

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
STAFF ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
July, 2010, Mortensen Library 1:00 pm

PRESENT: Barbara Dessureau, Carolyn Crane, Kathleen Kruse, Cindy Marks, Jim Mello, Kathe Snow, Lindsay McKeegan, Jen Conley, Lisa Belanger, Tina Berrien, Jason Pomposelli, Ben Ide, Nancy Clubb, Jennifer Keyo, Meagan Fazio, Sharon Scorso, Amy Brown, Sebby Sorrentino, Lisa Parker, Bonny Barsi, Donna Galin, Valerie Gilleran, Kathleen Hayden, Evelyne Haldimann, Marlene Hall, Connie Yoczik, Carla Fuller, Jessica Abbott, Jennifer Sanborn, Lynn Galvin, Nancy Fields, and Maria Marques.

MINUTES: Members in attendance approved the Staff Association minutes from the June 9, 2010 meeting after removing Lisa Belanger's name from those in attendance and editing to include clarifications to the "Wellness Committee Report."

GUEST SPEAKER: Arosha Jayawickrema of Finance and Administration spoke about current University finances, the June 2010 budget reductions, and rumors about future budget reductions.

Arosha began by explaining how the current world wide recession impacts the finances of the students applying to universities, FAFSA requirements for financial aid, the tuition discount rate, and how all of these factors affect University revenues and ultimately the operating budget.

Generally by the end of the spring semester, we have a good sense of the entering class's tuition discount rate, however, the exact rate isn't known until the fall. (Awarded financial aid is not the same as actual disbursements.) With the rapid and vast economic downturn last year, the financial situation for many students changed from the time they applied to the time they entered the University. The overall tuition discount rate, a factor that affects the University's net revenues, usually averages between 40 and 40.5 percent and about 44 percent for first year students. Last year's class entered with a tuition discount rate of 48 percent. Due to the sharp increase in the tuition discount rate, the University reduced its FY 2011 operating budget by \$5.2 million.

The University can't spend more than what it brings in and has to submit a balanced budget each year to the Board of Regents. The University also has a significant amount of public debt and is constrained in borrowing more money. The University's bond rating, which dipped below the BAA rating during the 1990's, is now back at BAA with a stable outlook. Due to positive financial results and prudent fiscal management, the University was able to secure bond insurance with an AAA rating the last time we issued. Currently, the University of Hartford is considered to be a financially well run institution by the bond rating agencies.

Arosha next discussed plans for going forward. The discount rate for Fall 2010 for the incoming class is currently at 44 percent. Arosha emphasized that there is **nothing** currently on the table regarding further faculty/staff reductions for October. He did, however, outline some of the financial challenges the University is facing in the near future.

- The economy is not bouncing back to where we were prior to Fall 2008 and some analysts say that it is a reset, (i.e. the recovery will most likely be very slow, making the next three to four years tough).
- The University budget was originally based upon a 3 percent increase in student tuition and a flat enrollment.
- Healthcare costs are estimated to go up by 10 percent.

To meet these challenges the University is trying to provide alternative markets to the traditional undergraduate programs, thus increasing the number of part time undergraduates. This means increasing Saturday and Winter Term programming as well as adding more on-line courses. Additionally, the University is seeking to increase international student enrollment. These steps will hopefully increase net revenues. The University also needs to review programs that are both not mission critical and financially viable to further decrease expenses. The University will also examine current services and functions. The questions of, "How do we do what we do?" "How can we do it better?", and "What can we do without?" will be applied wherever possible.

The discussion was opened for questions. During this segment Arosha explained that a freeze on positions will not be implemented and that the 6 week waiting period to replace employees is no longer in place. However, the fall census is critical to planning and even though the numbers look good right now no one will really know the outlook until students actually show up. President Harrison does not support staff reductions, but depending upon the fall census, the waiting period to refill an open position may need to be reinstated. Lisa Belanger (HRD) shared that HRD is currently working with supervisors to re-organize and/or re-engineer open positions. It is easier to re-engineer open positions than active ones.

Arosha shared that fundraising results are somewhat behind compared to the last year of the campaign. Patience must be exercised when it comes to fundraising. The key is to keep donors informed and interested about the University. When asked how many students the University can accommodate, Arosha shared, based on the optimal sizing analysis, about 4,500 full-time undergraduates, but we should be able to go up to 5,000, without adding new space. Our current residential capacity is at 3,600, but we can add 200 more by tripling some bed spaces. He also addressed a question about whether increasing study abroad opportunities would be helpful. Although study abroad options might be helpful for recruiting and have tremendous academic value, students do not pay the "home" university more tuition. Therefore, study abroad is not particularly financially helpful. It was suggested to Arosha that the temperature in many offices is very cold to freezing and that turning down the air conditioning might be a way to reduce expenses.

Moving on to other topics, Arosha quickly stated that there will be town hall style meetings scheduled this fall to discuss how time sheet automation will work and to address any questions or concerns staff might have about this issue. He also briefly reminded staff that this year the University will close during the holiday break from December 24th to January 2nd. There will be a few exception areas/departments such as IT, Admissions, Payroll, Sports Center, Institutional Advancement, and perhaps the Bio-chemistry Lab. Details will be worked out and more information will be forth coming.

GUEST SPEAKER: Dean Joseph Voelker (Arts and Sciences) addressed the meeting on the new first-year student initiative "Our Campus, Our Planet." Plans for the initiative began when former Provost Lynn Pasquerella observed that many universities promote a common reading assignment for first-year student orientation sessions. Lynn suggested that the University of Hartford adopt a similar program. Joe undertook some focus groups and learned that faculty was inclined toward varied activities, rather than a single reading. The conclusion was that the orientation sessions might be a fabulous venue for instilling the attitude that the University of Hartford is a beautiful campus that merits our stewardship. It was felt that the beginning college student still tends to comply with directives (i.e., they still do what they think they have to do), and therefore would attend the sessions, thus making their first days at the University a perfect time to instill campus stewardship values. In the process of encouraging proper concern for the campus, the concept will be expanded to embrace proper environmental stewardship of our planet. Professor Laura Pence (A&S Chemistry) and Norman Young, Executive Director of Facilities, will serve as presenters at Freshman Convocation on the Saturday before orientation day. Norm will address the way we should treat our campus. Laura will address environmental issues relating to our planet.

Our Campus, Our Planet will take place on Monday, August 30th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be 33 events, all of which will be coordinated and run by University volunteers. A brochure of events will be coming out soon. A few of the events will include:

- An alumni panel discussion about "green" careers
- Lectures on recycling electronics
- The economic theory of the "tragedy of the commons"
- Oxygen and pollution tests in the Hog River
- A campus tree tour
- Lecture by Larry Gould presenting his view that global warming is not caused by humans.

Joe explained that this session can help us test whether or not a program of this type is sustainable and if it should be carried forward next year. He encouraged all to think of this as a pilot program. During a brief question and answer period, Joe was asked if the campus will ever be designated as smoke-free. Staff members joined the discussion, and noted that this is an issue that should be under student ownership and leadership. It would be a good start to have one small area designated as a smoke-free zone and then expand that area gradually. Perhaps the entire academic side of campus could one day become smoke free.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Benefits Task Force: Will meet in August. No report.

Budget Advisory Team: No update, no meeting.

Wellness: Kathe Snow reported that they are continuing to work on a survey to determine what activities have the most interest to staff. They are hoping to have that ready by mid to late summer with something to kick off in September.

Community Engagement Council: No update to report.

Web Connections: Currently drafting mission statement and collecting names of participating persons per department.

Office Staff Committee: No Report.

STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORTS

Treasurer's Report: The balance is \$3,261.27. There were no new expenses or revenues since the June report.

Corresponding Secretary: Jennifer Keyo asked that members forward any information related to births, marriages, etc., to her at keyo@hartford.edu.

Community Rep: Lori Fasciano has moved to Hillyer College from Athletics. Therefore, we now need a new Community Representative for Athletics. Please contact Evelyne Haldimann if you are interested.

UPDATES/FOLLOW-UP JUNE MEETING

A self-defense class will be offered in August. There will be four 3-hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday - August 10th & 12th and August 17th and 19th from 3:00 pm to 6:00 p.m. each session.

NEW BUSINESS

A Faculty and Staff volleyball clinic is scheduled for August 19th at the Main Arena in the Sports Center from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. The clinic is free to all University faculty and staff. It will consist of lessons, contests and lots of fun. Please wear athletic clothing and bring a water bottle. Knee pads are recommended but not necessary. Enjoy a Thursday afternoon with your peers and meet this year's volleyball team. For more information please email Coach Ferguson at dferguson@hartford.edu.

HRD is sponsoring an upcoming "brown-bag lunch" on Tuesday, July 27, 2010 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. in Auerbach 326. The Lexington Group, Inc., the University's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, will discuss the topic of Managing Stress and Change. The event is free to faculty and staff. Please RSVP to ext. 4666 or berrien@hartford.edu by Tuesday, July 20, 2010.

NEXT MEETING: August 11, 2010 at 12:00 p.m. in Gengras Student Union - Room 335.

Respectfully submitted by

Nancy Fields
Recording Secretary