

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
STAFF ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES
February, 2011, Gengras Room 345 - 12:00 pm

PRESENT: Evelyne Haldimann, Nancy Fields, Cheryl MacMath, Lynn Galvin, Ben Ide, Jessica Abbott, Lisa Parker, Kathe Snow, Jenn Keyo, Jill Burnham, Erik Pavesic, Dan Silverman, Lisa Belanger, Barbara Dessureau, Kathleen Hayden, Jason Farrell, and Sharon Scorso.

MINUTES: The January 2011 meeting was cancelled due to the University being closed for inclement weather. Members in attendance approved the Staff Association minutes from the December 8, 2010 meeting.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

BAT Sharon Scorso reported for the Budget Advisory Team. The first draft of the fiscal year 2012 budget was developed based on the Board approved tuition, room and board increase and the faculty and staff merit pool. Student enrollment is projected to be flat from the current year. Projections include a slight increase in the overall tuition discount rate from fiscal year 2011 and a larger student bad debt write-off is anticipated. Pricing options for some graduate programs were discussed as well as managing courses taught by part-time faculty. The Budget Advisory Team is looking at ideas for generating new revenues and saving money.

WELLNESS Kathe Snow reported that the snowshoeing offerings have attracted 14 people. They have had a lot of fun, but ironically, have had to reschedule two events because of snow storms. Kathe also reported that 46 people signed up for the upcoming 5-week Fit for Life challenge. She passed around a sign up sheet and a set of Fit for Life Challenge Guidelines which indicate what kinds of physical activities translate to valid points. She emphasized that snow shoveling counts! The challenge is based upon points earned - a point is earned for every 20 minutes of sustained physical activity. The Hawk Walk challenge will be offered again. For more information about Wellness initiatives please visit the HRD website at www.hartford.edu/human_resources_development.

It was also announced that Weight Watchers will be offered on campus in GSU for 14 weeks if at least 15 people will register and pre-pay. The cost of the 14 week session is \$152.00 which can be split into three equal payments. Evelyne also encouraged members to participate in the Yoga and Zumba sessions being offered on campus.

BTF Lynn Galvin reported for the Benefits Task Force. Currently BTF is piloting a program with the company, Engagement Health, to examine a possible wellness program aimed at making us a healthier campus. A pilot group of mostly BTF Members plus a few others are participating in phase one of this initiative. Lynn also reported on the progress of the recent Benefits Survey. The survey results have been tabulated and are now under review. Three concerns identified by the survey are; 1) Tier Options, 2) Dental Options, and 3) Insurance Carrier Options - specifically considering the pros and cons of offering more than one insurance provider. Another current focus of BTF is examining the need and/or appropriateness of "capping" the amount of unused vacation/personal time that can be donated by individual employees as well as time received.

STAFF ASSOCIATION REPORTS

WEB ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Barbara Dessureau shared that the new website is now being accessed again directly via www.hartford.edu instead of being routed through new.hartford.edu. Barbara also shared that the Web Advisory Committee is learning a lot about all the departments on campus as they integrate. This is a wonderful site. The Libraries have not integrated yet, but will in the summer.

FACULTY SENATE - Jenn Keyo reported that some of the topics discussed at the Faculty Senate meeting included; the Faculty Procedure Manual, Jim Fuller joining BAT as a faculty representative, an upcoming plan for removing snow mounds from the parking lots, and implementing a national search to fill the vacant position of Director of Institutional Advancement. Also discussed was planning for the future and stabilizing the University. Provost, Sharon Vasquez, shared that the NEASC report will be available later this month and encouraged all to read the report. The faculty advancement and tenure process was also discussed.

OFFICE STAFF COMMITTEE - Evelyne reported that Phase 1 of the Staff Satisfaction Surveys, which was directed to Administrative Support Staff, has been tabulated and results have been reviewed with President Harrison, Provost Vasquez, Lisa Belanger, and Arosha Jayawickrema. Phase 1 yielded a 27% survey return rate. University administration indicated that the efforts being made on this initiative are appreciated and respected. Administration is very interested in the results obtained thus far, but would like to work with a larger rate of return. Staff Association Eboard members will be contacting everyone that was on the original survey list encouraging anyone who may not have completed a survey during the first submission to complete and return a survey. Phase 2 surveys, which were mailed to all other staff in January are being returned and tabulated. As of this meeting date, 115 surveys from Phase 2 have been returned. Phase 2 is yielding approximately a 25% return rate. If you did not receive a Phase-2 survey or if you have not yet returned yours, please do so as soon as possible. Please contact Uhartstaf@hartford.edu to request a survey.

CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS - Evelyne reported that some people have asked why the Constitution and Bylaws are being reviewed and revised. Review and appropriate revision of these documents must be completed every 5 years. This is year five. Additionally, changes have been made recently to the titles of the offices of Chair and Vice Chair, two new positions have been added (Exempt Staff Member-at-Large and Non-Exempt Member-at-Large), the positions of Recording and Corresponding Secretary have been merged, and membership has been redefined. These changes require significant revisions to the governing documents in order to bring them up to date. Proposed changes will be provided to membership for review and debate as soon as the drafts are completed.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Cheryl MacMath reported that envelopes were purchased to mail the Staff Satisfaction Surveys. The cost of envelopes was \$66.42. The new balance is \$3,166.85.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY REPORT - Lynn Galvin provided an activity log which indicates that approximately 38 staff members have been acknowledged with thank you notes, or cards expressing sympathy, get well wishes, or best wishes for a new endeavor. The log records activity from April, 2009 through February, 2011.

GUEST SPEAKER - Jason Farrell, Director of Facilities, shared an overview of the many maintenance responsibilities and challenges faced by the Facilities Department and the improvements that have been made within the Service Response Center. There are approximately 130 staff members in Facilities. Norm Young is the Executive Director of Facilities and John Michalewicz is the Senior Director of Plant Services.

Jason shared a brief personal background beginning with his first position with the University of Hartford in 1995 as Assistant Director of Residential Life. In 2000, Jason left the University to work for a private property management company. Although he very much enjoyed his experience in Student Affairs, he felt that getting "real world" experience would help him offer a unique and broader service experience to students as he would better understand what students need. He returned to the University in 2002 as Assistant Director in Facilities. Now his primary responsibility is supervising the campus call center - Service Response Center. The center employs 18 undergraduate students, subsidizing their room and board. These students are intensely trained in the trades through the RFA program and are on duty 24/7. They basically provide "the first line of defense" and fill the gap between immediate facilities needs and the availability of outside vendors by providing "off-hours" response. When the Facilities office is closed (overnight or on the weekends) and an urgent maintenance issue such as a pipe break arises, these students and Jason will contact necessary custodians and contractors. Within the past three years, student resident complaints at move-in time about residential facilities have been reduced from literally hundreds to virtually none this year. The facilities department is trying to implement process, procedure, and incentives instrumental in this residential side of campus success to the academic side.

Jason also discussed some of the extra challenges that have been faced by Facilities staff in light of the many snow storms we have experienced this winter. All roofs were inspected and all drains have been cleared. Every roof that needed to be shoveled has been cleared. There have been lots of leaks (approximately 30 reported) in the dorms and there may be more due to ice damming and melting, but there are no problems with the roofs themselves. Fire hydrants have been uncovered and storm drains are being cleaned. It is estimated that 650 cars will have to be moved and then put back in order to remove the massive amounts of snow from the parking lots.

When Jason opened discussions to a question/answer period, he was asked to describe the reward and recognition program used by Facilities. It is reputed to be a very successful program. Jason's former experience in Student Affairs helped him gain understanding and appreciation for positive motivation (carrot versus the stick approach) to motivating employees, especially when dealing with a large staff like in Facilities. Twice each year the entire Facilities staff is invited to a reward and recognition gathering. An Outstanding Staff Member is recognized and is provided with a monetary bonus (of perhaps \$100.00), a reserved parking spot, and a jacket. A Group Achievement Award is also presented. Nominations for this award are accepted from people outside the facilities department. This award could be a pizza party or lunch at the 1877 Club. Another award is the On the Spot Award. Nominations for this award must come from outside the department. Generally this award is a "pat on the back" acknowledgement and a lunch.

Staff Association members did ask Jason a few miscellaneous questions about the types of "regular" maintenance they could expect on the academic side of campus regarding trash removal, light replacements, heating and air conditioning issues, and office vacuuming. Office vacuuming (or lack of it) sparked quite a bit of discussion. Tom Drakley

is the Custodian Supervisor and can be reached at X 7925. Questions, concerns, and suggestions about office maintenance can be sent to Tom. Members also discussed a need to know the schedule of when the recycling bins are emptied. The Sustainability Committee tried to put the bins in centralized locations, but office staff finds that the bins are often moved or are inaccessible whenever they try to take recyclable materials to the bins - causing office staff to make several ineffective trips to attempt to recycle. Jason asked that staff email their questions and concerns about the recycling bins to him at Farrell@hartford.edu

NEW BUSINESS Jillian Holt, Assistant Director of Graduate and Adult Academic Services, is coordinating the annual Daffodil Days Drive. This is a fund raising activity for the American Cancer Society. For more information about this wonderful outreach please contact Jillian at X 4457 or jholt@hartford.edu.

The Staff Association would like to create a Social Activities Committee. The goal of this committee will be to research, suggest, and help manage fun activities (either on or off campus) in which staff and perhaps their families can participate. Please let Evelyne know if you are interested in participating on this committee.

The Athletics Department would like to encourage everyone to come to the 2011 America East Men's and Women's Basketball Championship. It will be held from March 3 - 6, 2011. At this point all volunteer positions have been filled, but your presence at the games will be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted by

Nancy Fields
Recording Secretary