

Washburn University Staff Council Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2022

Members Present – Leah Brown, Carissa Schmidlein, Meagan Smejdir, Christa Smith, Blaine Smith, Matt Busey, Nancy Province, James Scotti, Gayla Sarkesian, Jennifer Bixel, Kelli Wietharn, Barbara Evans

Members Not Present – Jackie Askren, Drew Liggett, Emily Schneider

Guests – Lynn Crippen, Jordan Smith, Debbie White

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Matt Busey at 3:03pm.
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Attendance was taken by Zoom chat.
- III. Approval of March 8, 2022 Minutes (Motion)
 - a. Voting
 - i. Motion – Blaine Smith
 - ii. Second – Nancy Province
 - iii. Votes
 1. Yay – 13
 2. Nay – 0
 3. Abstain – 0
- IV. Committee Reports:
 - a. Chair Report – Matt Busey
 - i. Will be scheduling a meeting with Dr. Farley as soon as list of major initiatives is finalized
 - b. Board of Regents Meeting Update – Matt Busey
 - i. Met on April 24, 2022
 1. New facilities warehouse building plans were approved, funded by a private donor
 - c. All Faculty/Staff Email/Posting Committee – Jackie Askren, Christa Smith
 - i. No updates
 - d. Benefits Committee – Jennifer Bixel, Emily Schneider, Matt Busey
 - i. Scheduled for April 19th
 1. We will share updates at May Staff Council meeting
 - e. Food Advisory Committee – Nancy Province

- i. Chartwells recently did taste testing to replace Tu Taco; waiting for the votes to come in from students/faculty/staff
- f. Parking Ticket Committee – Leah Brown and Blaine Smith
 - i. No Report
- g. Safety Committee – Jackie Askren
 - i. No Report

V. Old Business:

- a. Major Initiatives for Current Session
 - i. Staff Council officers met with Teresa Lee (HR Director) to discuss some upcoming initiatives
 - 1. Additional staff professional development opportunities
 - a. they have a new page on the HR website for professional development: <https://www.washburn.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/professional-development-resources.html>
 - b. Professional Development resources through EAB:
 - i. <https://www.academicimpressions.com/>
 - ii. <https://eab.com/research/workplace/resource-center/higher-education-professional-development-resource-center/>
 - c. Lacey Roberts will come speak with Staff Council in May (she is the new Asst. Dir of HR) about professional development opportunities
 - d. Possibility of Staff Council creating some professional development opportunities for general staff professional development – considering doing something regularly, during Staff Council meetings that will continue to be open to all staff members at Washburn and Washburn Tech; maybe we could create a Professional Development committee? Generally, people like this idea
 - 2. Expansion of Employee Educational Assistance Program
 - a. Taking Washburn courses at no cost
 - b. There is a tax consequence – when the amount per person exceeds a specific dollar amount per person, then it becomes taxable
 - c. Things to consider:
 - i. What is the impact on paying customers?
 - ii. What is the impact on employees completing their work while also taking classes?
 - d. Costs associated with this program in previous years:
 - i. 2021 Academic Year - \$110,000 in tuition costs for employees

- ii. 2022 Academic Year - \$180,000 in tuition costs for employees; tuition waiver
 - e. Before revising, we would need to work with the general Benefits Council; we would start by contacting Jim Martin, chair of Benefits Council
- 3. Bereavement Leave
 - a. This has been brought up before, and last time, it was decided that employees can use sick leave for bereavement
 - b. There is additional cost to creating an additional category of leave
 - c. Current focus is salary package
- 4. Sick Leave Payout
 - a. There is an obvious cost to this
 - b. If we moved forward with this, then we would really need to be specific about recording sick leave accurately
 - c. What are the implications for sick leave accumulation for 9/10-month faculty, as they do not accrue sick leave at the same rate?
- 5. Donor Leave
 - a. Currently, staff can do this through the Shared Leave pool, but only after someone has exhausted their sick and personal leave
- 6. Hearing Aids & Fertility Treatment – Expansion of coverage
 - a. Are there any special riders that could be attached to the base plan? Then individuals could opt in to these features at an additional cost
- 7. Other Information
 - a. Matt will send an invite to the Staff Council members who have volunteered to be part of the committee that looks at these initiatives

VI. New Business:

- a. Continuity Planning
 - i. Officer Terms:
 - 1. Bylaws state that “Officers will hold a one-year term and will hold office until their successors are elected.”
 - 2. Consider extending term length for continuity or creating new Immediate Past Chair Officer role
 - 3. Comments/Info
 - a. Matt will send an email to all representatives, so please read that information and send your thoughts/feedback to Matt

VII. Informational Items:

- a. Employee Recognition Ceremony is May 3, 2022 from 3:00pm-5:00pm

- b. Next Meeting: May 10, 2022 from 3:00pm-4:00pm via Zoom Video Conference and in the Lincoln Room, Memorial Union
 - i. Lacey Roberts will be joining us to discuss professional development opportunities

VIII. Adjournment (Motion)

- a. Motion – Kelli Wietharn
- b. Second – Barbara Evans
- c. Vote
 - i. Yay – 13
 - ii. Nay - 0
 - iii. Abstain – 0

Minutes submitted by Staff Council Secretary Meagan Smejdir.