



STAFF SENATE

Wednesday, August 2, 2017
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

President Fraser called the Tech Staff Senate to order on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, at 10:02 a.m. in Baz Tech 204.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Rachel Alexander
Pam Cooper
Shawna Davis
Andrea Eubanks
Brittany Flippo
Lindelle Fraser
Tammy Guarino
Tiffany Henry

James Higgs
Margie Link
Brittany Martin
Julia Pope
Rhonda Rodgers
Heather Taylor
Hope Vilavanh
Bettye Williamson

Senators Absent:

Sandra Anderson
Brandi Collins
Jeff Mumert
Jeff Nichols

Visitor(s):

Pat Chronister, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources
Chris Giroir, Department Head, College Student Personnel and Interim Associate Dean, Graduate College
Aubrey Holt, Director of Student Activities
Beverly Hooten, Assistant Personnel Manager, Human Resources
Jennifer Thomas, Ozark Campus Representative

On August 2, 2017, the minutes from the July 5, 2017, meeting were distributed electronically and approved.



NEW BUSINESS

On-Track Staff Development Program

Dr. Chris Giroir, Department Head, College Student Personnel and Interim Associate Dean, Graduate College, addressed Staff Senate regarding the creation of On-Track Staff Development Program as part of Leadership Tech and distributed the Leadership Tech Proposed Project Charter. Dr. Giroir introduced the Leadership Tech team members who are working on the program, Mrs. Pat Chronister, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Mrs. Aubrey Holt, Director of Student Activities. Mr. Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources, indicated that he requested to be part of program development and asked Mrs. Beverly Hooten, Assistant Personnel Manager, Human Resources, to participate.

Dr. Giroir explained that On-Track was chosen because it is already in place for students and provides a good model for developing skill sets and training for staff. Dr. Giroir indicated the first year will be focused on assessment and team building with the second year to evaluate what works best and put it into action. There will be a variety of workshops/presentations, mini assessment survey, and incentives as a starting point. The plan is to run a pilot program for fall 2017 with the intent to go live for the entire campus as of spring 2018 (Ozark and Russellville campus). Leadership Tech team members will work with Staff Senate in completing a survey to get feedback and creation of Staff Senate sub-committee for future input.

Mrs. Chronister explained that currently the University does not have a staff professional development program or comprehensive training for employees, outside of new employee orientation completed by Human Resources. In addition to serving a valuable need, the On-Track Staff Development Program ties into the University's strategic plan as part of Goal 1: Human Core and providing support for faculty and staff to do the best work possible in their roles. The intent is to have several courses by 2018-2019 with 3-4 events per semester as part of the On-Track Staff Development Program.

Mrs. Aubrey Holt, Director of Student Activities, discussed how On-Track works for students to include online training sessions such as Haven Alcohol Awareness Program, "how to" videos, lunch with a leader, etc. On-Track allows for a central location that students can find available programs through One-Tech. On-Track for students became available in 2014 and there are around 1,000 students who participate.

Senator Link asked if training/professional development completed as part of On-Track Staff Development Program could be used on a resume. President Fraser asked about using On-Track Staff Development Program for employees to advance their career. Mrs. Holt indicated that a University ID or T number could be used to obtain a progress report. Senators unanimously agreed that a certificate of completion should be



considered so that the employee has something tangible to use as programs/training are completed. Senator Flippo pointed out that On-Track Staff Development Program could be used to assist offices/departments with the assessment process, as there is a significant human resources component.

Mrs. Beverly Hooten, Assistant Personnel Manager, Human Resources, indicated that she is working on guest speakers for a lunch and learn event and asked senators for topics. The following topics were discussed: phone skills, how to handle difficult customers, customer service, and health care information/programs such as the importance of routine mammograms or prevention of diabetes. Mrs. Hooten indicated that Human Resources is also looking at fun activities, such as “Art of the Valley 2 (formerly, Paint with Lane),” “Pottery Worx,” Yoga, etc.

Mrs. Hooten asked senators for a “lunch” time that works for most employees. Senators unanimously agreed that picking a specific time is difficult, as lunch varies per office/department and is also based on time of year/busy season, etc. Senators unanimously agreed that the most important factor is having supervisory support to make sure the office/department is covered and that the employee can attend outside of their designated lunch break. In addition, making sure that employee participation is part of supervisory training. Mrs. Chronister agreed that supervisory support is essential for the program to work and all supervisors will be strongly encouraged to work with their employees.

Senator Link suggested that the Business Department often has events and guest speakers that are free to everyone and the Chamber of Commerce provides customer service training, along with their own events and guest speakers. In addition, offices/departments use webinars that could be made available to all employees through On-Track Staff Development Program. Mrs. Hooten indicated that all programs/training provided to employees would be considered based on low or no cost. Senators unanimously agreed that streaming and/or videos need to be considered in order to accommodate different work schedules and encourage participation.

Dr. Giroir concluded the presentation by saying that On-Track Staff Development Program will provide networking opportunities for all staff and allow for a better systematic view of campus. Dr. Giroir will send the Staff Senate survey to President Fraser after the fall 2017 semester has started. President Fraser will send the survey to all senators with the plan to create a sub-committee to work with the Leadership Tech team for future development.

Employee Turnover

President Fraser opened the discussion regarding employee turnover. Senator Pope asked about supervisory training, as this has a huge impact on employee turnover. In addition, staffing concerns, especially in high volume offices/departments where employee turnover may be higher definitely impacts the number of staff who look for



other options outside of the University.

Senator Martin indicated that Mrs. Tammy Weaver, Registrar, and Mr. Robert Freeman, Director of Human Resources, are currently serving on a committee looking at promotion from within the University. Currently, there is a great deal of time and money involved in advertising for positions and going through the interview process even when an internal candidate is the best fit. The question was raised as to the requirements set forth by state policy determining how to handle internal candidates (ex: classified versus non-classified), as the University has not always had the same policy for promotion from within. Senator Martin indicated that the State Recreation and Parks department allows internal candidates to apply for positions during the first two weeks and if the position is not filled, the job posting is made available to all candidates. Senators unanimously agreed that reevaluating promotion from within is definitely an important factor to decreasing employee turnover. Senator Martin indicated that she will ask Mrs. Weaver about a possible Staff Senate sub-committee to assist with the initiative.

In addition to reevaluating promotion from within, the hiring process needs to be examined. Current software used for the hiring process is not user-friendly and very cumbersome (Corner Stone). Offices/departments are not authorized to speak with internal candidates until the position is filled, which could take up to 30 days. Candidates are not always notified of the position being filled or because of the length of time involved to fill the position, candidates move on to other jobs. Senators unanimously agreed that there needs to be a consistent time frame for filling a position and all applicants need to be notified in a timely manner. President Fraser will contact Mr. Freeman to find out about state and internal policy for hiring new employees and report back to Staff Senate.

While pay for state employees, in particular classified employees, is governed outside of the University, several senators commented on low pay for entry-level positions and/or administrative assistant positions in comparison to job duties as an important factor in employee turnover.

OLD BUSINESS

Feedback for Staff Engagement Activities

President Fraser asked senators for representative feedback regarding staff engagement activities. The following ideas were discussed:

- ATU staff night at the movies, The Wall, Aquatic Center, Little Rock Zoo, Traveler's Game (discounted rate with Tech ID)
- Coupon for free lunch at cafeteria
- Food Truck Friday on-campus once a month during summer
- Breakfast and/or ice cream stations on-campus
- Noon classes/activities: yoga, meditation, knitting, bingo, fly tying, book clubs



Senators discussed that some of the feedback supported using extra funds to create an account for raises/merit bonuses. In addition, with current budget concerns and staffing limitations, it might be better to defer spending money on staff engagement activities until the University is in a better financial position.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Currently Staff Senate is in 5th place for the Green and Gold Cupboard Food drive. President Fraser reminded everyone that we are in the last weeks of the drive and encouraged continued participation.

President Fraser contacted Thomas Pennington, University Counsel, to arrange a special meeting to continue moving forward with review of the Staff Handbook. President Fraser will confirm meeting date/time with all senators.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, September 6, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. in Baz Tech 204.

ADJOURNMENT

President Fraser adjourned the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pope, Secretary

