



MURRAY STATE
UNIVERSITY

Staff Congress

Draft Minutes for March 13, 2024
Mississippi Room, Curris Center and Zoom

Present: Christian Barnes, Dedrick Brooks, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, Joshua Hutson, Sondra Kreger, Trish Lofton, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross, David Shelton

Absent: Russell Dunn, Matthew Jones, Matt Purdy, Angela Richerson, Shyann Royalty, Travis Plunkett

Guests: Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources; Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President, Student Affairs; Dr. Tim Todd, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Trish Lofton called the meeting to order.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President, Student Affairs: Dr. Don Robertson reported on spring semester enrollment and registration for Racer Nation Orientations. The Student Government Election has ended. The results will be announced later in the day on March 13. The agriculture career fair and all-careers fair were held on March 12. Career fairs for other specific majors will be held March 13 and March 15.

Dr. Tim Todd, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs: Dr. Tim Todd provided an update on the SACS accreditation review. The SACS representatives will be at MSU April 1-4.

Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources: Courtney Hixon said a supervisor training on performance appraisals will be held on Zoom on March 14. Performance appraisals are due April 5. An email was sent to employees with information about the Health Savings Account transition to Health Equity. Persons with questions may contact Human Resources. Ms. Hixon gave the schedule and topics for upcoming Lunch and Learn sessions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Jodi Hanneman made a motion to approve the February 21, 2024 Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded. Orville Herndon noted a correction in the Credentials and Elections Committee report, paragraph 3. The date of the Staff Congress election is incorrectly listed as “2025” and should be corrected to “2024”.

Orville Herndon made a motion to approve the February 21, 2024 Minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded, and the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT: Audrey Neal made a motion to approve the February 2024 Treasurer’s Report as presented. Jeremy McKeel seconded, and the motion carried.

Staff Regent Report: President Lofton noted that Staff Regent Dr. David Wilson was out-of-town for what he anticipates will be the final appointment to follow-up on a 2024 knee surgery.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: President Trish Lofton reported on the March meeting of the Executive Committee. The committee discussed merit pay and pay for years of service. The Executive Committee would like the ad hoc Merit Pay/Years-of-Service Pay Committee to research longevity pay procedures at other universities. Also discussed was moving the April Staff Congress meeting which is currently scheduled for April 17, the same date as All-Campus Sing. The committee recommends moving the meeting to April 24.

Orville Herndon made a motion to move the April Staff Congress meeting to April 24. Audrey Neal seconded, and the motion carried.

President Lofton plans to meet with committee chairs prior to monthly Staff Congress meetings. The purpose of the meeting with committee chairs will be to ask them what help is needed to help the committees achieve their goals and objectives. She will send committee chairs a Doodle Poll to determine a meeting date for April. Voting in the Staff Regent Election has begun and will be open until 11:59 p.m., on March 13. An email and a postcard with election dates and times were sent to staff. She asked Staff Congress members to encourage staff to vote in the election.

Credentials and Elections Committee: Orville Herndon thanked Staff Regent candidates Audrey Neal and David Wilson for participating in the Staff Regent candidate forums. Recordings of the forums are available on the Staff Regent Election website. He encouraged staff to vote in the election.

The Staff Congress Election will be held April 23-24, with the filing period March 25, 4:30 p.m. – April 8, 4:30 p.m. Mr. Herndon read the names of Staff Congress members whose terms will expire June 30, 2024.

Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee: Jodi Hanneman said the staff breakfast is scheduled for May. Information about the breakfast will be sent to staff.

Communications Committee: Jeremy McKeel reported that the Communications Committee has added posts to the Staff Congress social media pages. Recent posts include congratulations to staff who have recently completed new degrees. The items were forwarded to the committee by Audrey Neal. Staff may forward to the Communications Committee other staff recognition items to be posted on Staff Congress social media. The committee has started a series of posts introducing Staff Congress members. Mr. McKeel will be contacting Staff Congress members to request brief biographies for the posts. At its recent meeting, the Communications Committee discussed ways of informing staff about staff recognition awards, including setting up an information table at the Curriss Center.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Survey Committee: Audrey Neal thanked the Staff Survey Committee members for their continued work preparing the report from the Staff Survey. The committee plans to have the report completed in April. The Staff Congress Executive officers plan to present the Staff Survey report at the Board of Regents retreat.

Textbook Scholarship Committee: Joshua Hutson said the Textbook Scholarship Committee plans to have a social media post regarding the spring textbook scholarship. The committee is in the process of organizing rebate nights to raise funds for the textbook scholarship and for the professional development fund. A rebate night at Burrito Shack is scheduled for March 22, 4:00-9:00 p.m. Other rebate nights are in the process of being scheduled.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: Duane Dycus reported that at its March meeting, the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee discussed the MSU grievance policy and how grievances are addressed when they are presented to Staff Congress. Audrey Neal has drafted a document containing guidelines for the Staff Congress Executive Committee to follow when addressing staff grievances. Jodi Hanneman contacted Human Resources to inquire about the status of the proposed revisions to the callback policy.

Ms. Hanneman reported that Human Resources staff are reviewing the proposed changes to the callback policy and researching the callback policies of peer institutions in Kentucky and in the Missouri Valley Conference.

Regarding the grievance policy, it will need to be updated to state that staff should present grievances to the Staff Congress President or Vice President rather than to other Staff Congress representatives.

Mr. Dycus said the committee discussed concerns that meal reimbursement rates for travel have not been adjusted for inflation. He inquired and learned that the university follows the reimbursement rates set by the state of Kentucky. The state reimbursement rates have not been changed, and the university does not have plans to change the rates.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: No report.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: Orville Herndon said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on March 15, at 1:00 p.m., via Zoom. He will email the Zoom link to committee members and to Staff Congress members.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities Committee: Dedrick Brooks reported that the following naming items were approved by the Board of Regents at its March 1 meeting: DEVsource Technology Solutions Esports Arena; Charles and Anne Wrather Hoke Mezzanine—Wrather Hall Auditorium Balcony; Sergeant Patrick J. Medley Veteran and Military Success Coordinator Office.

Judicial Board: No report.

Sick Leave Appeals Committee: No report.

International Studies Advisory Committee: No report.

Budget Advisory Committee: Audrey Neal said the Budget Advisory Committee will meet on March 23. Much of the information to be presented at the committee's meeting is dependent on the state budget which is currently being discussed by the Kentucky Legislature. The draft of the university's budget will be presented at the March 23 meeting. The university town hall is scheduled for April 25.

Shared Governance Committee: No report.

Parking Advisory Committee: Duane Dycus said the Parking Advisory Committee will meet on April 22.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

Business List Revision Committee: Jodi Hanneman asked for volunteers to serve on the Business List Revision Committee. Joshua Hutson volunteered to serve on the committee.

President Lofton said the committee receives numerous requests from businesses around the country requesting to have their business links added to the discount list. The committee evaluates the requests to determine whether or not the businesses are located in the region and whether or not they offer discounts specifically for Murray State employees.

Audrey Neal said a letter is being prepared that asks businesses if they currently offer or would offer a discount for MSU employees. She asked Staff Congress members to present the letter to local businesses.

Merit Pay/Years-of-Service Pay Committee: President Lofton said that, as she discussed in the Executive Committee report earlier in today's meeting, she would like to revise the tasks of the Merit Pay/Years-of-Service Committee. She will talk to Matt Purdy, chair of the committee.

Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee: Orville Herndon reported that the Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee is waiting for the Staff Regent Election process information the committee has requested from peer universities.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Lofton thanked the Staff Congress committee chairs for completing the Google form which asked how the committees are progressing toward meeting their goals and objectives. She discussed the responses received in the Google form. President Lofton will compile the responses into a document which she will share with Staff Congress members so they can share it with their constituents. She complimented committee chairs and members for their work. The goals and objectives for the committees were developed from the Staff Survey comments. The committee goals for next year will be based on this year's Staff Survey comments.

President Lofton has received many positive comments about Staff Success Week. She would like Staff Success Week to be scheduled twice per year, with a variety of topics. She would like some sessions to be offered for the exempt supervisory roles.

President Lofton said that Human Resources sends her a list of new staff. She then sends the new staff members an email to welcome them to the university. The email includes a link to the Staff Congress website and a request that the staff contact her or other Staff Congress members if they have questions or need assistance.

INFORMATION ITEMS: The next Staff Congress meeting will be held April 24, at 1:30 p.m. President Lofton will try to reserve the meeting room in Wells Hall unless Staff Congress would like to hold the meeting in the Mississippi Room of the Curris Center.

Jodi Hanneman said the Zoom attendees could hear the meeting better from the Mississippi Room compared to the room in Wells Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: Jodi Hanneman made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.