

**Draft Minutes for November 20, 2024**

**Alexander Hall, Room 342, and Zoom**

**Present:** Dedrick Brooks, Tami Dandeneau, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Gerry Harris, Orville Herndon,

Joshua Hutson, B.J. Johnson, Trish Lofton, Jeremy McKeel, Amanda Mansfield, Kim Newbern, Tressa Ross,

David Shelton, Mary Steely, Rachel Stewart, Kristen Swisher, Casey Workman

**Absent:** Dayna Hutchinson, Matthew Jones, Audrey Neal, Justin Thomas, Joshua Tillson, Lisa Willis

**Guests:** Courtney Hixon, Director, Human Resources; Camela Ramey

12 online + 1 guest;

**CALL TO ORDER:** Staff Congress President Audrey Neal called the meeting to order.

Oct: Staff Congress Vice President Jeremy McKeel called the meeting to order. Staff Congress President Audrey Neal was traveling for work.

**REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:**

Courtney Hixon: update Fair Labor Standards Act passed in April with two salary threshold increases July 1 and January 1; federal ruling vacated those two; MSU will proceed as are with July 1 $43,888(?) but not with January 1 increase until receive further clarification from \_\_\_; can direct questions to HR; share care program ends December 1(?) MSU participations; log-in to claim rewards points before; can direct questions to HR

Oct:

**Courtney Hixon, Director of Human Resources:** Courtney Hixon said open enrollment is scheduled for October 18 through November 1. The Employee Health and Benefits Fair is scheduled for October 23, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., in the Curris Center Ballroom. Medicare information sessions and flu immunizations will be available at the health fair.

**Staff Regent Report:**

Dr. David Wilson sent a report from the retreat and board meeting. He sent out information from Columbia Sportwear; must go to store in Henderson. Special called meeting Dr. Jackson said was retiring. Next special called meeting was with selection committee and \_\_\_. Have been told that questions including regarding process must go to chair Owen(s). Dr. Wilson requested separate forums for staff, faculty, and staff due to differing questions. Interviews Feb/March. Senior breakfast was this week. Will have midnight breakfast on Sunday before finals start, in Winslow, prizes shirts. Staff reception will be in December after finals.

Audrey added that company’s name is Academic Search Incorporated; can look at site for job listing and information.

Oct: No report.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Dedrick and Dayna

Oct: Joshua Hutson made a motion to approve the September 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes as presented. Tami Dandeneau seconded. Vice President McKeel called for the vote, and the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT:**

Tressa: some of the textbook scholarship being awarded; name badges

Dayne Kristen

Oct: Joshua Hutson made a motion to approve the September 2024 Treasurer’s Report as presented. Kristen Swisher seconded. Vice President McKeel called for the vote, and the motion carried.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Executive Committee:**

Audrey: met last week; Christmas party will be discussed by Tressa; Staff Success Week will be planned by DEI Committee which will provide update; had some discussion about some recent changes in Procurement re: software purchasing what can be used—Beth Ward has agreed to give presentation on that during Staff Success Week, SC has given some questions for the session. Audrey has contacted Courtney request SC constituency groups; when receive will present at future SC meeting, anticipate Jan meeting—will help SC communicate with staff and help staff no who can contact on SC;

Oct: No report.

**Credentials and Elections Committee:**

OH: looking at open SC positions; David Looney has agreed to fill vacancy in Finance and Administrative Services

Term expires June 30, 2025

OH move to appointment; BJ second, …motion carried.

Oct: No report.

**Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee:**

Tressa: holiday party; at Oct meeting, SC discussed not do that; Residential College Association asked that SC publicize; it will be in grand ballroom of CC, 1-3, Dec 7—Once Upon a Holiday, A Storybook Celebration (movies, themes); discussed that would be good if have something else at party; RCA has student that will play Christmas carols, will have carolers walking through area; SC can help but not required—contact Casey. Tressa will ask David and Jeremy to distribute, also to \_\_\_; will notify WKMS; put on calendar, Racer Nation.

Staff Reception: Tressa talked to Sharion—date Dec 10, 11-1 in grand ballroom in CC; both ballrooms have been reserved –received feedback after last year’s event that was crowded, not enough space; 11:30 will be presentations—Jackie’s office will do that; have been asked if can Zoom so outer offices can see-- Jeremy said will do that; have had received requests for gluten-free options—Tressa said Sharion will take care of that. Discussed having table near sign-in table to have QR code and paper forms with pens for people to nominate staff for job well done; can make some certificates for those nominated; hand deliver; publish those over time; then can later request nominations for Staff Excellence Awards; committee would like to review and reviews the Staff Excellence Award nomination form –too complex, would like to simplify; Tressa requests that names for the award, feedback be sent to committee.

Oct: Tressa Ross said that the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee discussed including extended campuses in events such as the staff holiday reception. Ms. Ross has emailed Sharion Meloan, Executive Coordinator in the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, to request the date for the holiday reception.

The Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee suggested changing the date and/or theme of the Children’s Christmas party. Other community events are scheduled for the same day the party is usually scheduled. This resulted in low attendance at the Christmas party in 2023. In 2022, attendance was higher but attendees commented that the location (Alexander Hall atrium) was crowded and hot. The Curris Center Ballroom, which is large enough for the Children’s Christmas Party, is reserved by another group a year in advance. Discussion followed and included possibly moving the event to a different time of the year, and changing the theme. Staff Congress members discussed including some questions on the Staff Survey to ask staff for input on the time of year staff would like the event to be scheduled. The group consensus was to not schedule a Christmas party for 2024, while considering other options and other times of the year to schedule an event for employees and their children.

**Communications Committee:**

Jeremy no report; meeting date fell on election day, so did not meet.

Audrey: will re-send publication form to SC—to use to send to Communications Committee with info to publish

Oct: No report.

**Working Conditions Committee:**

No report.

BJ? Effective Dec 1 he will be director of network operations.

Oct: No report.

**Staff Survey Committee:**

Dedrick: committee met Nov 7 discussed \_\_ staff survey report; discussed 5 questions can send to \_\_ that don’t have to add to staff survey so don’t make survey longer; discussed adding a few questions to add for new employees—will meet as subcommittee to discuss criteria formatting directing to those questions; discussed way for staff to communicate comments;

Audrey: SC has form on website—comments, concerns;

Dedrick: discussed how to publish that form

Tressa: at reception table, could have flyer with info about where to find that form

Audrey: smaller questions/periodic survey will provide topics for listening sessions

Dedrick: thanked committee members for work

Oct: Dedrick Brooks reported that at the September meeting of the Staff Survey Committee, committee members discussed possible revisions for the 2024-2025 Staff Survey. In lieu of a meeting in October, the committee members communicated via email. The next meeting will be scheduled for November.

Discussion followed. The consensus of Staff Congress members was to include in the Staff Survey a section of new questions about current concerns while continuing to include some repeated questions each year. Maintaining some of the same questions each year allows the Staff Survey results to indicate trends and changes in responses. Having some questions repeated in the survey each year also provides data that can be used to provide a review of the university president. In 2023, when the Board of Regents requested that Staff Congress provide a review of the university president, the Staff Congress executive officers were able to prepare a review using data from Staff Surveys. Staff Congress members also discussed including a section of questions for newly hired staff.

**Textbook Scholarship Committee:**

Joshua not present

Audrey: textbook scholarship awarded; no applications for professional development fund

Tressa: thinks Abby Hensley (?) is person with \_\_\_\_--in Development Office overseas that to let Marie’s family know so they have option to attend when scholarship is awarded

Oct: Joshua Hutson reported that its October meeting, the Textbook Scholarship Committee selected the following textbook scholarship recipients from the applications received for the fall 2024 semester scholarship: Ladonna Roberts, who works in Information Systems, and Dixie Lynn, who works at WKMS. No applications were received for the professional development fund for the fall semester. The committee will meet in November to discuss raising funds for the textbook scholarship and professional development fund.

**Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee:**

Audrey gave report on behalf of Trish not able to attend meeting.

Reviewing inclement weather policy –number of comments in survey about not being equitably applied across faculty, staff, survey; front-loaded sick days for new employees—consensus of committee was to table topic as focus on these other topics---will take more time to develop new item with nothing currently in place; tuition waivers—will focus on \_\_\_;

Will meet Friday at 8:30 let Audrey or Trish know of feedback, questions

Oct: Trish Lofton reported that at the September meeting of the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee, the committee members discussed and prioritized the committee’s work for the 2024-2025 year. The committee plans to discuss the inclement weather work policy, tuition waivers, mental health support for staff, and sick leave time for newly hired staff. Comments received on the Staff Survey indicate staff concerns regarding the inclement weather work policy. Some staff said the taxes for tuition waivers used have been withheld from their pay. Newly hired staff who have not yet accumulated sick leave before they need to be absent from work due to their own illness or the illness of a family member must use unpaid leave.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:**

Amanda: Success Week Jan 6 Zoom as last year; has contacted Beth Procurement, Katie \_\_hiring student workers, \_\_ work-life balance, Rachel\_\_AI session—she did a google session last year;

Tressa: sat in on AI sessions for her college; thinks would help admins and others with work; she also did session with freshman students with Google tabs, \_\_\_;

Amanda: sessions on DEI; also have received request for facilities session; she has reached out to FM for session re: work orders, ….

Audrey: contact Amanda with suggestions. If many suggestions, can possibly have another Success Week in fall.

Tressa: asked if in Zoom chat during sessions, can ask attendees if have any ideas for other sessions

\_\_: re staff changes—when find out when we ask for something that a staff change occurred; no notice sent to inform staff; Audrey: will contact Courtney to ask who is responsible, request to communicate that information

Oct: Amanda Mansfield said that based on feedback from Jordan Smith, Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs, and Camisha Duffy, Executive Director of IDEA and Title IX Coordinator, along with the committee members’ input, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has decided to retain the committee’s name as is. Reasons for doing so include that the committee’s name aligns with the committee’s purpose and function. Jordan Smith said he would keep the committee informed of any legislation related to the purpose of the committee.

**UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:**

**Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee:**

OH: will meet on first Friday in December 8:15 a.m.; have several people express opinions about various topics, committee relayed to Courtney in HR; asked that SC encourage staff with concerns, comments to contact OH; also can let OH know if want to attend meeting

Oct: Orville Herndon said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on November 1, at 8:15 a.m. The 2025 insurance information was sent to staff on

October 16.

Projected information for 2026 insurance is expected to be available in August or September 2025. Mr. Herndon said staff may contact the committee with any feedback.

Nov: Audrey—re: these next committees—SC is asked to provide a representative to these committees but the reps haven’t heard when committees met

**Intercollegiate Athletic Council:**

Rachel: haven’t heard anything so no report

Oct: No report.

**Naming Campus Facilities Committee:**

Dedrick: 4 proposals under discussion

Oct: No report.

**Judicial Board:**

no report

Oct: No report.

**Sick Leave Appeals Committee:**

No report.

Oct: No report.

**International Studies Advisory Committee:**

No report.

Oct: No report.

**Budget Advisory Committee:**

No report. Audrey: probably won’t have anything until Jan/Feb—when legislature gives funding report; probably another meeting in April with presentation of budget;

Oct: No report.

**Shared Governance Committee:**

No report.

Oct: No report.

**Parking Advisory Committee:**

Duane: No report.

Oct: No report.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES:**

**Business List Revision Committee:**

Audrey: send suggestions to Jodi; can request letter from Audrey if want to give to business to request discount, or put that person in contact with Jodi;

Jodi: trying to contact gyms in regional campus communities to offer discount to university employees

Oct: No report.

**Staff Regent Bylaws Revision Committee:**

OH: still trying to get written info from other campuses; Audrey: may need to move forward with info received to date

Oct: No report.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Audrey: overtime and exceptional compensation policy has been in with HR for almost 2 years; Audrey had phone conversation with HR which has to also review policies of peer universities after review done by committee; HR found that 13 of those schools don’t have a policy of overtime and exceptional compensation—Courtney has contacted universities to determine if that is because those universities outsource but she hasn’t always been able to find answer

Ranges from 2 to 4 hours; UK does flat response rate of $60; Courtney said that would be adequate for some work; not much discussion re: remote work in those policies; Courtney and Jackie are in conversation about remote work; Audrey will check back with Courtney in early January re: this; committee did a great deal of work on the policy proposal; although evergreen study and FLSA changes required HR’s attention, hopes this policy can be addressed now; any proposal requires 2-3 readings at BOR to be approved so could be another year to be approved

Audrey: if new to SC and haven’t seen policy submitted to HR, contact Audrey, she will send policy proposal

Oct: None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Audrey: reminder that as Courtney said that email was sent to those affected by FLSA re: latest status/ruling; Dept. of Labor has 2 months to appeal court ruling

Tressa: first time did this in past, no one was changed back;

Audrey: Courtney said she was available to answer questions about that.

Oct: None.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

None.

Oct: Vice President McKeel said the next Staff Congress meeting will be held in Alexander Hall, room 342.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Dedrick Dayna 2:36 p.m.

Oct: Trish Lofton made a motion to adjourn. Tressa Ross seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.

----chat

**lisa.willis** 1:57 PM  
"Shining Star" award

**Mary Steely-Henderson** 2:01 PM  
Will it be come and go on the 10th except for the awards at 11:30?