



**MURRAY STATE**  
UNIVERSITY  
**Staff Congress**

**Draft Minutes for September 20, 2023**  
**118 Wells Hall and Zoom**

**Present:** Marty Anderson, Christian Barnes, Dedrick Brooks, Russell Dunn, Duane Dycus, Jodi Hanneman, Orville Herndon, Dayna Hutchinson, Casey Johnson, Matthew Jones, Sondra Kreger, Trish Lofton, Jeremy McKeel, Audrey Neal, Kim Newbern, Travis Plunkett, Matt Purdy, Angela Richerson, Tressa Ross, Shyann Royalty, David Shelton, Matthew Todd, Dr. J. David Wilson

**Absent:** Joshua Hutson

**Guests:** Dr. Jessica Evans, Staff Regent; Dr. Melony Shemberger, Faculty Regent

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

**REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT:**

**Staff Regent Report:** Staff Regent Dr. Jessica Evans said she emailed to staff a summary of the Board of Regents retreat and meeting held on August 24 and 25. The Board of Regents approved the changes to the Staff Congress Bylaws regarding representation categories. The Board of Regents approved a second reading of a new policy concerning drones and remotely controlled aircraft on campus, and approved the first reading of the policy for flexible and remote work. The second reading of the policy for flexible and remote work is expected to be held at the December 8 Board of Regents meeting.

The Faculty and Staff Leadership Council will meet with University President Dr. Robert Jackson on September 21. The Faculty and Staff Leadership Council consists of Staff Regent Dr. Evans, Faculty Regent Dr. Melony Shemberger, the Staff Congress Executive Council, and the Faculty Senate officers.

The compensation study is ongoing. The Faculty and Staff Compensation Review Committee is waiting for information from the consulting firm.

Dr. Evans expressed appreciation to the Staff Congress officers for their presentation to the Board of Regents. The officers presented the results of the 2022-2023 Staff Survey, recommendations based on the survey, and an update on the work of Staff Congress. She thanked them for advocating for staff.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Dayna Hutchinson made a motion to approve the August 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Tressa Ross seconded, and the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT:** Duane Dycus made a motion to approve the August 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented. Audrey Neal seconded, and the motion carried.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Executive Committee:** Trish Lofton reported that the Executive Committee approved the Communications Committee's communication plan. She complimented the committee members for developing the plan. Staff Congress committees can send information to the Communications Committee to be posted to Staff Congress social media or to be emailed to staff. The Executive Committee discussed guidance for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The DEI Committee Chair Kim Newbern requested guidance to narrow the focus of the committee.

The Executive Committee discussed the Staff Excellence Awards. Clarification regarding the Staff Excellence Award stipend is needed to determine if the award stipend stays with the person who receives the award or if the stipend stays with the position. Another clarification is needed to determine if the stipend is a one-time award or if it is applied to the employee's base pay. Staff Excellence Award nominations are due September 30.

The committee has scheduled listening sessions for the fall semester. Tentative dates are November 1, at 2:00 p.m., and November 3, at 9:00 a.m. The sessions will be held via Zoom. Questions can be submitted anonymously before the meeting. Immediate feedback and polling will be available during the meeting.

The officers discussed the need for an ombudsman. The committee will gather information on the process needed to establish an ombudsman position. The position would be a neutral party and not affiliated with the university. President Lofton noted that most Kentucky universities have an ombudsman.

Ms. Lofton distributed printed copies of the Staff Congress 2022-2023 Annual Report. Copies will be given to the upper administration and to the chair of the Board of Regents. She complimented Staff Congress members for their accomplishments during the previous year. She thanked Jeremy McKeel for his assistance in distributing a digital newsletter earlier in September.

**Credentials and Elections Committee:** Prior to today's Staff Congress meeting, Orville Herndon emailed to Staff Congress members a list of Staff Congress members in the new representation groups which were approved by the Board of Regents on August 25. He asked members to contact him if they think they have been placed in the wrong group.

President Lofton complimented the Credentials and Elections Committee members for their work on the reorganization of the representation groups.

**Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee:** Jodi Hanneman reported that the Staff Recognition and Special Events Committee met and has contacted the office of the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services to request date options for scheduling the Staff Reception. The committee is looking for a location for the Children's Christmas Party.

**Communications Committee:** Jeremy McKeel said the Communications Committee submitted a communication plan to the Executive Committee. The committee suggests that a list of Staff Congress members with their email contact information be included on the Staff Congress website. Mr. McKeel asked if a list of constituents according to representation/employment categories could be made available to Staff Congress members. Orville Herndon said he will ask Human Resources for an employee list by groups so he can prepare a list of constituents according to the new representation categories.

The committee is considering using Slack as a communication tool among Staff Congress members.

**Working Conditions Committee:** Matt Purdy reported on the September 6 meeting of the Working Conditions Committee. The committee suggests that Staff Congress develop a welcome committee to meet new staff members. The committee also discussed the need for an orientation program for new staff. Mr. Purdy has contacted Human Resources to discuss an orientation program. Human Resources is currently working with 2024 insurance. The Working Conditions Committee will follow up with Human Resources.

**Staff Survey Committee:** Audrey Neal said the Staff Survey Committee will meet in October. The meeting date will be determined. At the meeting, the committee will review the questions on last year's survey and discuss potential new questions for the 2023-2024 survey. Staff Congress members may contact Ms. Neal with suggestions for the survey. The committee would like to have the survey ready by the end of December so that it can be sent to staff in January after returning from break. The committee tentatively plans to have the survey results ready for presentation at the spring or summer Board of Regents meeting.

President Lofton thanked the Staff Congress officers for presenting, along with Ms. Lofton, the 2022-2023 Staff Survey results at the Board of Regents retreat.

**Textbook Scholarship Committee:** President Lofton gave the Textbook Scholarship Committee report on behalf of Committee Chair Joshua Hutson who was unable to attend today's Staff Congress meeting. The committee awarded a professional development fund scholarship to Stephen Keene, Program Advisor, in Student Support Services. The Textbook Scholarship Committee will update the textbook scholarship and professional development fund applications and convert them to Google forms. The committee will discuss possible events to replenish the textbook scholarship and professional development funds.

**Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee:** Dr. David Wilson said the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee will meet on September 27. Congress members may send Dr. Wilson questions for the committee.

President Lofton thanked Staff Congress members for their responses and for contacting their constituents for feedback regarding insurance. Dr. Wilson added that he also appreciates Staff Congress members' input concerning insurance.

Staff Regent Dr. Evans asked if the committee has received a response from Human Resources regarding overtime compensation. Marty Anderson said that Human Resources is comparing MSU's overtime compensation policy with the overtime compensation policies at benchmark universities. \_

President Lofton said she will ask for the list of benchmark universities being used for the comparison. The list can be used by Staff Congress when looking at other topics.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee:** Kim Newbern said the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will partner with cultural organizations on campus to ensure the hiring process is inclusive and to prepare a resource guide for newly hired staff and faculty.

#### **UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:**

**Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee:** President Lofton said the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet on September 25 to discuss the option that was chosen for 2024 insurance. Ms. Lofton added that when the committee met previously to discuss the insurance options for 2024, she expressed the concern that pay raises are consumed by increases in insurance premiums.

**Intercollegiate Athletic Council:** Tressa Ross reported that at the Intercollegiate Athletic Council's recent meeting, sports betting information and guidelines were presented.

**Naming Campus Facilities Committee:** Dedrick Brooks reported the following naming recommendations were approved at the August 25 Board of Regents meeting: The Doran Arboretum at Murray State University, the Tommy and Sandy Draffen Performance Level in Stewart Stadium, and the Pete and Joy Waldrop Assistant Coach Office in the Gene W. Ray Center.

**Judicial Board:** No report.

**Sick Leave Appeals Committee:** No report.

**International Studies Advisory Committee:** No report.

**Budget Advisory Committee:** No report.

**Shared Governance Committee:** No report.

**Parking Advisory Committee:** Duane Dycus said the Parking Advisory Committee is in the process of scheduling a meeting for the fall semester. The date will be determined based on the availability of the committee members.

**AD HOC COMMITTEES:**

**Business List Revision Committee:** No report.

**Merit Pay/Years-of-Service Pay Committee:** Matt Purdy said the committee met on August 31. The committee plans to research how other universities address merit pay and years-of-service pay. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for September 28, at 10:00 a.m.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**INFORMATION ITEMS:** The next Staff Congress meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Dr. David Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Marty Anderson seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.