

**MASON STAFF SENATE**  
General Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 2, 2018  
10:30am-12:00am

Fairfax: Innovation Hall 334, Arlington: Founders Hall 720, SciTech: Colgan Hall 221

Members: Stephanie Atkins, Lisa Bair, Susan Brionez, Andrew Burroughs, Amanda Corrigan, Sean Cox, Kathy Dodd, Eric Fowler, Christina Frasson, Jared Hagenow, Jennifer Gantt, Erin Iacangelo, Amanda Kennedy, Megan Kirk, Ann Moran, Jenna McGwin, Christopher Maier, Lindsey Olson, Lauren Reuscher, Carl Redmon, Akitta Robertson, Tiffany Sandstrum, Brett Spencer, Rebecca Stone, Michael Wharton, Preston Williams, and Joanne Zimmerman

Absent with Notice: Susan Brionez, Rebecca Stone, Amanda Corrigan, Ann Moran, Carl Redmon, Andrew Burroughs

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Angel Cabrera**

**1) Call to Order at 10:00**

**2) Headlines and Points of Emphasis**

- a. Forbes magazine - 54 of 500 companies examined as the best place to work
- b. Expanded holiday break - going to continue doing this.
- c. January 18 - established two flex holidays for use
- d. Gym - free use of YMCA for Arlington Employees

**3) Employee Recognition**

- a. Employee recognition program has grown - something like 1,394 employees were recognized in 2017
- b. Continued support for flexwork/telework – Cabrera has heard the suggestion for promoting *more* telework employees on commencement days due to campus crowding.
  - i. Cabrera says he will address HR and JJ, but nothing can be promised yet.
- c. Good information coming from employee survey - overall results are good - mostly satisfied

**4) Employee Pay -**

- a. Continued growth in pay - commonwealth has declared where we should be - we still aren't there but we're growing.
- b. Politically - will the commonwealth provide support for GMU vs another school/another priority?
- c. Budget introduced by McAuliffe before he exited office was GMU- friendly. Unfortunately this year (normally house vs senate priorities are similar) \$400-\$500 million for commonwealth has gone to Medicaid expansion under ACA.
  - i. House favored, senate did not, no agreement was achieved. They are back at the table, and neither house nor senate proposals have raises for GMU.
- d. Board meeting tomorrow - 5/3/18 - to determine tuition increase, but state does not have any info available for decision making.

- e. Board meeting is going to try their best for a salary increase. (Commonwealth doesn't like it if GMU gives raises when commonwealth doesn't provide money for political reasons.
- f. Mason has accounted for half of growth of The Commonwealth

## **5) SCHAR School Update-**

- a. Former Governor McAuliffe to assume a teaching position with the SCHAR School - he won't be lobbying for GMU in Richmond

## **6) Richmond Meetings**

- a. Cabrera's priorities - Salaries, Financial Aid, Current funding Model
  - i. GMU receives significantly less money per student. UVA receives approximately \$3,000 more per student than GMU.

## **7) Questions:**

- a. Question: 12 weeks of paid leave at House of Delegates vs GMU. HOD gets 12 weeks of parental leave.
  - i. Answer: HR to be consulted and will return at a future meeting - Existing benefit is not bad.
- b. Question: Jennifer in Arlington: What can we do about setting money aside for maintenance on buildings down the road.
  - i. Answer: There is money, but it is probably not sufficient.
- c. Question: Employee Recognition - Are there departments/organizations that are using this option more? Can we see a general idea of who is rewarding your employees?
  - i. Answer: We should look into who uses them more, and how can we encourage others to begin using these programs for their employees? HR now pays imputed income, whereas previously came from "unit." (Large orders will be charged to unit.)
    - 1. Follow up - Beth Minuti(Sp?) will attend a future meeting to address staff rewards.
- d. Question from Chris: Is the 50% of growth from mason 50% of graduating students in the commonwealth?
  - i. Answer: No, the 50% of growth is overall. Most students that graduate from Mason do stay here in Northern Virginia
- e. Question: If the board meeting tomorrow approves a pay raise -what is the timeline for turnaround?
  - i. Answer: They will only approve a tuition raise tomorrow, which will provide money for raise but the raise is still pending.
- f. Question: How are we aligning our growth with the growth of industries in the area?
  - i. Answer: Mason Engineering School is the biggest grower of the industry in NoVa. Computer Science, IT, Cybersecurity, are the largest at Mason vs the commonwealth. Industry is pushing Mason to grow these programs, and

Mason is pushing Online Graduate programs, but undergrad is growing a little slower because it comes from Mason resources.

- ii. Answer Two: Major push to have industry experienced professors and integration between programs and industry leaders. Adjunct faculty add more value to programs, and more adjuncts is the national trend as universities receive less and less from the state.

## **8) Koch Brothers Donations Discussion**

### **a. Highlights:**

- i. Organization put in a FOIA request for every single document related to Koch Brother's Donations
- ii. Some old financial agreements were located in the financial office that stated a donor could sit on the committee to determine which employees receive awards.
- iii. Despite the "Koch seats" GMU still had ultimate say as to which employees received awards/recognition.
- iv. Cabrera wants to ensure that academic decisions are made by Mason, not the donors.
- v. One donor agreement was still valid, but Mason contacted the Donor and the Donor agreed to void it.
- vi. Cabrera is not 100% sure that there isn't some historic agreement - so he sent the email to the GMU Staff/Faculty to ensure the University does a formal review to eliminate any unfavorable agreements.
- vii. GMU will not reject money from donors based on ideological differences.
- viii. GMU will not decide what ideas are ok, because that is not academic freedom.
- ix. GMU is pushing for donors from all over the ideological spectrum

### **b. Reminder: Every email GMU Employees send can be requested under FOIA**

## **9) Constituent Time**

### **a. Student Parent Group – Heather Aleknavage**

- i. University advertises this as a resource when recruiting faculty, staff, and students but isn't doing a good enough job of making the resources available.
  - 1. Goal: Expanding childcare, accessible nursing, accessible facilities for parents.
  - 2. Reviewed options/resources with HR - currently based out of orientation office for new students.
  - 3. Staff requires similar benefits in regards to childcare, lactation space as the student parents.
  - 4. Working Mom's Group, Working Dad's group, Family Matters - try to bring the groups together to operate as a sounding board/ stronger workforce.
  - 5. There are greater than 1000 student parents w/Financial Aid, Single parents making up approximately half of that.
  - 6. Nova pathway/program - NoVa works with Generation Hope
  - 7. University offers child care service for kids between age 2 & 5, there is a two year wait period, funded through a mortgage from CDC

- ii. Effort from HR to expand - check with Linda Harbor

## **10) Previous Meeting Minutes Passed**

## **11) Committee Updates**

- a. Events
  - i. Preston is new Co-Chair.
- b. All Committees-
  - i. Chairman wants to evaluate the application of each committee and make sure we have active senators on committees that will attend related meetings around campus.

## **12) Quality of Life Survey**

- a. Mini-survey results are in and the BIG survey is coming after it closed on Friday
- b. Linda Harbor is leaving so a new person for the position will be selected in the upcoming months.
- c. Meeting with HR likely will not occur until summer time.
- d. HR will have a website available for review by staff.

## **13) Officer Elections**

- a. Jennifer is the new Treasurer.
- b. Staff Senate Elections are coming up.
  - i. Send Election/Campaign statements to Brett or the Staff Senate Email.

## **14) Miscellaneous/Closing Thoughts**

- a. Staff Senate to Meet with JJ Davis next week. If you can't attend please notify someone.
- b. Question – How can Sci-Tech better communicate with Campus Staff for Appreciation and Events
  - i. Suggestions: Sci-Tech Listserv, University Life List-serv for student attendance.

## **15) Adjourn Meeting at 12:00 PM**