

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE
General Meeting Minutes
October 2, 2012, 11:00 – 12:30 pm
Research Hall 163*

Present: Susan Bionez, Joey Carls, Rubi Chavez, Kevin Diffily, Tya El, Laura Harrison, Megan Kirk, Patrick Ledesma, Ginnie Mahoney, Marit Majeske, Amanda Meikeljohn, Sara Montiel, Charles Nicholson, Della Patrick, Stephanie Payton, Toshiko Uchiyama, Karen Underwood, Paul Wieber, Stephanie Zeher,

Notified Absent: Stacey Remick-Simkins

Absent:

- 1) Call to Order at 11:04 am by Joey Carls
- 2) Opening Speaker: Robert, Nakles, Executive Director, ITU - Security & Project Management, introduced Sara Morehouse, Communications Coordinator for ITU - Security & Project Management,
 - a) Topic: Cyber Security Awareness Month (handout provided)
 - i) National Cyber Security Awareness Month initiated in 2004
 - (a) Mason's actions:
 - (i) 4 seminars, each Thursday in October, each a different topic, no cost, no registration necessary, resources on line as well.
 - (b) A shared responsibility—everyone welcome
 - ii) Questions—refer to handout
- 3) Constituents' Time:
 - a) Fairfax: no comment
 - b) Welcome to Loudoun— no comment
 - c) Arlington—no comments
 - d) PW—no comments
- 4) Old Business
 - i) Approval of September 2012 meeting minutes
 - ii) Tabled
- 5) New Business
 - a) Executive Report
 - i) Advisory Committee Appointees
 - (1) Dining—Ginnie
 - (2) UPIC—Maret
 - (3) Space Use Policy Review—Patrick
 - b) Treasurer's Report (on shared drive)—see handout
 - i) Nothing of concern at this time

- 6) Presentation by the Chair regarding mission and Senate structure (refer to power point presentation)
 - i) Not yet a formal proposal; will become formal in December after more discussion in November and December
 - b) The number one question for Senators: How much of your time is spent on Senate business? How much of that time is not productive? Joey's has been listening to feedback. Would like to be responsive to senate time, increase productivity, and reduce redundancy.
 - c) Goal of changes: increase meaningful touches with staff, Senate committees would meet less frequently and only when work needs to be done, systemic university issues would come to the entire senate at each monthly meeting
 - d) University Issues committee would dissolve: Those who are truly interested in a topic can create a working group based on that issue.
 - e) The three committees, which would meet biannually, would become:
 - i) Awards
 - (1) Select Outstanding Supervisor Award winner
 - (2) Employee of the Month gift decisions and presentations
 - (3) Meets in August & February
 - ii) Events
 - (1) Staff appreciation and outreach events
 - (2) Meets in November and May
 - iii) Education
 - (1) Newsletter coordination
 - (2) General meetings guest speaker coordination
 - (3) Did you know? Efiles posts
 - (4) Meets in October & April
 - (5) Newsletter in November & May
 - f) Other changes
 - i) Biannual recess for entire senate
 - ii) Align goal setting and elections with student government and Faculty Senate.
 - (1) Current structure, of setting goals when incoming chair takes helm partway through that year, does not make sense.
 - (2) Allows the senate to craft goals in tandem with SG & FS
 - iii) Elections moved to once a year, with terms starting in August.
 - iv) Committee chairs, who are currently elected, would be formally appointed positions.
 - v) Eliminate Hail & Farewell
 - vi) Staff Appreciate Day would become a biannual event at each campus
 - (1) Smaller events, no registration required
 - (2) Discourage free lunch
 - (3) Aim to educate staff, meaningful touches
 - (4) Encourage more engagement from University departments
 - vii) Attendance Policy would be reviewed and not so stringent
 - (1) Reasoning: an unengaged senator would be encouraged to reengage rather than being asked to leave Senate
 - viii) University Committee Assignments would be open to all staff
 - (1) Would need to have a reporting requirement

- (2) Would get more staff engaged in University matters
 - (3) Reduce burden on sitting senators
- ix) Aiming for more flexibility to engage interests of senators. Would need to adjust bylaws.
- x) In sum, aiming for more flexibility and to engage Senators more fully in their area of interest
- g) Exec committee—more condensed, consisting of chair, vice chair, treasurer and parliamentarian.
 - i) Budget review
 - ii) Attendance review
 - iii) Governing documents review
 - iv) Other issues as necessary
- h) Questions and Comments from Senators
 - i) Is a twice a year enough for committees? Would twice a semester be better? One to plan; one to finalize one to plan. Would committees have the option to meet more often if needed? Another voice supported that question
 - (1) The goal is to loosen the bylaws to be more responsive to Senate needs. Another meeting would be agreeable if needed.
 - ii) Parliamentarian concerned over the change in roles and responsibilities, given overhaul of structure.
 - iii) Toshiko, big change. Depends heavily on individual interests rather than larger University concerns.
 - (1) By eliminating University Issues, the entire senate is responsible for the major issues rather than just a small subset of committee.
 - iv) Susan, would like to know if we are just researching or taking action on this proposal.
 - (1) At November's Staff Senate general meeting, this item will again be discussed. It will be formally presented at the December meeting. At the January meeting, voting will take place.
 - v) Laura, lets people work on what they want to work on. Makes chair position flexible in order to capitalize on senators' time.
 - vi) Toshiko, concerned that flexibility will result in just one person doing all the work.
 - (1) Laura, some statistics: If serving on Staff Senate and going to every event, 40 hours number comes for the year. If also on an advisory committee, it's closer to 50. Does not include chair positions.
 - vii) Kevin, clarification: this body would meet every month except January and July, when we would have Staff Appreciation Day events?
 - (1) Confirmed
 - i) Susan, what precipitated change? Was the Staff Senate broken?
 - (1) Chair has been listening to but not acting on comments from current and former Senators. Many have expressed concern over the amount of time Staff Senate takes from their regular positions, how much of that time is redundant, and that Senators are not allowed the flexibility to follow their interests. He thinks this is more efficient and a way for us to be more responsive and do what constituents expect. Believes now is the time to act. If it doesn't work, he will take the fall.

- j) Della, will this change make constituents more aware of Staff Senate? How would we make others aware of these changes? How would we get more constituents to attend meetings?
 - (1) Laura, it is all Staff Senate's responsibilities to do a personal touch to get them to attend.
- k) Sara, commends change. We lose and have lost potentially strong members because they cannot commit to that much time.
 - (1) Other Senators who left precipitously were tired of our inefficiency: repeated discussions about same topic, length of time to plan events. Goal is to be more flexible and responsive. If two meetings a semester, need not be long meetings. All of us have responsibility to be ambassadors to our peer groups. Need to discuss Staff Senate topics with our colleagues. To increase attendance at general meetings, we need a change in marketing events.
- l) Kevin, how much time will Senate have to review proposed changes, will there be more time to discuss.
 - (1) Need to have one month for bylaws change. If Senate wants to vote on this change in January at retreat, we need to propose in December. That gives today, November and December to discuss. Should be an ongoing dialogue. If we wait until August, Joey may not be at helm. If we enact in January, Joey has time to step in if need be.
- m) Susan, liked recent Outstanding Supervisor Award process since it was on-line. Not everything requires in person interactions.
- n) Marit, feels disconnected from issues. Bringing issues to whole senate would result in more engagement, cutting down on meeting would enable better attendance.
- o) Chair asks that each give us some thoughts. Please address ideas to Joey. Will be on agenda for next few meetings, will be voted on in January. Please also look at Staff Senate Mission Statement. Will be up for discussion at January retreat. Karen, how will we handle revision of mission statement at retreat? We may need to alter format. Mission statement: should be short and concise. Joey will give Karen's question some thought.

7) Roundtable

- i) "Did you know?" item for month—tabled
- ii) Toshiko attended meeting on smoking policy 2214, under discussion.
- iii) For general meetings, can we shift constituents' time to right before speaker? Will do right away

8) Constituents' time: Anything Staff Senate could be addressing for constituents?

- a) Heather Aleknavage, working moms support group. She wanted to know if any discussions about new children in work place policy had taken place? Has been discussed by University Issue. When finalized, it doesn't seem to have any real consequences. Heather has heard that it's a Draconian policy that may make it okay for supervisors to say no to bringing a child to the workplace. Human Resources already reworking it. Kevin, working moms and DADS—suggested adding "dads" to group.
- b) Parking fees. Will they ever cap? It's currently up to \$600. Joey, from parking master plan, Parking Services looking at restructuring lots that based on proximately to

buildings. Who decides fees? Parking would probably hire consultants to determine costs. Will ask Josh to come to a future meeting. Susan recently attended emergency management, cost \$2700 to build each parking space in a deck.

- 9) Guest Speaker: Dr. Angel Cabrera, President, George Mason University, will discuss his plan for crafting a new vision for Mason and take some questions.
- 10) Sarah Nutter, Presidential Fellow and Accounting Professor, School of Management, offered some opening remarks before Dr. Cabrera's arrival:
 - a) The approach to casting a vision was to allow the new president to pause, to reflect who Mason is and who it wants to be when it grows up. The Board of Visitors (BOV) requested a university Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) assessment and a look at what makes Mason: the stories of "how we overcame . . ."—such as school of engineering not initially supported. The School of Law had a similar story. Sister schools didn't really want these schools to begin with. How did we get from here to there? What are the expectations? How do we play a role in these various domains.
 - b) Dr. Cabrera arrived at 12:11 pm. Dr. Cabrera discussed the conference with the BOV and the summer that led to the process of creating new vision for Mason. Upon his arrival, a lot of curiosity of what his vision was. He arrived with out "plans," wanting to see Mason in action. Opened a consultation process, which is what he is currently doing with Sara Nutter leading process. The process, and Mason, is very complex, with many voices. For the next vision to be effective, it must be everyone's vision. BOV has given him half a year. Next spring, he will come back with vision for next decade. This vision will translate into a strategic plan, new campaign, and ways in which we consider opportunities. That vision will include a reflection of who we want to be as an organization, including commitments; the type of university we are to become in terms of value to our students; what we want to be and how we want to operate and our values, extracted from those who knew the university well, when is Mason at it's best. This notion of Mason at it's best can be gleaned from asking staff when do they love coming to work?
 - i) A four-part one-page document will be delivered to the BOV
 - (1) Mission statement—one we can remember: what we do and how we do it.
 - (2) List of values—type of organization we are
 - (3) A picture of a Mason graduate—what type of student we want to educate
 - (4) Commitments—answers, positioned around some of the biggest questions in higher education, for example, global position, distributed campuses, technology
- 11) Question and Answers for Dr. Cabrera
 - i) Susan Bionez: With multiple locations for some programs within Volgenau, there are concerns—students having to attend different campuses for the same program is problematic.
 - (1) AC: There are concerns associated with having distributed campus. Doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, just that there needs to be a good reason to establish programs that require that approach.
 - ii) Kevin Diffiily asked Dr. Cabrera to elaborate on his vision with technology and education.

- (1) AC: Has been doing research on topic for a long time, it's become clear, if used right can be powerful tool to improve education. Right combination of technology and face-to-face interactions CAN improve education experiences. Sal Khan, founder of the Khan Academy, flipped the notion of the classroom experience—lectures at home via YouTube and homework in the classroom. By doing so, the classroom allows problem solving, immediate feedback, and a collaborative approach to learning.
- iii) Toshiko Uchiyama: For staff, more technology means more paperwork, data entry, etc.
 - (1) AC: Technology should help us work smarter. Should not dumb us down. We spend our time doing what only humans can do. Technology should improve students and administrators. How can technology make us more efficient? Perhaps by increasing the pressure to work smarter.
- iv) Sara Montiel: Three questions: 1) How are you? 2) How are you settling in? 3) What is the best part of Mason?
 - (1) AC: 1) Wet (due to the day's weather). 2) Settling in well due to the incredible support; a new normal for his family life. 3) We're not trying to emulate or copy any other institutions. How do we think better? How do we do things our way? Mason may be in the position to define what a good university is. Also loves diversity of ethnicities and lifestyles: residential freshman, working adults, from urban to rural environments.
- v) Susan Brionez: loves Mason, but too many typos in website.
 - (1) AC: Agrees with website woes: click once, twice then you're lost. The new one, currently in process, will be cleaner. Why is the case? Decentralized decision-making. Problems in conveying unified brand *vis a vie* website. Should be improved with new leadership in University Relations.
- vi) Stephanie Zeher: Specific concern: having professional advisors rather than faculty advisors in all department. Working in the Registrar's office, she sees lots of pressure to complete paperwork from faculty advisors who are not always up to date on policy. Those departments who use professional advisors have fewer problems graduating students.
 - (1) AC: Took note.
- vii) Tya El: Also embraces Mason, remarked is more difficult for staff than faculty and students to get involved in community because they are often tied to their desks.
 - (1) AC: Prefers people to be held accountable for results rather than process. Although some jobs are desk dependent. No one knows better than the person who does the job.
- viii) Joey Carls: What are the ways in which the Staff Senate can best help the administration be successful:
 - (1) AC: 1. Do what you do every day. Every one makes a difference in the lives of our students. 2. Continue to be leaders. 3. Participate in upcoming meetings during which Staff Senate members will be tapped on their experiences at Mason

12:30 Meeting Adjourned at 12:47 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 6, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Research Hall 163.

On shared drive:

September2012 Meeting Minutes

Year-to-date Treasurer's report

*Remote Meeting Rooms:

Call in number: 703-249-8067

Prince William, Bull Run Hall 254

Arlington campus, Founders Hall B119

Loudoun Campus, Conference Room