

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE
General Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2012, 11:00 – 12:30 pm
Research Hall 163*

Present: Joey Carls, Laura Harrison, Megan Kirk, Patrick Ledesma, Ginnie Mahoney, Amanda Meiklejohn, Charles Nicholson, Della Patrick, Stephanie Payton, Toshiko Uchiyama, Karen Underwood, Stephanie Zeher,

Absent: Rubi Chavez, Kevin Diffily, Paul Weiber,

Notified Absent: Susan Brionez, Tya El, Marit Majeske, Sara Monteil

- 1) Call to Order at 11:05 am by Joey Carls
- 2) Announcements
 - a) Kathrin's computer recently crashed; virtually all data lost
 - b) Outstanding Achievement Awards ceremony moved to Johnson Center, Tuesday, November 13, 8:30 – 9:30 am
- 3) Old Business
 - a) Approval of October 2012 meeting minutes (on shared drive)
 - i) Passed with minor changes
 - b) Minutes from September 2012 not available (due to aforementioned computer crash)
 - i) Agenda will be used as placeholder
- 4) New Business
 - a) Executive Report
 - i) Advisory Committee Assignments
 - (1) Parking advisory committee—Kevin Diffily (not present) serving on committee
 - ii) Recreation Advisory Committee—restructured to be more inclusive of all campus audiences. One staff seat. Can refer to constituents if desired. Stacey encouraged this. Could also ask new senator to do so. An item in eFiles requesting interested staff members was also suggested. If interested, contact Joey, who will then handle. Karen questioned previous configuration of committee; she had been serving with Tya and Kevin. Are all three of them off the committee? Karen happy to serve again, but to be used as a last option.
 - b) Treasurer's Report (on shared drive)
 - i) Nothing to add. Limited expenses this month. No significant updates.
 - c) Continuing discussion regarding mission and Senate structure
 - i) From last meeting: Sentiment seemed that limiting committees to two meetings a year was a concern; therefore, rather than limited to 2, committee must have at least 2. Chairs would decide on number of meetings.
 - ii) Need ad hoc committee to revise bylaws:
 - (1) Fairfax: Stacey, Della, and Megan.
 - (2) Arlington: Patrick, yes.

- (3) Prince William: Charles, maybe, depends on time commitment. Maybe 2 meetings in next month. Charles will think about it.
- iii) Joey will send meeting announcement to whole committee when scheduled.
- d) Joey opened floor for discussion.
 - i) Query: Having had a month to consider these proposed changes, are there any questions?
- e) Stacey: University Issues committee has been researching other Virginia university's staff senate—or comparable organizations—structures. Early on, Mason Staff Senate was modeled on Virginia Tech. Interesting continuum among organizations. Some senate/councils, such as William and Mary (W & M), are very young; others, such as Virginia Tech, are quite advanced. Radford, well establish, but also in a culture shift. Most established senates have a close and regular working meeting with administration and Board of Visitors (BOV), in part because that is how culture has evolved. Radford, before restructure, had 100 members, but the average seems about 24. W & M also hosts a Staff Appreciation day with similar problems as Mason's. VCU has a walk-a-thon that raises scholarship funds and other events, called "signature activities." They are looking for protection from administration as they figure out that relationship. Virginia Tech and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) are much stronger.
- f) Mason Staff Senate needs to ask itself if its wants to expand, how do we develop our outreach, how can we bring in our constituents? Those that have comfortable, strong foundations have a certain efficiency.
- g) The notion of ad hoc committees based on issues has merit, but management would be key. As a small group, we have a lot of challenges. Ideas presented last month would enable senators to become more engaged in what interests them. Question regarding mission statement and goals, what does that mean with this new culture? How can Staff Senate become more visible?
- h) An effective practice of faculty senate is a convocation for their constituents. Could we do something similar, an "annual report" of sorts, maybe biannually. Invite Cabrera. Stephanie, seconded idea, good way to keep constituents engaged and more involved. Perhaps personal invitations would be more effective in getting others to attend meetings.
- i) Most effective way to make these personal communications would be to have staff senate members elected according to university structure rather than by campus. Challenge is when people move around campus. Maybe divvy up seats by schools, by units, or by deans/directors. Would have a bigger impact on Arlington and PW campuses. If senate members divvied up by units, how would it be decided from each unit? We would need to get data on full-time-equivalent numbers from HR. If determined by Deans and Directors, then one from each. Not currently part of the proposal.
- j) Query by guest: Has there ever been a membership drive? Response: All staff members are already part of the membership. Clarified that we are an advisory role to administration not a governing body.
- k) Laura has talked with new operations person at Prince William, very encouraged by that conversation.

5) Roundtable

- a) Communication & Outreach committee in planning stages for Toys for Tots

- b) Reminder that Staff Senate retreat is January 8, 8:00 am breakfast, 8:45 meeting, should conclude by noon or 12:30
 - c) In Arlington, Patrick holding “open houses” biweekly. Not well attended. Some new employees expressed interest, but wanted to get acclimated first. Next week, Patrick meeting Policy 103, space utilization, group. If any thoughts, let Patrick know so he can take them to the committee. Needs to know before next Monday.
 - d) Virginia Governmental Employees Association (VGEA) meeting for new board members coming up on February 17 and 18. Will be lobbying on issues coming up, such as retirement, raises, etc.
 - e) Evaluation timetable is an issue for some staff members. They were given evaluations for first time in several years, but supervisors waited until the very end of the timelines and then the process was very rushed. Employees were not given time to rebut comments. In order to get raise/bonus employee obligated to sign without rebuttal. Perhaps talking with Shernita Parker, Employee Relations Specialist, would be a good avenue for resolution.
 - f) A similar issue, incomplete evaluations not eligible for raise/bonus. Is it the employees’ fault if their supervisors do not complete the evaluation? Joey will approach Linda Harber of Human Resources/Payroll. No accountability for supervisors who do not complete evaluations. Needs to be a systemic change for supervisors. Fundamental problem is that most employees don’t know the process evaluation.
 - i) Questions for Linda Harber: What can employee relations do for supervisors who don’t respond in a timely manner? How can employees be proactive?
- 6) Constituent’s Time—none today
- 7) Guest Speakers: Betty Jolly, State Government Relations Director, Government and Community Relations and Sabena Morte, State Government Relations Assistant, Government and Community Relations (Betty not available)
- a) Topic: The State Government Relations office responsibilities; How the Staff Senate can work with their office, and upcoming issues staff of which Mason staff should be aware.
- 8) Meeting Adjourned at 12:35 by Joey Carls
- 9) Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 4, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Research Hall 163.

On shared drive:

October 2012 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

Minutes by Kathrin Breitt Brown