Minutes from Staff Council Meeting

July 23, 2015

410 Library

Attachments: Agenda, Sign In (Members, Guests), Sign Up (Evens, Concerns, Elections, Awards)

**Attendance:**

* Members: 10
* Guests: 17
* Guest Speaker(s): 1

Call for Joining Committees…Sign Up Sheets were made available:

1. Events
2. Staff Concerns
3. Membership/Elections
4. Awards

**Opening Remarks/Reports from the Officers:**

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Recording Secretary

Corresponding Secretary

The new executive officers for the Staff Council began their annual terms. The incoming President, Amanda Green, began by previewing the agenda for this meeting. She is serving for the second time as Council President. All the incoming officers were introduced to the guests. Rosters will be updated at the meeting in August, so any councilors who do not wish to participate or do not attend meetings will be replaced.

Amanda Green President

David Lambour Vice-President

Tiffany Soublet Treasurer

William Guillory Recording Secretary

Brian McDonald Corresponding Secretary

The incoming Vice President, David Lambour, briefly stated his intentions for the upcoming year and willingness to work with the campus staff. He welcomed all to contact him with any concerns.

The incoming Treasurer, Tiffany Soublet, was not able to attend the meeting. The President was briefed in advance and gave an account status report. Funds raised at the Spring Fling Auction are still in the savings account. These funds need to be split between two accounts for spending purposes: the Foundation Fund and the Scholarship Fund. A quorum will be needed to move the monies. The Staff Council is looking forward to awarding one scholarship to a staff person or their dependent this upcoming year. Just over $1130.00 is expected to be the amount of the award.

Also, the President indicated that our annual allocation for budget should remain the same ($2750.00 annually) assuming the University budget goes forward as allocated by the State.

**New Business**

The previous Staff Council Member retired in July leaving a vacancy for the EEO Class Service/Maintenance Representative. This employee cohort is fully represented with 2 staff persons from that area. The President urged those in attendance to come forward and serve as a representative.

Friends of UNO Library will host a fundraiser in conjunction with Ye Olde College Inn, 3000 S. Carrollton Ave on August 18, 2015. Twenty percent (20%) of all dining bills will go to support the UNO Library. An email blast and flyers serve as reminders.

Brian McDonald noted that any staff wishing to submit questions or concerns anonymously, there is a form available at the Staff Council website.

**Old Business**

None

**Guest Speaker:**

Vice President for Business Affairs – Dr. Greg Lassen

Dr. Lassen came the Council to provide an update on fiscal matters at the University. Topics included the State Legislative Session and the policy focus of the University going forward this year.

First, the State Legislature was able to maintain the funding level for UNO at AY2014.

Second, he noted that UNO is still on “fiscal watch” with the Board of Regents, but that stems from difficult times over the past few years and choices that had to be made in terms of budget balancing moves. He is optimistic about the upcoming year.

Dr. Lassen indicated that UNO would begin to shift from a defensive posture to a proactive one using a three-part policy focus:

* Enrollment Management
* Academic Re-structuring
* Fiscal reform

As the standards for admission to the State’s 4-year, bachelor degree awarding institutions underwent changes, enrollment initially fell as the pool of potential students decreased in size. In order to recruit students that would be eligible for admission to UNO under the current standards, the institution has had to grow the process of marketing UNO to new, international standards. This is mainly the case with all colleges and universities, so the level of competition is definitely at an all-time high.

The hiring of Dr. John W. Nicklow, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, has put the Institution in a position now to make changes more readily in the academic arena, where previously, interim VPs could not. Up till now, most the reductions have come from the admin/staff ranks, mostly by attrition and elimination of positions. The Faculty Senate is by nature a methodical, process-oriented body that a full time Provost must engage to increase efficiencies and reduce institutional costs. Moving forward, academic restructuring will be front and center.

Finally, Dr. Lassen discussed the state of affairs fiscally. UNO has achieved a revenue to expenses balance on the past few years, but that has come at a cost. The Institution’s cash reserve has been depleted…a long term goal is to begin the process of rebuilding that fund. At the State level, we are concerned about UNO’s allocation…any issues with revenue forecasts would lead to midyear budget cuts. He is also looking forward to another long term goal…review of the State’s approach to balancing the budget by cutting higher education, instead of spreading the cuts across all agencies.

 The decline in enrollment has subsided somewhat are we are back on a path of growing the Institution’s enrollment. Since joining the UL System, we are in Year 3 of UNO’s Three Year Plan.

Questions from those in attendance mainly centered on the proposed outsourcing of Facility Services. Dr. Lassen was not prepared to speak in detail on a process which is still in flux. However, he indicate that the selection process has yielded a primary candidate and a contract with the company could happen during the Fall Semester. He will remain available to staff to discuss the proposed move at any time.

The meeting was adjoined.

Next Meeting: August 20, 2015