

## **Staff Council Meeting Minutes**

December 19, 2002

9:00 – 10:30 a.m. in MHC 155

**Members Present:** Laurie Dimond, Rod Kirkwold, Michael Andregg, Ruth Danielson, and Diane Tibodeau

**Absent:** Nate Rolloff, Barb Dunker, Mary Kleinberg, Kathryn Sauro, Karin Zeller

**Guests:** Rev. Dennis Dease – President UST  
Dr Judith Dwyer – Executive VP  
Loren Heeringa – Associate Vice President HR

Opening reflection was read, followed by introduction of guests. Father Dease was then given the floor. Father Dease began with the observation that the distinction between staff and faculty on the campus is not really pronounced. Everyone has his or her gifts to contribute. Culture is an important aspect of the college community. Fr. Dease stated that he receives many compliments in regard to staff and how well parents, visitors and students are treated in contrast to public institutions. The culture of UST for newcomers is created by staff, who are the custodians of culture. The Mission of the University is one of a Catholic faith based institution. Civility is one way in which we reflect our faith. We are also an urban based institution for the dissemination of knowledge.

Strategic planning is ongoing – the administration is continuing to assess the needs of the community. SIPs (Strategic Initiative Proposals) are being reviewed, and priorities will be set for the next capital campaign. There are two new initiatives, according to EVP Judith Dwyer, academic excellence and staff. Budget resources are tight and we have to be vigilant and keep costs down. This is due in large part to the sluggish economy. Revenue is down in the graduate programs as a result of the downturn of many companies, especially tech firms. The Gainey Center has also experienced a lesser demand for their business seminars and conferences for the same reasons. The state also cut approximately half a million dollars in work study financial aid. All three of these factors have contributed to the budget shortfall.

There have also been many positive changes. Student Affairs and the College of Business have been restructured to redirect resources.

Banner Blackboard is rolling out, and the University added two new world class deans - Christopher Puto, Dean of the Business College and Thomas Mengler, Dean of the Law School. The University is still searching for a Dean of Academic Affairs, but the market is tight throughout the United States.

The University is always interested in any money saving suggestions.

That concluded the remarks by Rev Dease.

The guests departed and the staff council meeting resumed. It was decided that January would be a good month to hold another open constituents' meeting. Before his departure from the meeting, Loren Heeringa, VP for HR agreed to be present at the open constituents meeting to answer concerns/questions. January 16<sup>th</sup> was the date tentatively chosen for the meeting.

Due to meeting conflicts for council members, the third Thursday of the month from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. was selected as the new time for staff council meetings.

Ruth Danielson put forth a proposal for a new program at UST – patterned after one found in some workplaces. The program would encompass the entire University – staff, faculty, administration, students, advisors, coaches etc. The program would provide cards that any UST member could pick up and give to another UST member to say: Thank You, Congratulations, Thinking of You, Job Well Done, etc. It would provide a means of recognizing communication and teamwork and a sign of UST values being practiced. The council felt this was a good idea and Ruth agreed to put forth a SIP proposal for funding.

### **Committee Reports:**

*Budget Advisory:* The budget meeting was cancelled. The operating budget presently has a shortfall which is growing.

*Fringe Benefits:* The committee is looking into health care costs and enhanced opportunities for staff. It has focused on tuition remission recently and is looking very seriously at expanding the range of schools for which they could apply. There are no plans to reduce any aspect of the current tuition remission program.

### **Constituent Correspondence:**

**A** question was raised about whether faculty/staff retreats would be reinstated. It was suggested that Campus Ministry be called to answer that question. (Note: Laurie checked with Campus Ministry and it was a budget concern that made it so they cancelled the staff retreats. However, they may consider day retreats or some other alternative because of the known interest in resuming them.)

Another staff member inquired if PLT could be given in one lump sum, rather than earned per pay period. The question would be e-mailed to Loren Heeringa for consideration.

A member inquired whether faculty/staff Express Acct could be placed on line for viewing balances.

Adjournment.

The **next meeting** will be Thursday 1/16/03 from Noon – 1:00 PM. It will be an open constituents meeting. In St. Paul it will be held in MHC304 with a video link to Minneapolis, TMH LL09

Please feel free to contact a Staff Council member if you have any questions or suggestions.

### **Council Members**

Michael Andregg open	Administrative Food Service	2-5925	MCG101
Ruth Danielson	Academic	2-5982	OSH220
Laurie Dimond	Academic	2-5300	JRC153
Barbara Dunker	Administrative	2-6920	AQU121
Rod Kirkwold	Physical Plant/Sec	2-6542	PHP111
Mary Kleinberg	Auxiliary Services	2-4342	TMH105
Nathan Rolloff	Administrative	2-6506	AQU217
Kathyrn Sauro	Minneapolis	2-4380	TMH337
Diane Tibodeau	Academic	2-6321	5016
Karin Zeller	Minneapolis	2-4207	TMH331

Staff Council Mailbox #4387

Staff Council Website [www.stthomas.edu/staffcouncil](http://www.stthomas.edu/staffcouncil)