

Staff Council
University of St. Thomas
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2003 -- 1:30 - 3:00 PM

Members present: Laurie Dimond, Barb Dunker, Rod Kirkwold, Meg Krekeler, Andy Leet, Nate Rolloff, Kathy Sauro

Members absent: Chris Cognetta, Joanne Rhoades, Erin Thigpen, Diane Tibodeau

Guests: Dr. Dan Carey, Healthy "U" Program; Loren Heeringa, Human Resources

Laurie Dimond, Council Chair, began the meeting by asking the group to take a moment and reflect on the work we are doing on behalf of staff members at UST.

Ms. Dimond then introduced a new member to the Staff Council. Andy Leet, from the Department of English, has joined Staff Council. Mr. Leet is filling the vacancy which occurred when Ruth Danielson left St. Thomas. We are pleased to have Andy join Staff Council and look forward to working with him.

One of the areas of interest for Staff Council is support of the Healthy "U" Program. Dr. Dan Carey, Department of Health and Human Performance, joined the meeting. Dr. Carey thanked the group for its interest in the Healthy "U" Program and gave an overview of the wellness program.

The program has been in existence for about five years. There is a full-time student wellness staff member, however, there is not a staff member devoted to faculty/staff wellness. The group functions through a core of volunteers dedicated to the advancement of health for faculty and staff, and also is provided some program funding through Human Resources. The hope is that a full-time, paid staff member could one day be hired to advance the wellness program for staff/faculty. There is an abundance of research in support of the work done by wellness programs showing that having healthy employees does have a positive impact on ever-rising health care costs.

Dr. Carey is interested in having a Staff Council member join the Healthy "U" Program committee. Council members, if interested, are asked to e-mail Dr. Carey. He went over the program schedule, the points system set up to award prizes for participants, the on-campus Weight Watchers program, yoga classes offered, blood pressure testing, flu shots offered, diet analysis, smoking cessation program, fitness testing, and the many other Healthy "U" Program offerings.

Loren Heeringa then brought the Council up-to-date on the proposed Strategic Priority on Staff. The EVP Cabinet had a lengthy discussion at its retreat earlier in

August on the staff study group recommendations. Mr. Heeringa talked through the process involved in moving this strategic direction along, which will include a report and presentation to the Board of Trustees at its October meeting. This Strategic Direction on Staff provides recommendations to enhance the staff ability to meet the challenges of an institution in continual change.

Based on feedback from a variety of sources, the Study Group charged with examination of this issue, feels that the greatest impact could be achieved through a focus on these four recommendations:

- Enhance the leadership and management development process for staff in supervisory and leadership roles.
- Establish a more systematic staff development process.
- Achieve market-competitive total compensation and rewards for staff, with a greater emphasis on linking pay and performance.
- Establish and manage a more systematic, two-way communication process that builds and maintains trust and commitment.

A question was raised and directed for Mr. Heeringa's comment regarding some changes made in the College of Business. Many changes have been and will be made in the organization of the College of Business under the direction of Dean Puto, and some positions have been filled by moving staff members into different positions without a search. Mr. Heeringa addressed those concerns and said that yes, parts of the organization are being changed, but not everything can be done at once. A decision was made to give internal preference to current College of Business staff to apply to a restructured position within the College of Business. However, there were a couple of instances where Dean Puto chose to make some appointments. The need is to make sure the organization hangs together and continues to operate as it should. Mr. Heeringa did say that there is a need for communication within that College but there is also a need for staff to trust that what the Dean is doing is in the best interests of the College and also UST. There are reasons that certain issues are not discussed publicly, for instance, because of personnel reasons. Mr. Heeringa reiterated that Dean Puto is very committed to affirmative action.

Staff members do get nervous, and the Staff Council would send a reminder to the administration that any communication, even as simple as "we are going to look out for our staff and will do our best to inform staff as we go along," would be helpful and appreciated.

A question was raised, regarding the strategic direction on staff, that relates to faculty being put in a supervisory position and being adequately prepared for that supervision. Mr. Heeringa said that the strategic direction on staff does address that issue and there was considerable discussion at the retreat about the role that a faculty member takes on if they are, for instance, named as a department chair. The H.R. partners will play an important part in helping faculty, and others, gain the skills needed to take on a leadership role.

Mr. Heeringa concluded by asking for input and thoughts on the strategic directions being brought forward.

Ms. Dimond asked about Staff Council membership on the Workforce Transitions Task Force, and Mr. Heeringa asked that we hold on that issue. The Task Force is an "on call" group and any issues that do come forward for the Task Force are also brought to Staff Council.

Staff Council talked about the formation of Heritage Week (March 6-12, 2004) and what sort of events should take place during that week. Mr. Heeringa suggested that the Staff Council Staff Appreciation Breakfast be a separate event and not a part of Heritage Week.

Another issue discussed was what happens if a staff member has to be absent from work for a few days. Some of our units have only one staff member assigned and there isn't always someone else that knows how to staff the unit. Mr. Heeringa commented that this is a valid issue and mentioned cross-training within various units as one solution. In the past, UST utilized "floaters" who were assigned to various units as need arose. That is a good system, but most likely not possible given the past reductions in work force and the budget issues. Some units have called on former staff members (typically retirees) to fill in for a short period of time. Mr. Heeringa did acknowledge that this was a valid concern, and he would encourage units to work together to cross-train staff.

A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the July minutes.

The proposed Amendment to Article III of the Bylaws was discussed. The proposal is to include an at-large member to the Council which would not change the current membership of 11 but would be in addition to the current membership. A decision was made to table this discussion until the September meeting.

Because of the length of the meeting, most of the committee reports were held over for the next meeting. Ms. Sauro did report, however, on Minneapolis Operations. The School of Law building has opened and also the ramp at 11th and Harmon is open. The City does own and manage the ramp, UST has 375 spaces available.

Before adjourning, Barb Dunker passed out a list of volunteer opportunities for consideration/discussion and also a draft welcome card for new staff members to UST.

Committee reports --

Affirmative Action --

Budget Advisory --

Charitable Giving --
 Child Development Center --
 Diversity --
 Employee Recognition --
 Fringe Benefits --
 Minneapolis Operations --
 University Committee on Women --

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Next Meeting: September 17, 2003
 St. Paul Campus, Aquinas 210

Council Members

Chris Cognetta	Food Service	2-4140	TMH235	
Laurie Dimond	Academic	2-5300	JRC153	
Barbara Dunker	Administrative		2-6920	AQU121
Rod Kirkwold	Physical Plant/Sec	2-6542	PHP111	
Meg Krekeler	Minneapolis	2-4272	TMH331	
Andrew Leet	Academic	2-5600	JRC333	
Joanne Rhoades	Administrative		2-4342	TMH105
Nathan Rolloff	Administrative	2-6506	AQU217	
Kathryn Sauro	Minneapolis	2-4380	TMH337	
Erin Thigpen	Administrative	2-6508	AQU221	
Diane Tibodeau	Academic	2-6321	5016	