

**Staff Council**  
**University of St. Thomas**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 17, 2003 -- 1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Members present: Chris Cognetta, Laurie Dimond, Barb Dunker, Rod Kirkwold, Andy Leet, Joanne Rhoades, Nate Rolloff, Erin Thigpen, Diane Tibodeau

Members absent: Meg Krekeler

Guests: Julie Schwalbach, Human Resources

Laurie Dimond opened the meeting with a brief reflection and then introduced and welcomed Randy Scott as a new member of Staff Council. Randy is a member of the Public Safety & Security staff located in Minneapolis, and is completing Kathy Sauro's term to Staff Council.

Laurie then introduced Julie Schwalbach from Human Resources. Laurie invited Julie to join the meeting to discuss possibilities for back-up or floater help in non-exempt positions, particularly administrative assistant positions, on campus. The concern among staff is the need that could arise to fill in for someone on an emergency-type basis. For example, if an admin. assistant were out for an extended period of time because of injuries sustained in an automobile accident, is there a plan we could have in place to assist that department or area with some of the more "skilled" tasks that needed to be done, such as areas related to entering class schedules in Banner or inputting invoices for payment in Banner, etc. The concern is not for periods of time like vacations or maternity leaves, since those are planned times and the necessary arrangements can be made to cover. The concern is the unexpected absences that could arise.

Julie Schwalbach addressed some of the things done in the past to provide admin. help on a temporary basis. We can hire a temporary worker from an agency, at one time there was a floater pool, or a group who were "on-call." There are problems inherent with many of these solutions, obviously. A temp. can immediately take on some of the tasks, such as answering the phone, but how does a temp. perform the tasks that require training or specific information in order to complete? Also, the "on-call" people often weren't available when needed, etc. Student workers can be of good help but, obviously, aren't full-time staff and would not be trained for the most part in Banner, etc.

There are some units on campus who have only one admin. assistant in the unit. Would a possible solution be to partner up with someone that could provide help on the tasks that require training? Bringing in a temporary worker would provide coverage of the phones and other duties, like photocopying and word processing. Could the academic units within one building work out a partnering arrangement?

The need for temp. employees is not limited to admin. assistant positions. Food Service, for example, hires temporary employees on an as-needed basis. Full-time employees are offered the opportunity to pick up extra shifts before temps. are hired. The library, also, uses on-call help.

Julie suggested forming a Task Force to look specifically at this area, identify the problems or issues and then work toward offering solutions. Barb Dunker will, with

Julie's help, provide an item for the *Bulletin* calling for Task Force volunteers. The partnering idea would not be for the "partner" to take on all the duties of the person out on leave but to help get the unit through the immediate issues that a temporary employee brought on would not be able to navigate. It may mean helping with Banner issues and other issues that require specific training and also to be a source of information for the temporary employee as they work to cover the responsibilities of the staff member on leave.

If there is a solution that comes from the Task Force, the Council felt it would have to have an "official" stamp on it. That is, we would need support from H.R. and the administration to make the program work. Bringing this issue up may also encourage some informal partnering for now and also may encourage units to make sure they have a manual updated that would include specific information that could help someone who is filling in for an employee on leave.

Julie Schwalbach then left the meeting.

The Staff Appreciation Breakfast was then discussed. The date of the breakfast is April 21, and Room 304 MHC is reserved beginning at 3:00 p.m. on April 20 for set-up until 10:00 a.m. on April 21. There is another event being held in that room on April 20 until 1:00 p.m., and Facilities Scheduling staff have said Staff Council cannot begin their set-up until 3:00 because of the tear-down and clean-up required following the earlier event. Since we are doing our own set-up and may be using tables that are already set up for the other event, Rod Kirkwold is going to try and find out what the other event is and how long will actually be needed for clean-up.

There was a brief discussion about having a breakfast on both the St. Paul and the Minneapolis campus -- on different dates because each group would like to have Father Dease in attendance. Barb Dunker is going to find out how many staff are on each campus.

For those staff who can't attend the breakfast because of their job responsibilities, we will give each of them a coupon for a movie of their choice. Movie tickets can be purchased through the UST Box Office (the Staff Council budget can be charged). Randy Scott agreed to check on how many security personnel are in Minneapolis so we have a number for movie tickets.

Laurie asked that subcommittees be formed for the specific parts of the breakfast. Prizes will be covered by Rod Kirkwold and Barb Dunker. The plan is to wait until after the holidays to send out the request for donated prizes. Nate Rolloff and Erin Thigpen will coordinate the invitations (including the return RSVP that can be used for the door prize drawing). Gift bags or a giveaway item for each person attending will be coordinated by Diane Tibodeau. Laurie will confirm that the breakfast date is on Father's calendar as well as on Tom Rochon's and Mark Dienhart's. Chris Cognetta will place the breakfast order through Food Service. Laurie is asking the "Just Showed Up Band" to attend and provide entertainment.

Nate asked about the video that has been shown. That particular video has been shown two years in a row. Barb will ask Admissions if they have a video they show to prospective students, and also will check on the video made for the *100 Years of Athletics Anniversary* celebration. Barb took some pictures of last year's event, and

we can have those mounted on tag board and on display. Another display possibility is to have some information regarding Staff Council and also service/volunteer opportunities available on campus. Suggestions are needed from Staff Council on the charitable giving collection we want to incorporate into this year's breakfast.

Laurie mentioned that Jacob Cunningham, volunteer coordinator with Campus Ministry, will attend a later Staff Council meeting to discuss opportunities available, specifically the VISION program.

The October and November, 2003 minutes were approved as written.

## **Committee reports --**

**Affirmative Action** -- No report.

**Budget Advisory** -- Rod Kirkwold and Erin Thigpen. Many, many meetings. Also subcommittees have been formed and those groups are meeting to look at specific areas of the university. Rod and Erin felt that administration is trying to look at things very carefully and make some improvements in the process. Also, there is a sense that the goal is to be as equitable as possible. The administration is trying to get information out in a very broad manner.

**Charitable Giving** -- If you do have a charity of choice, make suggestions. The collection at the Appreciation Breakfast will be done on a university-wide basis.

**Child Development Center** --

**Diversity** -- Going through a change because the initial task was completed and presented. Now with the new areas, including mission, focus has gotten back to diversity. Laurie Dimond has been unable to attend the past couple of meetings, however, they are looking at the makeup of the committee and then where to take the committee work.

**Elections** -- Diane Tibodeau and Barb Dunker will coordinate.

**Employee Recognition** --

**Fringe Benefits** -- Joanne Rhoades and Chris Cognetta. Much of the past discussion at these meetings was rolling out the benefits for the upcoming year and discussion of how to get staff to attend the informational meetings. Also talked about the tuition remission program -- another subcommittee of the group. Even trade on admissions which is a hold-up because UST would offer 75% tuition remission and others offer 100%. There is a minimum dollar amount that we would need to provide, also issue of who would be eligible. Would it be based on seniority, by GPA, or by? The committee is working very hard to have all the issues involved with broadening the tuition remission list resolved and then presenting it properly. The financial implications have to be thoroughly investigated -- do we also have to recruit at other institutions in order to get students to come here? The program won't be ready for fall 2004.

Minneapolis Operations --

**University Committee on Women** --

**University Council** -- Staff Council members are invited and also encouraged to invite another non-exempt staff member to join them at the meeting. The meetings are intended to provide updates on what is going on around campus, etc. Next meeting is February 17.

Budget --

**Healthy U** -- Rod Kirkwold mentioned that the Healthy U will have a presence at H.R. Fair and they are working on getting prizes for those who achieve their goals.

**Mission Committee** -- Andy Leet has been appointed to represent Staff Council on this committee. Met for the first time on December 15, and there is not a lot to report right now. Have been told that the four pillars are not negotiable to change -- Catholic, urban, liberal arts and career development -- group of about 15 led by Gene Scapanski. Timetable originally was to have committee work done by end of spring semester, let folks ruminate over the summer and then in the fall go back to everyone, but that timetable has been questioned. Starting out at departmental level where staff are to discuss and then gradually moving into unofficial events to encourage people to attend and discuss mission. Next committee meeting is in January.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

**Next Meeting: January 21, 2004**  
**St. Paul Campus -- AQU 210**  
**1:30 - 3:00 p.m.**

<b>Council Members</b>			
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
Randy Scott	Minneapolis	2-4100	MOH203
Erin Thigpen	Administrative	2-6508	AQU221
Diane Tibodeau	Academic	2-6321	5016
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