May 9, 2018
Miller Learning Center 350
2:30PM

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 pm by Staff Council President, Michael Lewis.

Roll Call


*Members absent:* Tyson Browning, Michele Griffin, Marie Mize, Mary Moore, Jacob Schindler, Kassie Suggs, Evelyn Wilhite, Beth Woods.

A quorum was present.

Minutes

The April 2018 minutes were approved unanimously.

Staff Council Committee Reports

There were no reports. Christine Ahern asked if the Communications committee had anything to report on the website. Joy Strickland reported that they did not, but were about to start work on it.

President’s Report

Michael shared that he had been busy with Staff Appreciation Day planning on May 10. He attended an Alumni Association Board of Directors Meeting and Alumni Awards Lunch. He gave his final report on Staff Council to the University Council. The report is attached to the end of these minutes. Michael also attended a candlelight memorial service where he read names of UGA employees and students who passed away since last April.
Old Business

Alex Hill said that she sent a draft of the Staff Council time and duties survey to Marie. She hoped to get it finalized and distributed before the next meeting. Michael suggested that it be sent out two weeks before the June meeting.

New Business

PARKING RATES

Michael asked how many representatives were on the Staff listerv and had received or read the many emails about parking rates at UGA. Michael wondered if Staff Council should take on the challenge of trying to change parking rates. Laura Kelley said that if Staff Council did take on the challenge, she would present it to the University Council Facilities Committee, of which she is a member. She also shared some things she learned at a meeting about UGA’s Parking and transportation study. A significant portion of UGA employees commute 30 or more minutes. Also, there has been talk of wifi-enabled shuttles coming in from remote locations. Employees could park their cars there, get on the shuttle and begin their workday while commuting.

Michael said that he asked Don Walter, interim director of Parking Services, to join Staff Council today, but he was unable to on short notice. Michael suggested we invite him to the June meeting.

Pattie Holly asked if Ken Schroeder could speak. The Council agreed that he could. He introduced himself as the author of a Staff listerv discussion about parking rates. He said that he and Stuart Ivy had been sharing emails about the topic and they both agree this topic needs to be addressed by Staff Council. Ken added that we need to dig deeper than inviting Don Walter to come and give us comments.

He said that United Campus Workers has done some research by using open record requests. They can’t do anything with that research but Staff Council can. Ken said that we need to move from a customer model to a stakeholder model. He said the university is forcing students and employees to pay capital bond costs for parking decks that will remain long after the students and employees are gone. He added that he felt the hourly rate in the parking decks could be raised from $1 to $2, and that football parking fees could be raised as well. Michael said he’s not sure Parking Services gets the football parking money.

Michael said that while he’s not opposed to Ken’s proposal that Staff Council take up this issue, he acknowledges that it’s a huge task and will require a lot of investigation and knowledge about Parking Services financials.

Andrew Hanneman asked what free parking options exist at UGA. Stuart said there is an underutilized Park and Ride lot where Oak Street/Lexington Road meet the Loop. City buses stop there and go through North campus. He added that there’s a new UGA Park and Ride lot off of College Station where the waste treatment plant used to be. There are currently 100 spaces, but they are going to expand it to 800 spaces. UGA buses stop there.
Steve Gibson said that he believes it’s reasonable for staff to be represented at a table where parking policy is being discussed. Michael said he agreed with that.

Michael asked if the Council wanted to create a parking ad hoc committee or charge an existing committee to pursue this. Stuart said he thought an ad hoc committee was a great idea and that it might become a permanent committee. Christine suggested that a voting member move to create an ad hoc committee, or move to add this topic to next month’s agenda for further discussion. Stuart moved that the idea of forming an ad hoc committee be moved to June’s agenda under Old Business. Michael said he would invite Don Walter. Debi Chandler suggested that Michael also invite Robert Holden. Stuart Ivy suggested that Todd Berven, the new head of parking, be invited as well.

Christine Ahern asked for a vote on the motion. The motion carried.

NOTICE OF STAFF APPRECIATION DAY EVENT

Michael shared that he received an excess of emails about the when, where, and what of Staff Appreciation Day, so he thought that perhaps better notification was needed. Andrew Hanneman suggested that when the ArchNews emails go out prior to the event, perhaps they could include a meeting invite.

Melissa Jackson said that she had a mini meeting with the Marketing and Communications team in charge of the event and they were glad to get feedback and were open to coming to Staff Council to hear more concerns.

Kelly Cona thanked Michael for attaching a flyer to an email he sent to all Staff Council reps on Monday. She was grateful to get those printed and posted because half of her staff does not have computer access. Michael said the flyers should have been distributed much earlier.

Melissa Jackson said that Marketing and Communications sent an email to all deans and directors back in March, hoping that they would share the information with their staff. Stuart asked all reps if anyone heard from their deans or directors about the event. 5 people raised their hands.

Christine Ahern asked if Staff Council could meet with the event committee. Michael said he thought that was a good idea. Melissa Jackson said that Marketing and Communications folks are open to new ideas and ways to improve the event.

Kyla Sterling asked if there were plans to send out a feedback survey to staff after the event. Michael said that there were not. Kyla asked if it was possible. Christine said that last year there was no interest in getting staff input after the event. Kyla added that perhaps Staff Council could strongly recommend a feedback survey to the committee. Christine asked what would prevent Staff Council representatives from soliciting comments from their constituents.

Michael said that he thought Staff Council should send out a survey after the event. Kristen Lawrence recommended that someone create a simple Qualtrics survey that reps could send to their constituents. Christine cautioned that the way survey questions are worded can skew results. She recommended a broad appeal for comments about the event.

Alex Hill volunteered to build a survey that would not lead people to certain answers. She would then build a report as an Excel document. Debi Chandler asked if a QR code could be included for those
who do not have access to a computer. Alex said that it would have to be printed out, but surveys
could also be answered on mobile devices.

JUNE ELECTIONS
Kelly Cona announced that elections for the three Executive Committee At-Large Officers would be held at the June meeting.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.

The next Staff Council Executive Committee meeting is Tuesday May 29, 2018 at 3:30 pm in the Craige Board Room at the Georgia Center.

The next Staff Council meeting is 2:30 pm Wednesday, June 6, 2018 in Benson Hall room C115.
Staff Council Report to University Council, April 25, 2018

This is my final report to University Council as President of Staff Council. The last four years have been a whirlwind of learning, research, and doing. Now that I feel I have finally gotten the hang of it, term limits kick in.

Nearly five years ago, on July 1st, Jere Morehead’s first day in office as the president of the University of Georgia, he invited me to discuss staff needs and concerns. I had three: A Staff Appreciation Day celebration, widening the scope of shared leave so a caregiver could be eligible, and radical change to the classification system such that staff would no longer have to find a new job in order to get a minor promotion.

To the first, he instantly replied, “That is something my office could be helpful with.” Helpful, indeed. Working with Matt Winston and lots of people from the Office of Special Events, we held the first Staff Appreciation Day celebration that May, and have every May since, with the next coming up May 10th, 10:00 – 2:00 at the Intramural Fields.

We also immediately set about to enhance the Shared Leave Program eligibility, eventually adopting the same program used by USG, which does enable caregivers, like the mother of a two-year-old undergoing a heart transplant, to use shared leave donated by others so she could care for her child.

As to the third, well, that is a tall order. While high on the priorities list, various other issues (like FLSA) have pressed it aside, but we are now working on it in earnest, first with the Staff Salary Administration Guidelines Advisory Team. Much more work is required before this comes to fruition. However, creating a career path within a position should markedly reduce turnover and the costs of staff recruitment and retention.

Staff Council has had several other successes, too. We are proud of the recent Staff Resources Fair, our new Staff Networking Program, the Lot Full sign at the Tate Parking deck, and, in cooperation with SGA, getting some bus stops relocated to help decrease traffic congestion. We serve a very important function as another communications pathway to get important information to people where they work.

Toward this end, we enjoy having guests address the council and answer questions. We have scheduled meetings with the president and the provost where every question is answered with clarity and respect. We invite various vice presidents, associate vice presidents, and executive directors from time to time. These
relationships are invaluable to both a better understanding of the entire university, addressing issues and concerns, as well as providing a foundation for workable suggestions for improvements.

Of course, part of our work is on certain University Council committees, where the voice of staff can be a persuasive and needed input from another perspective. As a member of the Executive Committee, I have seen every motion to come before council (and a few that didn’t) over the last four years.

Many motions are merely housekeeping, such as cancelling a program because it hasn’t had a student this century. Some at first can seem a bit silly, like changing the name from basket weaving to weaving baskets, but when presented with evidence that all of our peers and aspirants now use the newer term, it becomes obvious that we must, too, lest we be perceived more as archaic than honoring tradition.

Then there are the surprises. I’m sure you have all heard the old maxim, “In academia, the fights are so fierce because the stakes are so small.” A motion that may seem simple, straightforward, and of minimal scope, suddenly becomes extremely controversial due to an unexpected impact somewhere no one thought to examine. Those are the ones that make this process worthwhile; preventing mistakes from happening. Good governance requires the governors be cognizant of the governed. This university is so large, so diverse; it is nearly impossible to be aware of all of its aspects. This body’s efforts are critical to ensure that all voices are heard and considered.

It has been my pleasure to serve both the Staff and University Councils, to have gotten to know many of you, to gain a far better understanding of how things work at this great university, and, as charged by university statute, “advising the President and by recommending to and consulting with the University Council in the establishment of rules and regulations deemed necessary or proper for the promotion of the general welfare of the University.”

Thank you for the opportunity.

Michael Lewis,
President, Staff Council