February 5, 2020  
Zell B. Miller Learning Center, Room 350  
2:30PM

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm by Staff Council President, Marie Mize. Staff Council Parliamentarian Debi Chandler took over chairing the meeting at approximately 3:15 pm.

Roll Call:

*Members in attendance:* Christine Ahern, Brittany Barnes, Maria Berdon, Teresa Cash, Lisa Chandler, Debi Chandler, Lesley Coffey, Kelly Cona, Melanie Crawford, Tamala Foreman, Mary Formo, Macie Fouche, Jami Gilstrap, Elmer Gray, Lillian Haas, Savannah Hembree, Stuart Ivy, Kevin James, Wesley Johnson, Amie Jones, Laura Kelley, Jennifer Leyting, Ken McDaniel, Jackie Mitchell, Marie Mize, Paula Moon, Mary Moore, Mathew Mundy, Jessica Owens, Rob Paltz, Jacob Schindler, Ken Schroder, Amanda Shaw, Garrett South, Stevie Stigler, Paul Suttles, Jason Tiller (via sub Dana Barnhart), Harold Waters (via sub Tim Welsh), Beth Woods (via sub Lauren Blais).

*Members absent:* Charlie Bauder, Christopher Childs, Anjali Dougherty, Wade Fields, Michele Griffin, Heather Macon, Emma Mattox, Leslie Morrow, Kathryn Reeves, Anna Santos, Leslie Sitz.

A quorum was present.

The January minutes were approved.

**Staff Networking Program Update**

Staff Council President Marie Mize noted that the next session of the Staff Networking Program was still open to potential participants until February 28th. There are 142 people signed up for the program at this point.
EITS Mentorship Program

Marie Mize mentioned that the EITS Mentorship Program, which is open to anyone in the University of Georgia System, was still taking on participants for the next session. An email referenced during the meeting states that the deadline is Wednesday, February 19. Marie noted that the email should be forwarded to anyone who might be interested. This email has also been sent out to the mentorship meetup group, so there is some good cross-listing for this opportunity.

Staff Resources Fair

Marie reminded the group that the Staff Resources Fair (SRF) was coming up on March 10 from 1 to 4 p.m. and that the SRF committee would be looking for volunteers. Council member Savannah Hembree mentioned that Staff Council will have a table, and they will need volunteers to be stationed there to answer questions about the Council. She is looking for commitments in one-hour increments—anything from one to three hours would be great. More than thirty-five groups will be participating in the event, including new ones that were not present last year. The committee is two-thirds of the way to the fundraising goal thanks to Tamala Foreman and others.

Marie noted that she is collecting door prizes for the event, and she would happily accept items from our units if we have them.

Professional Development Task Force

Marie, a member of the Professional Development Task Force, referenced President Morehead’s State of the University speech during which he announced that he had approved all twelve recommendations coming from the task force. She will send out the associated report once it is no longer in draft format.

One of the twelve task force recommendations outlines the use of a staff lifecycle framework, which would include a more formal onboarding process to ensure that new employees learn core information when starting at UGA. For example, if you don’t buy football tickets during the first year of employment, you are out of luck for future purchases. Training and Development has made efforts to develop an onboarding process in the past, and now there are plans to hire a new staff professional development coordinator along with another two (potentially) staff members in that office to support efforts in this area. It is unclear whether the Critical Hire Process will affect these hires.

Other recommended items from the task force include:
- Create a common definition of staff professional development across the University
- Ensure that staff professional development is acknowledged as a university priority
• Develop a branding and marketing campaign (which may be unveiled at the Staff Resources Fair)
• Professional development grant program to assist units that can’t afford to send staff for training opportunities
• Expand the staff appreciation events beyond the single-day picnic to include workshops, awards, and speakers
• Operationalize staff development in all units by giving managers a toolkit with methods and guidelines
• Work with HR to ensure that development opportunities are tied to the competency model
• Create a branch of experts among UGA faculty and staff who can provide expertise in development

Marie mentioned that the new professional education portal that has already launched will be used more extensively to offer online classes and to recommend training to staff.

Committee Reports:

Benefits and Classifications Committee —Jami Gilstrap, Chair, reported on some recent legislation related to pharmacy benefits coming out of the Georgia State Legislature 2019-2020 Session: House Bill 323. She showed a brief video that was created by a pharmacist explaining that, as a result of this law, a pharmacy benefit manager cannot steer an insured member to a particular pharmacy. An insured individual cannot be required to use a particular mail-order or bricks-and-mortar pharmacy. There may be pharmacy benefit managers who are not respecting this law, but consumers may push back against the benefits manager to assert their rights.

Given the language of the bill, there is some uncertainty about whether it would apply to state employees. The bill states that Code Section 33-64-10 is amended such that benefit managers “shall not require insureds to use a mail-order pharmaceutical distributor including a mail-order pharmacy.” However, this section of the bill does not apply to a “State Health Benefit Plan under Article 1 of Chapter 18 of Title 45.” Laura Kelley indicated that we should have the necessary individuals at UGA look over the verbiage of this bill for clarification.

Stuart Ivy, member of the Benefits and Classification Committee and also the Chair of the University Council Human Resources (UC HR) Committee, reported that the Critical Hire Process is on the agenda of an ongoing electronic meeting of the UC HR Committee. They are currently in the process of drafting a non-binding statement that outlines some concerns about this policy. Staff Council member Kelly Cona, member of the UC HR Committee, has read the draft and notes that it contains information about the possible adverse effects on the mission of the University of this Critical Hire Process. Savannah Hembree mentioned that her concern is that there is no end date to the Critical Hire Process as written, and no date at which the policy should be reviewed, which is something that the committee should consider noting in its statement.
Given that the critical hire process is related to the state budget, the conversation shifted to compensation issues. Kelly Cona and Stuart Ivy opined and prognosticated about the likelihood of merit raises. While there has been no explicit information on this front, Savannah said that the situation looked negative. Stuart Ivy mentioned that the fixed-dollar raise proposed by the Governor for teachers at different salary levels had the appearance of a cost of living raise, a practice which is antithetical to past University System practice.

Ken Schroder thinks that there may be other purposes to the Critical Hire Process, such as downsizing the staff workforce.

Kelly Cona noted that these hiring changes are coming in advance of the release of the Comprehensive Administrative Review (CAR) report, which could serve as a potential blueprint for change. She has been unable to find a final CAR report coming out of other USG institutions such as Georgia Tech. She also believes that administrators at UGA schools and colleges are operating without full information as they implement the new hiring policy.

Jami Gilstrap wondered whether anyone had been successful getting a critical hire proposal approved by the USG office. Ken Schroder heard that 11 of 17 submitted to the System office had been sent back. Marie Mize has sent an email to Juan Jarrett at HR about the latest statistics about these submissions. Savanna noted that her office has been successful in achieving a reclassification by keeping the new role within the same numerical range in the B-Cat system, which would avoid the critical hire process.

There were no other committee reports.

**Riverbend Road Walking Audit Update**

Matt Mundy participated in a 30-minute walking audit of Riverbend Road on January 16 led by Hillary Essig, the Bike, Pedestrian, and Safety Coordinator at Athens-Clarke County Government. Also in attendance was Frank Stephens, Interim Director of ACC Transportation and Public Works. Matt noted that he has also has had email correspondence with Rani Katreeb, Engineering Administrator. The walk revealed the shortcomings and challenges of this section of road, including the lack of sidewalk infrastructure, high volume traffic, blind corners, and less than ideal aesthetics. There has been no progress to date as reported by Rani Katreeb. The public will have the chance to review proposed concepts before the mayor and commission review and take action to approve them.

Matt noted that he did bring up Staff Council Member Elmer Gray’s concerns about lighting on this stretch of road to the ACC traffic specialists. These specialists noted the potential safety downsides to certain lighting approaches. Elmer thought that ACC would be adding lights to the bends in the S-curve in this stretch. Elmer also asked about what would be happening at the bus stops. Matt did not know what coordination was happening between UGA and ACC regarding these stops. He opined that the bus shelters at the stops likely fell into UGA’s
purview, and that there would need to be coordination between UGA and ACC on these plans. Elmer said that these stops are largely used by UGA’s students. Council Member Jessica Owens thought the shelters would be ACC’s responsibility.

Matt noted that he was not certain what was in the scope of the project from ACC’s perspective, which is also coordinating with Department of Transportation, but he thinks that improvements on UGA’s property would be UGA’s responsibility.

Laruen Blais (sub for Beth Woods) has knowledge of the project through her involvement as an Athens in Motion Commission member. She explained that this project is about three times as expensive as planned due to the need for retaining walls. She believes that the project is locally funded through TSPLOST and is one of the top five projects on a long list of priorities. She believes that some of the preliminary designs have been made public. Roswell Lawrence (staff member in Finance and Administration) is the official UGA representative on the Athens in Motion Commission and could serve as a point of contact on this project. She noted that public input is taken seriously by Athens in Motion.

Matt will continue to provide updates on this project.

**Recording Secretary-Seeking Candidate**

Debi Chandler noted that we are in need of a Recording Secretary due to our last secretary taking another position; interested parties can reach out to Marie Mize or another member of the Executive Committee.

**Nominating Committee**

Jami Gilstrap has volunteered to head the nominating committee. Kelly Cona, having experience in this area, offered to provide Jami with assistance and a guiding document. Additional representatives are needed for this committee and can get in touch with Jami if interested.

**Bylaw Revisions Committee**

Jennifer Leyting worked on bylaw revisions with Marie Mize and Ken Schroder. She noted that most of the changes were minor, such as changing “Chair” to “President” and eliminating language for committees that no longer exist. One area does require more input from the Council as a whole, which is whether new business can be introduced via the listserv and whether votes can take place on the listserv. She read the language in question, which comes from the bylaws section below:

5.1.1.6 Voting
Voting will be conducted during meetings whenever possible; however, in some cases as stipulated by the council, votes may be cast via the SC-reps listserv. In such a case, a simple majority of representatives must post a vote to the list to constitute a quorum. The Chair does not vote except in the case of a tie.

This section does not address how new business may be introduced. Ken Schroder notes that the bylaws language is vague. Stuart Ivy suggested that we might fall back on Robert’s Rules of Order as it pertains to electronic voting.

Debi Chandler made the point that, according to the bylaws, proposed agenda items should first be presented to the Executive Committee, and then this body would decide whether it would be brought to the Council as a whole. She referenced an instance in which an agenda item came up on the listserv along with discussion of a potential vote on this item via email without formal Executive Committee involvement or a meeting of the Council. Ken Schroeder believes that while emails on the listserv are public record, this does not constitute an open forum: Voting on the listserv should be a rarity, and the business of the Council should take place at regular Council meetings barring an emergency. Debi agreed with this sentiment.

Jennifer noted that we do have a way to address time-sensitive matters per the bylaws by calling a special Council meeting. Savannah Hembree suggested that time-sensitive matters could be emailed to the Executive Committee.

There will be a formal vote on the bylaws changes at the next meeting. In the meantime, comments are welcome and can be directed to Marie, Ken S., or Jennifer.

Meeting with President Morehead

The Executive Committee will be meeting with President Morehead on February 18. Debi asked the Council members to contribute questions to be presented during this meeting.

The following were suggested:

- What are the implications of the Critical Hire Process for the effectiveness of UGA; what are your concerns around this policy?
- Provost Hu has a priority of attaining a 17:1 student to faculty ratio. Will the Critical Hire Process be a factor in any plans to grow the faculty and, by extension, staff support?¹
- Is the salary midpoint a de-facto cap for the salary ranges given hiring policies, and what is the percentage of individuals making more than the midpoint for their position?
- How is the CAR related to the Critical Hire Process, and will the CAR be released?
- What is the status of the consultant’s review of UGA’s HR practices?

¹ For context: According to recent figures from OIR, including all instruction, research, and public service faculty, there are roughly 2.7 staff members per faculty member, not adjusting for FTE equivalents. US News reports that UGA has a student/faculty ratio of 17:1, whereas University of Michigan has a 15:1 ratio.
• Have the increasingly high credentials of the incoming students affected the nature of the institution as a whole, including the popularity of programs and majors being pursued by students? Are we shifting away from some of the agricultural focus?
• Is the state benefiting to the highest potential from its graduating students, or is out-migration an issue?

Debi will send the compiled list of questions to the Council listserv.

House Bill 109

Stuart Ivy noted that House Bill 109 being discussed in the current legislative session may have implications for those participating in the Teachers Retirement System. This bill may prevent new hires from applying accumulated sick leave towards their retirement benefits. Cost of living adjustments may change from 1.5% twice per year to 1.5% once per year for retirees, although others in the meeting thought that it would be changed to 3% once per year, which would still provide savings due to the lack of the compounding growth that comes about with the twice annual adjustment. Stuart noted that a 1.5% per year adjustment may result in an increase below the average rate of long-term inflation. This issue is in flux and may be a matter for future discussions.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: February 25, Correll Hall, Glover Boardroom, 3:30 p.m.

Next meeting of Staff Council: March 4th, MLC 348, 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.