

Staff Conference Meeting

Whitton Auditorium

May 19, 2015

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm

Members present: Margaret Williamson, Maria D'Agostino, Niki Behr, Laura Little, Kelly Shelton, Jeanie Faris, Kelly McGinnis, TJ Carney, Rebecca Best, Jill Simpson, Rosanne Wallace, Johnathan Brabson

Members absent: Grant Scurry

Approximately 92 staff members attending (includes assembly members)

Margaret Williamson opened the meeting with a welcome to the newly elected member to the Staff Assembly, Johnathan Brabson. Janell Stevens will be joining the Assembly in June to replace Margaret Williamson and Kara Traverse will be replacing Rosanne Wallace.

Announcements from Dr. Boyd

Dr. Debra Boyd, acting president, expressed a thank you for how supportive everyone has been as she took on this role. Everyone is doing more with less and with a good spirit. She believes Winthrop will do well and with the right person to lead us in Dr. Mahony. Please continue that spirit by supporting him as the Winthrop community has supported her. Dr. Mahony brings fresh eyes to who we are and what we do. She believes that he will be able to understand the wonderful things about our campus and community and will know what to keep and what to change. He will listen and will bring perspective regarding current issues. And he will be able to figure out those things, but with our help and support.

Competitive Compensation Committee

Dr. Boyd provided an update regarding the progress of the committee. They are still working toward their initiatives and are hoping to provide an update in the next month. It has taken longer than expected as they want to make sure to get the right sources of the comparative data. They are looking at not just at external but internal equity as well. As a reminder, the goal is a line item in the budget for competitive compensation. Even though it has taken a long time, be mindful that most things that are important to do we must be patient and do them well. The process of comparing the data will continue as we begin to show what we have found in the process in addition to understanding how deep and how wide the gulf is regarding compensation and with what issues we are dealing. It will probably have more impact on staff than faculty but it doesn't mean everyone gets a huge raise. Once we see the problem, we will make a plan to address the problem. It's not a sprint but a marathon and we will continue to move forward.

The Board of Trustees will be meeting soon in order to set tuition and fees for next year. They are studying the budget and resources at this time to figure out where the money is or isn't at Winthrop.

We know where there are issues and needs that filter into the biggest budget number in regards to next year's tuition. We know that there is still a lot of work to do with our current budget and processes to make sure they align with our goals and will be an ongoing process. Dr. Mahony prefers a responsibility centered management style where resources are allocated or adjusted three times a year depending on where the students are {choice of major} and where is the activity. When it comes to management of resources, he will look at a variety of issues and not just concentrate on what we have done in before. In the past, we have focused on base budgeting but now we need to look at how things have changed over time. We have experienced budget cuts and dedicated employees in the Finance and Budget area do a great job to figure it out every time to make it work. Facts are that we have lost a lot of state funding over time and we have been able to continue delivering the level of Education and Service that stays in line with the top universities. It remains to be seen how we might realign our resources, but it is a team effort. Dr. Boyd appreciates it and she knows that Dr. Mahony will as well.

Question: When is Dr. Mahony expected and when will he be on campus?

He will probably move in that week before he takes office, possibly the third week in June. We will do our best to respect their privacy as they get settled. She believes the children will be involved with some of the camps this summer on campus. His official first day is the first day of the last orientation. Remembering that his first day will be very scripted, as there will be processing information to be a functioning employee, learning about annual leave, being a state employee, etc. She would like to say that he is already light years ahead. For example, he sends a question and is provided with 12 links and 15 documents to give background. The leadership team feels very comfortable because he is asking the right questions and following-up with different angles. What you saw when he was interviewed is what he is. He takes time to warm up to you but he is very personable and warm.

Question: Please provide more information on what the Herald reported regarding a Christmas bonus.

It's more about a monetary bonus and not necessarily a Christmas bonus. The legislature is talking about and deciding. The House and the Senate are both presenting ideas regarding a bonus but they are completely different so there would need to be some concessions for both parties. It will all depend on the state budget so don't count on anything until it is voted on and passes. It may happen or it may not, but there is very little consensus regarding this issue. It is a continual effort to show the legislators the importance of investing in Higher Education and also investing in the PEOPLE that work in Higher Education. They have higher priorities at this time like building and improving roads, research colleges, technical colleges and the National Guard among other things.

Question: Do we have any idea of how enrollment is going?

It is slightly up right now about 6% which is not much but it is better than being down. We typically use predictors like orientation, signed up for room and admission's deposits but times change and indicators change. Example, students currently attend multiple orientations which was not the normal practice in prior years so therefore that would not be a good indicator on a student's commitment to Winthrop. As we get closer to July 15th, we will have more confidence on those predictions and a lot more data. As the saying goes, we will not know for sure until you can count the heads or suitcases on campus. But for today, yes, we are up in enrollment numbers for next year but the retention of our students is also important to keep those numbers up.

Presentation of Resolution by the Staff Assembly to Dr. Boyd

Margaret Williamson read a resolution to Dr. Boyd in appreciation for her support of the inaugural year of the Staff Assembly and presented her with a framed original of the resolution by the Staff Assembly. Dr. Boyd expressed her appreciation and stated it has been a really exciting year.

Employee of the Month

TJ Hyatt presented the Employee of the Month for April – Mary Black, Facilities Management

The nomination form is on the website as a link under the left hand side of the webpage. It is a simple and easy form to fill out. They will continue to work on getting paper submission forms available for those that do not have access to computers to submit the form. If you would like to nominate someone but you do not know their last name, please complete the form with as much information as you have and they will research to find the correct person. Some people were interested in knowing what the prizes include. Some of the items provided include a parking spot, free meal at Thomson, one month free at the West Center. The deadline for submissions for the EOM for May is the 28th.

Emails to Staff Assembly / Suggestions

Email: Please make sure we use the microphone when speaking on the panel or in the audience.

Email: Concern was expressed for those working hours in the buildings after the A/C is adjusted for the long weekend.

Response: The A/C is not set back until about 2:00 and most of those employees are out of the buildings or off by 3:30 on Fridays.

Committee Updates

Media and Communications Committee

Shelley Jones hopes that everyone is enjoying the Staff Stuff newsletter. The newsletters will be as interesting as you make them so please send information and ideas. They are working on a project to help everyone get to know names of staff members by highlighting the departments on campus. Shelley encouraged staff to respond and interact on the Facebook page (on your time off).

Campus and Community Involvement Committee

Residence Life and Sustainability partnered together with the committee to collect food items to donate to Project HOPE as students were leaving the dorms. They collected 450 pounds of food. They are considering moving to an online group format to get everyone together.

Professional Development Committee

Reminder that anyone can attend the TLC sessions, Full time employees can enroll in six hours per term for free. And there are also computer literacy training options available.

Elections

There are no open elections or nominations at this time but they have completed the process for the two positions in Academic Affairs which will bring Janell Stevens in June and Kara Traverse in July.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Next meeting June 16th at 2:00 pm