

Staff Conference Meeting

Whitton Auditorium

September 16, 2014

Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm

Members present: Jeanie Faris, Kelly McGinnis, Grant Scurry, Margaret Williamson, Rosanne Wallace, Maria D'Agostino, TJ Carney, Rebecca Best, Kelly Shelton, Sharen DuBard, Jill Stuckey

Members absent: Niki Behr

Approximately 75 staff members attending (includes assembly members)

Margaret opened with mention to committees. Assembly members will give some brief information about their committee and then break out into groups to allow time for staff to discuss and express interest in being on a committee of their choice. Each committee will decide who their chairperson will be and it is not mandated that the person from the assembly serve in that role.

Becky Best provided an update from the Elections and Nominations Committee

- Jill Stuckey will be the new representative from Institutional Advancement – Welcome!
- Voting for the representative for Student Life (to replace Gena Smith) will be open soon
 - Email for voting will be sent to the members of that division only and the ballot will be open for two weeks.

Our bylaws (pending approval) mention the replacement of assembly positions for those that are no longer able to serve the remainder of their term is restricted to the division only. The bylaws do not define who would be the voting body (division vs all staff) when a member's term has expired. Margaret requested comments on the preference from the audience. A commenter stated they would prefer the division only to vote as that division would have a better understanding and knowledge about what is going on in their area, as well as being able to provide a better representation for their area. The vast majority of the audience agreed with this comment. Margaret mentioned that although Assembly members represent a division, they will vote their conscience.

We received an anonymous comment before the conference meeting. Now that Comstock-Williamson is no longer here and since the Staff Assembly was her idea, is the current Winthrop administration and the BoT really interested in seeing this continue or do they just want us (the staff) to go away be quiet? Debra Boyd has made it clear that she is supportive of the Staff Assembly and the assembly/conference will remain.

Question: Can we know who was nominated for the open positions on Assembly?

Response: Nomination for the Student Life assembly member - Emily Tobin, Jill Simpson, Donna Snyder. There were 2 additional nominations that were unable to be considered for the position at this time.

Comment: Reminder, there will be dance lessons at the West Center to prepare for 80's themed Faculty / Staff party.

Moving on to information about committees:

Maria D'Agostino provided further information on the Media and Communications committee. As the Historian, she will work with members to have a newsletter once a month or twice a month, keeping the website current, Archives and pictures for events. She also envisions a year book at the end of the year.

Debra Boyd joined the conference meeting to elaborate on an email sent to the Faculty and Staff regarding the University Budget Review & Freeze. It does not include budgets for personnel. They will not be pulling funding from those items that have contractual liability already in place. This review is to align our money with our priorities. Looking at how we do our work, can it be done differently, more efficiently and more effectively? We are committed to the high quality education to our students while also supporting our staff. We need to be sure that we are good stewards of our funds if we want to request additional funds from the legislature and donors. If we find misalignments, there will be changes. To be able to request more money from state legislations, we need to be sure we are spending every dime efficiently and effectively. We may find that some areas are under resourced and some are over resourced. We need to consider what our current processes cost us in time and money.

Question: Who is the WE?

Response: The WE in this scenario would be anyone that is in charge of a budget.

Debra provided one example where we may want to realign funding - subscriptions to the Chronicle on Higher Education. How much are we spending as an institution with individual subscriptions for departments? Would it be a better use of our funds to have an institutional subscription? This change might require getting accustomed to an electronic version instead of paper copies. There will be no secrets in this process and the time for the funds to be unfrozen has not been determined at this time.

Question: When would the frozen funds be reallocated?

Response: Hopefully in the spring term. New ideas are going to come out of this process. Our core mission is still to educate students.

Question: Some supervisors may not be open to issues or suggestions.

Response: Everyone is encouraged to be open minded in this process, talk with folks and not try to do everything ourselves. Part of being a good citizen is to ask questions and share info. Concentrate on your areas but be open to outside ideas. Those that might function in different areas may have insight to help make things better and impact your work.

Debra states that once the funds have been narrowed down to the discretionary 10% for departments, the funds will be moved to a separate account. It will not remain in that department's operating budget.

How can we do things differently? What needs to change? Cost Sharing – if it is important to you what are you willing to give up in order to make a compromise?

Example of saving our resources – changing our processes to save money. Debra has received interoffice information in letter head envelopes. Is that necessary or a good use of our resources?

Question: If a person has an idea that spans across another department, who should they take that information to?

Answer: Debra stated that those questions can be emailed to the supervisor, but if they don't feel comfortable, they can send the email to the address, president@winthrop.edu with subject 'budget freeze' or something similar.

Question: Will the suggestions that come from this process have backing from the current administration in the transition to the new administration?

Answer: If it is a good idea and a better use of our resources, they would be foolish to not consider them.

Debra stated that this process is less about the freeze and more about the review. The calculations are being determined now by Finance and Business.

Question: Will there be a spreadsheet available for the amounts of the frozen amounts?

Answer: Yes, it is their intent to be out in the open with this process. Debra reiterated that we will find that some areas are over funded and some are underfunded, the review process will help us align our funds with our priorities.

Question: Commenter mentioned that their department uses a portion of their operating budget to fund the Temporary Help Line. Will those funds be included in the freeze or will that use of funds be taken into account since they are not currently allocated but will be needed later on in the academic year?

Answer: These are items that will be considered and this information is important when they are conducting the review. Maybe to realign their funding, is it more beneficial to have a 12 month employee instead of 9 month employee and we need to consider what other options might be available.

Debra stated this review is not something extraordinary, reviews happen on a yearly basis.

Question: As they gather information and changes are to be made, will we know about them?
Can we have a list of the changes?

Answer: Changes that affect the campus will be made public.

Debra stressed that we should not assume mal-intent and reminded the staff that the only reason she agreed to do the job of interim president is because of the Winthrop staff and faculty that would be supporting her in the process.

The remaining time of the conference meeting was used for those interested in participating in committees to meet with the assembly members for more information and to sign up.

The next Conference meeting will be October 21st at 9:30 a.m. in Whitton Auditorium.