

Winthrop University
Staff Conference Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2020
Dina's Place

Staff Assembly Present: Kara Cauthen, Jayme Charles, Thomas Cornelius, Katie Gawronski, April Hershey, Chris Johnson, Jessica Martin, Claire Mooney-Melvin, Brittany Neely, Jill Simpson

Absent: Johnathan Brabson, Lydia Johnson, Kirk McSwain, Tanya Pettus

Vacancies: None

Staff Present: Approximately 40

Call to Order

April Hershey, chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. She acknowledged the approval of minutes from the December 3 Staff Assembly Meeting.

Leadership Q & A

April said the questions submitted had been edited lightly to better reflect the concerns that affect staff.

1. *Why does Winthrop not count full-time employment in a grant-funded position towards total time accrued when calculating annual leave/sick leave earnings?*
 - a. President Mahony said that this is because of the way state law views grant-funded positions, but that this law is not unique to South Carolina.
2. *Has Winthrop ever considered providing paid time off (PTO) in place of annual leave and/or sick leave?*
 - a. President Mahony said that again Winthrop has no choice in this matter due to state law. It is a good suggestion, but just not something Winthrop is able to do.
3. *How is training for new administrative assistants handled? Is there a centralized method to ensure that the right people get training for the right things?*
 - a. President Mahony said that he will discuss this with people from HR and Finance & Business. It would be good to have some consistency in the way administrative assistants are trained.
4. *Is there a way to make the "search" button on the Winthrop homepage more intuitive and easier to use?*
 - a. President Mahony said the primary focus in changing the website was to make it more mobile friendly. There has been some work done re-indexing pages so the search function would work better. He also pointed out that there is a Faculty/Staff path from the homepage that links to many helpful areas. Staff should reach out if there are specific things not coming up in search, or with suggestions for additional links that should be added to the Faculty/Staff page.
5. *What are the plans for the Military, Adult, & Transfer Student Services (MATS) office?*
 - a. President Mahony emphasized that we do not want to reduce our commitment to these populations. The MATS director position is being reconfigured, so this person will have a different title and some different responsibilities. Discussions are ongoing about where this division should be housed, and it may not look the same as it did before.

6. *Why does it appear that some retired executive leaders are double dipping by receiving both a continued salary for a change in job but also receiving retirement income?*
 - a. President Mahony said he is not aware of this actually happening right now. Usually when it did occur, it was related to TERI employees and most of those have fully retired at this point. Even when employees were able to do this, it did not affect Winthrop's budget, as we were still only paying one salary. Whatever they may have drawn from the pension system did not affect Winthrop.
7. *In an effort to assist the grounds crew staff and help improve the physical presentation of campus, could interested staff work outside for an afternoon picking up trash instead of working in their offices?*
 - a. President Mahony said some of this question could have been related to the recycling staffing issue, and will hopefully be resolved now that we have a dedicated person to collect the recycling. They are also looking into other things that could be done to help solve this problem.

Updates from President Mahony

President Mahony shared that the state legislature is back in session and some very early numbers have been released from the Governor's budget, although these are likely to change. Some things we expect to happen this year include tuition mitigation where we are offered funds if we do not raise tuition, funds to use towards facilities, and a 2% salary increase for state employees. This could all change during the legislature process.

Enrollment for spring looks positive. We are 2-3% higher than we were at this time last year. We are seeing good transfer numbers, retention, and graduate numbers. All of this means that our budget situation is probably better than expected. We have also had our second best fundraising year ever, having raised \$6.5 million. Our endowment is up significantly. It is now around \$64 million, which is an increase of about 50% in just a few years. This means we will have more scholarship money available to help support our students.

A question was asked regarding whether we have an idea of the operating budgets for the next fiscal year. President Mahony said it is tough since we do not know what the state will do yet, but that senior leadership has started putting together some numbers that we are sure of, which will hopefully put us in a better place this summer.

Committee Reports

- **Media & Communications:** Kara Cauthen said the committee is seeking submissions for the February newsletter.
- **Campus & Community Involvement:** April shared that the pet food drive was a huge success. The next meeting is February 5, and will involve discussing future Food Truck Friday dates. The committee is also planning another food drive later in the spring.
- **Elections & Nominations:** April introduced Jill Simpson as the new representative from Student Affairs. She also announced that Jayme Charles is the new vice chair of Staff Assembly.

- Professional Development: Marcia Willis announced two upcoming events. A P-card Q&A will take place on February 13. People should send in their questions in advance and sign up through the CPE calendar. The second event is March 4 and will cover mindfulness in the workplace.
- Recognition: Brittany Neely welcomed five new staff members. Miranda Knight presented the Staff Member of the Month nominations and announced Charles Yearata as the winner.

Athletics Presentation

Hank Harrawood, associate athletic director, gave a brief overview of some things taking place in Athletics. He celebrated some recent athletic successes and highlighted the community service that our student athletes do. He reminded everyone that faculty and staff can get free tickets to all athletic events for themselves and their immediate family members. Faculty and staff can help support scholarships for student athletes by donating to the Eagle Club, which can be done as a payroll deduction.

Someone asked what has happened to the sports updates e-mails that we used to receive. Hank said he will mention this to the communications staff. Another question was asked regarding whether the eSports team has a Twitch channel. They do, and the channel will be linked on Instagram or Twitter posts before events. Hank also announced that the Hall of Fame banquet is coming up at the end of January.

Health Services

Jill Simpson reminded everyone of steps we should take to stay healthy during flu season. There are two strains going around this year. Our stats for campus do not look too bad so far. Health Services has only seen a few cases of the flu, but other things are going around.

Final Announcements

April reminded everyone to please fill out the QEP survey if you haven't already. It is only two questions, and is an important part of the SACS accreditation process. The QEP committee hopes to have a report next month. The links to the survey are in the Staff Conference PowerPoint, which will be posted online along with all of the meeting minutes.

April announced that Dr. Kimberly Faust and/or a representative from the Board of Trustees will be at the February 18 Staff Conference meeting to discuss the interim president search process. We are also trying to coordinate with the Sodexo nutritionist to come answer any questions staff have.

The March Staff Conference meeting is scheduled to take place during spring break. Dina's Place will not be available, so April is reserving another location. More details will be sent out.

Miranda Knight announced that the Diversity Council Affinity Groups will be meeting Thursday, January 23 during common time. There are currently five groups – African-American F/S, Asian Pacific Islander F/S, Latinx F/S, LGBTQ F/S, and Veterans F/S – but others are welcome to attend. Other groups will be created as there is interest.

April shared that there is a statehouse listserv that shares information of interest to state employees. April can forward these e-mails to anyone interested in signing up for the listserv.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.