Staff Senate Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2016
MU River Valley Room
1:00-2:30pm


Members Absent (excused): Jenny Duffy, Nancy Garcia, Carrie Jackson, Susie Kroetsch, Jenny Le Texier, Bree Melicher, Juan Pedraza.

Members Absent: Danny Weigel.

Ex-Officio Present: Pat Hanson


1. Call to Order President, Sharley Kurtz at 1:02pm.

2. Announcements:
      i. Slides from Provost DiLorenzo’s presentation are available on the Provost's website.
      ii. Three Priorities of the Provost: Implementing the new MIRA budget model; Continuation of evaluating the Promotion, Tenure, Evaluation systems, policies, and practices; and the Search for the School of Graduate Studies Dean.
      iii. Chancellor/State Board of Higher Education Priorities for Campus: Master Planning Process; Open Educational Resources (i.e. putting textbooks online to save students money); Student Success Initiatives: Retention & Graduation;
         1. UND Retention & Graduation: 7% increase in retention from fall freshman to fall sophomores in two years. Record fall to spring student retention of 93%. These improvements should increase graduation rates down the line.
         2. iCAN (Integrated Coaching and Advising Network) Project: Looking at advising and electronic systems that students can use to help them better understand their academic plan.
      v. Budget:
         1. We want to grow our way out of a budget problem rather than “cut” our way out. We obviously have to do both but we want to increase the growth to ensure we have to cut less. Ways we hope to enhance resources:
            a. The Provost has been working closely with the Foundation to increase fundraising.
            b. Want to increase student enrollment (16,000 is soft goal).
            c. Enhance retention
d. Enhance grant activities (goal is $125 million per year, UND is currently at $100 million per year)
e. Enhance work leading to economic development like innovation and entrepreneurship
f. Increase efficiencies/reduce redundancies.

2. Challenges/Opportunities
   a. Budget Gap (based primarily on the tuition cap): We need to close the budget gap this biennium. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, we are almost done figuring out how to close the budget via one-time funds such as holding vacant positions open for a few months.
   b. Fiscal Year 2017 – The Administration is currently working on solving the FY17 budget gap and will need to make some base cuts. In addition, because of the decrease in the price of oil, the state’s revenue is decreasing, therefore it is likely that all 11 SBHE educational institutions will have to take a percentage cut from the base budget (likely 2.5% which is triggered by past legislation). We will be working over the next couple of weeks/months to determine how we make base cuts.
   c. "Allotment" (return of biennium funds)
   d. Transition of the Presidency
   e. Name and logo
   f. Continued work on Development (fundraising) projects
   g. Building Trust across campus

vi. We want to be sure to partner with faculty and staff to help us make decisions. Help us to understand what you are not going to do any longer so you are not having to do more, help us be creative in budget savings. Anywhere we can save helps all of us.

b. Question Period
   i. For FY 17 there is potential for 2.5% cut?
      1. Provost DiLorenzo: No, it is the second year of the budget gap issue, making up the tuition difference, the second piece is the 2.5%. We won’t know what the total percent is until we know the state’s revenues. We will likely know what the percentage cut on top of the budget deficit will be within the first two weeks of February.
   ii. You talked about increasing student enrollment, increasing the number of international students is vital to helping with budget shortfall but there hasn’t been any hard recruitment initiatives for international student recruitment within the past six years. We are sustaining international student enrollment but are not growing in this area. Are there plans to increase international student enrollment and if so are recruitment initiatives being discussed?
      1. Provost DiLorenzo: This will certainly be part of the mix in the future. Vice President Reesor and Sol Jensen, Associate VP for Enrollment Management, have been having meetings with the Deans to discuss recruitment in general which includes Undergraduate student enrollment, graduate student enrollment, and international student enrollment. They are asking the Deans what their capacity is for enrollment. What can they do, how should we go after those students, creating an actual plan for recruitment/retention of those groups.
   iii. The Writing Center is seeing the maximum amount of students that we can see right now and students are telling each other to not even attempt to make an appointment because they will never get in. We are essential to retention. We want to be sure that if we increase student enrollment, we have the resources needed to help retain students like the Writing Center.
      1. Provost DiLorenzo: The more you can help us to make data-based decisions the better. We want to know what the impact is. What’s the ROI? What are your priorities? If we have this information, we are more likely to invest.
   iv. There are currently two vacant director positions, the Director of International Programs an the Director of the Multi-cultural Center. Do you have plans to fill those positions moving forward and in the absence of the directors, how will continue functioning to serve the students?
      1. Provost DiLorenzo: Sandra Mitchell, Associate VP for Diversity and Inclusion, and I are addressing this currently. We have a meeting with the International Center scheduled for next week.
v. Suggestion Box Question: I was wondering if you have had any updates on what UND has or will be proposing to the State Board of Higher Education on the budget deficit?
   1. Provost DiLorenzo: We will know maybe by Friday or next week when we have to submit our information to the SBHE. The percent will be clear regarding the FY17 cuts, but different campuses will have different ways to handle it and we will figure it out based on what’s best for UND.

vi. Can you talk about the proposal to decrease the graduation requirement of a 125 credit minimum to 120 credits and the rationale for this decrease?
   1. Provost DiLorenzo: The SBHE system policy states that the requirement for undergraduate graduation is a minimum of 120 credit hours. UND’s minimum is currently 125 credits. If a student takes 15 credits every semester for eight semesters, that’s 120 credits. We are currently looking into whether this would be feasible. Right now 60% of the majors offered at UND only require 120 credits.

vii. If positions are held as a cost saving measure during FY16, will they be released in July?
   1. Provost DiLorenzo: We will begin searches but delay start dates until after July 1, 2016. We need to determine how it all factors in with the allotment. How do we help staff do more with less?

viii. How would you advise Staff Senate to help staff who are afraid of losing their jobs feel better and know that UND administrators are trying to do the best they can to keep everyone?
    1. Provost DiLorenzo: Our first priority when faced with the budget deficit was to not decrease jobs, furlough jobs, etc. and you will see that in how we are addressing the FY16 budget deficit. In each step along the way, it will be more difficult but we will do our best to maintain positions and do whatever we can to grow i.e. master planning (deferred maintenance) but it will be difficult. The more folks can help in looking at reducing redundancy, then we can save funds to continue to decrease the chance that jobs will be lost. We need to take critical look at what we are currently doing to determine if we need to continue doing them so that it reduces staff workload. We need to continue to look at ways to do things differently or stop doing things.

ix. Is work being done in the interim to address the need for support from the Legislature for next legislative cycle?
    1. Provost DiLorenzo: Yes, we have started working on the budget for the next biennium which is due late this summer.

x. Do you think our health insurance could be part of budget cuts i.e. making staff pay for health insurance?
    1. Provost DiLorenzo: The administration hasn’t talked about that yet but anything could be on the table. We have been wrestling with the cost of graduate student healthcare this past year. There are some universities who don’t pay for graduate student healthcare anymore because of the increase in costs. This is another thing we will need to deal with. We will have to look at everything.

xi. Who is determining if positions will/won’t be held?
    1. Provost DiLorenzo: The Deans are determining if positions will or will not be held in the VPAA’s cabinet. As far as the other Vice Presidents are concerned, the Directors or heads of units will be making those decisions.

er. Does the new nickname & logo have anything to do with budget
    1. Provost DiLorenzo: The University lost substantial income when we didn’t have a logo. Having a logo will build another funding stream. We are trying to get it done quickly to build spirit and income.

3. Approval of Staff Senate minutes for December 9, 2015 Staff Senate meeting.
   "Trish Hodny motioned to approve the Staff Senate Meeting Minutes from December 9, 2015. Seconded by Don Rasmussen. Motion carried."

4. Officer Reports
   a. Treasurer Report – Sarah Abentroth (was sent to Staff Senators on January 7, 2016)
b. Membership – Cheri Williams – at the moment Staff Senate is at 50 senators, down to 49 after Shar’s departure. We have a list of staff members who are interested in being on Staff Senate and will begin recruiting to fill the 50th senator position.


d. Staff Development – Pam Henderson, “Reignite your UND Spirit” speaker, Mark Lindquist will present on February 5, 2016 from 10-11:30am at the Chester Fritz Auditorium. Registration is open on the Learning and Development website.

e. Public Relations – Beth Moe, A new newsletter will come out in February.

f. Pam and Tyler presented the January U-Shine Award to Risa Zimmer at One-Stop Student Services. We are currently accepting nominations for the Random Acts of Kindness. Tyler will send it out via Staff Chat and will send to Rebecca Weaver-Hightower as well as Matt Kopp from Student Government to encourage faculty and students to complete a nomination.

5. Staff Senate Committee Reports – (committee reports were sent prior to meeting with the agenda)

a. The new Ombuds, Henok Elias, is on campus at this time. He will be opening his doors on February 1st. An announcement will go out in the U-Letter regarding where his office is located and how you can contact him. He will be the guest for the March Staff Senate meeting.

b. Reports will be posted on the Staff Senate website with the meeting minutes.

6. University Committee Reports – (committee reports were sent prior to meeting with the agenda)

No University Committee Reports

7. Suggestion Box

a. I have had staff individuals ask about tax withholding at the end of a calendar year to find out that they were taxed on Seeds for Success grant money received. Possibly they were informed of this at the time they received the grant but if you are able to make that abundantly clear that would be even more helpful. The question was forwarded to Trish Hodny who will respond.

b. There is currently a water fountain on the 1st floor of McCannel Hall. Would it be possible to convert this to a hydration station? Especially during cold and flu season it would be helpful to have a more sanitary option to fill my water bottle.

Suggestion was forwarded to Facilities who will respond.

c. I do not like the new suggestion box "past submissions and responses" - how it is now by departments rather than listed by dates. I go on often to look at what was submitted to the suggestion box and it was nice having them in date order so you didn't have to go back to look for particular questions....not knowing what questions were submitted

Elizabeth and Pam will respond.

d. My question is does a full time student who received the Staff Senate Scholarship in the fall for the academic year need to re-apply for it for the Spring 2016 session?

Pam responded and informed the person that the scholarship is split between the fall & spring semesters.

8. Business Items

a. Passing of the gavel: Sharley has accepted a position at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Her last day at UND will be January 22nd. The gavel was passed from Sharley Kurtz to Pam Henderson. Pam will now reside as the President of the Staff Senate. Sharley was awarded a memory book and UND apparel as a token of Staff Senate’s appreciation. Sharley stated, “Always remember that staff are important and staff have a voice.” Best of luck, Shar!

b. Interim Vice President Discussion: The Bylaws state that if the senate year is past the six month mark, the Vice President will step into the role of President, thus Pam will be the Staff Senate President for the remainder of the term. The Executive Committee will appoint an interim Vice President to fulfill the remaining term until officer elections in May. If you are interested in interim VP role, email Pam a statement of interest by January 25th. She will share all statements of interest with the Executive Committee at their meeting on January 27th where they will discuss the statements and appoint an interim VP.
9. Matters Arising/Open Discussion
   a. Survey Update – The survey group found a survey tool called “Modern Think” through the Chronicle of Higher Education. The group initially requested $5,000 from President Kelley. Unfortunately, there was a miscommunication between “Modern Think” and HR and it will cost closer to $12,000 for the survey tool, rather than $5,000. The group met earlier this week. Becky Weaver-Hightower & Pam are going to review the number of people that will take the survey as if they use a random sampling, it will reduce the cost. They would like to stay within the budget of $5,000-$6,000. The survey will open mid-March and will be open until the beginning of April. Concerns were raised regarding using a random sample rather than allowing for all who wish to voice their concerns to do so. Conversation ensued.
   b. Presidential Search Update, Shari Nelson & Angie Morgan
      i. The Presidential Search Committee has had two meetings thus far. They are in the process of reviewing the applications of the 37 applicants. The 37 total applicants will be rated by committee members based upon 14 attributes that were in the job description which was created by your feedback. The group is meeting on January 20th to select 12-14 candidates who will be interviewed in Minneapolis on February 1 and 2, 2016. The committee wants to be sure that staff’s voices are heard during selection process. Feel free to reach out to Shari or with feedback or questions. You may also submit anonymous questions for the Presidential Search Committee via the Staff Senate suggestion box and Pam will pass along to Shari and Angie.

10. Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

   Next Staff Senate Meeting
   February 10
   Skalicky Room 211