

Staff Council: Meeting Minutes

#5 – Thursday, November 2, 2023

Chair Room, Rubin Campus Center

Attendees: L. Baghsarian, W. Battelle, A. Boertjens, N. Caligiuri, J. Cluett, A. Curran, D. Dubois, R. Gardner, M. Hamilton, K. Hollan, C. Keller, A. LeSane, N. Luiz, S. Miles, E. Morganelli, T. Scola

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.
2. Meeting minutes #4 for 10/19 were approved.
3. Chair Report – Theona Scola:
 - a. Chair Scola presented an update to the Board of Trustees at the Meeting of the Corporation on 10/27. Slides are available to all Staff Council members in the Teams site. Staff Council has a standing slot at these meetings, which is equal voice to faculty governance.
 - b. Task Force to evaluate staff working conditions is moving forward. Staff Council representation will include: Theona Scola, Mike Hamilton, Lusine Baghsarian, and Jennifer Cluett. VP Lauren Turner will be delivering the charge and will likely appoint one other person.
 - c. President Wang has requested to attend a future Staff Council meeting. We are looking to get her on an agenda before the end of the calendar year. Ideally, we will be able to share our established goals at that time.
 - d. An ad-hoc working group is needed to review our Constitution & Bylaws to better define the eligibility for re-election and any other pertinent updates. Adrienne, Nicole C., Caitlin, and Theona agreed to participate.
 - e. Chair Scola is going to meet with Secretary of the Faculty, Mark Richman, to discuss ways to better formalize Staff Council as a WPI governance body. It was requested that we also explore the possibility of sharing an update on Staff Council at a faculty meeting in the future.
 - f. Sub-committee lead detailed reports are useful in streamlining our processes. They will continue to be reviewed by the Chair and Secretary to help in developing productive full Council meeting agendas.
4. Involvement in the Provost Search:
 - a. Chair Scola is going to circle back to VP Lauren Turner to discuss how we can contribute meaningfully to the process given the lack of formal involvement of Staff Council on the hiring committee.
 - b. Currently, there is no formalized mechanism for involving staff in these types of searches. It was noted that Staff Council should advocate for amendments to the handbook to include better staff representation on hiring committees for roles that impact and/or oversee staff positions.
5. Sub-committee Report Outs:
 - a. Election – Adrienne has joined this committee. Work will re-convene in the new year given that no new business arises in the meantime.
 - b. Community Engagement – The group is still working on gaining access to send emails via dl-staff.

- c. Feedback Form – Only a handful of new responses with no need for larger group discussion/action. They are anticipating more responses following the 11/2 Benefits Fair and as people are exploring the changes to benefits during Open Enrollment.
 - d. Events & Planning – The group is asking for donations from local businesses for raffle prizes at the 11/20 Harvest of Thanks event. Anybody with leads should connect with Lusine. The floor plan is being finalized. There will be light refreshments (apple cider, donuts), a gratitude wall, raffles spread throughout the event, and room to socialize.
 - e. Communications & Public Relations – The announcement of the Harvest of Thanks event went out via WPI Today. The flyer will also be handed out at the Benefits Fair on 11/2 and hopefully sent via email to all staff closer to the event. The group also reviewed the elections communication timeline and made updated suggestions that need to be revisited by the elections subcommittee.
 - f. Climate Survey – The survey has been disseminated and is seeing a promising response rate thus far. Reminder emails will be sent before the survey closes.
6. Review & Prioritization of Staff Council Goals:
 - a. Mike Hamilton provided an overview of the process used to develop the current compilation of the Staff Council Goals. This was completed through using AI and we explored the possibility of drilling down further to create action plans of tasks to meet our determined goals.
 - b. Full Council reviewed the current draft of the Goals and made suggestions for updates. Mike will make changes and share a new draft on Teams.
 - c. Discussion around what can realistically be delivered upon this year and how to address broader, complex goals took place. This will be ongoing with the possibility of communicating the overarching goals and values via a Staff Council strategic plan and supporting that plan through concrete action items that can be achieved via sub-committee work this year and outlining future steps.
 7. Meeting was adjourned at 10:30am.