# Staff Council: Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 19, 2023  
Zoom

Attendees: W. Battelle, A. Boertjens, N. Caligiuri, J. Cluett, D. Dubois, R. Gardner, M. Hamilton, P. Howe, C. Keller, A. LeSane, S. Miles

Guest Attendees: Eric Beattie, VP Campus Planning; Kevin King, Ayers Saint Gross representative; Ashwin Dharmdhikari, Ayers Saint Gross representative

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.
2. Meeting minutes for 10/5 were approved.
3. Chair Report – Vice Chair Battelle:
   1. Executive Committee & Sub-Committee Leads met with President Grace Wang and VP Lauren Turner earlier in the week to present the feedback collected by Staff Council over the past month or so. Staff Council representatives shared the key themes that emerged from the feedback form data and requested that the data be explored further. President Wang was grateful for our work in this area and is committed to working with staff to improve the work climate at WPI. President Wang has endorsed the formation of a task force to address these issues with a focus on finding equitable solutions for flexible work and reduced work hours.
   2. Vice Chair Battelle will be meeting with VP Turner this week to discuss the composition of the task force, which will include multiple Staff Council representatives that will be selected to provide the broadest insights into the diverse working conditions and challenges across campus.
4. Sub-committee Report Outs:
   1. Election – Staff Forum in the spring will also include the Meet & Greet for Staff Council candidates rather than holding a separate event. They are also working on revising the election process timeline.
   2. Community Engagement – still working on getting the distribution list for staff up and running. VP Turner has been working with IT and seems to have access for T&I so we’d like to explore getting Staff Council administrative access to use the distribution list as well.
   3. Feedback Form – Very few submissions since last Council meeting.
   4. Events & Planning – Lusine Baghsarian is taking over as Lead for this sub-committee. They have been working on the “Harvest of Thanks” fall staff event on 11/20, which is primarily a social reception with little to no programming. A flyer to advertise the event has been designed and was quickly reviewed by the full Council.
   5. Communications & Public Relations – Roxanne is working on the announcement for the “Harvest of Thanks” event to be published via WPI Today. The subcommittee is also going to review the election timeline and communications cadence during that process.
   6. It has been requested that we update the list of Staff Council sub-committee representatives. Caitlin will compile that information from prior meeting minutes and confirm with the sub-committee leads.
   7. Climate Survey – The sub-committee has been working to narrow down extra questions that would be beneficial to Staff Council data collection. It was asked that we encourage staff to complete the survey when it gets pushed out in the coming weeks. Responses are anonymous.
5. Involvement in the Provost Search:
   1. VP Turner requested a listening session with Staff Council for the Provost Search. As we recently did one with President Wang, we pushed back on this option and took the opportunity to explore how Staff Council can be involved in the process to represent the staff voice.
   2. There was interest in having representation on the search committee, but Staff Council is also open to other options for involvement such as access to the survey responses, an opportunity to interview candidates, etc.
   3. It was noted that the Provost Search survey is available to staff, but the setup with asking for identifying information as the first question may deter staff from responding given the climate of fear amongst staff around speaking out. We tested the survey and it is possible to submit without including identifying information but that was not obvious in the current design. We would like to suggest that it be adjusted or we could push to solicit feedback via the anonymous option on the Staff Council feedback form and provide that information to the search committee separately.
6. Election Day Committee Representation:
   1. Staff Council was approached by Student Activities to join the Election Day Committee. While this isn’t directly affecting staff, there are possibilities to engage staff in the community as part of the committee.
   2. Staff Council has not decided whether to provide representation, but will revisit the possibility within some of the sub-committees and/or at a future full Council meeting.
7. Campus Framework Plan:
   1. Representatives from Ayers Saint Gross and VP Eric Beattie joined to solicit feedback from Staff Council about the physical spaces on campus. This listening session provided an opportunity to share what we felt was working on campus and what challenges we are experiencing with regards to physical space.
   2. Staff Council members were also encouraged to fill out the electronic survey to provide deeper feedback, as well as share the survey with other staff on campus.
8. Meeting was adjourned at 10:30am.