

Washburn University Staff Council Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2023

Members Present – Eileen Brouddus, Deb Bruner, Gayle Davis, Raelyn Dutra, Kaydee Emperley, Matt Flink, Kaylyn Hobelman, Cynthia Holthaus, Luther Lee, Teresa Lee, Linda Mathews, Kirsti Mzhickteno, Tisha Prather, JD Reynolds, Carissa Schmidlein, James Thayer, Anne Walbridge

Members Not Present – Althea Henderson, Christina Pirtle, Gayla Sarkesian

Guests – Christa Smith and Laura Stephenson

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kaydee Emperley at 3:02 pm.
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Attendance was taken by Zoom chat & for those who joined in-person at Lincoln Room.
- III. Approval of October 10th meeting minutes (Motion)
 - a. Voting
 - i. Motion – Eileen Brouddus
 - ii. Second – Tisha Prather
- IV. Guest Speaker: **Christa Smith and Laura Stephenson**, *DEI Climate Survey*
 - a. DEI Climate Survey was administered in February 2023 through Hanover Research to staff, faculty, and students at Washburn University Washburn Tech campus.
 - b. Christa Smith is providing results from the DEI Climate Survey.
 - i. Shared Fall 2022 Faculty, Staff, and Student Race/Ethnicity/Gender demographics, each shared individually by group. Other categories of results included importance of DEI, belonging, campus safety, etc.
 - ii. Overall, the results are positive but when you break down results by different groups or demographics that reported to survey, the results have less agreement.
 - c. Dr. Laura Stephenson is going to talk about ideas that have come from the DEI Climate Survey results and address ideas or concerns going forward.
 - i. **Address Needs of Diverse Community Members**
 1. Doubled amount of need-based scholarships – *Launched in Spring 2023: Shawnee County Promise and Thrives need-based scholarships*
 2. Continued investment in and development of English and Math pathways – *Started addressing during COVID: Changed Math requirements and Math Lab support for students, English had similar changes*
 3. WU 101 programming focused on diverse student needs – *Constantly being updated to address needs of student body*
 4. CTEL professional development opportunities such as inclusive teaching in STEM – *Many workshops include topics about diverse learners, STEM programs and ways to be more inclusive in teaching STEM subjects*
 5. Focused Office of Student Accessibility collaborating across academic units – *Prior was not coordinated between WU, WU Tech, and Law School campuses*
 6. Moving Education Department out of Carnegie to Plass – *Moved in Fall 2023*
 7. Increased availability of larger chairs/desks in classrooms

8. Creation of Assistant Director of Belonging in Student Life – *Located in OSID in Student Life, doing a lot of programming for multicultural students*
 9. Review of student success data disaggregated by demographic group to identify and address areas of improvement – *How can we improve teaching practices?*
- ii. Improve Washburn’s Recruitment and Retention Strategies**
1. Antibias training for faculty recruitments
 2. “Inclusion advocates” on faculty recruitment committees
 3. Commitment to inclusive teaching as required qualification for every faculty recruitment
 4. New assistant provost for faculty position that includes support recruitment, development, and retention of diverse faculty – *Relocated position from CTEL to Provost’s Office, currently Dr. Danny Wade*
 5. Continued detailed recruitment plans develop for every faculty recruitment with assistance from Equal Opportunity Director – *Hopes to help diversify applicant pools*
 6. More robust faculty mentoring program that includes financial compensation and required training for faculty members
 7. Systematic review of aggregate faculty applicant pool to assess diversity of candidate pool (*in PageUp*)
- iii. Reevaluate processes in reporting and handling incidents of harassment, bias, and discrimination**
1. Careful review of processes to begin Fall 2023
 2. Determine appropriate reporting for incidents – *define clearer definitions for harassment vs. bullying vs. discrimination*
 3. Implementation of “post-mortem” process among administrators involved in responding to reported incidents as mechanism for continuous improvement
- iv. Campus Safety**
1. Plans to move Library to Plass
 2. Campus Police x1300 – *New number for WUPD, x1153 isn’t inactive yet*
 3. Consider lighting, landscaping, and security cameras in upcoming campus planning processes
- d. Questions or Comments
- i. Eileen Brouddus agreed that the need for follow-up with an incident is needed, setting up expectations is a positive idea.
 1. Dr. Stephenson asked about where to share updates of “how to” or “next steps” for what occurs after reporting an incident. She shared the idea of providing information on Washburn’s website. Additional ideas from representatives in meeting included putting in MyWashburn, a message with information on an online form or auto-reply if incident is reported by email or phone.
 - ii. Matt Flink asked how to get more information on the faculty mentoring program. There is a retention issue on Washburn Tech campus and he doesn’t think WU Tech currently participates in this faculty mentoring initiative. Carissa shared this question in a follow-up email with Dr. Stephenson and Christa Smith.
 - iii. There will be another Climate Survey again, please respond to continue sharing your voice.

V. Committee Reports:

- Chair Reports – Kaydee Emperley
 - No meeting scheduled.
- Board of Regents Meeting Update – Kaydee Emperley, Eileen Brouddus

- Focused on Strategic Planning
- Next WUBOR meeting is December 7, 2023.
- All Faculty/Staff Email/Posting Committee – Eileen Brouddus, Vacant
 - No news. She will be talking to John Haverty to see if we are moving forward.
- Benefits Committee – Eileen Brouddus, Kaydee Emperley, Tisha Prather
 - No meeting since October.
 - Teresa Lee shared that Open Enrollment for employee benefits concluded last Thursday. HR is in the process of communicating the information received from Open Enrollment is set-up for the first pay period of 2024. There was good participation from employees as in years past.
- Food Advisory Committee – Gayle Davis
 - Thanksgiving Lunch is this Thursday, November 17th, 2023.
 - There has been more usage of food trucks on Washburn’s campus this academic year. WSGA is vetting food trucks to coordinate contracts through Chartwells.
- Parking Ticket Committee – Deb Bruner
 - No updates.
- Safety Committee – Chris Pirtle
 - No updates.

VI. New Business:

a. Questions from Constituents

i. Why don’t we have bereavement leave benefit?

1. Teresa Lee shared that Washburn employees are able to manage their PTO personal and sick leave accrued time. Over the last couple decades, it has been helpful to employees, especially employees who are international and need a few days to coordinate travelling to another country. It is detailed in [WUPPRM](#) in section 4.4 under Board Approved Policies: E. Benefits (page E-4).

a. 4.4 Reasons for Sick Leave. Sick leave is granted because of:

- *The illness, pregnancy, or temporary disability of the Employee; and,*
- *The illness or death of immediate and limited extended family members. The Administration shall define “extended family members” in detail.*

2. If a new employee does not have enough sick or personal time accrued yet and is needing sick leave for bereavement, they are able to request time off as detailed in [WUPPRM](#) in section 10 under Regulations and Procedures: E. Benefits (page E-5).

a. 5.3 Reasons for Sick Leave.

- *The death of an extended family member of an employee who is in his/her initial probationary period and who has not yet earned sufficient paid leave (sick or personal) to take paid time off. In this case, the employee may request up to 3 working days of sick leave. The request is subject to approval by the Department Head and respective Area Head with a copy to Human Resources.*

ii. Why does a previous employee that had vested in the retirement plan who returns to WU have to wait to be vested in retirement plan again?

1. It’s a typical provision in retirement plans. HR has done a lot more to automate with TIAA and fees. Anyone can update their records with HR to communicate with TIAA.

- b. Eileen Brouddus mentioned the Childcare Initiative – If you are interested in participating with Faculty Senate to do research, please let Eileen know by email.
- c. Cynthia Holthaus wanted to reminder about this Friday’s Community Input Forum by Zoom at 3:30pm, please join if your schedule permits. The focus will be on Strategic Plan, the survey will be sent after the forum.

VII. Old Business:

VIII. Informational Items:

- a. Next Meeting: December 12, 2023, 3:00 – 4:00 pm via Zoom Video Conference and in the Lincoln Room, Memorial Union

IX. Adjournment (Motion)

- a. Motion – Deb Bruner
- b. Second – Eileen Brouddus

Minutes submitted by Staff Council Secretary Carissa Schmidlein.