

Staff Council Meeting – Feb. 22,2024

In attendance: Brent Dotson, Cody Irick, Melissa Graham, Holly Martin, Jennifer Williams, Angie Burgy, Pat Harris, Cyndi Dotson, Elizabeth Knick, Vanessa Chilcote, Al Collins, Beth Wood, Sami Kincaid, Austin Fields, Jackie Bennett, Autumn Bender, Curtis Shriver and Sam Copen.

Brent Dotson – Call to order

First order of business – Jennifer Williams needs to step down as Secretary. We need to have a volunteer or nomination to fill the role as Secretary.

Cyndi Dotson volunteers. Melissa motions to accept Cyndi as Secretary, several people seconded it.

Reports:

Brent – In the last Cabinet meeting, we mostly focused on the new AI Bot that Administration is putting forward for students to interact with even after hours. They will be able to ask certain questions and get certain answers and information. We had a small demonstration in Cabinet and it looks like it's going to be a pretty good tool for them. Another thing we talked about was using Chat EPT where you can ask it questions and it comes back with information. We were throwing different questions at it and getting different responses and I think that will be a really good tool and could really help in a lot of different areas.

Cody Irick, Board of Governors – Our last meeting was centered around the HLC. The President read 13 pages of information on Criterion 1-5, asked a lot of questions of the Board members to prepare us for the visit on the 4th at 12-1:30. That was pretty much the entire meeting.

Melissa Graham, ACCE – The last meeting, I was unable to attend but with the emails that I have seen come through, I have a copy of all the legislation and where is in the process if anyone would like to see it. I know the HV 50/50 related to authorizing legislative rules regarding Higher Education is something that they are trying to work with the smaller institutions to be able to piggy back off the larger institutions in order to get things at a cheaper rate than they are getting.

I'm sure everybody is aware of the PEIA increase. It will be happening again in July.

Brent - Is the Governor doing anything for that?

Melissa – I actually think that there is a bill in here that the Governor is putting forward, I don't think it has gone through any of the steps yet, hasn't gone to the House or Senate so far. They are saying that the discussed 5% increase, there is not enough funding to offset it, it would be up to the Governor to pull money from somewhere. I have not heard anything yet about going outside of PEIA at this time.

They are also discussing having a salary study done, for staff, in place by May 1st. Because Higher Education staff are under paid and the structure hasn't been updated since 2017.

I know there has been a lot of discussion, and it's a big thing for our institution because we used to post the salary on the job postings and we no longer do. There really shouldn't be any job position posted without a salary range.

(Group discussion about the pay scale and how it effects the application process.)

Melissa – ACCE bylaws are being reviewed and updated, not sure when this survey is supposed to come out, they weren't able to get approval from the Chancellor. They are trying to rework it, it's supposed to go out to all staff at all West Virginia Universities to find out their experience of shared- governance in their institutions, like how staff, faculty and Administration incorporate together. That survey is still in process.

BridgeValley's concealed carry Policy is out for 30-day comment.

Senate Bill 870 is trying to prevent Higher Education Institutions from having DEI offices or officers.

End of the ACCE report.

Vanessa Chilcote, Treasury report – November we had some Alternative lunches, hot dogs and pepperoni rolls. We made a deposit of \$267.00, which bring the ending balance in the Employee Emergency Fund -\$1,105.00.(November Balance)

In our Activity Fund, we did a Yule Tide Week.

- We had hot chocolate and cookies - \$124.22

Christmas Luncheon –

- \$500.00 donation from the WVUP Foundation
- Table cloths/Candy Canes/Center pieces - \$170.57
- Total cost from Ricky's – Hot dog sauce and Luncheon invoices combined -\$1,470.00

Alternatives Lunches - \$110.72

- Hot Dogs – Water/Buns – Deposit \$72.00
- Taco in a Bag – Canceled due to Extended Holiday by the Governor

Purse Bingo – Angie has purchased all the purses for the Purse Bingo - \$1,869.94

Ending balance \$5,606.42

Staff Council Fund Balances:

- Children of Classified Staff Fund - \$78,699.75
- WVUP Employee Scholarship - \$124,740.33
- Drema Starkey Scholarship Fund - \$20,742.46
- Foundation Employee Emergency Fund - \$1,763.85

Angie Burgy – If everyone could try to get Business or people to sponsor the cost of a purse so we can start this event off in the clear that would be great!

Brent Dotson – The Evaluation Sub-team – I hope everyone has seen the emails coming around about comments and concerns about the new Evaluation tool, some of the comments that we have been getting, there is confusion between the 2 forms. One form is for supervisors to evaluate employees and the other form is for supervisors to evaluate supervisors. So, they are two separate tools.

The sub-team will be meeting again on March 7th to review all of the comments or suggestions and make any notes or changes that are needed. After this is completed, it will then need to be reviewed by the Administration and training will have to take place. Because ultimately this will be used for merit-based raises as soon as that system is in place.

We are going to move into the Concealed Carry Policy and Al Collins will give us more information on that.

Al Collins – I do have a policy or procedure laid out, I have sent it to Tori and we will be discussing it in Cabinet next week, and getting it ready for the Board of Governors.

Marshall did a really in-depth look at this, there are 11 states that already have this in effect, and Marshalls Safety team called every college in all 11 states, and asked them about this. They all said that everybody was worried and concerned about it and 6 months later nobody even remembers the policy. It did not become the “wild west” like everyone feared, it didn’t change much at all. Our policy right now is no weapons on campus at all, but if you are silly enough to think that I am the only person carrying a gun here, you are naive. I guarantee there are weapons on this campus every single day. This is just going to make it legal.

This is effective July 1, 2024, there will still be some areas where you cannot carry.

- You cannot carry in any room where any student or employee disciplinary action or proceedings are being discussed or handled
- Sole occupancy offices. If you have an office that is solely your office alone, it has to be marked, but you can dictate a “weapon-free area”. But if you are an employee with a concealed carry license, you can still carry in your office even though you designate it “weapon free” for others. There is nothing we can do to stop an employee who has a concealed carry permit from carrying.
- You will not be allowed to carry in the ATC Building because they house the Welding labs, because of the propane and such chemicals
- The Caperton Center because it is a secondary location for Wood County Schools as well as a college area
- Student Counseling area, you will not be able to carry in any area where psychological counseling is done
- Other labs as specified by signage, the science labs do not qualify. The law states that you have to have 55-gallon drums of chemicals to qualify, we have gallon jugs so it does not qualify.
- Anytime we have special events on campus like the math field day and such events where there are secondary or elementary school kids here we can list certain areas where you cannot carry in the areas where that is taking place.
- Private functions, we just had that “Home Go” show this past weekend, we can say that no weapons are allowed but private functions can override it and say that it is ok to have a weapon where as if we rent the room we can say that it no weapons allowed.

- If you are carrying and you need to go into a “weapon-free” area, the bill says that you need to return it to your vehicle and secure it so it is not visible.
- It is unlawful, in any manner to discourage a person from exercising their right to have a weapon lawfully secured on themselves or in their vehicle.
- College employees are not allowed to engage any person to find out if they have a valid license or are carrying a concealed firearm. The only employees who will engage those carrying a firearm on campus are Campus Police or an authorized official.
- If you see a weapon either on a person or in a vehicle, you can report it. No one is allowed to open carry on campus, it must be concealed. If you see a weapon on someone, DO NOT CALL 911, unless you feel threatened.
- If someone leases part of our building, example, United Way leases part of JCC, United Way has the right to declare their space as “Weapon free”, but the rest of the building and the parking lots do not qualify

(Al is going to check on employees carrying that work n the ATC, and he will also ask about the nursing labs because of the Oxygen)

There will be an Active Shooter Drill next Friday, March 1, 2024. Basically, to check the Early Alert buttons. It will also send an alert to your computer.

Brent – Children of Classified staff scholarships, we have 3 this semester. One for \$487.42, next is \$207.60 and the last one is \$38.23. For a total of \$733.25. Can I get a motion to approve paying these amounts for these students?

Pat Harris motions to approve

Cyndi Dotson seconds

Employee of the month voting – Bob Cooper!

Next meeting March 21st, 9:00am.

Brent – Motion to adjourn?

Al – motion

Second – Everyone. Lol