

Washburn University Staff Council Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2021

Members Present – Leah Brown, Matt Busey, Meagan Smejdir, Christa Smith, Blaine Smith, Marie Hall, Erik Carlson, Jackie Askren, Gayla Sarkesian, Jennifer Bixel, Janice Martin, Kathy Iwig

Members Not Present – Drew Liggett, James Scotti, Nancy Province

Guests – Dr. Kelly Erby, Danielle Dempsey-Swopes, Deb Mikulka, Dr. Eric Grospitch

I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Christa Smith at 3:02pm.

II. Roll Call

a. Roll call was taken by Zoom chat.

III. Guest Speakers:

a. Dr. Eric Grospitch, Vice President for Student Life

- i. Washburn is working to provide the COVID vaccine to Washburn students, faculty, and staff
 1. We have been asked to cease providing the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, but are still providing the Moderna vaccine
- ii. After the graduation ceremonies in May 2021, Washburn will begin having conversations about policies moving forward (example: the mask requirement)

b. Danielle Dempsey-Swopes, Director of University Diversity & Inclusion and Dr. Kelly Erby Assistant Dean, Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

- i. Campus Climate Reporting Process
 1. This is a method where the entire campus community has an avenue to report incidents that occur on campus that center around a bias incident
 2. This process is necessary to create an inclusive community, and for us to uphold Washburn's core values of Inclusion, Respect, and Collaboration
 3. Community members experience actions that make them feel insulted or excluded because of who they are, for which there is no other remedy or response
 - a. Behavior that is legally not discriminatory
 - i. These areas will be evaluated:
 1. level of severity
 2. level of pervasiveness
 3. impact on ability to work or learn
 - b. Behavior that demonstrates ignorance or incivility
 - c. Behavior that have a detrimental impact or effect despite positive intent
 4. To report a Campus Climate Incident, please visit this link:
<https://www.washburn.edu/statements-disclosures/campus-climate.html>

5. Goals of the Campus Climate Reporting Process
 - a. Respond to incidents of bias as reported by students, faculty, and staff
 - b. Provide care and support to those who experience bias
 - c. Explore avenues for conflict resolution mediation
 - d. Monitor trends that may affect the overall campus climate
 - e. Support ongoing community healing and education
 6. Campus Climate Team consists of the following individuals:
 - a. Associate Vice President of Student Life
 - b. Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs
 - c. Director of Diversity & Inclusion
 - d. Director of Human Resources
 - e. Chair of Academic Diversity & Inclusion
 - f. Associate Dean for Law Student Affairs
 - g. Assistant Dean for Tech Student Services
 - h. To learn more about the Campus Climate Team, please visit this link: <https://www.washburn.edu/statements-disclosures/campus-climate.html>
- ii. Inclusive WU Network
1. This group provides restorative justice, focusing on the following areas:
 - a. Create opportunities for acceptance of responsibility for harm
 - b. Facilitate a non-adversarial climate for resolution
 - c. Opportunity for education, understanding, and growth
 - d. Demonstrate care and provide emotional support for healing and inclusion
 - e. Repair relationships and restore trust
 - f. Nurture sense of belonging
 2. What the Inclusive WU Network Cannot Do:
 - a. Require that parties respond or participate
 - b. Assure action on behalf of the University
 - c. Enforce recommendations
 - d. Make decisions on behalf of the University
 - e. Infringe upon rights guaranteed by state or federal law
 - f. Address any ongoing threat of harm or safety
- iii. Questions
1. If you see an incident occur, please submit a report so that the Campus Climate Team can look in to the incident.
 2. Is the reporting process anonymous? Yes, you can choose to report anonymously. If you choose to report anonymously, please be aware that it will be more difficult to provide support.
 3. Does this reporting process and WU Inclusive Network apply to both Washburn and Washburn Tech? Yes!
- iv. Faculty & Staff Affinity Groups
1. Faculty and staff who share a common purpose or interest may apply to form an affinity group for networking, collaboration, and support
 2. All WU (Washburn University & Washburn Tech) faculty and staff are welcome to join

3. Complete an online application here: bit.ly/WUaffinity
4. Examples of Affinity Groups that exist at other institutions
 - a. Faculty & Staff of Color Association
 - b. Women's Association for Networking & Development
 - c. African American, African and Native American Association
 - d. Asian and Asian American Association
 - e. Hispanic/Latinx Association
 - f. LGBTQ Association
 - g. Veterans
 - h. Accessibility
 - i. Interfaith
5. How do we find a list of affinity groups at Washburn, or learn more about how to join an affinity group?
 - a. Visit this link: <https://www.washburn.edu/diversity/index.html>

IV. Approval of March 9, 2021 Minutes (Motion)

- a. Voting
 - i. Motion – Erik Carlson
 - ii. Second – Matt Busey
 - iii. Votes
 1. Yay – 12
 2. Nay – 0
 3. Abstain – 0

V. Committee Reports:

a. Chair Report – Christa Smith

- i. Dr. Farley Meeting on 4/5
 1. Commencement is scheduled for May 1st for 2020 graduates
 2. KBOR
 - a. Putting more pressure on Washburn to comply with other schools (example: EN 300 requirement)
 - b. Restoring some budget cuts that we had last year; we are hopeful to have them restored
 - i. If these are restored, then Washburn may consider a salary package
- ii. KBOR 3/25
 1. We are better financial shape than we thought we would be as we approach post-COVID times; we are not facing any cuts to staff positions
 2. COVID testing and vaccinations updates
 3. School of Law building – construction will begin soon, 25-million-dollar project with 14 million coming from donors

b. Board of Regents Meeting Update – Christa Smith

c. All Faculty/Staff Email/Posting Committee – Jackie Askren and Christa Smith

- i. March 24th
- ii. Reviewed current guidelines and policies for posting in WU Announcements (via email)

- iii. Workplace will no longer be available at Washburn, primarily because they were going to start charging a fee to Washburn
 - 1. Looking for feedback on Workplace – what we liked, what we didn't like, and what we would want to change
 - a. If lots of people used the tool, it could be really helpful and useful; we did not see very much usage
 - b. If you have any feedback about Workplace, please let Christa and Jackie know so they can share with the committee
 - 2. Consider replacing with Yammer
- d. Benefits Committee – Jennifer Bixel, Emily Schneider, Christa Smith**
 - i. March 23rd
 - 1. Presentation from Watco Benefit Group – this group helps Washburn to manage the benefits that Washburn offers to faculty and staff
 - a. Discussed current benefits, plan utilizations, scheduled renewals
- e. Food Advisory Committee – Jan Martin**
 - i. No Meeting
- f. Parking Ticket Committee – Leah Brown and Blaine Smith**
 - i. No Meeting
- g. Safety Committee – Christa Smith (currently vacant)**
 - i. March 30th
 - 1. New template for website
 - 2. COVID 19 response updates
 - 3. Loosening regulations in residence halls
 - 4. Will re-visit the 6 feet social distancing after spring2021; this may loosen in residence halls after spring 2021
 - 5. Continuing of Operations Plans – plans for how to continue operating in the event of a natural disaster or emergency; these are created for individual areas, and then added to the larger plan
 - 6. Facilities – capital improvement projects, construction instructions for law school construction workers
 - a. New lighting projects in the parking lots over the summer 2021
 - b. They have a TON of hand sanitizer left over, so if your department needs any, just contact Facilities
 - 7. Tornado shelters need to be kept nearly empty; WUPO will be checking the tornado shelters
 - a. Basement of Benton and Garvey after hours; these should be unlocked
 - 8. Crosswalks – they will check in with the city of Topeka
 - 9. Bird Scooters are coming to town
 - ii. Next meeting is April 27, 2021

VI. Old Business:

- a. Restrictions/Exceptions/Limitations in Employee Benefits
 - i. Christa received only a few; she spoke with HR and all questions were resolved
 - ii. If you or your constituents have any questions or something they would like to see in the benefits package, please let Christa know!

VII. New Business:

a. Vice-Chair and Safety Committee nominations

i. Vice Chair Nominations

1. Matt Busey

a. Motion – Jackie Askren

b. Second – Erik Carlson

c. Vote

i. Yay – 12

ii. Nay – 0

iii. Abstain – 0

ii. Safety Committee Nominations

1. Jackie Askren

a. Motion – Matt Busey

b. Second – Blaine Smith

c. Vote

i. Yay - 12

ii. Nay – 0

iii. Abstain – 0

b. Employee Recognition Ceremony

i. May 14, 2021 in Washburn A & B from 3pm-5pm

1. 3:30pm – words from Dr. Farley, Dr. Mazachek, and Chris Kuwitzky

2. Videos from students & scrolling awards on the screens

3. Live stream and in person event with pre-packaged food/snacks

4. Recognition of service for everyone for both 2020 and 2021

5. Years of Service will be honored by HR, and will be mailed to your home

ii. Retirement Ceremony on May 4, 2021

1. May 4, 2021 from 3:30pm-5:00pm

2. Celebrating retirees for 2020 and 2021

3. In person, come and go, event only with pre-packaged food

4. Make sure that you RSVP if you are planning to attend this event

VIII. Informational Items:

a. Don't forget to take advantage of free access to SRWC – until June 30, 2021

b. Check Bods Connect for some upcoming events!

c. Next Meeting: May 11, 2021 – Zoom Video Conference - 3:00 - 4:00 pm

IX. Adjournment (Motion)

a. Motion – Erik Carlson

b. Second – Matt Busey

c. Votes

i. Yay – 12

ii. Nay – 0

iii. Abstain – 0

Minutes submitted by Staff Council Secretary Meagan Smejdir.