

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 8, 2006

Members in Attendance: Jennifer Dube, Jeff Jones, Matty Leighton (Recorder), Patrice MacNevin, Doreen Palmer (UNH-M), Toni Searles, Jason Brodeur (Chair)

Members Not in Attendance: Slava Bruder, Lisa Wilder

Guests: Sharon Demers, Human Resources; Holly Hillsgrove, Council Candidate; Janice Pierson, Council Candidate; Jody Record, Campus Journal; Lonn Sattler, SPPC

Agenda Items

Opening Remarks/Review of October Minutes – Jason Brodeur, Chair

The October minutes were accepted by acclamation.

New Council Membership – Jason Brodeur, Chair

There were three issues in the area of council membership:

1. Resignation – April Damon tendered her resignation effective immediately due to the responsibilities of her new position with CIS/Academic Computing. However, she will continue to help Jason with the OS Council web site redesign.
2. New Member – Holly Hillsgrove expressed an interest in joining the council, and at Jason's request she told the council a little about herself. She has been an administrative assistant in the Political Science department for 6 ½ years, but has just accepted a position with CIS/Academic Computer as April Damon's replacement. She is interested in serving on the council because she'd like to meet different people, learn about other areas of the university, and get more involved on campus. The vote to elect Holly to the council was unanimous, and she will take over April's district.
3. New Member – Janice Pierson also asked to join the council. Janice has been with UNH for 18 years, 17 of which were with the Interhostel Program, and she now serves as Program Assistant for the President's Commissions Office. She has been a member of the Administrative Office Professionals (AOP) Planning Committee for the past five years. Last year she served as the AOP Program Committee chair. She is interested in serving on the council because she would like to increase the visibility of operating staff on campus. The vote to elect Janice to the council was unanimous.

AOP Program Changes – Group Discussion

Jason summarized the changes to the AOP Program for the benefit of any members who might not have had a chance to review them. Effective this fiscal year, the AOP Conference will be held every other year, during "even" fiscal years. Therefore, the next AOP Conference will be held in March 2008. In "odd" fiscal years (i.e., FY07, FY09) Human Resources and the AOP Planning Committee will offer two other series in place of the conference:

- ▶ The AOP Speaker Series – The goal of this program is to schedule two keynote speakers every “odd” fiscal year. The committee hopes to host the first keynote speaker during winter 2007 and the second in spring 2007.
- ▶ The AOP Luncheon Learning Series – This program is already in place, but the goal is to “jumpstart” the offerings in fiscal year 2007 by increasing to between two and five programs each year (depending on the interest of the community, AOP conference planning, and the AOP speaker series scheduling).

If administrative professionals have a specific topic or keynote speaker they would like included in either of the two “odd year” programs, they should contact Christina VanHorn.

Feedback that council members received from constituents seems to indicate that, overall, administrative office professionals on campus are pleased with the changes. Janice, as a member of the AOP Planning Committee, was able to help the council understand the reasoning behind the new format. She explained that because the conference is basically a one-shot, all-or-nothing opportunity just once per year, the AOP committee felt that having a different format on alternate years would allow a greater number of staff to take advantage of the programs and include people who might miss out when they can’t make it to the conference. She also noted that the decision was not an attempt to save money or take away benefits, since the amount of money budgeted for the program has not changed. During the subsequent discussion about the changes, the following suggestions were made:

1. Patrice MacNevin – Offer some of the speaker series and “luncheon learning” series events as early morning/breakfast sessions or late afternoon/“coffee hour” sessions for those employees who work hours other than 8:00 – 5:00 or who have difficulty getting out of the office during regular work hours.
2. Holly Hillsgrove – Offer a smaller-scale “thank-you” luncheon for administrative office professionals on the years when the conference does not take place.

An additional area of discussion emerged around the issue of “release time” for staff who serve on councils and commissions or participate in activities that fall into the category of service to the university. Some supervisors gladly allow staff time to participate in these types of activities, while other supervisors require that staff members use their lunch hours or personal time. The council asked Sharon Demers if there was a way for HR to create a policy that requires supervisors to provide release time for service activities. Sharon responded that it was unlikely that the university would mandate release time, but they could certainly provide regular communication to supervisors that strongly encourages the release of employees for university service. In fact, she even suggested that it might be possible to send communications to supervisors of individuals when they are selected for service. She will get the names of the members of the AOP Planning Committee and send a pilot communication about release time to their supervisors.

Transportation Policy Committee – Jeff Jones

Prior to this month’s meeting, Jason sent out an announcement to all operating staff asking for volunteers to represent the OS on the Transportation Policy Committee. Two staff members stepped forward, Tracy Burns from the Child Study and Development Center and Diane Hall

from Contracts and Grants. Jeff Jones, as Transportation Services Coordinator, has direct knowledge of Transportation Services, and has been selected to work together with Tracy and Diane to compile notes from each committee meeting and report back to the OS Council. At the most recent meeting, the committee spent most of the meeting responding to Resolution 28.03 (attached to these minutes as Appendix A) submitted by the Student Senate. As a result of the resolution, the council is considering the following:

1. Improving service in the one-mile radius around UNH where student residents are precluded from obtaining on-campus parking passes. New stops have already been added on Route 5 which runs from Durham to Newmarket, and additional stops will be added to other routes as needed.
2. Adding service to the Market Basket grocery store in Lee. There is an issue of funding with adding a route, since it would require the university to purchase an additional bus (or buses) and hire and train at least two more full-time drivers. New buses now cost \$280,000 each.
3. Adding service to Rochester. This service would probably link up with the proposed Lee/Market Basket route. Transportation Services will study demand for service in Rochester before proceeding.
4. Extended hours of operation for the campus loop buses. Currently the campus loop buses stop running at 11:00 PM (functionally this is actually about 10:45 PM). This has already been approved and will probably go into effect next semester.
5. Adding service to Pease Tradeport, Granite State College, and UNH Manchester (as a joint venture with Manchester Transit Authority). These routes all require further study to determine demand and feasibility.

The committee also discussed the image of the Parking Department across campus. There is a perception that parking personnel are not “customer-friendly” to parking lot users. Although Transportation Services admits that parking fine revenues help to keep student and staff fees lower and reminds us that people who are ticketed have violated parking regulations, they would like to find ways to help people avoid parking in the wrong the places by accident and generally present a friendlier face to the public. One tactic they have considered is placing staff in booths at each parking lot in order to present a friendly and helpful face to commuters, but this would be costly. Jason suggested that permit-activated stanchions might achieve the goal of keeping people from unintentionally parking in lots where they are not authorized without costing as much.

Recap of Tri-Council Forum with VP Dick Cannon – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason and Patrice both attended the forum on Wednesday, October 18th. They reported that VP Cannon is very open to staff input and has agreed to make himself available for quarterly forums with the chairs of the three staff councils. During the first forum, the discussion touched on alternative energy sources and benefits cost mitigation. With his background in health care consulting, VP Cannon has a unique understanding of benefits issues and is sympathetic to staff concerns about benefits costs and quality. He is also environmentally conscious and is actively involved in implementing plans for a pipeline that will bring methane to UNH from a huge landfill in Rochester. This methane is currently being burned off rather than utilized as an

energy source. Although the cost to construct the pipeline is in the tens of millions, current studies indicate that the pipeline could pay for itself in four years or less by supplying up to 80% of the fuel for UNH's cogeneration plant for free. The cogeneration plant provides heat and electric power to the Durham campus.

Matty Leighton also noted that Jeff Jones and VP Cannon had intervened to resolve a constituent's complaint about shoddy service and products from a university-designated vendor. The constituent received a timely apology from the vendor as well as a complete refund. This is a good example of how the Operating Staff Council acts as a bridge between staff and administration to the benefit of both.

Annual Retreat – Jason Brodeur, Chair

The tentative date for the annual tri-council retreat is Wednesday, January 10th. This is the date of our regularly scheduled meeting for that month. President Newman has been invited to speak, and VP Dick Cannon will conduct another quarterly listening session with the tri-council representatives during the retreat. If any council members know of a conflict on this date, please e-mail Jason as soon as possible.

Performance Management Initiative Feedback – Group Discussion

Feedback that council members received from constituents indicates that operating staff are generally satisfied with the new performance management initiative. A number of staff members said a change was overdue. Although complaints were few, they included:

- ▶ A staff member whose supervisor refused to go to training sessions on the new procedure
- ▶ A staff member who did not like being “strongly encouraged” to attend the training sessions
- ▶ The general perception that the evaluation process is still subjective and may put staff members at the mercy of an unscrupulous or vindictive supervisor

Patrice MacNevin asked how the new process would accommodate staff members who do not have computer access. Sharon responded that those staff members will probably receive paper forms to fill out. Sharon and Jeff also pointed out that the actual rating system will require a paradigm shift for staff members and supervisors, as someone who is performing at 100% will receive a mid-range (average) grade. Sharon wanted to make sure that all understand that this initiative is a work in progress and will continue to be evaluated and refined as the years go by.

United Way Campaign – Sharon Demers

Sharon encouraged council members to publicize the United Way campaign. The campaign started last week and runs through the 22nd, and so far we are far short of our goal of \$50,000.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.

OS Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/os-council/>

PAT Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/pat-council/>

Appendix A

Student Senate Resolution XXVIII-03

Introduced by: Campus Structure Council
Student Body President, *Sean Kelly*

Date: September 17, 2006

Whereas, more than five-thousand undergraduate students who attend the University of New Hampshire are considered commuter students, and

Whereas, many of these commuter students live off campus but within the boundaries of Durham such as at the Young Drive houses, Mill Pond Apartment complex, and School House Lane houses, and

Whereas, there is not a Campus Connector Shuttle that stops within a reasonable walking distance of these apartments, and

Whereas, there are currently shuttles that transport students from Residence Halls to academic buildings, and

Whereas, the commuter students residing within one mile of campus may not purchase commuter parking permits enabling them to park in an area with a shuttle servicing campus, and

Whereas, providing shuttle services would be advantageous to students traveling in inclement weather, therefore

Be it resolved by the Student Senate of the University of New Hampshire to work with University Transportation Services and the town of Durham to expand existing Wildcat Transit Campus Connector service areas to accommodate the population of students who live off campus but within the Durham community.

Student Action: _____ **passes unanimously** _____ **Date:** _____
Speaker Verification: _____ **Date:** _____

Entire minutes from Student Senate meeting of September 17, 2006 are available at:

http://unh.edu/student-senate/Session%20XXVIII%20Agendas/Meeting_4.doc