Minutes of the Provisional Staff Advisory Committee to the President
Wednesday, October 26, 2011
Alumni Center, School of Education, Health and Human Performance

Attending: Tom Casey (ex officio), Herbert Frasier, Stan Gray, Silvia Youssef Hanna, Enid Idelsohn, John Inman, Aron Kuch, Cheryl McClary (ex officio), Brian McGee (ex officio), Anne McNeal, Robert Reese, Sheila Vanek, Marcia White

Not attending: J. J. Corbett, Marlene Navor, Jake Stoudenmire, Marlene Williams

Call to Order

Marcia White called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the October 12, 2011 meeting were distributed. There being no corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

Staff by Divisions
Tom Casey provided a list of staff members by division to Enid Idelsohn during the meeting. She will summarize it and report to the committee at the next meeting.

Communication Best Practices
Stan Gray reported on his research regarding communication best practices. He distributed a summary which is attached as Appendix A.

There was discussion about how staff members can submit suggestions to the committee for consideration. Anne McNeal distributed a list of possible subjects to include in an online suggestion form. It was decided that the form will not list specific subjects such as “Suggestions,” “Positive Comments,” and “Complaints,” but will be an open-ended page where the submitter can say whatever he or she wishes to say. However, there will be an optional opportunity to include name, phone number, email address, department and division with the caveat that if the submitter chooses to be anonymous, the committee will be unable to respond. John Inman felt that every suggestion that includes contact information should receive a response letting the submitter know that it has been received and what will happen next with it. Anne will draft an introductory paragraph for the form and place it in Sharepoint for the members to review and comment.

Stan Gray said that the most helpful part of other schools’ committee websites is a list of FAQs which is basically a short version of the bylaws.

In respect to whether or not the committee will submit annual reports, Brian McGee reported that the Faculty Advisory Committee does not submit them. They report primarily via meeting minutes.
One practice in Stan’s report was from the University of Vermont where peer advisors are available for non-represented staff. Brian McGee explained that peer advisors can receive suggestions from non-represented staff and submit them to the committee for consideration.

Silvia Hanna asked Stan whether he found instances of other schools sending out needs assessments. As an adjunct faculty member, she received one sent to our faculty. Stan said he did not see any, though some have sub-committees to address specific concerns. Linda McClenaghan in Human Resources sent out a needs assessment several years ago. Silvia will follow up with Linda.

Marcia White asked Stan whether he found any mention of suggestion boxes. He did not, though some committees made printed versions of the suggestion form available.

**Faculty Online Voting System**
Brian McGee reviewed the faculty online voting system in MyCharleston which is used for electing members of the Faculty Senate and approving changes in the Senate bylaws. (The members of the Faculty Advisory Committee are appointed, not elected.) Topics include announcements of upcoming elections, current elections which are usually left open for a week, election results including vote tallies, and a history of past elections. Current elections are also announced via email.

Brian contacted Andrew Bergstrom about programming a staff voting system, and we need to get our request into the programming queue now if we want to be able to vote online in spring semester. If specific seats are elected by division, it will take longer to program because IT will have to limit access to voting for those seats to staff members in that division. It is better to segment voting for committee seats than for bylaw amendments because of lower response rates in amendment votes. Student voting also usually has a very low turnout.

Faculty elections require only a plurality of votes, not a majority. Each voter can vote for only one person for a position even if more than one person will be chosen in the category.

Stan Gray wondered if there is a prepackaged voting program. Brian did not think purchasing such a product has been explored because the faculty voting system was migrated directly from CougarTrail. Aron Kuch will follow up with Andrew Bergstrom to determine whether Banner has a built-in capability or whether an add-on or plug-in would have to be purchased.

Brian said an administrator, usually chair of the nomination and election committee, maintains the voting system. Further questions about the faculty voting system can be directed to Michael Phillips, Beth Goodier or Andrew Bergstrom, who are familiar with it.

Brian pointed out that we will need a runoff system in case of ties, or, according to Roberts Rules of Order, it is accepted practice to flip a coin.

**Listserv and Generic Email Address**
Anne McNeal announced that a mailbox has been set up for the committee: sac@cofc.edu.

To provide an idea of how many staff members have regular access to the website and would be able to submit a suggestion form online, Tom Casey said that of 1300 employees, 1250 can complete leave reports or time sheets online. Tom will confirm that number and let the committee know whether some employees complete paper time sheets.
The question was posed whether we can tie announcements to leave reports and time sheets online. We cannot, but there is space for announcements on the MyCharleston home page.

When the suggestion form is online on the website, the committee will ask President Benson to send an email to Administrative Information, which reaches everyone on campus, notifying staff that the committee will use staff@cofc.edu to communicate with them. The committee will then send an email to that address alerting staff to communicate with the committee via the suggestion form which will be sent to sac@cofc.edu. Anne McNeal, Marcia White and Robert Reese will monitor the inbox for now with future responsibility addressed in the bylaws. Anne McNeal will draft an introductory statement for the suggestion form that specifies the role of the committee and clarifies that we are not a grievance committee. It will request constructive ideas as well as problems, and ask for recommended solutions to any problems that are submitted. The introductory statement will be on Sharepoint for review and comment.

**Constituent Concerns**

Silvia Hanna has heard from staff members who are concerned that staff members who are also students, even if they are paying for courses and not being reimbursed by the College, do not get student benefits such as free flu shots and student access to athletic events. Another suggestion is to allow staff members to take professional development courses that are not offered at the College at other local institutions and receive reimbursement for the cost.

Tom Casey said that benefits are determined based on the primary role of the individual. Silvia suggested a review of how many people are affected and how much expense is involved. Brian McGee said the president is interested in this issue and expects the committee to address it.

Robert Reese stated a concern that the committee cannot set up bylaws and address constituent concerns at the same time. Marcia White said we are just accumulating input on student concerns now. Robert said we need to let staff know what we are doing in our email to the staff following the president’s email to everyone.

**New Business**

**Board of Trustees Meeting**

Marcia White informed the committee that she, Anne McNeal, Robert Reese, and Herbert Frasier attended the Board of Trustees meeting on October 14. She recommends that other committee members attend the January meeting as well. Just call Elizabeth Kassebaum a week in advance and let her know you are coming. Meeting dates and times are announced in the online events calendar (calendar.cofc.edu) and by press release on the College’s homepage. Anne McNeal has requested receipt of a meeting notification from Betty Craig.

Marcia White discussed the fact that faculty and students have committee involvement and the opportunity to report at the board meeting. There is not a board committee where the Staff Advisory Committee is a natural fit. Anne McNeal recommended that we make a recommendation to the president that we find or create a space for the Staff Advisory Committee in the Board of Trustees committee structure.
Bylaws Discussion
Aron Kuch, John Inman, and Silvia Hanna have held meetings about writing the bylaws and have been looking at bylaws for similar committees at other institutions. They have posted a general framework for the bylaws on Sharepoint. Silvia said we can borrow from others but we need to bring the College’s unique culture into them.

John Inman suggested that, given the limited time remaining for this meeting, the discussion should center on standing and ad hoc committees.

Marcia White asked how many committees a typical Staff Advisory Committee has. John responded that most Staff Advisory Committees are larger, having 20 or more members. Robert pointed out that our committee size was specified in the creation of the committee. Marcia White thinks we can recommend increasing the size of the committee. Stan Gray said we should not limit the work of a committee based on its size, but leave room to adapt. Silvia Hanna suggested having committee membership from the various institutional divisions based on the number of employees in the divisions.

Aron Kuch pointed out that other schools have a staff senate which has a broader mission than solely advising the president and thus might need more members.

John Inman recommended that we have three to five standing committees with the opportunity to have additional ad hoc committees. John pointed out that the standing and ad hoc committees can include staff members who are not members of the Staff Advisory Committee. Anne McNeal said that is a good way to get others interested in becoming involved in the SAC.

The proposed Student Interaction Committee would address concerns common to staff and students such as the need for a fitness center. Marcia White said that, since we need to interact with faculty as well, we could combine them. Stan Gray suggested calling it the College Relations Committee.

There was discussion about combining other suggested committees.

Communication should not be combined with Recognition and Awards because the Communication Committee will have a large job. The Compensation Committee and Recognition and Awards Committee could be combined into a general welfare committee (but give it a better name).

Governance Committee refers to a committee overseeing the internal rules of the Staff Advisory Committee. It could be combined with the Executive Committee.

The next step will be to flesh out the two sections of the bylaws requiring the most work: membership of the Staff Advisory Committee and determining and defining standing committees. Other sections are either already determined, such as the purpose of the SAC, or are straightforward, such as amending bylaws and defining SAC officers and their duties, or will be discussed by the group as a whole, such as the permanent name for the SAC. Election of officers will continue to be accomplished by the members of the SAC. Aron Kuch will chair the task force on Membership with assistance from Robert Reese, Anne McNeal, John Inman, Silvia Hanna, Marlene Navor and Marlene Williams. Stan Gray will chair the task force on Committees with assistance from Sheila Vanek, Herbert Frasier, Cheryl McClary, Enid Idelsohn, J.J. Corbett and Jake Stoudenmire.
Aron Kuch pointed out the outline of the bylaws in Sharepoint with each section available for collaborative input. Only one person at a time can work on a particular section. Footnotes can be set easily by selecting “Insert Footnote” in the “References” tab.

Marcia pointed out that there is a Discussion section in Sharepoint so that task force members can discuss a section before they make changes to it. Members can set an alert to receive an email when changes are made, or at specified intervals such as daily or weekly.

**Next Meeting**

The committee will meet next at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, November 9, 2011 in 227 Addlestone Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne McNeal
Secretary
Appendix A

College of Charleston
Staff Advisory Committee

Communications Assessment

WEB
- Email via listservs
- Website
- Online submission forms: “Please describe your concern.”
- FAQ – shorthand for bylaws and questions; very helpful.

PRINT
- Flyers through campus mail
- Postings on bulletin boards
- Staff newsletters, brochures
- Annual reports

IN PERSON
- Direct contact with representatives who bring forth issues.
- Special events – socials, blood drives, etc.

ELECTIONS
- Conducted online for employees with active email, and on paper ballots for employees without email access.

ISSUES/SUGGESTIONS
- Can be delivered online or through campus mail. A name must be on the issue, in case clarification is needed, but can be kept anonymous once the issue is processed, if requested - (ASU, Vermont, Texas) Other universities offer an email link with no form (Georgia, Villanova)
- The issues form may be downloaded from the web, provided through an employee manual, or available through a representative.

SURVEYS
- Conducted regularly to gather suggestions, concerns, gauge interest in initiatives.

NON-REPRESENTED STAFF
- Peer advisors available for non-represented staff. Coordinated in conjunction with HR. (Vermont)