Minutes of the Staff Advisory Committee to the President
April 1, 2014
Randolph Hall Boardroom

Attending: Rudy Alisauskas, Walter Brown, Mandi Bryson, Frank Budd, Meredith Chance, Carl Crews, Elizabeth Dixon, Amy Orr, Ashleigh Parr, Phil Stevenson, Brian McGee (ex officio), Ed Pope (ex officio), President Benson

Not attending: Jessica Rodgers, Carl Crews, Herbert Frasier

Called to order at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes from the March 18 meeting were approved.

Old Business

Fitness Facility

By Monday, April 7, SAC will present a proposal to President Benson, and copy EVPs, that will include suggested times for the new fitness facility to be available to faculty/staff. Current peak usage times are 3-6 p.m. President Benson feels strongly that there will be available times for faculty/staff use. The leadership will find times for faculty/staff to utilize the new facility.

Great Colleges to Work For - HR Working Group

Human Resources created a working group that included a faculty representative and SAC representative, Amy Orr. Ed Pope stated that there were common answers in the survey results (the results are posted on MyCharleston).

Survey results indicated that there were communication concerns from “top-down” and “down-top”. The campus is able to address some issues, but there are others for which we have restrictions.

The working group made some recommendations:

- Compensation for faculty and staff: The group recommends that the College continue looking at the differences in salaries to bring us closer to our competitors.
  - The College has done many things to get us closer and we will continue to keep pushing the issue with President-Elect McConnell.
  - President Benson recognizes that the cost of living in Charleston is much higher than other places in the state.
• One recommendation the working group made was to modify the College’s tuition assistance program to be more in-line with what the state allows (18 credits per year from the 6 credits per year the College currently offers.
• Several other recommendations include issues that are not currently being addressed:
  o Flexible scheduling
    ▪ The leadership could allow EVPs to decide how flexible their division should be.
    ▪ The state allows flexible scheduling and the Citadel offers four-day work weeks in the summer.
    ▪ Brian McGee indicated that certain offices need to be scheduled 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. five days per week, and equity issues could cause problems. One suggestion was to have alternating weeks of being off Mondays or Fridays in order to assist with office coverage issue.
  o Telecommuting
  o Dress code
    ▪ Some offices are stricter on dress code while some offer a casual Friday or casual attire in the summer; however, different jobs require different dress codes.

Susan Hallatt indicated that the Graduate School has a fund where they purchase clothing that includes their wordmark to wear on casual days.

Ed has committed to push these policies forward with input from SAC. Ed will help get the policies started, but there are higher priorities currently that involve the code of conduct and grievance reporting.

**New Business**

President Benson reported that the EVPs will discuss listservs concerns in next week’s meeting. There are ongoing issues regarding listservs as the Faculty/Staff listserv is constantly active and full of communication about non-relevant information.

Ed reported that The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy has been updated and is under review. The College has altered the definition of “parent” to be more inclusive of those acting as the parent for a child (aimed at benefitting the LGBTQIA community). It’s not possible to change the definition of “spouse” at this time due to the State’s definition.

Ed reported that there will be an open enrollment period offered to temporary employees including adjuncts in order to allow them to add or change their retirement plan option.

Ed reported that the Affordable Care Act begins on January 1, 2015 and will be implemented for temporary employees who work 30 hours or more per week.

Breakfast with the EVPs – This suggestion was made by the HR working group in order for new employees to meet with EVPs to get exposure to all College departments and to give employees an opportunity to talk with EVPs in an informal setting.
Staff Forum Update

Some staff indicated that they desired EVPs to attend, but there is a divide in that opinion. By the EVPS not attending, some staff feel as if the EVPs didn’t value the forum, but they were intentionally not invited so that staff would not feel limited in their statements. SAC wanted to use the forum for staff to communicate with us. SAC will assist with making it known that EVPs were purposely not invited to the staff forum on March 12.

Performance Evaluations

SAC encouraged 100% participation in performance evaluations, and President Benson also encouraged completion by every staff member. Ed reported that every state agency has the same problem and that 100% completion is an issue. To set an example, Steve Osborne required that each of the employees in his division complete their evaluations; his return rate is very high. Ed will provide President Benson a breakdown by division.

Subcommittee Reports

Staff Liaison

No report at this time

Communication & Concerns

SAC plans to issue a quarterly newsletter, and President Benson recommended keeping it short and crisp in order to replicate it easily. The first version should be complete this week.

Staff Brunch and Awards will be held on Thursday, June 12 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. in the McAlister Suite (3rd floor of TD Arena)

- President Benson will attend.
- Nominations for awards will be open online April 15-30. All nominations will come to the Communication & Concerns subcommittee and they will submit their recommendations to the full SAC. Instructions on how to nominate will be forthcoming.

Membership

At-large election results were certified.

At-large election results are as follows:

- Bronwyn Barron, North Campus
- Josh Bryson, Athletics
- Jeremy Clement, Information Technology
- Susan Hallatt, Graduate School
• Melissa Hortman, Center for Student Learning
• Karee Keefer White, New Student Programs

Announcement will be made on April 2 to all staff.

Chair’s Report

SAC was unaware that the College was not planning to conduct the Great Colleges to Work For survey this year, and this indicates that “top-down” communication did not occur. President Benson stated that the decision was made quickly by the EVPs to postpone, and he felt we didn’t need to do it every year since we were looking at last year’s results when it was time for this year’s survey. It didn’t give the campus a chance to make the necessary changes, but Brian will recommend to President-Elect McConnell that SAC supports offering the survey every year.

President Benson is encouraged that SAC is digging into the big issues on campus and suggests to keep it going.

Traffic Concerns

Recently a survey was done of Coming Street by the City of Charleston, and the City believes it would slow traffic down if it went in both directions. The City is going forward with making Coming Street two ways, but it’s not for safety reasons. President Benson said that the City wants the area north of Calhoun to feel more like a community and less like a freeway. The City didn’t take into concern deliveries, street blocking, pedestrian traffic, etc. before reaching their decision. President Benson said that the College is going to do their own survey on St. Philip and Coming Streets.

CofC/MUSC Merger Update

President Benson said that the merger was means to an end. Does the College continue to be what we are or let others come into town? 28 universities have footprints here now; Francis Marion University will be number 29. How can we do more for the City while maintaining our focus on the students? Turning CofC into a research university would fulfill that need for the City but would require hundreds of millions of dollars, or we could let someone else do it, and in turn, stunt our growth. A merger could be beneficial to the City and the College if done properly. Our Strategic Plan calls for a few PhD programs to be put in place to target the City’s needs (Computer Science, Marine Bio, etc.). With those programs, the College could possibly stay how it is, but we don’t have those programs to offer yet. President Benson believes that taking on a few PhD programs would benefit the school, and we could add others as interest and progress grows.

It is unlikely for the submitted bill to pass this year as it’s flawed. President Benson said that the College should try to get permission to do some PhD programs before the merger is pushed forward.

Town Hall meetings will be rescheduled from its current schedule of this Thursday, April 3. As SAC has requested, it will be scheduled earlier in the day in order for all employees to attend. It will be rescheduled to a few weeks from now, and when the date is final, it will be publicized.
Ashleigh Parr adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Chance

Secretary

Staff Advisory Committee to the President