University of Nevada, Reno
Staff Employees Council (SEC)
Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2013
Reynolds School of Journalism, Room 304

Representatives Present: Ashley Andrews, Anette Christensen, Katherine Dirk (Secretary), Peter Dieringer, Jorge Farinacci, Melodie Gander, Lee Green (Public Relations Coordinator), Nancy Grower, Rebecca Hess, Nancy Horowitz, Kristen Kabrin (Chair), Nancy Kelly, Linda Kuchenbecker (Vice-Chair), David Lockyer, Cheyenne Magpantay, Lynda McLellan, Chris Mikulich-Cook, Maureen Morton, Phyllis Snedeker (Treasurer), Barbara Wiley, and Erik Williams (Ex-Officio Chair).

Representatives Absent: Jacob Cann, Christopher Chadwick, Bonnie Coker, Jennifer Nelson, Cynthia Olivo, Gary Price, and Asta Ratliff.

Guest Speakers: President Marc Johnson; David Zeh, Professor, Department Chair of Biology/Faculty Senate Chair, Commission on the Future of the University.

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm.

II. Announcements:
   a. Augusta Washington of Cooperative Extension, South has taken an opportunity elsewhere, so her spot is now open for a new representative.
   b. The Call for the Employee of the Year flyer has been sent to every classified staff and faculty. Please encourage people to make nominations.
   c. Need someone to serve on the SEC Elections Committee. There are two outgoing members. There is work to be done to make the elections process work well. For those interested, Christopher Chadwick can answer questions and give an estimate of time commitment. Need someone now to watch the process before the two outgoing members leave.

III. Approval of minutes: December meeting minutes were approved.

IV. Open floor for Questions, Committee Reports comments:
a. Barb Wiley asked that when the Open House Committee need people to volunteer, how do we ask? Can we put selves on the agenda? Yes, Kristen confirmed that the announcement can be put on the agenda.

b. Chair Kristen Kabrin shared that she has been charged from the president in response to the poor elections to get the word out about SEC. She met with John Trent of Nevada Today, the University’s news and events publication. John Trent would like to meet with Kristen and someone from the Open House Committee, as well as the Reception Committee when the events are near.

c. Public Relations Coordinator Lee Green noted that in the past there was poor response to the Employee of the Month and Employee of the Year nominations, and asked everyone to please take the information and share, encourage others to nominate.

d. Melodie Gander asked Chair Kristen Kabrin if she could share about her meetings with the President. Chair Kristen Kabrin said that they’ve talked about getting the word out about SEC. President Johnson’s meeting with Employee of the Month over coffee has been going well.

e. The Classified Staff Development Fund/Educational Leave can be used for classes outside of main university credits, like Extended Studies. This differs from the Classified Staff Grants-In-Aid Benefits through the University, which cannot be used for non-credit classes.

f. Nancy Kelly did not get updated dates from the Open House and Reception committees like discussed at the last meeting. She went to SharePoint to get dates, but please send information to her.

g. Listserv for constituents - Vice-Chair Linda Kuchenbecker is inquiring whether IT can create self-populating lists for the different areas. This may allow representatives to email their constituents a short summary of the meetings to keep them informed.

h. Barb Wiley asked if Administrative Leave could be granted for the Open House, will need follow-up.

i. Nancy Horowitz asked if representatives will be told who their constituents are. That is something Vice-Chair Linda Kuchenbecker is working on with apportionment and the constituency lists.

V. Guest Speakers:

a. President Marc Johnson
• Asked Barb Wiley if she could repeat the question regarding Administrative Leave for the Open House, and Barb clarified that the committee wondered if it was possible. President Johnson said he would try to find out.

• President Johnson invites us all the Town Hall. It will be February 7, 2013. He’d like us to all come, but realizes that it has to funnel through the units to stay operational. It will be in the Joe Crowley Student Union Ballroom, and online.

• There was an exciting meeting with the Board of Regents last Friday [January 11, 2013]. Chris Ault stepped down as head coach of football, so the University worked with a consultation firm for a search, Brian Polian was brought on, and his contract was approved at the Board of Regents meeting.

• There is also an opening for the Athletic Director, and a search will commence soon.

• Athletics is important to the University. There is a good graduation and retention rate, tremendous outreach to the community, and it promotes the University.

• Also at the Board of Regents meeting, the University was approved to use money from selling water rights for the Student Achievement Center. Some of the departments in the Student Achievement Center will be the Writing Center, Counseling, Diversity Center (which has outgrown its current space in the Joe), Tutoring, and a new Veteran’s Affairs center (so veterans will have a space to associate with other, older veteran students). There was excitement among the Regents. A benefit of the center is that it will extend employment by staying open later.

• The University is getting ready for the Capital Campaign. It is the first in many years. There is training for faculty and deans in fundraising in very focused areas. A capital campaign can stabilize UNR and the campus situation. It will be a 7 year endeavor, and we hope for philanthropic gifts.

• Tomorrow we will hear the Governor’s address of the State of the State. Expect a lot of talk about education. The University complied with a request for a 0% increase budget. We are playing ball with the Governor and Legislature. The funding formula is still to be determined but we anticipate losing state money, but keep tuition and registration fees. The last 4 years the institution has continued to grow so that will help. We received 10.3 million this year. If projections continue we will keep fees and use it for the future. We can do repairs, add staff and faculty as long as we continue to grow in students. The
University is now and will be using different funding – more on our own. We can get students, treat them well, we have a good environment to attract students.

- There are added positions to the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSPA) to bring in more money for grants and projects.
- The University is positioning itself to fund self – attract gifts, students, and funding, which will stabilize our future.
- The University is working diligently with K-12. One thing is not just relying on state proficiency exams but on other exams for college-readiness. Whether it is UNR, community colleges, or if preparing to go into the workforce, students should be ready.
- Gun on campus – this issue will be going to Legislature this year. Right now it is possible to carry a gun on campus if it is requested and approved by the President. There are not many. One thing the University encourages is critical thinking, and if a student is upset, don’t want them to fall back to a weapon. All 8 presidents of NSHE want to maintain the current request system.
- President Johnson then opened the floor for questions. Public Relations Coordinator Lee Green asked if the self-funding model will have an effect on State of Nevada employees. President Johnson answered that the University will never become wholly self-funded. There will be state classified employees but there will be more positions funded by grants, fees. Will still have the state classification system.
- Another question asked: Does the Legislature have power to overrule the preference to request to carry a gun? President Johnson answered that they cannot overrule a president’s approval, but they can approve the carry on campus and the University would have to live with it.
- Melodie Gander commented that she is proud of Colin Kaepernick and thinks it will be great for the University. President Johnson agreed, and shared that, in fact, Brian Polian said that we will be recruiting on the success stories of Colin Kaepernick and the pistol offense.
- President Johnson then gave an update on some current projects:
  1. Renovations to Church Fine Arts will be to blow out the lobby and make it more theatrical. There will also be renovations to the theatre.
  2. Remove Getchell this summer in preparation for the Student Achievement Center.

- President Johnson shared an example of self-funding. The Living Learning Commons, Reynolds School of Journalism renovations, and the Earthquake Lab did not use state funding – the University is developing this campus with its own financing mechanisms.
- Vice-Chair Linda Kuchenbecker asked if there was enough money from the water rights to build the Student Achievement Center or if it was just to tear down and design. President Johnson answered that the University will use capital fees and bond the building. The philanthropic gift campaign starts next week, which is a priority of all of us.
- Public Relations Coordinator Lee Green brought up that there was a possibility of a long term plan in Facilities to build a warehouse to store important equipment, and wondered if the President had any thoughts on it. President Johnson responded that we saw the need for it recently, with the need to reinforce the electrical loop as a recent example.

b. David Zeh, Professor, Department Chair of Biology/Faculty Senate Chair, Commission on the Future of the University

- Chair Zeh began by saying he knows how much classified staff do. He has best friends that are classified staff and works with classified staff. He appreciates the invitation to SEC.
- The current model of higher education is being challenged on many fronts. There has been a dis-investment at the Legislature. Student debt is rising. Costs are rising. Erosion of faculty and staff salaries. Disruptive technology, such as for-profit online degrees and MOOCs. This could lead to an extinction of the mid-tier university.
- In particular, the state dis-investment – when times were good, there was a funding increase. When times were bad, education gets cut more. Funding comes from tuition and fees. When things got better, it never got back to the original level. It is a spiral downwards. Colorado is an example – they receive little funding from the state, are mostly autonomous.
- The University of Nevada, Reno is a competitive market for faculty and students.
• The Commission on the Future of the University – give credit to David Ryfe, who was unable to join us today. The commission was given charges and looked at the question of how do we go forward?
• Develop a more proactive Faculty Senate.
• What have other states done? Arizona States a good example. Convince legislators to gain control over tuition. Virtuous cycle: Gain control over tuition, recruit students, financial aid, hire new faculty, recruit students [back to the beginning - a circular process]. This leads to the reputation being enhanced.
• Going to have to adopt this. Behind the curve. The University can’t compete with places like Berkeley or Oregon. Look at resources and what makes us unique, like the College of Engineering, land grant institution. Exploit this “multi-disciplinarianism.” Real-world connections. Do creative things couldn’t do on your own.
• The question was asked if the commission has specific recommendations to Administration to make it easier to be interdisciplinary. Chair Zeh answered that it would be to develop policies and procedures to reward people who work across disciplines.
• Erik Williams asked if there are specific recommendations to promote interdisciplinary work. Chair Zeh answered that they did not make specific proposals because it needs to be grass-roots. The Center for the Environment failed because it was dictated. The College of Education and Engineering are working together – reward this somehow. Make it easy to do, make paperwork easy. If proposals are made, choose the interdisciplinary proposal.
• Chair Zeh then opened the floor for questions and discussion. He was very eager to hear thoughts from SEC.
• Vice-Chair Linda Kuchenbecker asked that as department chair, what do you see as roadblocks from Administration and what can classified staff do? Chair Zeh answered with paperwork – work together to reduce paperwork. This is something he sees in his own department.
• Public Relations Coordinator Lee Green asked about the process. The commission has presented it to Administration, so where does it go from here? Chair Zeh answered that they’ve presented it to Faculty Senate, President’s Council, and Administration. The
President seems enthused about it. It seems like it will fit well with marketing, as well as the capital campaign.

- Chair Kristen Kabrin asked that if there is follow-up within this commission, could classified staff be involved? Chair Zeh will talk to the commission and suggest it.

- Chair Zeh then shared that there is an open forum on February 6 at 4 pm in the Joe Crowley Student Union. It is on the commission’s findings and it open to everyone to attend.

- Ex-Officio Chair Erik Williams suggested that to make paperwork easier, OSPA could consider putting their forms on SharePoint. Chair Kristen Kabrin noted that they are actually getting new software soon.

- Rebecca Hess suggested that there be clear communication to classified staff about programs. One example she had is having a student show up in the office and the office didn’t know how to handle the paperwork because they had not been informed of the program.

- Barb Wiley suggested that if an office or group finds a successful way, share that with other groups. Get the groups together or have a workshop so everyone knows the best practices.

- Ex-Officio Chair Erik Williams also suggested that some way the University as a whole should require that Principle Investigators (PIs) go through grant training, because by the time they want to do things, they find out afterwards that it is not possible, and can be scared off by the bureaucracy. It would behoove faculty to go through training.

- Vice-Chair Linda Kuchenbecker commented that the report is available on the Faculty Senate website, and asked if the commission has gotten any feedback from faculty? There has been some feedback. Know a lot of faculty work on their own, collaboration could be a different animal. The University operates on a bubble-up – department chairs propose to deans, deans propose, compete.

- Chair Kristen Kabrin commented that infrastructure is important. Some research she has done was on Arizona State University’s interdisciplinary program, which showed that first have to get support staff on board, which made the transition for faculty easier.
• Chair Zeh was grateful for the discussion and wrote down many of the comments to take back to the commission.

VI. Open floor
   a. Cheyenne Magpantay mentioned that there is an open search for a Grad School Operations manager, with a possible start date in February or March. Also Karen Smith, new at OSPA, starting February 1. As President Johnson mentioned, OSPA has two new Grants and Analyst projects positions.
   b. The template for annual committee reports will be uploaded to SharePoint so committees can begin working on their reports, due in June.
   c. Lee Green has volunteered to now be the main representative to the Facilities Resource Committee. Erik Williams volunteered to be the alternate.
   d. Barb Wiley inquired about the spring newsletter. It is planned for April/May. Please make suggestions and send ideas to Kristen Kabrin.

VII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:26 pm.