Georgia State University
Staff Council
Meeting Minutes: October 16, 2013

Attending: Regina Anderson, Colleen Blanchard, Jordan Cavallin, Kevin Chappell, Ann Claycombe, Chris Connelly, Robert Crowder, Shernai Dodson, Caroline Dotts, MaryAnne Gaunt, Santriesa Glover, Harley Granville, Cynthia Hollaway-Owens, Miriam Jackson, Harvey Johnson, Raphael Johnson, Colleen Joyce, Cynthia Martin, Nakisha McNeal, John Medlock, Candice Merritt, Bonte Mitchell, Patricia Nolde, Traci Shelton, Karen Simmons, Amanda Stoll, Susan Vogtner, Shelly-Ann Williams, Michael Wyatt

Call to Order

Staff Council Chair Chris Connelly called the meeting to order. He made a motion for the approval of the meetings from the September meeting. The motion carried.

Announcements

Tonya Cook from Intercultural Relations announced that planning was underway for the MLK Convocation and Torch of Peace awards. She encouraged council members to nominate a peer for the award. She also expressed her wish to include a Staff Council member on the convocation committee.

Anita Webb reminded the group of the upcoming Benefits Fair and Employee Information Day, which will be held on Friday, November 8. She asked those who wish to volunteer for the event to send her an email (and bring leftover Halloween Candy!).

Deborah Colvin Wilson reported that the university will hold its first Employee Learning Week activities during the week of December 2. Each day will feature different learning events, including a celebration of those who have earned certifications, an overview of training opportunities, and health/wellness development activities.

Office of the Ombudsperson

Kelly Alexander, the ombudsperson for staff and students, shared information about the Office of the Ombudsperson. The office advocates for fair and equitable treatment for faculty, staff, and students. They are confidential, independent, informal, and impartial. The office helps resolve issues but is not an office of notice for policy violations. They listen, coach, facilitate issue resolution, teach conflict resolution skills, and refer to appropriate offices and services.

The office is planning an upcoming session on improving morale in the workplace. The council asked Alexander for some suggestions in this regard. Larger issues like salary were unavoidable, but she recommended that small signs of acknowledgement and recognition can go far to improve morale.

She indicated that the office makes an annual report to the provost that includes general recommendations based on the types of issues the office addresses. The council discussed comparing
the findings of the office with those coming out of the 2013 staff survey. Alexander indicated that she would share her staff-related recommendations with the council.

**Staff Survey**

Connelly reported that the Staff Survey committee had completed an initial draft of the 2013 Staff Survey. The report will be finalized in November and presented to the president and Administrative Council shortly thereafter. A draft version of the executive summary of the report was distributed to the group for review. Committee chair John Medlock reported that the overall findings indicate that staff members view their Georgia State work experience in a positive light. He noted that less positive findings involved mentoring and staff retention, so any recommendations from the council should attempt to address these areas. The report indicated that only a quarter of staff responding to the survey reported participating in mentoring activities. Additionally, around half of the respondents indicated that they had seriously considered leaving the university in the previous year. Top reasons cited were salary, career advancement, and issues with supervisors.

The council discussed several recommendations for addressing concerns raised in the report, including developing a performance-based salary adjustment process, university-wide mentoring programs, training for supervisors, and additional data collection efforts. Medlock noted that deans, VPs, and other administrators would be sent the summary data for their areas after the report was presented to Admin Council.

**Adjournment**

There being no new business, Connelly adjourned the council.

*Recorded by John Medlock, Staff Relations Director*