Staff Advisory Council
Minutes
Thursday, December 10, 2015, @ 10:30am
Edwards 164

Members Present: Jim Streicher, Shane Tay, Cameron Mott, Tukonya Vereen, Derek Doss, Lynne Brock, Sandra Hatcher, Kevin Bowers, Matthew Crawford, Misti Williams, David Betsch, Bill Edmonds, Dan Lawless and Lisa Bernadyn.

Members Absent: Diane Wilson and Lisa Bellamy

Approval of Minutes: A motion to accept the November 19, 2015 minutes was made by Shane Tay and seconded by Cameron Mott. The minutes were approved by the members.

Old Business

Follow up discussion on the following items:

  Suggestion:

   “When the school closes due to weather, we get an email or text alert telling us "The University is closed." Notice the wording used, in particular, the word "closed."

  If we are not expected to come into work when the university is “closed,” then what part of “The University will open at 10:50 a.m.” and “Faculty and staff should report by 10:50 a.m.” would make employees think we are to report at normal time?

  Suggestion would be to have better communication, especially coming from a University that has a “communications department,” so that when the University says it will open at 10:50 a.m. but instead means show up at normal time, I know to come in so I am not forced to used leave time when I was just sitting at home waiting to come in.

  This is reminiscent of the Singleton heat outage last year during the coldest day of the winter when they allowed Singleton employees to leave around 11:00 a.m. and didn't bother to mention they would have to use their own leave time until 3:00 p.m."

  D. Lawless forwarded this suggestion to Kim Sherfesee, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer, and shared this is being looked into with the Governor’s office. Mr. Lawless read a paragraph that was at the end of the email from the initial email that came out regarding the closure. “Please note that these instructions may have to be modified based on any future determination made by the Governor’s office regarding this hazardous weather event.”

  D. Lawless shared an update regarding the hazardous weather closing from Kim Sherfesse, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer. “Thank you for your feedback. When a hazardous weather event occurs, it is necessary to communicate information as broadly and quickly as possible. When the University closes, the CCU alert system is the mechanism used to convey urgent messages to students, faculty and staff.

  When a hazardous weather event occurs, there are many aspects that need to be considered. Examples include: essential staffing required, support services for residential students, personal safety of employees and students, campus conditions, etc. The assessment of these aspects can take time and often these details are not finalized at the time the CCU alert "closed or delayed opening" notice is sent. In the interest of personal safety, employees are expected to follow the closing/delayed opening notices unless they are in "essential services" positions and/or they have been otherwise notified by their supervisors to report to work during periods of closure.
Based on current state regulation, the decision to close the campus in the interest of safety does not automatically result in paid leave. Payment of leave during a hazardous weather event must be granted by the Governor via executive order. Any declaration of paid leave will not come until after the hazardous weather event has ended. Since paid leave determinations are after the fact, the University will occasionally take interim measures in an effort to ensure employees are paid timely. If paid leave is not granted, employees will have to report annual leave, make up the time or leave without pay.

In collaboration with several offices campus-wide, the Office of Emergency Management continues to develop strategies to enhance systems and processes when hazardous weather events occur.

On December 9, 2015 the following email was sent out from Kim Sherfesse, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer. “The Office of Human Resources & Equal Opportunity (HREO) received notification from the state that authorized leave with pay (ALWP) was granted to eligible non-exempt employees who were required to report to work at/by 10:50 a.m. on October 6, 2015, due to the hazardous weather event. Our records indicate that you had reported annual leave during that period. Since ALWP was granted, the Payroll Office has credited your annual leave balance accordingly. No action is required on your part.

If you are an exempt employee, you are receiving this email because you have one or more eligible non-exempt employees reporting to you who reported annual leave on October 6.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Toben in the Payroll Office at extension 2752.”

D. Lawless will follow up with Ms. Sherfesse regarding individuals that made up the time and how will they be accommodated?

- “Parking at Baxley Hall for staff is horrible, I thought there were supposed to be some reserved spots for staff in GG. When is this going to occur?”

D. Lawless pulled the previous email regarding this suggestion last year and resent it to Rein Mungo regarding the 23 spaces behind Baxley Hall and Scholar’s Academy.

D. Lawless shared after speaking to Mr. Mungo he was informed to contact Dr. Byington, Provost and Executive Vice President, regarding these parking spaces. Mr. Lawless will reach out to Dr. Byington.

D. Lawless shared he was able to briefly talk with Dr. Byington regarding setting up a time in the future to meet.

- This suggestion was in Baxley Hall. “Please install guttering on Baxley Hall. With the frequent rains (heavy) the rain literally pours off of the roof and soaks our feet and legs. Thank you for considering this suggestion.”

D. Lawless will forward this suggestion to Rein Mungo, Interim Director of Facilities Planning & Management.

D. Lawless shared he sent this suggestion to Rein Mungo, Interim Director of Facilities Planning & Management, and asked if he could keep this in mind for future planning. Mr. Mungo did respond and asked if the suggestion was regarding the front of the building or the back of the building. Mr. Lawless shared with Mr. Mungo that he thought it was the front of the building but in future planning the back of the building would also need gutters.
“CeTeal used to be a place to host training on programs such as the Office Suite. However, lately it seems they are more focused on Faculty themed instruction. I would like to suggest a Staff training for use of software such as Microsoft Office.”

D. Lawless will forward this suggestion to Training, Development and Service Excellence.

D. Lawless shared CeTeal’s primary function is for faculty training. Mr. Lawless did contact Lauren Vinson, Training Manager, Training, Development and Service Excellence, regarding this suggestion. Ms. Vinson shared they will have trainings for Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel offered in January of 2016. [https://www.coastal.edu/traininganddevelopment/](https://www.coastal.edu/traininganddevelopment/)

“Why does it take University Communication so long to get back with you on some of the simplest request; they are not Feeling the Teal at all. I have requested feedback/mock up drawing at the end of the last spring semester and requested, again, this semester. I did receive an email back saying I would get something back very shortly, overall, it will be 8 months and I still have not received anything back from my request.

Someone needs to take a look at all of their outstanding request and get someone within their office and higher administration to get on them; if some of their workers cannot handle the work then they need to be reevaluated on their position.”

D. Lawless shared the following response from Bill Plate, Vice President for University Communication.

“University Communication does its best to prioritize requests in a timely manner that is in line with the mission and strategic objectives of the University. My staff is capable; however, the volume of requests and projects has more than doubled year over year for the past three years. In an effort to maximize resources, I have started to implement a reorganization of UC. Recently, we hired a project manager for creative services. This position should alleviate a few of the concerns raised by the anonymous author. As we continue to evaluate our priorities, we may need to deny a request or provide alternative solutions to complete a project. Please keep in mind, a request that is perceived as simple, in reality, may require more time and resources than one might expect. I encourage anyone with a concern or issue to talk with me about it and please do not wait until they are at a point of frustration.”

“I find it almost offensive that one of our recruiters has a year’s worth of travel expenses listed at almost double the salary of most of our staff members. The article, published in THE STATE newspaper on 11/7/15, states that "the highest non-Clemson travel spender [in the state]" was one of our admissions staff (international recruiting). Listed at $66,095. This and the recent news of embezzlement is a hard pill to swallow in the midst of being told that we won’t get the 3rd payout of the compression due to retention.”

D. Lawless shared the following response from Darla Domke-Damonte, Associate Provost for Global Initiatives. “Completely understandable. I have seen the article as well, and it is accurate. Let me provide some context for the Council.

In Fall 2014, for the first time, CCU began an international recruitment initiative to reach the stated goal of getting to a 3% international student population as stated in the university’s strategic plan. Kenley Jones, the person referenced in the article in THE STATE, was hired to serve in the capacity as Senior Associate Director of International Recruitment and Admissions, and tasked with increasing international recruitment to meet these goals (with co-reporting to both Amanda Craddock in Admissions and to me as Associate Provost for Global Initiatives). As a part of international recruitment, he proposed a budget, a plan for recruitment that included awareness building and direct student contact (and institutional visits) that included participation in a limited number of clearly targeted recruitment fairs, and timeline for doing so. Each of these fairs has a registration fee of between $500 - $12000 and enables us (as a rather unknown university to these student markets) to meet and interact with potential students that an
autonomous effort on our part would be incapable of yielding. The registration fees for these recruitment fairs were included on each of his respective Travel Authorizations to give a full accounting of the cost of the recruitment travel (rather than showing only the airfare, on-the-ground costs, etc.) – as the registration fees also required in many cases procurement approval and in almost all cases legal review in addition to my and the provost’s approval. I would like to note that Kenley regularly chooses to drive to Charleston to reduce airfare costs associated with representing CCU at these fairs, that he claims only the basic per diem (except in very limited settings where costs in the local city are exceptionally high), and he combines travel programs together to reduce the costs of this participation to CCU in many laudable ways, including offering to stay over for a few days in between fair locations on his own dime to reduce travel costs. In fact, he has done an exceptional job of keeping our costs for this process low. Through this process, we have increased our international student figures to the highest on campus by 30% this year over 2014-2015, including among others 4 students funded fully by a government-sponsored program (for just these students total tuition collected will likely top $120,000). We review each fair after participation to determine whether it is a good fit with our recruitment plan and evaluate our probability of receiving students through that venue. We are just beginning in this international recruitment process, though in a time period when other US universities have already invested for many years so we are trying to be sure that we make good choices about the strategy that can best work to bring talented students who will be a good fit for CCU to complete their degree and be engaged in our campus community.

I understand how this number looks to be very high and appreciate the concern voiced by the colleague raising the question. Each of these trips goes through review ahead of time, both for its fit with the recruitment plan, and for its potential to both yield students in the short-term and to build awareness of CCU and develop leads for future years. Kenley is also tasked with responding to all of these students generated through the process and for processing all international applications for admission, and he does this successfully while being abroad sometimes for three-four weeks at a time.

Our focus is on developing a reasonable and cost-effective approach to attracting talented international students to CCU who can bring a broader dialogue and perspective to our campus and community. I hope that this context will help our colleagues understand why this figure stood out in the context of The State’s article, why it was not something that we saw in previous years before we began our international recruitment initiative, and the purpose and tie to institutional goals that it serves. It is not a small sum, but we are seeking to not only let students abroad know that we exist as an institution of higher education, but why they should choose us above all of their domestic alternatives as well as other alternatives for university degrees from other parts of the world.

I’d be happy to discuss this further with you, the Council, or any colleagues who would like further information.

With best regards and appreciation for all that the Staff Advisory Council is doing to bring fuller understanding of all matters of concern to dialogue.”

New Business

Suggestion Boxes:

Suggestion: This suggestion was in the Wall building. “My friends and I think the bathrooms (women’s) in Wall on the 1st floor are the dirtiest on campus. Never clean even after she clean.”

S. Hatcher will forward this suggestion to Buddy Hendrick, Director, Facility Operations.
Web Page Comments:

Suggestion: “Why would CCU schedule the annual Holiday lighting at 5 on 12/1 when offices are expected to be open until 7 on Tuesdays and Thursdays?”

D. Lawless contacted Shawn Sease, Director of Special Events, regarding this suggestion. Mr. Lawless reports they were not aware of the extended office hours and followed the standard pattern of the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving break. This will be taken into account for future events.

“The University Calendar that is available online needs updating. For example, as of Dec. 1, there is only one December commencement ceremony listed, though there will be two ceremonies (May also only lists one ceremony). This is true for both the HTML and interactive online versions of the calendar.”

D. Lawless shared the calendar is being updated.

“Communication is a key factor that is talked about in Feel the Teal, however it seems many feel this does not apply to them. No communication has been given to those that will be affected by the construction and changes that are being made to the parking circle in front of the Wall Building. We have a number of VIP visitors that come to campus (BOV, Board of Trustees, Guest Speakers etc.) and this is where they park. Where will they park now? In the gated parking lots? This will mean those that pay for parking will possibly not have parking. How is this fair/ethical? It’s bad enough we even have to pay for parking (it would be fine if everyone was required to do so).”

When this suggestion came in the message that was being drafted regarding the closure had not been received.

NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FACILITIES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT:

During the Christmas holiday break, two cul-de-sacs will be installed on Chanticleer Drive. One will be installed near the HTC pond between Brittain Hall and the Wall Building. The other will be installed close to the existing location of the bus stop at the Wall Building and The Woods Pavilion. For possible emergency situations, gates that can be activated to open if emergency vehicles need to pass into the area will be installed inside the cul-de-sacs. There will be no daily vehicular traffic in the area between the gates after construction is complete. This will allow students/faculty/staff/visitors to walk freely through this area.

The attached rendering will give you an idea of the placement of the cul-de-sacs. Faculty/staff will still have access to the gated lots near the Brittain and Wall buildings.

Faculty and staff may address questions to the “Faculty & Staff Online Forum” : http://connect.coastal.edu/

Alternatively, questions may be addressed to:

Ralph Byington: byington@coastal.edu

Stacie Bowie: sbowie@coastal.edu

Debbie Conner: dconner@coastal.edu

You will recall that the intent in the master plan was to create a “pedestrian-friendly campus.” This is one of the additional initiatives meant to move the campus in that direction. The construction during the holiday break should create the least amount of disruption for the campus community.
D. Lawless forwarded this suggestion to Staci Bowie, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Lawless shared the following response from Ms. Bowie, “It is my opinion that the gates will be open for graduation, move in day, concerts and football games. It will be open for only large campus wide events that require moving people around. It is my anticipation that someday we will create green space in front of Wall and remove the driveway. To open the gates for special individuals like Board of Trustees and special guests does not send the right message, it is closed for the safety of our pedestrian students. I would suspect that Board of Trustees and guests would park in the gated lots on meeting dates. The Board of Trustees are here four times a year and the visitors would be admitted at the request of the Dean.”

- “I’d like for there to be a safer way of crossing Hwy. 501 to get to the other side of Campus at the Atlantic Center. Perhaps an elevated, enclosed walkway like you’d see in larger cities. This way students & staff would have a safe way to cross Hwy. 501 on foot or bike. I know that I would commute by bike if there were some sort of option like this.”

D. Lawless will forward this suggestion to the appropriate person.

The council discussed the option of taking the shuttle across 501. It was also noted the shuttles are equipped with bike racks.

- “In reference to this fall’s policy change on graduate tuition reimbursement, was this policy designed to serve as a means of “forced” employee retention or to discourage employees from taking advantage of the tuition reduction benefit? As an employee, I would love to take advantage of the benefit of free/reduced cost tuition to become a graduate of CCU, however, it is possible that unforeseen events in my life may impact my career and require that I leave CCU. For example, if I begin pursing a Master’s degree at CCU and my spouse secures a new job that requires our family to move or if I need to move closer to my parents for health reasons or if I am offered a position at another institution that allows me to follow my desired career path, why should I be punished for choosing to do so? It just seems unfair that our institution would require our employees to pay an “exit fee” to take another position elsewhere regardless of the circumstances surrounding that employee’s reason for leaving. I am aware that it is a choice for an employee to enroll in classes within our university; however, it is impossible for an employee to foresee his or her future life requirements three or four years down the road.

This policy simply reduces one of the primary benefits of working in higher education; access to education is a reason why many employees chose to work at institutions of higher education for less pay than a private sector job. Imagine if an employee who left university employee was forced to pay the university back for retirement contributions upon leaving! In addition, I have yet to talk with any of my colleagues at other colleges/universities that have a similar policy for employee tuition benefits, why has Coastal instituted this policy when it appears no other universities are doing so? In the end, this policy simply discourages entry level employees from taking advantage of the educational benefits available to CCU employees as these younger employees are more likely to want to earn an additional degree but are also at a point in their careers where job fluidity is a virtual requirement to meet their career goals.”

D. Lawless forwarded this suggestion to BJ Landrum, Vice President University Compliance and HR.

- **Additional Discussion items by members:**

  D. Lawless followed up with Stacie Bowie Vice, President and Chief Financial Officer, regarding her name being on the back of the bathroom’s door in case of immediate attention. Mr. Lawless shared if a problem needs to be addressed immediately regarding someone calling her office about restrooms, Ms. Bowie’s office will call over instead of completing a work order for facilities.

D. Lawless will get clarification on the Spring extended office hours and when they will begin.
• **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:15.

**Next Meeting:** The next SAC meeting will be held January 14, 2016 in Edwards 101.