

University Staff Senate Minutes

May 18, 2023, 11:00-1:00 p.m.

Raynor Memorial Library, Beaumier Suite C and virtual

Present:

Elected representatives:

Kirsten Boeh, Carol Trecek, Molly Eldridge, Melissa Econom, Latrice Harris-Collins, Calley Hostad, Maria Cooper, Sarah Kazlauskas, Jack Bartelt, Amber Jensen, Chris Bartolone, Nicolle Skoien, Robin Cork, Yvonne Printz, Christine Fleming

Other attendees:

Tia Langnes, Lori Montezon, Kathy Coffey-Guenther, Chad Wheeler, Tina Aiello, Donna Wells, Lynne Griffith, Kate Braasch, Stacey Romant, Ariel Roche, Kim Perez, Ritu Sachdev, Karen Nest, Wendy Butler, Paul Dion, Tim McMahon, Mark Schumacher, Jordan Mason, Lisa Vlach, Maggie Nettesheim-Hoffmann, Patty Przybylka, Jamie Busse, Stephanie Werkowski, Katie Ruetz, Jane Kondracki, Lynn Mellantine, Ben Kennedy, Sherri Lex, Margo Leone, Anna Wilks-Metrou, Sherrie Dorff, Brigid Alba, Rae-Ann Vanek, Katie Klamecki, Mel Baker, Yasi Blackmon, Maggie Klatt

Chair Carol Trecek began the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

Jack Bartelt led the reflection.

Special Business

Guest Speakers: Dr. Michael Lovell, university president

- Carol introduced how questions for discussion were gathered and selected for this discussion with Dr. Michael Lovell.
 - Carol divided the submitted questions into some topic areas and then discussed them with Presidential Communications staff. Every effort has been made to ask the questions verbatim unless there were several very similar questions and then they were combined into one. Given our time constraints and the topics we chose, the questions which we thought were best answered by the president; the rest of the questions will be sent to the appropriate offices and answers will be shared through Staff Senate. Even if a submitted question isn't being answered by the president during this meeting, he did see all the questions and is aware of the topics and concerns and the questions that were submitted.

Opening Remarks

- Dr. Lovell started with an overview of his role as president. The role is the most outward-facing role at the university; however, Dr. Lovell has a goal to be accessible for staff, faculty and students through the many events he attends and regular meetings with folks.
- Highlights of the president's role:

- Fundraising
- Strategy and vision for MU
- Surrounding himself with strong leaders focusing on the day-to-day operations of MU, so that he is able to keep focus at a high level
- Reminders that the chair of USS meets monthly with the president. This is something Dr. Lovell started when he joined MU, 9 years ago.
- Themes from the questions
 - Communications
 - In both directions: Dr. Lovell to staff and staff to Dr. Lovell.
 - Dinners with Dr. Lovell are available for staff to connect with him in an informal setting.
 - He attends 240 campus events every year.
 - Strategic Plan
 - A theme of caring for our people.
 - A focus on the necessity to *stop* doing things in some areas if we'd like to start doing new things and ensure we meet our economic targets.
 - Marquette has never been stronger than in its current position.
 - Metrics for this view:
 - enrollment (in terms of both numbers and diversity)
 - research dollars and projects, diversity rates of our incoming student class
 - campaign performance (60,000 people who have invested in the campaign, and 40% are first time donors)

The following are formatted as questions from the USS Chair and answers from President Lovell.

- Question: In terms of the Board of Trustees, there seems to be a lack of connection with those 'in the trenches'. How many people from Marquette are truly involved in guiding them and their decisions?
 - The board of trustees is organized into five different committees: finance and risk, external engagement, intercollegiate athletics, academic excellence, and student experience and mission.
 - Although no staff members outside of leadership go to the full board meeting, between 10 and 15 staff members attend at least one of the committee meetings. Each committee is structured differently, but each one has a lot of direct input from staff members.
- Question: Our IT systems are old and we seem to spend a lot of resources patching up inadequate systems. In addition, Wi-Fi can be spotty on campus. We know IT changes are costly – what is the plan for upgrading and fixing?
 - Yes, the University plans to upgrade these systems. It isn't easy to change systems, but Laurie Panella, chief information officer, made a strong case at a spring ULC (University Leadership Council) meeting.
 - MU will need to go through the process of updating all our systems from HR, finance, and information technology systems.

- These decisions to upgrade are not only financial, but also connected to productivity and resources. We are currently using such outdated systems, people's job functions will change once we make updates, because they will be freed up to work on other things instead of patchworking solutions.
- For Wi-Fi, Laurie met with the deans and departments recently to get a sense of where on campus we have connectivity issues.
- ITS has emphasized the use of HelpDesk tickets to assess where to address urgent needs.
- Follow up question: What is the timeframe on making these updates?
 - Laurie can speak to this, but these changes are on the path now.
 - *From Lynn Griffith:* Wi-Fi is being updated this summer across campus.
- Question: Graduate student enrollment is increasing. Will Marquette offer this population health insurance in order to stay competitive with other regional institutions?
 - There is a long history around student health insurance. After insurance companies increased their rates, MU could no longer offer competitive health insurance rates for students. Several (7) years ago, graduate assistants voted on receiving either a stipend to offset the cost of insurance or receiving a smaller supplemental stipend and access to the MUMC for all graduate assistants. Graduate assistants elected to receive the larger supplemental stipend.
 - Right now, we do not have an insurance provider that can give us the rates that would be beneficial to our students.
- Follow up question: In discussions with current graduate students at Marquette, they do believe the university should offer them health insurance. Melissa Econom looked at the updated MU peer and aspirational institutions, which do offer students insurance using a variety of methods including hiring graduate students as part-time, limited-term contract employees.
 - Dr. Lovell recommends talking to Dr. Doug Woods about this, as he has been entrenched in this process from the beginning.
 - Potentially something to discuss with HR as well on this.
 - If this is something that would make us more competitive, we could look at ways to support this.
 - Melissa Econom will connect with Doug Woods and Claudia Paetsch to continue this conversation.
- Question: When we hear about the "Student Success" initiative and the Lemonis Center—why is student success so focused in the undergraduate student population? Does Marquette intend to create any future spaces to support graduate student community?
 - Semantics: the terminology "student success" is nationally a term associated with undergraduate students.
 - MU is thinking about how best to support a graduate student who isn't traversing the campus in the same way an undergraduate student would between departments and colleges.

- Humanities Without Walls is an example of initiatives we have fundraising to support.
- Question: When do units need to stop giving back their budgets—give-backs and tightened budgets stifle programming that supports community building and professional development. It constantly feels like we need to do more with less.
 - Important to understand where we are in the arc of the university in terms of our finances.
 - Our current student population is sitting at a 20-year, all-time low as a cascading impact of COVID.
 - FY23 presented stress to the university around inflation. The current budget that we have now was approved in December of 2021. In this current fiscal year, we have at least \$7 million dedicated to inflationary costs such as utilities, food, and other spending.
 - We have to figure out how to get through this year given these two challenges. We are looking to reduce non-essential spending. We do not want to make cuts to base budgets, and instead are trying to use our restricted available funds to cover the unexpected costs of inflation and low enrollment where possible.
 - Going forward, hopefully, we won't have this tight enrollment number or significant inflation.
- Question: We have heard the academic side of campus has been asked to give back \$3 million in the last two months of this fiscal year. How much has the administrative side been asked to cut? It is frustrating to get to this point in the year and be asked to, once again, give back money from the budget – how many years are we going to have to do this?
 - *Note per university leadership: this is not a “give back” situation; rather the university is working to leverage available, restricted funding that can be used for these purposes to offset a budget gap.*
 - Both the academic and administrative sides of campus have been asked to reduce non-essential spending.
- Question: We have heard about the staff compensation project but not about plans to increase wages or deal with salary compression in terms of staff. Will that happen and if so, when (next fiscal year?)
 - Lovell gave context behind the compensation project. The goal of this project is in part understanding what is the most important to employees, and comparing to our peer institutions. This same project has been done with tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty on campus.
 - A focus on the care for our people. How well are we providing the most desired benefits, including health care benefits, vacation time, and more?
- Follow up question: Is there a timeline we are thinking about? Everything we've heard about the compensation study, to this point, is about job families and grouping jobs into buckets of similar jobs across campus. Is this going to lead to reevaluations of compensation for each job family?
 - That is part of the analysis that we have to do.

- One of the things we do have to do is compare apples to apples, in terms of similar roles and benefits.
- This study has to give us the information we need. If the university doesn't know what the needs are, we can't begin to address them.
- *Carol Trecek will follow up with HR to get more information.*
- Comment: It is concerning that we don't have a cost of living increase, we just have merit pool. There is concern about that model, especially from a supervisor perspective.
 - One of the challenges we have in higher education is our limited ability to immediately address inflation with the "cost of our product." We don't have a lot of flexibility to address inflation.
 - The compensation study will help us plan for the future. We want to have the right number of employees for our needs, but we also want them compensated fairly.
- Question: During the 8th Presidential Address in March of last year, you announced the Wellness and Recreation Facility and with that stated that "the university is exploring many unique partnerships with health care systems." What is the status of that exploration and in what capacity will Milwaukee area healthcare systems be part of Marquette?
 - MU has discussed partnerships with all the major health care providers. The university has had a medical clinic physician position that has gone unfilled for two years. We are going to have to solve this problem, but it is hard for us to attract employees in this area with the local competition we face.
 - Instability in the local market with local mergers causes our conversations to pause.
- Due to time the last question will be answered and will be shared with MU staff.
- If you have future questions for Dr. Lovell, you can always submit them to USS via Carol.

The following question was submitted ahead of the meeting but not asked in person due to time constraints:

Our vision statement, mission statement, and *Beyond Boundaries* Strategic Plan assert that our community should prepare students to be globally competent. In a world in which cross-cultural competence and nuance is needed to address climate change, epidemics, pandemics, artificial intelligence, and international security threats, what measures would you support to rebuild the language department, rebuild the Office of International Education and rebuild faculty lines that have taught students about other parts of the world?

The responses below reflect insight from university leaders.

- Marquette continues to have a robust Core that, with the learning outcome of preparing students to be Global Problem Solvers, readies students for global competence.

- Marquette is committed to supporting these units to meet demand and the needs of our students (e.g., the Department of Political Science is hiring an Asia specialist).
- A thorough review of OIE was done in 2021, which resulted in several organizational changes to support the office's work. <https://today.marquette.edu/2021/01/university-reaffirms-commitment-to-international-education/>
- The president works with the provost to ensure that academic units have the resources needed to address areas of need. At the more detailed level, decisions on hiring and lines are best left to those who are immersed in the day-to-day work.
- If additional needs arise, the unit is encouraged to connect with Dr. John Baworowsky, who can best assess needs and resources.

Regular business

Secretary's request:

- Motion to approve February's 2023, USS meeting minutes.
- Motion approved.

Treasurer:

- Nothing to report.

Vice Chair:

- Worked with Lynn Mellatine to approve two staff emeritus requests.
- You can request to become an emerita online here: <https://www.marquette.edu/staff-senate/emerita-emeritus-staff-designation.php>.

Chair:

- The Excellence in university service and Excellence in Diversity Inclusion Awards luncheon will take place Monday, June 5th.

Nominations and Elections:

- Nominations form is open, but closes on May 26 at 5pm.
- You can find the link online here: <https://today.marquette.edu/2023/05/university-staff-senate-nominations-now-open/>

Bylaws:

- Nothing to report.

Communication:

- Building off the book club discussion the Communications Committee is thinking about future events and programs that USS could host.

Service:

- Thinking about ordering USS swag to use for future events. Will need to finalize that purchase before the June meeting. Amber Jensen will send out some options to look over.

Outreach:

- Poker Walk taking place on May 24, 12 – 1pm.
 - Chris Bartolone and crew will help to move lunch bags.
 - An email should go out to finalize all the separate pieces of the event, including USS Communication handouts.
 - More prizes and giveaways than any year before for raffle prizes, as well as winning poker hands.

UAS Report:

- New UAS Chair has a desire to identify items that USS would like to discuss and partner on. Jack can help with the hand off to the new UAS Chair once elected.

MU Police Board:

- A meeting took place three weeks ago. Seeing a positive response to their mental health unit. Chief Hudson is now looking to get funding for a second spot, given the number of calls coming in on their mental health line.
- The crime stats were discussed. Many of the campus numbers of incidents are down.
- Outreach events to the MU students have been popular and received well.
- Question: Was there discussion about racial profiling and students of color not feeling comfortable on campus?

Strategic Planning Report:

- You can find a presentation with information including a timeline, as well as a link to provide feedback here: <https://today.marquette.edu/2023/05/campus-community-input-sought-for-strategic-planning-2030-effort/>
- Timeline is ambitious, but the timeline they are sticking to.

New Business:

- Reflection schedule for upcoming meetings:
 - June 15, 2023, TBD
 - July 20, 2023, Robin Cork

USS went into a closed session at 12:15 pm.