ISU Staff Council Minutes

Focus: Internal Committees

Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Location: Zoom

Format: Adapted from Robert's Rules of Order (Standard Order of Business)

Call to Order

Time: 12:00 PM

Roll Call

Members Present: George Banks, Rebecca Brown, Lawson Cassels, Amke De Boes, Daniel Freburg, Terry Jackson, Zubayer Khaled, Alicia Lage, Dillon Maher, Derek O'Connell, Stuart Palmer, Calvin Ross, Amy Secretan, Rachel Waring-Sparks, *Becky Franz (ex-officio), Colette Homan (ex-officio)*

Members Absent: Kat Arrenholz, Monica Elkin, Lawrence Lair, Megan McCann, *Cindy Lotz (ex-officio)*

Action: Approval of Meeting Agenda and Oct. 6 Minutes

Motion: Rachel

Seconded: Terry

Vote: unanimous approval

Public Comment

Immediate Business

- Refresher on the flow of council's work
    - We're over halfway through the semester!
    - Much of our work happens in committees and then is brought to Staff Council for approval
    - We have a template committee charter that each committee needs to fill out by the end of the year. This is a good opportunity to discuss how committees want to go about their business, what they perceive as the scope of their work, etc.
    - Committee reports during full Council meetings should focus on action items that need a Council vote; the planning, ideating, gathering opinions, etc. should happen in committee.
        - If you have an item that you believe needs a Council vote, submit that item to Exec for approval prior to the meeting. Exec will determine if the item is ready for a vote or needs more time in committee.
        - It is up to the committee chair to make decisions that do not rise to the level of requiring full Council approval.

- Question: Is there any guidance or a rule of thumb for us to determine what kinds of things should go for a vote?
    - Answer: anything that requires spending money; initiatives that will be representative of all Council or staff – you can always ask Exec if you're not sure if it requires a vote or not.

- Faculty/Staff Holiday Party
    - This will be a heavy lift on faculty and staff, but faculty do not have a budget to support this event. The President's Office has confirmed that they can also contribute financially to this. Still waiting on documents from Rachel C. about how much this event has previously cost and the amount that the President's Office can contribute.
        - Previously known as the Children's Holiday Party, but doesn't have to continue to be for future.
        - Although faculty cannot contribute financially, faculty members will be recruited to participate in planning and execution.
        - Question on the table is: are we interested in leading the planning and execution of this event?
        - Terry suggestion: create working group of event planning staff on campus along with any Staff Council members who are interested in helping to plan.
        - Questions and comments:
            - This is a large-scale event on the scale of the Faculty/Staff Luncheon – do we have capacity for this? To be clear, the President's Office is *helping*, but we are spearheading the planning.
            - How much might the President's Office be willing to cover? In previous years, they covered over half (~68% in 2019).
            - Roll call vote:
                - Amy: yes
                - Daniel: yes
                - Lawson: yes
                - Derek: yes
                - Dillon: yes
                - Stuart: yes
                - Terry: yes

- George: yes
                - Alicia: yes
                - Amke: yes
                - Rebecca: yes
                - Calvin: yes
                - Zuby: yes
                - Rachel: yes
                - Motion passes unanimously

Unfinished Business

- Homecoming decorating contest
    - Alumni Engagement doesn't have a budget line that they can transfer over, but Rachel C. can support financially
    - Several concerns voiced about taking on this and the holiday party in the same year
    - Can still recruit volunteer judges through Alumni Engagement – this ask appears to be primarily about coordination and promotion
        - Not many concerns about promotion and coordination from the marketing and communication side of things
    - Can we table for another year, partner with Homecoming and "shadow" Alumni Engagement next year to get a feel for what this would look like while working on the Holiday Party?
    - Roll call vote: should we move forward with taking over the organization of the Homecoming Decorating Contest?
        - Derek: abstain
        - Amy: no
        - Daniel: no
        - Lawson: no
        - Dillon: no
        - Stuart: yes
        - Terry: yes
        - George: yes
        - Calvin: no
        - Amke: no
        - Rebecca: yes
        - Stuart: no
        - Alicia: no
        - Zuby: yes
        - Rachel: no
        - 9 no, 4 yes, 1 abstain
- Academic Senate representation
    - Senate Letter 9.7.21
    - Please review this letter and bring thoughts and suggestions for our next meeting and consider how many seats you think we should ask for.
    - Comment: adding Staff Council senators does directly increase the workload of some folks on Council and perhaps we should consider if there would be a corresponding need to adjust the number of people on Staff Council.

Co-Chairs' Report

- Recap of meeting with the President

- Reminder of free Presidential Speaker Series event featuring Scott Pelley tonight at 7pm in Braden Auditorium
- Amy and Terry brought up the goal of conducting a staff survey; President seems supportive and we will continue to move forward
- Space planning for campus: University campus master plan, which was created in 2011, is expiring in 2030; lots of movement on campus in the next few years, especially with the addition of the other part of the GE Road complex, completion of WKCFA construction and filling the spaces that they are currently occupying; a new Master Plan is in the works (Board of Trustees approved the associated expenditure in May 2026)
- Students' academic performance: anecdotal concerns from staff that this first-year class is struggling to a greater extent than previous years; President suggested reaching out to AVPUE Marko Dumančić to share concerns and see data compared to previous years.
- Impact of decreased enrollment on this year's budget: no major concerns of budget shortfall as a result of decreased enrollment; President believes there are things we can do to mitigate to reduce the effect of decreased enrollment on our budget institutionally to avoid unit-level budget cuts
- Retention: these numbers are from IPEDS data, which is what all public Illinois universities must use to track retention rates; provides consistency among state institutions

- Recap of exec board meeting
  - Template for committee charge – please fill out and save to your committee folder on Teams
  - New action item vote process described above
  - Discussed suggested bylaw changes:
    - Voting procedure for elections: vote for how many open seats (current: vote for 1 candidate)
    - Voting for financial expenditures: automatic roll call vote

Secretary's Report

- Attendance reminder from the bylaws (Article IX, Section 3): "Attendance. At-large and ex officio members are expected to attend all regular meetings, as well as all special meetings where their presence is appropriate, and **should provide advance notice of absence to the Secretary.**" Please email me if you are going to miss a meeting! No Teams chat – it will get lost there.
- Reminder that shell agendas for the rest of the semester have been created and are accessible via Staff Council Teams > General > Staff Council Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- RWS will continue to post agenda on Teams at least 3 business days prior to meetings, but council members are encouraged to add reports to the appropriate agenda as soon as they have them

Treasurer's Report

- Nothing new to report

Senators' Report

- Terry and Stuart were both unable to attend the last Academic Senate meeting on 10/20.

Standing Committee Reports (second meeting of month)

Scholarship (Chair: Amy)

- Working on gaining an understanding of the different scholarship processes between the AP scholarships and CS scholarships.
- Got access to files and funds re: CS scholarships from Beth Porter.
- In process, but taking a little longer than anticipated.
- If questions arise about scholarships, direct them to Amy.

Awards (Co-chairs: Amke & Derek & Dillon)

- Formstack submission forms have been updated.
- Communications plan has been aligned with Rachel Caracci and Gwen Talbot (Team Excellence Award).
- Many thanks to Dillon for updating all websites.
- Derek is working with IT on an Awards section of the Staff Council webpage. This will not be completed in time for this year's awards, so information still lives on the AP and CS Councils webpages, but the key award information is built into the forms themselves so that applicants/nominators have needed info.
- Comment from Colette that HR does not pay for plaques – in recent years, AP and CS Council have each paid for their councils' respective plaques.
    - Communication from President's Office has indicated that HR pays for plaques; Amke will follow up to clarify.
    - Awardee names need to be run by HR to ensure that there are no issues.
    - In previous years, Colette has ordered the plaques and someone from the President's Office has picked them up – this process can be changed.

Elections (Chair: Daniel)

- No notes

Programming and Events (Chair: Amke)

- Say Hello With Cocoa
    - Staff Council swag mugs (108 units) have been ordered, and we are waiting to hear from 4imprint on delivery date. Affinity groups have been invited.
    - Communications plan is moving along (e.g., newsletter, social media posts, etc.). Many thanks to Lawrence for the mug logo design and communications action items.

- Question for council: Would you like another program in December or should we start looking at January 2027?
    - Hold pending information about the cost of plaques for awards and attendance at Say Hello With Cocoa.
- Winter/Holiday Event December 2027: We need a subcommittee.

Communication, Outreach, and Marketing (Chair: Dillon)

- Promotion of award nominations, Say Hello with Cocoa, and Toys for Tots

Employee Concerns and Well-Being (Co-chairs: Amke & Derek)

- Staff Survey (annual potentially) was the main topic of our meeting. Qualtrics and anonymous submissions were initial suggestions. The committee discussed demographic and other basic questions and categories to create framework for first survey draft.
- Derek is working on a committee process document that will explain the purpose of the committee, membership, procedures, etc.
- There was a brief discussion of how ECWB should receive information/requests from constituents. This would likely be best done through general Staff Council email by referral, or contact with another committee.

Discounts (Chair: Terry)

- No new report

Ad hoc Committee Reports (second meeting of month)

None

External Liaisons and Committees Time-Sensitive Action Items

None

New Business

Election procedure change

Terry will send out markups to vote at next meeting.

Roll call votes

Terry will send out markups to vote at next meeting.

Announcements

November 3 is Election Day!

- Refer to the Redbird Voter Guide for voting information and please encourage your students and colleagues to make a voting plan if they haven't done so already!

Adjournment

Motion: Derek

Seconded: George

Time: 1:09 PM