

UMCES Staff Council
Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2020
10AM

Present: Lisa Ross, Molly Pickel, Rhonda Schwinabart, Michelle Prentice, Julia Bliss, Rona Kobell, Stacy Hutchinson, Peter Goodwin, Amy Griffin, Cami Martin, Kurt Florez, Kevin Bruce, Lori Stepp, April Lewis, Peter Goodwin

Approved Minutes

Agenda Items:

Updates from Peter Goodwin

- CUSS has concluded their survey on shared governance and will be sending out results shortly. If you have comments for UMCES between the surveys, please contact the President's office.
- The staff award has been a very successful program. There is a new FRA award, which we had planned to award at commencement. Dr. Goodwin stated that we are welcome to award the staff award at any point, but suggested that it could be presented at the commencement along with the faculty and FRA awards.
- Kevin Bruce asked how Peter Goodwin is holding up. Dr. Goodwin responded that the support from all of the staff and faculty has enabled the transition to go relatively smoothly. There have been good ideas coming in from all across the university system.

COVID and remote working

- Kevin expressed that many at SeaGrant already had experience working remotely, so the transition was relatively smooth. The speed at which this all happened was challenging.
- Kurt expressed that CA and HPL had to work on getting everyone connected back to the office.
- Rona expressed that her work has not changed very much after going remote. There are others in the office who want to connect by Zoom. It is challenging to balance the meetings, work, and other care responsibilities at home with children out of school.
- Michelle expressed appreciation for Kurt and Jason's help getting everyone set up for working remotely. Rona appreciated flexibility in working hours given the new challenges of having kids at home all day. Rhonda also expressed appreciation for everyone who helped get AL set up for remote work in just a couple days. Michelle, Rhonda, and Rona all expressed gratitude for the swift communication and effective communication about the decisions.

Staff Council Elections

- Molly sent out an initial email and a reminder

- We have received two nominations. HPL: Julia Brush and Kurt Florez. CBL: Stacy Hutchinson and Samantha Mays.
- The nominations are due April 17. We will send out one reminder next week.
- Everyone agreed that we will allow people to submit multiple nominations for multiple locations.
- Molly will send out a reminder next Monday.
- We will need to update welcome packets. Michelle volunteered to help with that.

Staff Appreciation Day

- April sent out the survey. We will need to review our results.
- April has sent a message about reserving the park and has contacted the caterer as well. Reserving the park space will be the first thing to do when we reopen. Curtis was involved in the past and April will reach out to him with any questions.
- We have not decided on a gift. Please send any suggestions to April.
- Kurt expressed that people still may feel uncomfortable with gathering in a small space, so the space that we have had in the past two years would leave space to spread out. It may be good to set out time in the agenda for taking a walk around the lake, playing games, etc.

Staff Council Executive Committee

- There have been many meetings.

Communications Committee

- We missed sending out a March newsletter. Kevin thought that we should still put together a newsletter to send out. We will try to do one staff spotlight

Staff Awards

- Michelle liked the idea of presenting the staff award at commencement. Michelle thought it would be good to include a special communications from the staff council on who won the award and why.
- CUSS has reviewed Board of Regents staff nominations. UMCES had two staff nominations.
- This year, we are announcing the call for nominations at the end of April. They will be due June 30. We would have to revise that timeline if we want to announce the staff award at commencement.
- We would also need to make it clear that staff are welcome to come if we do have a staff award presented at commencement. Amy expressed that we'll need to plan for greater numbers when we plan commencement if we do that.

Human Resources

- Please use the employee assistance program if you need assistance during this transition.

Admin Council

- The last meeting was cancelled.
- Peter Goodwin shared that we should bring any agenda items to the admin council as necessary.

CUSS Updates

- Cuss held a virtual meeting on March 24.
- The discussion focused on COVID-19 and how decisions were made at the university.
- Lori felt that UMCES was more transparent about decisions. There were concerns at other universities that Lori did not feel were issues at UMCES.
- Discussed the legislative session, which was cancelled. Received good feedback about the legislative day.
- The USM budget was passed and is in good health. A USM HR representative shared that there is a good assurance of employee security.
- Peter Goodwin shared that many, including Patrick Hogan, thought this year's advocacy day was one of the most successful ever. Thanks to everyone who was involved in the planning.

Lab Updates

- HPL: There's been a quick transition to working from home.
- CA: The UMCES commencement will happen online on the originally scheduled day and then there will be an in-person commencement later in the year.
- CBL: There were three new employees in the facility starting in early March. The transition to remote work has been going well. Events like Science for Citizens have been postponed to the fall.
- AL: Transition to working remotely has been going well.
- MDSG: Things are going smoothly. Rona asked about whether this period is starting conversations at IMET about allowing more liberal teleworking policies. Dr. Goodwin responded that we have not yet started that conversation, but it definitely will be a part of the conversation in the future.
- IMET: IMET is bringing the open house virtual and will be reaching out to representatives at each lab.

Dr. Goodwin shared that there is a bipartisan bill in the works considering how to help universities and research institutions in the U.S. We should be documenting any losses that we take during the shutdown as there may be opportunities to recoup some of those losses.

Next meeting will be on