

# MINUTES

## CLAS Staff Council – regular monthly meeting

Wednesday 7/15/20 - Zoom

- I. Call to order – 11 a.m.
- II. Roll call
  - a. Present: Kathy Ford, Emma Kirk, Jen Knights, Sandy Mast, Julie Ostrem, Pattie Kimbrough, Greta Sokoloff, Mark Fullenkamp, Jeremy Richardson, and George Hospodarsky; ex officio Rebecca Kick and Heather Mineart. Guest(s): None
  - b. Absent: Amanda Jensen, Kari Gates
- III. Fullenkamp motion, council unanimously approved 6/17/20 minutes.
- IV. Committee Updates
  - a. Awards – The virtual CLAS Staff Recognition event was held June 24<sup>th</sup>. I think there are some things we would change if we did the event virtually again (next spring?) and there was an issue with pinning the ASL interpreter, but the event mostly went off without a hitch. The feedback and activity on the chat was positive and people generally seemed happy we had the event. Kimbrough generously volunteered to be chair for the Awards committee and over the next month we will meet to go over what the Staff Recognition Committee’s normal yearly activity is as well as discuss some new ideas moving forward (Richardson has some already), so we will be back in August with more!  
Kimbrough asked about the availability of the recording of the Recognition Event and Sokoloff has an email out to Melia Pieper to find out more about that.
  - b. Bylaws – Did not meet this month. Kimbrough will do an update of the bylaws for the DEI Committee and provide to committee for review.
  - c. Communications – Did not meet this month. Web page updated with new Councilors and committee information. Mineart suggested adding ex officio members to the site, the Council agreed that this was a good addition.
  - d. DEI – 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the UI DEI Committee July 21. The CLAS DEI Committee met 7/14/20. Fullenkamp and Knights both attended. Associate Dean Sara Sanders head the committee and at the recent meeting there was a review of the DEI action plan for CLAS. Feedback was provided for an early August submission. Fullenkamp stated that Web Services has been tasked with the creation of the CLAS DEI webpage, content to be populated by Nic Arp. Will go live the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August with the finalization of the action plan. There will be a meeting in a couple of weeks for plan finalization and website review. AD Sanders emphasized that it is imperative for faculty, staff, and students to provide a main push for change or addition to the plan all while staying in step with the UI DEI plan. Knights shared a draft of the plan with the Council for feedback.
  - e. Education – The Education Committee (Mast, Ostrem, Sokoloff) met to discuss a resource webpage to be part of the CLAS Staff Council website. The page will provide links to educational opportunities and financial assistance to increase professional skills. The webpage is being developed for: employees new to CLAS; current employees who have

assigned to new roles; and current employees who wish to update / sharpen professional skills. Eight resource areas have been identified: personal health and well-being; lowa compliances; working with external audiences; financial skill-building; supervision; coursework for credit; professional conferences & workshops; and DEI. Research into these resources have been divided among committee members. Project completion ETA = start of fall semester. It is anticipated that the page will grow and change over time. A second webpage (FAQ's) to address miscellaneous strategies, concerns and other info will also likely be added.

f. Executive – Recap of meeting with Dean Goddard (New Business)

g. Ex-Officio Updates

i. UI Staff Council – Mineart informed the council of the status of the catastrophic leave changes being spearheaded by UI Staff Council (see feedback below; V.b.i.1). The changes are passed Phase I and Phase II will be next. Phase II submits recommendations for a catastrophic leave pool along with improving efficiencies, including anonymity. The Council would like faculty and staff with expiring vacation to be notified that vacation time will be lost and providing the option to donate hours to catastrophic leave. Furthermore, if hours are donated to a specific person but not used, the person donating hours will be asked if they are willing to donate to a general pool. The Council is also recommending that best practices for catastrophic leave be covered in Supervisor Training. Cheryl Reardon (HR) reviewed Qualtrex data from University staff in regards to current concerns. Not surprisingly the top concerns were related to: COVID19 impacts, budget reductions, returning to campus and DEI.

UI Staff Council Executive Committee actionable items for the year are: training (e.g. supervisor training), partnerships across campus, and website and committee updates. Along with identifying areas of influence. Kirk asked about the next steps for changes to catastrophic leave and Hospodarsky asked if it is possible to institute pools for hour donations. Mineart replied that although there is still a strong push to get Phase II approved everything is on hold until COVID19 calms down and although not approved, up to this point there has not been a definitive “no’ with respect to creating pooled hours for catastrophic leave.

Hospodarsky asked about the salary freeze affecting 4200 UI staff members. This is specific to University staff outside the UIHC system which has already implemented salary reductions and a furlough plan for both faculty and staff. The result is that a large number of CLAS staff will be affected because of the number of employees in the College. There is currently not a furlough plan and those will most likely be decided at the unit level with approval from the higher ups. Salary freezes and furloughs will happen. Perhaps only for Gen Ed funded positions (Although Sokoloff just attended a staff meeting for PBS and the salary freeze is across the board so it includes soft money positions). Mineart discussed how the new budget model is making the response different and more variable depending on the unit or org. So there are not global actions like those seen in 2008 (e.g. reduction in TIAA-Cref contribution). Mineart said she is

interested in finding out if you do a voluntary reduction now are you protected from future reduction during Tier II and III budget reduction phases (i.e., not hit twice). Finally, the decision by the ICCSD for school to be virtual in the fall poses numerous concerns for both faculty and staff being asked to return to campus.

- ii. ASG – Kick said that 99% of ASG meetings are discussing return to campus and ultimately the members have more questions than answers. Mineart asked how departmental administrators are looking at the return and Kick responded that each admin is working with their staff on how much coverage is required and what in person work might look like.

V. New Business

a. Recap of Executive Committee Meeting with Dean Goddard

- i. Hospodarsky described the plan for having the Dean’s representative to council meeting be the Dean and Associate Deans on a rotation for this next year. In part for council members to get to know the Associate Deans and what they do. Also, with the pandemic and an uptick in meetings it seemed better to spread the attendance out over the entire group. Kick mentioned that all the Associate Deans have been attending the ASG meetings and have been very accommodating and very motivated to learn more to do their jobs better. Most of the councilors voiced approval of this plan. Kimbrough will email the Associate Deans so they are informed of this plan.
- ii. Hospodarsky went over Dean Goddard’s view on the role of CLAS Staff Council within the College. Emphasizing that both networking and feedback are tied together in the Council’s mission to be a conduit for class staff to express concerns to the administration. It is also important to continue a program of awards and recognition. The Dean is pro professional development so Council work in that area is essential. Mineart added that developing career pathways tools and information is an important goal for UI Staff council too. It was agreed that succession planning is important for replacing staff who have been working for decades.

- b. Staff feedback and communication – Mast stated that it is important that the emails are forwarded to the Dean’s Office. Ostrem suggested putting questions on the webpage. Knights stated that as drafted in the Communication Committee bylaws, emails (and senders if not anonymous) are included in the minutes where the correspondence is discussed so they are essentially available from the website.

i. see attachment of Knights’ email

1. Catastrophic leave – see UI Staff Council update above
2. Returning to campus – Hospodarsky drafted and sent an email to respond.
3. Budget cut transparency – no real budget updates until after the Board of Regents meet and maybe not until January when State appropriations are determined.

- c. Reminders and updates
  - i. Town hall canceled (Tuesday) – no real changes to report  
<https://clas.uiowa.edu/deos/mailing/july-08-2020/july-14-clas-town-hall-canceled>.
  - ii. This afternoon there is an presentation on HR support for employees returning to campus. <https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu/news/2020/06/campus-update-fall-2020-virtual-campus-update-times-and-link>
- VI. Old business
  - a. Email to staff

Next meeting – Wednesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Emails from CLAS Staff Members**

<p>Apr 24, 2020 2:42 PM</p>	<p>There has been a lot of discussion around budget cuts and apparently meetings are occurring at the higher HR level about what kinds of actions they may take. This is causing a lot of uncertainty and stress among our staff. I think it's important to let staff know head on what may be coming, instead of having to decipher between the lines. We would all appreciate more transparency during this already stressful time.</p>
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Jun 22,  
2020 1:06  
PM

This may not be something the Staff Council has time or bandwidth for this year, but... look. Catastrophic leave. I'm glad we got more folks added to it. That's good. But can we someday have a conversation about how horrible and demeaning it is, the way it's currently structured? How I ought to be able to just donate hours to a pool and have them go to someone who needs them eventually – not pledge to give someone time and then find out six months later they did or didn't use it, because apparently privacy's not a thing? How no one should have to send email to everyone they know or put their name on a website to ask for leave donations, like a giant lumbering HIPAA-violating billboard? How getting cancer, or having a sick kid, or getting mono or COVID six months into your first job, shouldn't be a popularity contest or a freaking GoFundMe?

May 28, 2020 2:38 PM

I have trouble seeing the ethicality of bringing students back to campus when we know that we're in a state that's moving steadily toward top-10 for spread and that students living and playing will catch it from each other. There's no point in talking about hoping everyone will do their best when we have 150 years' worth of experience in how students behave, and we know that this isn't a matter of individual choice: more spread because of individuals' choices increases the danger for all. Whatever the disappointment to the more libertarian among us, this is an instance in which we need people to act with a sense of public welfare, and avoid creating situations where we know it's unlikely that enough people will do this effectively. So we'll bring students in, many of them from families where there is no well-informed decision about the risk (please don't fudge about that), then send them home with a much higher infection rate to families where people have multiple health issues. Iowa is not a particularly healthy state; this is well-known. We also know that there's a high false-negative rate on the tests, so we won't really know who's going home infectious. We should be using this time to learn how to teach really well online, and to ensure that students are well set up for online learning, but instead we're hearing about gearing up to come back to campus. I appreciate that there are people who just want all this to go away and for football to happen, and also that everyone is worried about our bottom line. I expect the Regents are also sitting in the scale pan. But please weigh this against sending home the asymptomatic kid who hands the virus off to a parent or sibling who then dies a horrible death. Apart from the enormity of the death, how is the student supposed to live with that? Either it will be pretty clear that they infected their family member, or there will forever be a question: did I? They were fine before, and I came home, and a week later.... This is not a time to shrug and say something bland about inevitability and the impossibility of perfection. The scenario above is not inevitable and avoiding it does not require perfection. It's a result of choices: a premature decision to reopen when the virus is still spreading widely and adequate, reliable testing is not available, and an uninformed choice to send a child to school because the university has assured people that precautions are being taken. With time, we will have three things: medical knowledge of how to keep Covid-infected people alive; effective non-vaccine pharmaceutical intervention; vaccine. There's reason to be hopeful about the last, and it isn't going to take forever for the other two. But death is forever. You know how they say patience is a virtue? This is why. In the meantime, we should be following California's lead, and we should be signalling that clearly to students and parents so that they can plan, too. We'll get through a semester or two online. But we should be working on how to do that now: sharing how things went in spring, finding best practices, listening to colleagues from other universities about their experiences and practices, beefing up our IT, and working with Congress and others to ensure that our students have the bandwidth, devices, and study areas they need. It's no more difficult than reopening prematurely and considerably less risky. Thanks for reading -