

STAFF Senate

Santa Clara University

Staff Senate Minutes
Thursday, November 20, 2008
11:00 – 12:00
Benson Room 21

Attended: Lorraine Alabi, Susan Babbel, Chad Benzel, Marquita Coe, Kari Craighead, Diane Cranor, Tom Farrell, Sam Florio, Jessica Gagnon, Joseph Guidace, Christina Johnson, Nikole Nichols, Arcelia Rodriguez, Jim Rowan, Mary Sexton, Fred Smith, Jenny Stoddard, Julie Stone

1. Approval of October Minutes

We approved the October minutes.

2. Committee Updates

a. Executive Committee

i. Quarterly Assembly Meetings

Staff Senate Bylaws call for one meeting per quarter with the Staff Assembly. Jim Rowan proposed a January 2009 joint meeting of the Staff Senate and Staff Assembly, featuring a speaker on a topic of interest such as an update on university benefits.

Terminology note: the Staff Assembly is the full staff, the Staff Senate is the body of their elected representatives. (The Faculty Senate is the full faculty, the Faculty Senate Council is the body of their elected representatives.)

ii. Officer and Committee Chair Checklists

Jim requested that, by the end of calendar 2008, officers and committee chairs to send him a checklist of their responsibilities throughout the year. The lists will be useful for future planning and transitions.

b. Elections Committee

Marquita Coe is the new elected representative of the Student Administration group. So far, one person has been nominated to represent the Business School on the Staff Senate.

c. Communications

i. Newsletter

Jim thanked Jessica Gagnon and Tom Farrell for their work on the new Staff Senate newsletter, which has been very well received. The next newsletter is scheduled for January.

ii. Survey

Jessica commented on the more than 130 responses to the survey included with the newsletter. She noted, in particular, an interest in university benefits. Also, many staff members who responded to the survey did not yet know who represented them on the Staff Senate. Jessica will provide more details about the survey at the January meeting of the Staff Senate.

d. Events

i. Health & Wellness Faire

The Faire is tentatively scheduled for February 11th or 12th. The Kennedy Commons is the preferred location because private rooms there allow privacy for health tests offered at the Faire.

ii. Spring Fling

The tentative date is March 25th.

iii. Lunchtime speakers

Jim raised the possibility of having the Staff Senate sponsor lunchtime speakers on topics of interest to staff members. Diane Cranor offered to contact appropriate people to speak on copyright, an important topic on college campuses because of potential liability.

Fred Smith suggested at the last Staff Senate meeting that we consider already scheduled university events before launching a new speaker series. Nikole Nichols suggested that the Staff Senate publicize those events instead of sponsoring new events. Nikole, Tom Farrell, Jessica

Gagnon and Kari Craighead will form a subcommittee to investigate these issues.

e. Community Service Project

The ongoing Ignatian Center project at the Julian Street Inn has successfully recruited many new volunteers and is going well. Many staff members who responded to the survey that Jessica distributed with the Staff Senate newsletter expressed interest in additional service projects.

3. Proposed Bylaws Amendments

a. FTE requirement for counting employees for determining number of representatives

The Bylaws define staff as non-faculty, non-union employees. Representation on the Staff Senate currently depends upon the number of staff members in each campus group. In departments such as athletics, there are a number of staff members (e.g., announcers or scorekeepers at games) who regularly work just a few hours per week (.1 FTE). Including these 40 or so .1 FTE employees, the athletics department has about 90 employees and is entitled to three Staff Senate representatives.

It was proposed that the Bylaws be amended to require that a staff member be employed at least half-time (.5 FTE) for that staff member to be counted in determining how many representatives his/her group is entitled to on the Staff Senate. An alternative suggestion was that low FTE employees be counted in proportion to the amount of time that they work: i.e., ten .1 FTE employees = 1 FTE employee. An additional problem is whether/how the votes of .1FTE employees should be counted in electing Staff Senate representatives.

Jim is going to investigate how many employees on campus work less than half time, where they work, and what effect that has on Staff Senate elections. The question will be discussed at the January Staff Senate meeting.

b. No "election" if only one nominee for a seat on Senate

The Staff Senate voted unanimously to amend the Bylaws specifically to provide that no election is necessary when only one person is nominated to represent a group. Vacancies on the Staff Senate are currently being handled this way.

c. No write-in.

The Staff Senate voted unanimously to amend the Bylaws specifically to provide that no write-ins are allowed. Elections have been handled this way since the switch to electronic voting, because the software doesn't provide for write-ins.

d. Change term of office to start on Jan 1 instead of July 1?

A reason to change the term of office is to allow more time for planning the Staff Faire, scheduled each year for early September. A reason against changing the term of office is that other University governance committees begin their terms of office on July 1. It was suggested that planning for the Staff Faire begin earlier and that joint meetings of outgoing and incoming Staff Senate representatives begin after election results are tallied in April. Committee members need not be elected Staff Senate representatives, so outgoing chairs might be persuaded to remain on committees to help with transitions.

4. Staff Volunteer Award Program

In the past, the entire Staff Senate (formerly the Staff Assembly Council) voted on the recipient of this award, given at the Staff Recognition dinner in June. The vote is done at the Staff Senate meeting prior to the event. It was suggested that planning begin early in 2009. Diane Cranor and Marquita Coe will work together on the award nomination and selection process.

5. Other business

The December 18th Staff Senate meeting has been canceled. Because of the date, many representatives would be unable to attend.

There will be a Family Giving Tree in the Learning Commons.

Jim came to the Staff Senate meeting from a University Budget Committee meeting. He noted that current economic conditions have already meant budget cuts. One or more Staff Senate events may need to be scaled back or canceled in the coming year.