

Administrative Staff Council 2008-2009

Minutes: January 8, 2009

Members Present: Jim Beaverson, Daria Blachowski, Adam Bohland, Shannon Bozigar, Nora Cassidy, Jodi Devine, Donna Dick, Judy Donald, Jason Dunn, Laura Emch, Kim Fleshman, Chris Haar, Mike Hachtel, Barb Hoffman, Steve Kendall, Jeanne Langendorfer, Susan Macias, Sandra Mencer, Connie Molnar, Jacqueline Nathan, Penny Nemtiz, Tim Parish, Brett Pogan, Heidi Popovitch, Carrie Rathsack, Marlene Reynolds, Deborah Rice, Beverly Stearns, David Steen, Kurt Thomas, Nancy Vanderlugt, Briar Wintersteen, Mary Beth Zachary, Tom Zapiecki, Sara Zulch-Smith, Violet Serrato (CSC Rep), Guests: Greg Guzman, Joe Luthman, Robin Belleville, Tony Howard

Co-Chair Kim Fleshman called the meeting to order.

Introduction of Subs: David Raska for Mitch Miller, Tony Howard for Tony Short, and Mark Anderson for Beth Nagel

Approval of December 2008 Minutes: A motion was made by Mary Beth Zachary to adopt the minutes. Laura Emch seconded the motion. All approved.

Guest Speaker – President Cartwright

1. *What has been your best experience at BGSU so far?*

It is difficult to name the best experience but I do think there are many “bests” that focus around the people here and the strong sense of commitment and community. We really need to be intentional about making sure we are a community of learners. Presidents, Deans, Staff, Students – everyone should see themselves as learners. I sense there is a commitment here to do so and people are genuine about their commitment to the community and the mission of the University. I see it playing out in many different ways every single day. The community should be proud that we try very hard to do what we say. We try to make our mission, our values and our goals come alive – and I take great pride in this.

2. *With the exception of yourself, would you comment on the number of leadership positions that are interim appointments, and what affect this might have related to (a) the perception of BGSU at the state level and by Presidential candidates, (b) the conduct/momentum of our mission, and (c) how well we are positioned to achieve USO mandates?*

The number of interims does not affect our ability to be responsive to the expectations in the University System of Ohio Master Plan. I have no sense -- from my interactions with policy makers in Columbus -- that they see any

difference in our commitment because of interim positions. We are asked to focus on getting more individuals into college, keeping more graduates in Ohio, and attracting more baccalaureate degree holders into the state. None of that is new for us nor is it dependent on the number of interims. The interims have to perform their jobs at 100% -- it's just that they are doing it for an interim period of time. The responsibilities and expectations are not diminished. The State is asking us to document our progress against twenty different accountability measures that are grouped into four categories: access, quality, affordability and efficiency, and economic leadership. The ways in which we have to document our progress may be different - but none of those expectations are new for us. We already have these expectations for ourselves and will continue to achieve these goals whether a person is in an interim or permanent position.

The perception of BGSU by presidential candidates is, of course, now a moot point. But, there is something to be said here in terms of my thinking – and the thinking of the Board of Trustees. I have been focused on creating a great transition year and assuring we are doing the right things with respect to the USO, to our own mission and expectations, and ourselves - but also as a way to create a wonderful platform for a new individual to come in next summer and lead BGSU as our next president. Being president beyond the one year certainly was not on my mind - although I was regularly asked if I would consider a two year extension to get the university through the next biennium budget. I was systematically negative about that request. However, the economic condition has become very, very serious. We have had three state budget reductions in the current biennium totaling around two billion dollars. The projection for the state deficit for the next biennium could be as high as seven billion dollars. That will depend on the state portion of the federal economic stimulus package and whether it provides flexibility or is tied to certain aspects of the state budget. In the best of all worlds, there would be a flexible, robust component for the states. The university presidents in Ohio are actively supporting the governor in his request for that flexible, state support. But even with a very robust federal package, there is still a deep hole in the state's revenue projection in the next biennium. This past year we were buffered from cuts because of the compact public higher education made with the governor – that if we held tuition increases at zero, he would protect our state support. He has honored that compact through three budget reductions.

The governor has not been able to protect us on the line items, however. Line items are important to our operating budget. They are factored into the budget as if they were basic state support. They have been there long enough that we have become dependent on them. There are a couple of very big ones for us - Success Challenge dollars and support for the library repositories - are two examples. In great irony, we are being encouraged to look at efficiencies and yet one of the components of efficiency – the regional repositories – might be cut.

Because of the financial situation, I felt I had to re-think my response to the Board

of Trustees request for a two-year extension. We have had a significant deterioration in the financial circumstances of the nation, state, and the university since I agreed to be here for this one-year transition period last June. This - coupled with the number of individuals in interim positions and the provost's resignation - created a tipping point. With the number of senior positions filled on an interim basis, I began to re-consider my decision and think about how I could be a part of the community and help BGSU move through these transitions on a slightly longer timeframe.

The issues of interim positions are important in some ways as I have just described, but I don't think it puts us at a disadvantage in terms of conducting our mission or how we are perceived in Columbus because expectations haven't really changed.

In addition, I respect the provost's decision that - at this time of her life - her family and personal priorities had to prevail. I am pleased she is helping us through this first couple of months of transition so we don't lose momentum. I am meeting Monday to talk about how we put a provost search together.

3. Thank you for communicating openly and regularly with the employee constituent groups regarding state budget and economic realities and the implications these challenges will have at BGSU. Of the planning scenarios you shared with us in your December address to the Faculty Senate, several staff members are deeply concerned by and focusing on this: "...there will likely be lay-offs and that we will also need to keep hiring in key areas." The context was the commitment to support our core mission. Would you elaborate on the criteria being used for determining what are the key areas that will be protected/what are the areas that may be subject to lay-offs, given strategic planning is still in process?

I intend to continue open and regular communication. The responses on the Great Ideas website are extremely helpful. We are providing responses to each idea and will post them on the website so people can see what is suggested and what we are doing with the suggestions. The other part of the open communication has been focused on the operating budget. There are still many moving parts. My commitment is to give you what I know when I have it. Right now, there is not a lot that is new. We don't know what the budget deficit will be. The budget is driven by three main variables: state support (SSI), tuition, and enrollment. Changes in each of these areas affect our budget. We are modeling a 10% reduction in state support across two years - but that doesn't mean that is what it will be. In addition, we don't know if we will be allowed to raise tuition. We have to look where we are positioned with our competition and what constraints we have. There are some schools that are loading "fees" onto students. We need to have parents look at actual comparisons of total costs - not just the tuition rate. It's not just the tuition - it's the tuition, fees, and scholarships or grants, etc. We need parents to look at the net cost and not the sticker price. We have to be very sensitive about our tuition because we are

perceived as a high-priced institution. That may not be the case when considering fees other institutions are charging. Nevertheless, our decisions regarding tuition will matter in regard to the operating budget and we'll know a little more about our SSI and line items after the governor presents his budget proposal. The Ohio house and senate will debate his proposal and at each step of this process we will receive more information about what is likely to be the outcome. It will be stressful. We have to keep watching enrollment – because enrollment drives tuition revenue and the SSI. The state is changing the formula to become gradually less enrollment driven but it will still be largely enrollment driven. We look at this every day and are trying to work together as a community of public education so that we don't have divergent statements and proposals regarding tuition.

We have to make the best decisions about where we make our budget reductions in order to maintain the mission and priority of the university. We have a very decentralized budget process – as most higher education institutions do. We rely on our vice presidents and deans to make the best decisions based on their priorities as they align with university priorities. Although we don't have a new university strategic plan, we do have an existing plan, a mission, and a sense of values. We are not without guidance even though the new plan is not completed.

With respect to administrative staff and the commitment they have to the university, we have a very special challenge. The notice provisions require us to inform individuals whose positions may not be continued for the next fiscal year by December of the prior year. December is a very difficult time to send anyone a notice that a position might not be continued. Yet we are trapped by our own policy to make these notifications in December. If we had a different notice period, we might have more information upon which to make decisions. But, we had to plan for a serious reduction because we could not be caught in April unable to do anything. I know a number of individuals who have received letters but have had personal conversations regarding a possible employment continuation after we know more about what is likely to happen with the State budget. But, at this point, our hands are tied. We would all be better off if we had a more flexible policy that enabled us to have more information before we have to make these decisions. We plan to move forward to see if we can create that.

These are the realities and they aren't pretty or easy for anyone. But, we can't ignore them. You can't get six million dollars out of a budget our size without looking at positions. We are a labor intensive organization. We are especially challenged that sixty percent of our budget is in academic affairs where a great deal of our core mission is centered and has to be delivered. We have a very challenging situation and we have to turn our attention from getting through to what we have to invest in. Obviously we have to reduce costs somewhere else in order to be sure we have investment resources in areas that will allow us to grow, improvement enrollment, and bring in more revenues.

No one enjoys this. We have to be prepared to make the best decisions we can based on the information we have and then be able to adjust our decisions as the information changes. We were faced with some very last minute cuts in Success Challenge. Letters that arrived at an inconvenient time were Success Challenge related.

We agree that how the notice is delivered is very important. As a cabinet, we were committed to having as much face-to-face interaction as possible with these notifications but are aware that in some cases, regrettably, that didn't happen.

Program cuts are possible in the second year of the budget biennium. Because we've been watching vacancies and have a hiring freeze, we'll have some flexibility in the first year of the biennium. However, if there isn't a turn around in the state resources – during the second year we will have exhausted the flexibility provided by vacancies and open lines and will have to look at other options.

With the market what it is, we also have to expect less from endowments to support our programs. This is especially worrisome in terms of student scholarships. The market has dropped so dramatically that there are not enough earnings in many endowments to transfer into the scholarships. We are having some success asking donors to – on a short term basis– write a check as opposed to putting it into the endowment. We are asking others to think about doing that in a general pool. We are calling this Sustaining Tomorrow's Scholars and we have had a positive response.

4. Is the University actively pursuing online and blended learning initiatives? If so, how is the directive being communicated from the administration university-wide? How are we recruiting for and marketing these programs?

We are aggressively pursuing online and blended learning programs. We are at an all time high for online enrollments. We now reach more than 7500 students with about 500 online courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. We have two degree completion programs that are fully available online – Bachelor of Liberal Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Technology/Advanced Technological Education. We have active initiatives underway to expand the enrollment in online learning. New markets, for example, are the military and emergency personnel. We have six new degree completion programs in development and a very innovative first-year program that could be delivered online that would be responsive to the governor's senior to sophomore initiative – where we could deliver to high school seniors the first year of college in an online format. So, we are trying to think about our capabilities in online and blended learning in relation to the expectations of the USO for partnerships with community colleges, high school student programs, and so forth. And we are actively working with community colleges for 2+2 programs – both online and blended. We are trying to maintain our capacity in the division of Continuing and

Extended Education where we have instructional designers to assist faculty. In addition, there is an ambitious marketing initiative underway to make sure we get the message out about our online and blended offerings to a significantly expanded audience. We are working with the military, for example, where we could touch as many as 250,000 people (they won't all enroll!). Our enrollment would look different this year if it weren't for the growth in online learning.

5. In the time that you have spent as President, what are other thematic concerns you are hearing, and what changes do you anticipate will alleviate these concerns?

I believe we have already covered this topic so I'll move on to the next question.

6. Based on your experience as a university president and what you now know about the culture and operations of BGSU, what qualities do you consider most critical in our next president?

Well – this question is somewhat moot now. However, I think the search committee did a splendid job writing a specification that communicated the needs of the university and made it clear we were looking for an individual that meets those needs. It's about the fit – the alignment of what a university needs and what an individual has to offer. I hope that as we get into the next search, that will be front and center the way it has been this time. I do think we'll have an opportunity to start earlier so that someone could be engaged with us even as I am preparing to depart.

7. When you leave, what do you think BGSU will look like—what do you hope will be your imprint?

Now there is more time to have an imprint and make a difference. My hope is that we will have emerged stronger from a very challenging time as a community and that everyone will understand why we had to make some very difficult decisions. I hope we can take great pride in continuing to make strategic investments even as we deal with very difficult budget challenges. I think the budget challenges will be with us for the two years. Our challenge will be to use the situation in the most creative way to maintain what is valuable to us and make sure we have opportunities to make new investments where we can expand our mission and grow our enrollment.

Thank you for the opportunity and thank you for the ongoing commitment you have to the university. I understand times are tough and that you are all concerned. We are as well. But, to repeat what I said earlier, we cannot ignore the realities. We have to plan for the worst and hope for the best -- and make sure we come out stronger. I'm convinced we can because there are many great people at BGSU including the administrative staff.

Co-Chairs Report:

12/05/08 Board of Trustees

- K. Fleshman addressed the Board on behalf of ASC: (1) Announced the distribution of the “Flexible Scheduling and/or Variable Work Hours Memo” to BGSU VPs, Deans, Chairs, and Directors. Reiterated the policy approved by the BOT on March 23, 2007. (2) Mentioned that we are looking forward to Board action in 2009 on the resolution to rename the President’s Leadership Academy the Sidney A. Ribeau President’s Leadership Academy as part of a comprehensive plan to honor Dr. Ribeau.
- ASC officers attended the Educational Session at 9 am, which included (1) an overview of the BGSU HB 251 Energy Conservation Plan by Steve Krakoff, and (2) the proposal for a Health and Wellness Across the Lifespan Center of Excellence by Dean Linda Petrosino.
- K. Fleshman and B. Stearns attended the Financial Affairs/Facilities Committee meeting (revised University Naming Policy, approval of adoption of BGSU 403(b) Plan, approval of BGSU HB 251 Energy Conservation Plan); and S. Zulch Smith attended the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting (personnel changes since Oct. 3, 2008, and merger of Environmental Health and Environmental Studies Programs).

12/09/08 Executive Committee Meeting

- Discussed questions for the President (ASC 01/08/09 meeting).
- Developed ASC agenda items 01/08/09 meeting.
- Treasurer provided financial report.

12/16/08 Employee Constituent Group Leaders (Tri-Chairs) Meeting (K. Fleshman, F. Olson, B. Stearns, E. Williams)

- **Public Records Management: Records Retention and Records Requests**
B. Stearns coordinating a meeting of panelists for seminar on records requests and records retention in the spring semester. Suggested panel participants include Assistant to the President Sean Fitzgerald to address records requests and FERPA; Head Librarian of the Center for Archival Collections Steve Charter to address records retention and the BGSU Records Policy; Registrar Christopher Cox and Dean of Students Jill Carr to address student records, FERPA, grades/grade appeals; and Chief Information Officer Bruce Petryshak to address records security. E. Williams reported that the Provost and the President are aware of the seminar and have approached Chris Cox and Sean Fitzgerald. E. Williams suggested adding Mark Gromko and a representative from the Business Office to the panel.

- **Current Climate at BGSU**

Faculty presenting a forum on Jan. 22 regarding the pros and cons of collective bargaining (Ben Muego will address the advantages; Michael Berger will address the disadvantages).

12/16/08 Meeting with Office Human Resources (R. Ferguson, K. Fleshman, M. Serio, B. Stearns, S. Zulch Smith)

- Discussed article in the Blade about layoffs at UT.
- R. Ferguson provided a history of administrative staff contract non-renewals from 1998-99 through 2007-08. The numbers are consistent through the years ranging from 7 to 16. As of 12/15/08, given the information provided to HR to date, the number of non-renewals this year falls within the range of previous years. HR will update co-chairs regarding changes.

Treasurer's report:no report

Chair-Elect Report: no report

Secretary's Report: no report

Committee Reports:

Amendments: no report.

Awards: no report

Internal Affairs: The Internal Affairs committee will be meeting on Tuesday to work on the orientation packet and a notification to administrative staff to provide suggestions, concerns or questions. We are working on the appropriation worksheet and the ballots for the upcoming election.

External Affairs: no report

Personnel and Welfare: We have received a revised draft of the NCC document.

Professional Development: Professional development funding will be available for the spring 2009 semester. Information including deadlines for application will be posted to the ASC website the week of January 12th.

Scholarship: The Scholarship Committee has finalized the raffle prizes and raffle announcement will be mailed out next week.

Ombuds: **December 2008**

0 cases

4 hours

75 hours year-to-date

BGSU Retiree Liaison: no report.

New Business:

A discussion began regarding the number administrative staff employment change notification letters were sent last month. The total number of notifications is not yet been confirmed. A suggestion to initiate support services for individuals whose contracts are not renewed.

It was noted the President's mention of changing the 6-month non-renewal notification policy for administrative staff. Concern was expressed regarding shared governance and the desire for ASC to be involved in possible future discussions.

Good of the Order:

Volunteers are needed for President's Day is February 16, 2009!

The Undergraduate Student Art Show is February 8th.

Penny Nemitz made a motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Susan Macias.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2009 at 1:30 in 207 BTSU.

Respectfully submitted by,
Sherri Orwick Ogden
Secretary