

DRAFT

Staff Work Life Committee Minutes

Thursday, September 16, 2021

1:00 p.m. (Zoom)

Attendance: Rita Mannelli, Jon Fleming, Thomas Keilman, Stacey Stehle, Valarie Wilson
Colleen Leonard, HR Representative, *ex officio*

Absent: Jazzmyn Ivery-Robinson, Cathy Stevens, Patrick Richey

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rita Mannelli at 1:00 p.m.

1. Welcome to Colleen Leonard, Employee & Labor Relations Partner and new ex-officio member of the committee.
2. Nice feedback was received from a staff member and sent along to Peter Lana regarding the fall flower installation in front of GAC. ... *"I don't remember seeing that in the past, and it brightens my mornings!!"*
3. Three self-nominations to fill the committee empty slot were received.
 - Carey Backman, Director, Student Engagement and Leadership
 - Alex Hopkins-Ives, Coordinator of Operations in Communication Sciences and Disorders
 - Lynne Vick, Executive Assistant to the Dean, School of Health & Human Services
4. The committee recently conducted an updated survey to all staff members. The results were condensed and analyzed. Each member of the committee was assigned to do a "JamBoard" for easy discussion. Please see below:

Staff Work Life Survey Results

Salient points of the responses was created into *JamBoard* which in turn are summarized in *Words* below:

Question 5: Please explain why you do not find your work engaging?

- 23 respondents to the open ended question "Do you find your work engaging"
- 7 respondents expressed that the work is cyclical and repetitive, and thus not engaging
- 5 respondents expressed that their area is understaffed
- 4 expressed a lack of advancement opportunities. "The entirety of my skills are not utilized."
- 2 expressed that they were underpaid.
- "By nature it is cyclical and it seems like the longer I am here the more I am expected to take on....SCOPE CREEP."

Question 9: What barriers have you encountered in requesting access to professional development opportunities?

- 64 total respondents
- 3 Part-time employees expressed the feeling that because they were part-time, they couldn't access professional development.
- 24 respondents expressed that funding/budget was the barrier to access to professional development opportunities.
- 20 respondents felt they had no barriers to requesting access to professional development opportunities.
- 10 respondents reported work obligations/not having the time.
- 1 respondent expressed family obligations as the reason.
- One major barrier is belief in the worth, knowledge, expertise and contributions made by staff; if this is absent, then very limited to no opportunities will be offered. There is also a hierarchy within the category of "staff" - if one is at the "lower" side, this is especially true with regard to professional development opportunities, promotions and/or raises (which was prevalent before COVID)

Question 10: What projects, committees or other responsibilities would you like to be a part of to help develop your career?

- 42 respondents to the question
- 10 respondents replied with NA, Not Sure, Unsure, Unknown or None
- More campus-wide committees. A committee that reviews career tracks for employees in order to improve employee retention. Committees with other departments. I feel the same staff is picked for all search committees and task forces.
- Switching roles in the office to ensure my resume stays sharp!
- Leadership responsibilities. All educational and development opportunities in my field. Cross-disciplinary committees as well as cross-institutional partners. Network with other schools by attending conferences offered by software vendors.
- Any and all related to my field and career. An attractive aspect of being at a college is that potential for continued learning and personal growth. Given the circumstances, these opportunities are more limited for part time employees and not sure if it has been a consideration.
- I would be eager and interested in being part of any project, committee et al where my contributions and expertise would be valued. It seems to be the same cohorts that are often tapped for advisory panels, search committees, et al. EVERYONE should be provided an opportunity to contribute and be heard.
- Already serve on too many committees. Nothing at the moment. I'm just trying to keep up with my responsibilities. I have a great number of projects and committee work right now. None at this time. My plate is full.
- I already sit on multiple committees. I already feel overwhelmed with work I do not want to have to be a part of anything else.
- Nothing at the moment. I'm just trying to keep up with my responsibilities.
- I already feel overwhelmed with work I do not want to have to be a part of anything else.

- New program offerings development. Specific tasks that I perceive should be part of my job responsibilities. I'd like room for advancement. Outside conference and trainings.
- Not sure, but I have been exploring areas that I can be a part of.
- I am excited about restorative justice and would like to get involved with this at Nazareth College.
- As our division reorganizes, I have been asked for input about what I would like to see changed/what is feasible with current staffing and work responsibilities. I would like to continue to contribute to this process.
- I enjoy working with the students and doing what I can to get them involved in the Nazareth Community. DEI-related projects and committees, work that involves students.
- I'm actively involved in many projects/committees, etc. within the professional field I am a part of. Serve on the Budget Committee.
- Currently, I feel as though I have plenty of pro-development opportunities for me right now.
- Committees seem to include the same staff over and over. Campus wide opportunities. For some reason my department never gets asked to be a staff representative on any committee.

Question 14: Explain why you feel you do not have enough resources to be successful

- Out of 94 responses to Question 13 (Do you feel that you have enough resources to be successful in your position?), 64 answered Yes, while 30 said No, and 23 added explanations
- Staffing Levels (11 responses)
- Staffing shortages are causing burnout; No time for proactive planning, just reacting to fires; Part-time employment not sufficient to meet job requirements
- Doing other department's work leaves no time to get own job done; No time to cross-train employees
- Professional Development Resources (3 responses)
- Lack of professional development resources; Resources are available for faculty and students but not staff; No budget for professional development
- Technology (6 responses)
- Technology is outdated, not user-friendly, or unavailable; My request for technology was declined; Unwillingness by Naz to invest in technology
- Compensation/Benefits (3 responses)
- Compensation and/or benefits are not competitive; not compensated fairly based on skillset

Question 21: What can we do to give you a better work/life balance?

- More Staff (12 replies), Flexible Schedule/Hybrid (24 replies), More Money (7 replies), Emails after working hours (3), Other (11)
- More Staff: "more staff to help with work load", "fill open positions", "too much work is piled on", "double the amount of work - hire more people"
- Emails: "educate the community to not send emails after working hours", "a greater acceptance of not responding right away to every single email", "limit EM, especially after hours"
- Flexible Schedule: "opportunities to work from home; "cost-savings", "less stress", "family balance", "ability to work more hours from home", "allow for flexibility", "flex days", "support work from home situations"

- Other: "Events later in the day", "develop a policy of expectations for time off, unofficially expected to respond", "recognize the added responsibilities for FT asst. coaches beyond coaching", "value my contributions and potential"
- More Money: "Money. More Money", "increased salary", "proper compensation", "raise salaries, be competitive in the market", "campus child care, subsidies, or higher salary to allow"
- Other: "you're doing fine", "I'm good", "I am doing fine as a PT person, occasionally wish I could take a course for the sheer enjoyment", "being supported by supervisor when I set boundaries and not feel bad"

Question 23: In what ways can the Staff Work Life Committee assist you in your work at Nazareth College? 30 responses

Advocate

- SWL could have been consulted with the return to work plan for the college.
- Advocate on behalf of the staff with upper administration
- Make sure that staff are represented in strategic decision-making. Be part of the planning process for Assembly Days.

Connections

- Opportunities for faculty and staff to build connections
- Provide opportunities to develop and enhance work connections with other departments.
- More events for engagement

Communication

- Responding to submitted concerns/questions, etc.
- Not sure what to come to the committee for or the process for approaching the committee
- Increase email communication instead of just posting to website

Professional Development

- More opportunities other than social gatherings

Question 25: What events are you interested in participating in?

- Social and Fun events that allow for connections to be made with others from different Departments. Mixers, coffee hour, picnic, lawn games, etc.
 - Life assistance: Medicare workshop, financial workshops
 - Off Campus Fun: (Red Wings games, trips to museum, theatre, etc.)
 - Off campus community service opportunities
 - Recreation activities. Fitness and wellness events. "not just standing around eating and drinking"
- ✓ The committee needs to be an active listening voice for staff
 - ✓ "I would like to attend more events to get to know people...many of these currently happen after-hours which is tricky with my parenting schedule."
 - ✓ Events seem to always leave someone out since we never close office during work hours

Question 28: What is one Work Life Program you have heard about or seen at OTHER organization that you thought was beneficial to employees?

- Flexible work arrangements (hybrid work schedule, 4 day work week, flex days, casual Fridays)
- Sick bank for employees to share
- Tuition reimbursement
- Show employees that their lives matter; don't separate personal growth from professional growth.
- Include families at employee events
- Pets in office
- Celebrate employees (give away turkeys at Thanksgiving, host an employee gala, hot chocolate event, wine tasting, brewery gatherings, baseball games, retirement/departure gatherings)
- Health/Wellness programs: yoga and stress management opportunities, more recreational course
- Offerings during the work day, wellness fair
- Recreation hour (instead of happy hour)
- Inter-departmental team building events

End of survey summary.

OTHER ITEMS:

- Staff Recognition: Andy Morris recent email "Update on Student Support Services in Academic Affairs", August 31, 2021 was a good example and appreciated by both faculty and staff.
- President Beth Paul is hosting Employee Recognition on Thursday, September 30 at 3:30 p.m.
- No clear transparency on Staffing
- Long-term problem: using Nazareth as stepping stone and goes to other higher Ed institutions for a better pay.

The next steps:

- To review and to share the summary of the survey to President Beth Paul.
- To update its *by-laws* to reflect the divisional changes at the College and to ensure representation at each division.
- To hold an election of empty slot.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ermindia Hugh