

SSRC Minutes

February 10, 2009

Support Staff Relations Committee members present: Retta Kelley, Randye Jones, Ranae Hamor, Shannon Geisinger, and Stephanie Peterson.

Several members had conflicts on the February 3 date, so this month's meeting was postponed till February 10. Our agenda for this meeting is:

- the spring general meeting,
- the spring luncheon,
- and continued discussion of some of last month's topics.

The date and time for the spring general meeting has not yet been set; we are targeting the second week of spring break. We decided to invite President Osgood to address Support Staff about budget and economic issues facing the college and staff in particular.

Other ideas regarding the agenda of the general meeting:

We'll contact Elena Bernal to find out if there is any news to share with staff about the Campus Climate Assessment project.

We discussed finding out who is serving on the Benefits Committee, wishing to present those names to staff just for information purposes. (Randye mentioned that the Diversity Committee is working to create a list of all committees on campus, though a completion date is not known.)

Elections are held at the spring general meeting. Our communications officer will submit an announcement to the Campus Memo asking for nominations before the general meeting; nominations at the meeting are also welcome.

As part of the general meeting we also want to include some open discussion time for Support Staff to voice their concerns to the SSRC (in addition to having a comment box available for people who aren't comfortable speaking up in a group).

Continuing a discussion started last month, we decided to try a comment box at the general meeting. The purpose of the comment box would be for folks to bring their concerns to the attention of the SSRC. We will announce at the meeting that the comment box is available, and that we encourage people to include their names, which will be treated with confidentiality. With a name, we can get additional information if needed and also follow up with that person. We cannot guarantee follow up on anonymous comments. We do not plan to read any of the submissions at the general meeting, simply because we can't guarantee that we would have any immediate answers. Randye thinks she can supply the box and some note cards.

There is sometimes confusion that the fall/spring general meeting and the fall/spring luncheon are the same thing. They are not! According to the SSRC Handbook:

"The primary purpose of these general meetings is to provide an opportunity for group discussion and presentation of issues for the SSRC to relay to the administration."

The luncheons are a more social event, organized by a rotating schedule of campus offices. These two events are also typically held on different days.

The luncheon committee has set the date for the spring luncheon. It will be Tuesday, March 24, 2009, at Noon, in the Quad Dining Hall. Invitations to staff with information on how to RSVP will be distributed by the luncheon committee.

We continued our consideration of creating a Support Staff listserv. This listserv would be an email list of only hourly non-union Support Staff, used by the SSRC for occasional announcements. We basically agreed it is a good idea, but the listserv should be moderated by multiple members of the SSRC to ensure proper content. That means, if any other member of the list tried to send a message to the whole list, someone on the SSRC would have to “approve” the message before it would be sent to everyone on the list. A footer should be appended automatically to all messages, giving recipients the option to opt-out of the listserv, and warning that the list is not for general use and is moderated by the SSRC. In addition, a member of the SSRC would be appointed to work with Human Resources to maintain the accuracy of the listserv. Retta will contact ITS to begin the process of setting up the listserv, and Stephanie can attend a set-up meeting as well. Once the listserv is set up, the committee must have a routine of following up any email communications with hard-copies to Support Staff members in Dining Services.

From the listserv discussion, an concern was brought up about Support Staff members in Dining Services and their lack of time during working hours to check their college email account. We wondered whether something could be set up similar to Wellness time, where a short amount of time might be provided weekly for them to access a computer and check their college email accounts.

Another topic from last month: informal meetings where some SSRC members would be available in a certain location at a certain time for any staff member to drop in and talk. Several of us have volunteered to be available for drop-in discussions, probably at the Spencer Grill. Dates and times to be determined.

The committee received a question asking about a grievance policy for the college. We reported in last month’s minutes that there may be a policy related to this issue (an “appeals” process) in the revised Staff Handbook. The SSRC members present felt that having a written policy in place is important to Support Staff.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Peterson - SSRC Secretary

The next committee meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, March 3, 2009.

The Support Staff Relations Committee (SSRC) is concerned with working conditions and general benefits at Grinnell College. The SSRC is not mandated to involve itself with personnel matters relating to specific incidents or individual cases.

Feel free to contact the current members!

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