

**Staff Advisory Committee
Teams Meeting
September 23, 2021**

Members Present: Angie Denson, Margo Dirkson, Shana Eads, Kathy Faulkner, Amy Foster, Joni Gilmore, James Goad, Carrie Harris, Susan Henry, Michelle Holm, Corinne Johnson, Bethany Jones, Charlene McClain, Kim Meredith, Michael Sliger, Sarah Starkey, Angie Wells

Members Absent: Andrea Kruszka

Others Present: President Oldham, Lee Wray, Kevin Vedder, Donna Schrock

Summary:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes; May 6, 2021 & June 9, 2021

Introductions

Discussion on Staff Retreat & Evaluations

Nomination for Vice-Chair

Comments by the President

Proceedings:

Past Chairperson Angie Wells filled in for Chair Andrea Kruszka. She called the Teams meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Susan Henry motioned to approve the agenda. Kim Meredith seconded. APPROVED.

Carrie Harris motioned to approve the minutes from May 6, 2021. Susan Henry seconded. APPROVED. Susan Henry motioned to approve the minutes from June 9, 2021. Bethany Jones seconded. APPROVED.

All members introduced themselves and told what department they worked in.

Angie Wells asked for comments on the Staff Retreat held on July 20, 2021. Charlene McClain said she thought it went great and would be just as good next year. Everyone worked hard and people commented to her that the Question and Answer session at the end was wonderful. Angie Wells said that the comments she has received back were all positive. It went very well and smooth. Angie Densen said, based on the evaluations, that we need to work on adding a pickle to the lunch and more snacks.

Lee Wray added that he thought we received an excellent review. There may have been 3 comments that may be considered negative for the whole event. It was one of the better reviewed events that he

had ever looked at. Angie Wells was pleased with the turnout and thought with all the positive reviews that next year will be even bigger and better. She met a lot of new people through the event. Amy Foster brought up that someone had said maybe a different time of year would be better but most thought the summer is still the best for most people. Lee agreed for the academic offices it is better in the summer but you need to watch SOAR days for Enrollment Management. It is hard to find a time that is good for everybody. Everyone was in agreement to do another Staff Retreat next year.

Angie Wells asked for nominations for Vice-Chair and read the duties it entailed. Susan Henry nominated Sarah Starkey. Sarah respectfully declined since it was her very first meeting. Donna Schrock read the three names that were not eligible to be nominated since they would be ending their term at the end of this year; Kim Meredith, Carrie Harris, and Susan Henry. Charlene McClain nominated Angie Wells to do another term. Corrine Johnson seconded. Unanimously Approved.

President Oldham welcomed and thanked everyone for the great job they have done in response to the pandemic. We had a little surge on campus with the Delta Variant but the numbers are coming down. We are at about half the number of cases we were two weeks ago. The numbers in the community are declining as well and encouraged everyone on campus to be vaccinated. It is very easy, convenient and free to get vaccinated on campus.

There are a lot of capital improvements on campus. We have finished Marc Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center, the new Laboratory Science Building, and the Stonecipher Lecture Hall. The Burnett Recreation Fitness Center has been listed as one of the top ten campus recreation centers in the country. Next week we are scheduled to receive the annual Governor's Award for environmental stewardship for the new rec center and the new science building.

There was a ceremonial ground breaking for the new Engineering Building. Contractors will start work in the next few weeks. We are continuing design work on the new JJ Oakley Innovation Center and Residence Hall. The Cupola on Derryberry will be replaced with a new one in the next few weeks. Peachtree and Stadium roads on campus will get a major overhaul. Most of Peachtree will become pedestrian. The whole project will take about 18 months and will start by the end of this year or early next year. It will give a new feel to the center of campus. We are working at scheduling these projects at times that would have the least negative impact on the campus and we will keep everyone informed.

We received money in this year's appropriations to renovate Wattenbarger Auditorium and the Derryberry Auditorium. We are beginning the design process now. We have submitted one capital project outlay to the state for next year for a full renovation of Johnson Hall with the demolition and removal of Foster Hall. No immediate plans to replace Foster Hall on that site so it would return to green space.

We have big aspirations in three major areas, Research, Fundraising, and Enrollment. Research had a record year with just short of \$22.8 million in funded research. Advancement also set a record in Fundraising, over \$22 million in private gifts were given this past year.

President Oldham talked about the Wings Up Way ~ on how we treat our students, how we treat each other, and how we treat visitors on campus. It can be a constant reminder to treat everyone respectfully and appropriately and to roll out the red carpet. Enrollment is an issue that all universities are concerned about. Almost all universities in the state of Tennessee were down in enrollment except two. We were down about 3.4%. We are financially strong, that is the good news. We have a very aggressive recruiting strategy in place going into the next recruiting cycle. We have increased scholarships, we are

guaranteeing scholarships, and we have a very loud marketing campaign. We have created a student organization called the Trailblazers that provide personalized campus tours to visitors and then follow up with them to personalize the process.

We are ranked number one in Tennessee for early career salary for graduates. We are number one among public universities in Tennessee for best return on student higher ed investment and we are number one in the lowest amount of student dept. We continue to provide a great value here to students in the state of Tennessee.

Susan Henry asked when did he think Foster would be torn down? The President said it would depend on how soon the state would allocate the funds. The earliest would probably be a year from now. Charlene McClain asked what the number was for enrollment. The President replied official count is 9,840 students. We need to make sure that the decline is not a multi-year decline.

Angie Denson asked if the Trailblazers could give prospective graduate students a tour and who would they reach out to? The President thought it was a great idea and that she could start by talking with Dr. Johnson. Keep in mind that the information that they typically would tell someone would be from the perspective of an undergraduate student.

Charlene commented on how pretty the campus has been looking with the landscape and wondered when we would be able to see the design for Peachtree? The President thought within the next couple of weeks. Shana added that everyone should get out to see the fall decorations on the plaza. The bales of hay were hand painted.

Other such matters: Angie Wells asked Kevin Vedder to tell a little about himself. He stated that his whole career was with higher education. He started at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, for about 30 years in Human Resources. Moved out to Maryland in an Associate VP position for about 4-5 years. Then came here to Tennessee Tech, a great institution. There is a great foundation of people doing work across all levels to support this institution. He also spent 25 years in the Army National Guard post 911. He is excited to be here and that fundamentally the Staff Advisory Committee is critically important and having the President here to support it is the key to success. I am here to help support and have some ideas that might be of interest as we go forward. If there is anything HR can do to help you be successful, we are open to you and accessible.

Susan Henry motioned to adjourn. Joni Gilmore seconded. Adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Donna Schrock, recorder