

University Council

MINUTES

MAY 14, 2024

3:00-4:22 PM

LH 208 & TEAMS

MEETING CALLED BY	Tonia Ferrell, chair
TYPE OF MEETING	Monthly Meeting
PRESIDER	Tonia Ferrell, chair
NOTE TAKER	Heather Loughney
ATTENDEES	<p>Member: Marilia Antunez, Grace DeWitt, Melissa Dreisbach, Tracie Epner, Ed Evans, Blair Everett, Tammy Ewin, Tonia Ferrell, Dan Friesner, Megan Frey, John Huss, Sarah Kelly, Kris Kraft, Brant Lee, Nate Meeker, John Messina, Stephen L. Myers, Linda Saliga, Varunee Faii Sangganjanavanich, Sonya Wagner, Heather Walter, Nick Weber, John Wienczek</p> <p>Absent with notice: Stacia Biddle, John Corby, Gary Miller</p> <p>Absent without notice: Kim Cole, Deb Owens, Catherine Strain, Eli Strohecker, Eric Veigel, Julia Wood</p> <p>Other attendees: Dale Adams, Matthew Akers, Mechelle Banis, Kelly Bialek, Sheau-Huey Chiu, Diane Bish, Scott Campbell, Vivian Campbell, Kathleen Hauenstein, Kim Haverkamp, Amanda Herald, Patti Huth, Emily Janoski-Haehlen, Judith Juvancic-Heltzel, Thomas Lavelle, Paul Levy, Kendall Martis, Tim Meyers, Patricia Miller, Michele Novachek, John Reilly, Scott Roberts, Christin Seher, Linda Shanks, Michelle Smith, Mark Stasitis, Kaitlin Vazquez, Morgan Wagers, Jessica Whitehill</p>
Agenda topics:	
	<p style="text-align: center;">CALL TO ORDER TONIA FERRELL</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. 2. The chair made one addition to the agenda, adding the report from the Physical Environment Committee. The revised agenda was approved. <p>The minutes of the 2024-4-9-minutes-university-council-final.docx meeting were approved as distributed.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT TONIA FERRELL</p>
	<p>The executive committee met April 23 and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab Safety Committee – the chair spoke with Eric Green and Faculty Senate Chair Budd regarding approval of committee existing under University Council, Chair Budd was agreeable to that. • Guest Speakers – updated schedule. • New business – discussed pending rulings on salaries in the Federal arena, how that could affect salaries on campus. Ruling will be coming in the next 12 months.

	The chair gave farewells to outgoing Student Government leaders.
PROVOST'S REMARKS	
	<p>The provost gave an update on enrollment – doing well in light of FAFSA issues, all institutions have seen decrease in year to year numbers as a result. Starting to receive files now and have had a large batch arrive recently. Will continue to work on what we can control; good orientations, keeping in touch with students, admissions work, and fixing small issues in the systems.</p> <p>Attended the Budget & Finance Committee meeting – good discussion, gathering ideas on next steps. Next few months will be busy. Taking the time to be careful and thoughtful in decisions.</p> <p>Questions? Huss – question about admissions related things with financial aid and slow roll out – wonder if there are some elements of our response that could be proactive? With students holding off on decision of where to attend, seems like a good time to make an affordability argument. Students who were considering going away to school might decide instead to come to Akron this year. Should university take advantage of situation? Wiencek – will pass information on to Admissions and Tammy Ewin is here. Social media would be the best way to get that message out.</p> <p>Evans – wondering if you could comment on an article in the Daily News about state support of higher education. It was pretty dismal according to the article. The state of Ohio is supporting higher ed in Ohio at about 65% of the national average. How can we turn that around? Wiencek - please forward the article. It is a challenge nationally and has been for quite a while. Support for higher ed is nowhere near what it was in the 90s. Been a drifting of societal view of higher ed. Time has moved forward, and degrees have been linked to good jobs and then politicians have seen it as a private benefit. Moved from publicly subsidized to now a different model. Showing data to legislators is important. Higher ed is important to supporting an economy. College educated people contribute more to society, pay higher taxes, and are less likely to become involved in criminal activities. Useful information, though not sure there is much we can do about it.</p>
STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE	
	Makarius - Building awareness of 24-26 strategic plan. Have hard copies here today. Look online to see up to date information. April had a strategic plan summit, celebrated the 5 collaboratives that have done work. Lifelong learning, flourishing people and social impact – 3 strategic plans moving forward. Well attended summit. Look forward to continuing the conversation, please let me know if you would like to be involved.
GUEST SPEAKER – SHELLY KELLER - PURCHASING	
	<p>Shelly gave a PowerPoint presentation Travel Presentation Spring 2024.pptx</p> <p>Questions: Everett – work in small department, surprised by fees. Where can we get information on that?</p>

Keller – service fees are how travel group gets paid. We are working on how to reduce those fees. We know they are ways to book on your own, and we’re figuring that out. We’re working on it.

Meeker – there’s fees associated with booking, a lot of folks see those, talk about how the university might save money going that route. A lot of people are not seeing that. Keller – we’re all coworkers on campus. Hope to combine those fees and go back to travel group to ask for a better deal. Have told them we need the best pricing possible each and every time. We are always asking if there is a way to reduce the cost. Have talked to others who use Christopherson and others who have gone elsewhere, will be getting new contract in Fall, and we’ll look for the best prices.

Huss – if someone is making travel arrangements and finds better rates, should they stop and email the agent or you to find out how to do that?

Keller – in our cost savings is also the time spent working on a trip. Hate to do this right now, snip and copy me and/or the agent. I’ll get involved and help get someone to work on it. The agency does not always get the “Expedia” price. If you’re in a hurry just reach out.

Shelly also shared this document for information: [Travel Infographic.pdf](#)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TONIA FERRELL

- Budget and Finance – met in April with Misty Villers, got current assumptions that we had planned to share today, president asked us to pause on that. Met last week with Misty, provost and president, new information. Things we’re looking pretty good, but we don’t know exactly what is going on with it. We’ve been told we will be looking at a lot of it and not finding out after the fact.

Provost – more than happy to take any questions. Data has been shared and there is nothing new. Policy of drawing on reserves is the real issue. Do we want to continue to draw on those reserves or look at reducing expenditures? Working with Jill Bautista to develop budget but may change as we go. Look at the reduction in expenses in next few years. Revenue is the issue. We are in the midst of developing a plan, working with everyone on campus on that.

Questions:

Carson – I may be wrong but think I’m not. When we sold off parking we were supposed to get a 50 Mil windfall, last June/July president said that 55 Mil would get us about 18-24 months out and give us breathing room. We’re now 9 months out from that and we’re talking about it again. Did that 55 Mil not give us any breathing room? What we’re doing doesn’t ever feel like we’re plugging the hole.

Saliga – it is helping with it, but we have a huge hole to dig out of. It’s helping but we have to do more.

Wienczek – it reduced the draw on reserves but it’s a policy decision about what level of the draw on reserves we can maintain. Last summer the indications looked good. But now we are anticipating things that we weren’t talking about last summer; decrease in SSI for example. Trying to be responsible with the budget. Trying to stay ahead of the changes.

- Physical Environment – Stephen Myers gave presentation of campus construction updates [202405 University Council Presentation comp.pdf](#)

Questions:

Messina – is there a photographic history of before and after on campus, to help people watch changes? With all the campus changes happening, it’s a way to look at what it used to look like.

Myers – we have a few before pictures, but not a lot of campus. Have a lot of photos overall, but need to find them.

Carson – on the hardscape center of campus. How much of that does the State of Ohio provide anything towards that?

Myers – this project is funded by the State of Ohio. Waiting for approval on that. Have asked for 5 mil, waiting to hear on it.

Carson – JAR construction area, how long will that take?

Myers – should be done in August.

Evans – is there a definite plan for space where Exchange Deck is coming down? Will it be green space?

Myers – yes, no plan for space.

Evans – mentioned art percentage, have not heard that before. Could we commission work from staff or students?

Myers – no, done through the State for that.

Evans – existing issues on campus – did not see specific things. Understand we have a couple leaking rooftops on campus, being dealt with bladders at the moment.

Myers – in this upcoming biennium we don’t have a ton of roofs included. Some of those leaks are not all roofs, some are condensation from AC and sometimes plumbing or roof drain. Trying to address as quickly as possible. Supposed to be temporary solutions. Not pretty but roof leaks are difficult to find.

Carson – is capital planning involved with Polsky and what is the status of the work?

Myers – capital planning not really involved, more of a support role.

The chair thanked Stephen for his presentation and pointed out that there had not been on since before COVID.

- Information Technology – targeting faculty in terms of training for Workday. Push out a lot of training during summer months to prepare for Fall.

Questions:

Evans – in addition to Workday, there are a bunch of faculty waiting to get access to Stellic. Any word on that?

Sangganjanavanich – Stellic is secondary to Workday for now, Stellic will be coming. If you don’t have access right now or need more access, put in a ticket.

CONSTITUENCY REPORTS

TONIA FERRELL

- GSG – Megan Frey introduced herself as the new president of GSG. She reported that the change over in leadership was going on.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USG – Grace DeWitt introduced herself as the new president of USG and Elena Kozma as the incoming vice president. Also working on transition to new leadership. • PSAC – met April 20, Steve McKellips spoke. Discussions of end of semester events; bowling event happened and Rubber Ducks night coming up. • SEAC – no report. • Faculty Senate – no report. • Chairs – Heather Walter reported that there would be a new chair of chairs and that she was stepping down July 1. • Deans – working on end of year budgets.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
NEW BUSINESS	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
GOOD OF THE ORDER	
TONIA FERRELL	
	The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 pm.