

Staff Council Quarterly Meeting

September 2, 2021, 2:00 PM

Online Zoom Meeting

- I. Introductions and roll call: John Cheatham (Chair) – Members present listed below
 - a. Blue Ridge: Anna Speessen (Vice Chair), Lori Bramlett
 - b. Cumming: Lauren Garcia (Vice Chair), Daniel Bell
 - c. Dahlonga: Scott Marshall (Vice Chair), Sherry Waddell (Treasurer), Karen Armstrong, Lara DeBlois, Sean Evett, Staci Youngblood, Christopher Bryan (Secretary, Alternate), Lisa Day (Alternate)
 - d. Gainesville: Joslyn Hilliard (Vice Chair), Tara Bailey, Christy Morrison, Brandon Buttler, Casey Gilliam, Kristie Kiser, Amber McHenry, Brandi Poole, Bryan Garris (Alternate), Ken Harrison (Alternate), Melissa Warren (Alternate)
 - e. Oconee: Rebecca Carter (Vice Chair), Zach Thrift, Andrew Todd (Alternate)
- II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 27, 2021: Posted on Staff Council website.
 - a. Motion: Scott Marshall, Seconded by Casey Gilliam
- III. Chair Updates:
 - a. Staff Council polo shirts – new members, please get your size and whether men’s or women’s to your Vice Chair, who make a list and send to me for an order.
- IV. Treasurer’s Report: Sherry Waddell
 - a. Not too many expenditures yet, we do need to do campus allocations – still need feedback from GVL and DAH
 - b. Scholarship fund allocation per campus – getting info from Foundation and Freda
- V. Campus Updates: Campus Vice-Chairs
 - a. BLU – Anna – New staff person started, but left before they could do the welcome, first Blue Ridge Team meeting on Sept 13. Will get with Sherry offline on budget request.
 - b. CMG – Lauren – Planning on first Staff Council meeting in September. Looping in City Hall location.
 - c. DAH – Scott – Had first meeting, starting to look at Spirit of Christmas event, looking to welcome event, interested in feedback coming back to campus
 - d. GVL – Joslyn – Met August 11th, committees are getting organized, looking to come up with ideas and meet next week to finalize budget needs, looking toward Helpful Harvest and will talk to Dr. Oates. Dr. Oakes also asked to come up with the largest concerns and goals for staff.
 - e. OCN – Rebecca – Had first event on second day of classes – coffee and doughnuts grab and go, got good feedback from staff, next event is typically Chili Cookoff in October (last year did Chili lunch grab and go)
- VI. Committees Updates:
 - a. Public Relations – Current members Daniel (CMG), Lauren (CMG), and Donna (DAH)
 - i. Delegating more to Staff Council
 - b. Nominations and Elections – Current members Rebecca (OCN), Daniel (CMG), Lauren (CMG)
 - c. Staff Development – Current members Daniel (CMG), Lara, Candis, Christy (GVL)
 - d. Welcome – Current members Lauren (CMG), Anna (BLU), and Donna (DAH)
 - e. Staff Awards – Current members Karen (DAH), Candis (DAH)

- VII. Plans and Projects for this year: Chair
 - a. Childcare, recycling, merit increasing
- VIII. New Business:
 - a. Staff concerns with COVID-19 and/or UNG's response to it. (Some points copied from Zoom chat and some are notes from discussion.)
 - i. General feel in Cumming is moral is low due to very lax policies. General feeling is that USG and BOR don't care. People's right not to get a vaccine seems more important than employee's safety. Numbers are showing higher than last January. Doesn't seem like anyone has their back. Resources to reach out to would be helpful. Seems like administration is more concerned about tuition income than safety. Students are coming to campus and saying they might have COVID and we can't tell them to go home.
 - ii. Oconee feels very similar to Cumming. Staff feels they don't have much control, especially when meeting with students regularly. Doesn't seem that contact tracing is effective with those meetings. Consistency with communication of event requirements. What we can and can't ask people to do like wear masks. Especially Staff Members who don't have an office space like Tutoring.
 - iii. Gainesville seems to be about 50/50 – some are worried that not enough is being done while others feel that those who are vaccinated and are comfortable working on-campus are being “spoken for” by more vocal groups. A big frustration here is that some groups are being told one thing, for instance to cancel events, but other groups are operating business as usual. Consistency would be ideal. Close proximity departments (like theater) are concerned as well.
 - iv. Academic Advising in GVL general consensus is there is support for more restrictions (and strongly support). Many students don't know what to do if they're exposed, filling out the form (should or shouldn't), the signage encouraging mask wearing on the GVL campus is smaller than previously. Maybe have Nigel say, “cover your beak” and reiterate how important it is. There are also many positions that can work remotely. Some really enjoy coming into the office and some would like hybrid or remote. Or even something more structured for this. No quarantine recommendation for vaccinated people who are exposed. Letters given to exposed people don't match the information on the website.
 - v. I think from the student's perspective a lot of not wearing a mask has to do with peer pressure. I have heard of students that wore a mask one day, noticed no one else in class didn't and then they too stopped wearing a mask. I will mull a solution just a perspective I have heard.
 - vi. Have they thought about having a team to strictly do COVID for the students? In the ROTC dept two people are in charge and do all the paperwork and contact tracking. It is a lot of work, but it might help.
 - vii. Asymptomatic testing in GVL doesn't seem to be as frequent and not publicized.
 - viii. Theater has gotten with Greg and is doing weekly testing.
 - ix. UNG testing is taking upwards of four days.

Motion to adjourn at 2:41 PM by Scott Marshall, seconded by Lauren Garcia

If you need this document in an alternate format for accessibility purposes (e.g., Braille, large print, audio, etc.), please contact Staff Council Public Relations: staffcouncil@ung.edu