Executive Membership Meeting
Minutes of January 14, 2010

Convener: Janiece Kiedrowski, Chair

Recorder: Kathleen M. Kielar, Secretary

Agenda:
1. Approval of the minutes of December 3, 2009
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the Vice Chair
4. Discussion of HR transformation and our new partnership (Jim Jarvis and Scott Morris)
5. Discussion of PSS transformation (as per email into), please come prepared to discuss
6. Discussion of Web-site reorganization (including possible revamp of communication for general membership meetings, PSS activities, etc.). Think, “This Week at UB”.
7. Old Business
8. New Business
9. Adjournment

Minutes:

1. Minutes from the December 3, 2009 meeting were approved.

2. Report from the Chair

3. Report of the Vice Chair

Ann Marie talked about marketing. See below for a more detailed information.

4. Discussion of HR transformation and our new partnership

Janiece prefaced the discussion with some highlights of the meeting that went on between PSS officers and HR (Jim Jarvis, Jennifer Bowen, and Scott Morris). We are trying to exploit the best of both areas. We will not be an offshoot of HR, but instead work together to promote interests for the betterment of UB and professionals. We have things in common and can work on our relationships and mutual interests. Topics that we can explore are dealing with stresses, budget issues, managing through transition and transformation, PSS is working on getting more people involved, getting middle managers more involved, training and development interests, Area discussions, the mission of PSS, the needs, strategic directions, and getting the message out to professionals.
Jim Jarvis then discussed the HR transformation. A main theme of the meeting between HR and PSS was that each area sees many similar goals such as the provision of better environment; provide opportunities for professional growth, etc. In many ways he sees HR and PSS pulling on the same rope. We should be helping each other. This is something we can focus more on. PSS’s stature is more prominent and well known…and used by the staff more. PSS has continued to grow and he thinks people view it that way. PSS is an important partner to HR. By joining efforts, we can achieve meeting the many mutual goals each area has.

At the general membership meeting, HR will provide an update of what is going on at HR. We are going to talk about three main topics, organizational development training unit, the workplace/wellness department, and workforce development and what the role of the University is when acting as a steward when looking at workforce development in the region. The way we are looking at our current situation is not “if” these things are going to happen, but when. The current budget situation will only delay things, not stop efforts. UB intends to grow. Under UB 2020 there is a projection that about 6700 new jobs will be created at the University. This is based on income growth on the state side, RF, UBF, and the clinical. This is in addition to the ordinary attrition due to turnover and retirement. This is a huge economic impact on the region.

What we want to do is look at how can we best create opportunities for people in the region so that they can take advantage of these economic and career opportunities. What that involves is looking at where the growth is going to be. What are the hot jobs? What are the educational and experience requirements for these jobs? How do we get people information for these jobs? Where do we start? Do we start at the high school or middle school levels? When do you start getting people the information so they can start thinking about these things? Where do we provide the resources for the degree or preparation for civil service exams? There are a lot of different facets to it. The University has been contributing a lot of different resources for this to happen.

Another piece of the workforce development is promoting individuals from within the University. The 6700 jobs are new jobs. Those jobs are in addition to attrition and retirement. For example, the CTRC building is currently being constructed. There are going to be about 375 jobs in that building alone. 250 are anticipated to be new jobs and some people are anticipated to move. It is also anticipated that people within UB will move around to take some of these 6700 jobs, which will create opportunities where people left their jobs within the University.

Another part of the workforce development effort is creating opportunities for our own professional staff. We have already started offering opportunities for people within Scott’s area to explore their own professional growth and put themselves in position to take advantage of these opportunities. That’s an important part of the workforce development effort...not only touching people outside of the University, but also creating career pathways internally for existing employees.
The jobs will consist of unskilled all the way up to faculty positions. One of the areas we are looking to develop is lab techs. We just don’t have the labor pool to fill all the positions we need for lab tech. We also know that a lot of the expansion of the life sciences is going to create more of these positions. We will do a career path for a lab tech. Those buildings need to be cleaned, as well as needing administrative support, etc.

How does the “generalist” training that Scott offers, help professionals learn the technical skills for a specific job? His first thought was that the kinds of skills that are being thought of are just as important. For example the lab tech will need to get some specific training, usually a science background, some experience, maybe an Associate’s degree. What the employer is also looking for is critical thinking skills, communication skills, etc. Every type of job needs these types of skills.

Some organizations hire a specific type of personality, right? Scott Morris cited Google who uses critical behavioral interviewing to develop success competencies that they want in their employees. They are looking for people to display the success competencies along with smart people. Essentially, they hire for attitude and then train them the skills. You can always teach the skills. You can’t teach them the mindset. We’re not there yet, but we’re working on it.

Is there a preference to hire internally first? Jim answered the same rules that we have now would still apply.

Are there any measurable attributes that will help employees identify career areas that they will be strong at? The short answer is no. We’re not ready for that. Scott cited lack of resources, as well as the barriers that the culture presents. The culture at UB is more of what benefits the individuals, rather than the collective group. We are beginning to change managerial attitudes through such programs as CPM (Collaborative Performance Management). The real nature of the program is relationship building. There are 9 modules of the program that stem from communication to the technical...how you fill out forms. We’ve received a lot of positive feedback from the program. We’ve had a department chair that was participating in CPM as well as a similar nationally known and recognized program. She said the CPM program rivals this nationally known program.

Scott then talked about the direction of Organizational Development. We’ve been in existence for 24 months now. The first focus had to be to create something a broad number of people could touch. So we created over 70 different programs. We deliver about 18 programs a month with an average of 15 students per class. We’re reaching lots of people. We wanted to create ways that the institution saw value in the employee rather than the institution looking at the employee as a machine.

The evaluations have come back very positive. The evaluations are nice “feel good” points, but the classes don’t do a lot to move the organization forward if they aren’t
targeted at people. We need to move away from just offering programs, but we need to create learning roadmaps for individuals based on their needs for people for what they do at work, but also what they do in their personal lives. We invest in training because we want to make better people. When we get better people, we get better workers who feel good about coming to work. This is advantageous for all.

We also need to start grouping various tasks, duties, knowledge, and abilities into competency areas. He needs to get the support of the Deans and the VP’s. That said, we should be able to map competencies within the University. This will start small and then based on success, will expand and grow. Take a trainer, for example. What are the competencies we need that person to master? What kind of experiences do we need to create to help them expand their mastery? Some of those things will come from going to class. Some of them are going to come from better performance management and their interactions and relationships with their direct supervisors and others in that chain. Others are going to come through our abilities to challenge them beyond the classroom. This is another aspect of what we are working on. How do we carry forward learning about a particular topic back to into the workplace and give supervisors tools that they can use to challenge people who have been to training to apply those things, to both strengthen the relationship and to create application opportunities. This is what we are thinking about internally.

We are looking to build on the 70 programs. That work continues and we add additional things to it. He likens it to a pyramid, where the base will need to continue. They are also looking at the ability to work outside the boundaries of the university. A source of knowledge and service to the community.

A question was asked to both Scott and Jim about how HR communicates to employees. There is a monthly newsletter that goes out to a list-serv of a select group. We do not think it is sufficient, but on the other hand, it is evident that we really don’t have the resources to provide training for all UB employees (about 10,000 employees).

A well informed manager takes steps to be informed. Maybe people don’t have the time or their priorities are different. We need to ask questions like, how can we leverage information so I can get it in a manner which I can use?

How is HR planning on helping employees feel less stressed due to the budget cuts, etc.? In looking at organizational structure and distribution of work and assisting people in figuring out things that they don’t have to do. At the managers level is helping managers where they can help deal with those kinds of changes and stress and help manage their units better. As far as we know, this year isn’t going to be better than last year. We don’t really know. We will have to presume we are going to be on this course for a while. Every manager needs to look at each task and determine if that task is absolutely necessary to do. These aren’t easy decisions. In some areas, we are going to have to be satisfied with a lower level of service.
Scott added that services don’t have to be cut right away. We will need to leverage employees strengths to better distribute the work load. We need to teach managers to recognize and make the changes the leverage employee strengths where we have less from employees griping about the work that they do, but instead have employees who “fit” the work they do. This is a matter of changing the managerial mindset to make this work.

Will a model of better utilizing employees be applicable to CSEA employees? Yeah, I think it is more difficult. Were we need to concentrate our efforts is changing the managerial mindset. A lot of work can be shifted around under CSEA titles – shift the work. When we change the mindset of the managers, they will be able to discern the details that we at our level cannot.

5. Discussion of PSS transformation (as per email intro), please come prepared to discuss

Ann Marie Landel gave a background on why it was important that PSS needed a Mission Statement. Using materials she received in a class on creating problem solving, she came out with a great set of ideas for the Marketing and Communications committee. Her class told her we as PSS need to tell everyone not only what we were doing, but what was done after we did it. We need to promote our past activities. We need to identify who we are as officers. We need to get more involvement from our Senators so that our Senators are connecting with the people that make up the areas that they represent. We need to get more involvement from our Executive Senators. We need to show the relationship value to employees. In other words, what does it mean to the employee. Describe the benefits. Get some celebrities in our meetings. What does membership mean and what does it mean to be a part of PSS? What are the 5 areas and which departments are in which area? We need to communicate better with our employees. We need to update our website and make it clearer.

The discussion also brought forward the idea of getting feedback from individuals who are unable to attend meetings. We are trying to get more participation and ideas for speakers.

Suggestion of area meetings, what’s going on within departments. Possible agenda. Get to know departments in your area. Connect areas and connect professionals. Could the University Club be a conduit?

Profile people on the website: Congratulate their accomplishments: “Have you Herd?”.

6. Discussion of web site reorganization (including possible revamp of communication for general membership meetings, PSS activities, etc.). Think, “This Week at UB”.

Three questions were distributed to the group. We will work with the General Membership of what the Mission of PSS will be. We’ve concluded that we will need to
review information that we receive from the General Membership meeting and will bring it back to the Executive Membership meeting in February.

The questions are:

1) If you could build an ideal professional organization at UB that represents all professionals, how would that organization represent you best, and what would the organization be involved in doing?

2) How would you best structure that ideal organization to allow Professionals to be more involved with each other and the University? (e.g. activities, policies, representation, technology use, etc.)

3) UB has been involved in significant changes (UB2020, The Master Planning Process, H/R Transformation, IT Transformation as well as budget reductions). What challenges are you facing as a professional in your workplace at this time due to these changes that the Professional Staff Senate could assist with?

Mission Statement and vision.
Our heartfelt desire, what do we really need/want to do. Has our mission changed. PSS has evolved. What do we need to be doing?

7. Old Business

No old business was discussed

8. New Business

No new business was discussed

9. Adjournment
2009 Professional Staff Senate
Executive Committee Attendance

Date of Meeting: January 14, 2010

Area I:

Present  Mathew Deck
Present  Rebecca Goodman
Absent  Fred Covelli

Guests: Laura Yates

Area II:

Absent  Dave Ballard
Present  Leticia Thomas
Present  Ilene Fleischmann

Area III:

Absent  Randy Borst
Present  Amy Wilson
Absent  Dan Ryan

Area IV:

Present  Laura Pruski
Present  Cherie Williams
Absent  Anne Marie Swartz

Area V:

Present  Amanda Brown
Present  James Jarvis
Absent  Laura Bamum

Officers:

Present  Janiece Kiedrowski
Present  Ann Marie Landel
Present  Kathleen M. Kieler

SUNY Senators:

Absent  David Ballard
Present  William Coles
Absent  Henry Durand