Executive Membership Meeting
Minutes of March 4, 2010

Convener: Janiece Kiedrowski, Chair

Recorder: Kathleen M. Kielar, Secretary

Agenda:
1. Approval of the minutes of February 4, 2010
2. Report of the Chair
3. Report of the Vice Chair
4. Adjournment

Minutes:

1. Minutes from the February 4, 2010 meeting were approved.

2. Report from the Chair
   We thought we would pull the Senators all together to do some strategic planning to help guide future senators.

3. Discussion with Senators
   Senators introduced themselves.

   Janiece reviewed the information gathered from the General Membership meeting, the PSS Executive Officers/HR meeting minutes, and the duties of the Senators (See Appendices). Overall there were four general themes that came out of the discussions; Change in culture, Career advancement, Communication, and Connectedness. Should we consider our part in changing the UB culture. Jason Parker felt that communication and connectedness would help change the culture; many of us agreed.

   Educational component. Is there a place were we can discuss processes that someone would like direction with, and how to resolve it, like a clearinghouse of information.

   Using FaceBook as an example, we have professionals that are Facebook friends, but these same people don’t necessarily come to meetings. How can we get them involved in the PSS? We want to get to know each other more. That’s what we are here to do today.

   The Senators were asked how they feel they can play a greater role in helping the Professional Staff Senate work with changing the culture of the University, career advancement, communication, and connectedness.

   A major theme that came through within the discussion to change the culture was that this must occur at the local/departmental level before we can change the University-wide culture.
Brainstorming ideas ensued:

- We would like HR make various presentations to the units/departments. Can PSS help with this type of communication? Issues ranged from hours worked, work load, ability to leave office for lunch/meetings, how to handle HR issues—but PSS can serve as a neutral resource.
- We should share the General membership meeting minutes with the area meetings
- Focus on new employees when they enter the University. Provide an initial buddy or source of information. We’d have to be careful that we selected the right resource buddy.
- Have an officer for each area where they can direct them to HR
- Have email links of the Senators on the Senators page on the PSS website
- Can we set up some type of virtual meeting location using such products as Skype
- What about setting up a social network on Name.com, ning.com, and SecondLife.com to have meetings online. Some still felt face to face contact was the best.
- Knock on the door to greet new employees

Janiece also asked each of the areas where they would meet should they have an area meeting.
Area I – will find a place to meet
Area II—Student Union
Area III – Ellicott Food Court – would have to be at breakfast time
Area IV – Capen, TLC or Law
Area V – Crofts or Capen

There ensued a fairly lengthy discussion on Professional staff, particularly in the area of academics, where professionals felt they were not given “permission” to leave the office to attend any meetings. Many of these professionals felt “watched.” In most of these cases, the supervisor is a faculty member, therefore they may be restricted as a result of the faculty member not being aware of the professional’s needs. Kat, I don’t get the same read on this on the campus in general, so should we target faculty here, or just take that reference out? There are many draconian other than academic bosses that make people account for their time out of the office.

Janiece then went over the specific Senator Duties:

1. Senators shall read and become familiar with the Constitution and ByLaws of the Professional Staff Senate.
2. Senators shall attend all regular and special meetings of the PSS.
3. Senators shall read and become familiar with the minutes of the PSS meetings and the Executive Committee proceedings, and any other Senate communications, including the minutes of any and all committees on which they serve.
4. Senators shall represent their area 1) by obtaining and conveying constituent concerns to the Executive Committee and, 2) by relating Senate concerns to their Area constituents.

5. Area meetings, while not expressly required by the constitution or bylaws, are highly recommended as a means for Senators to exchange ideas, and to discuss issues and matters of interest to the University community and the Area constituents. The frequency of such meetings shall be determined by the Area Senators. It is recommended that each Area hold at least one Area meeting each semester.

6. Senators shall endeavor to present a fair and impartial viewpoint on all issues and matters brought to their attention.

7. Senators shall, personally and individually, contact each new professional staff member within their Area. They will offer assistance with orientation to the Campus and escort each to an opening PSS meeting.

8. Election of Senators to the Executive Committee shall be in accordance with procedures adopted by the Elections Committee.

Janiece extended an invitation to the Senators to attend the Executive Committee meeting, particularly during the strategic planning process, as well as when there are speakers.

A question on the floor was asked about the poor participation from some Senators and why they are still allowed to carry on service or even re-elected. Janiece said that many actually do show up. Bill said in the past that they wrote letters making sure that there is contact to the person. We can send them a reminder about their obligation or a phone call just needs to be made.

New employees names should be given to the two Executive Senators, as well as lists provided of all employees to the Senators. A suggestion is that Anna might send out a new employee welcome letter to the new employees referencing their senators and/or executive committee members, and copy the Senators. The Executive Committee members can then follow-up with that new employee. Kat said she would draft a welcome letter for new employees.

A Senators toolbox was suggested where senators could have access to the new employees letters, where a list of their people are listed, and where senators can find a name of their new employee. This toolbox will be password protected so Senators could login and get the information. Any instructions on how to submit information on the list-serv, etc. Essentially whatever the Senators need to keep connected with their area folks, is what we’ll post.

Janiece asked Mike Behun, our campus Union President, to comment on the discussion that there were individuals that didn’t feel they could leave their departments. Mike said that the Union would be more than happy to talk with the supervisors. Most of the time in these
situations, the supervisor was not aware that attending UB meetings. Mike then discussed things that exempt professional employees can and can not do.

A few other comments to this discussion: We are part of the university governance structure and should be involved with governance. We are also governed by Fair Labor Standards Act, as an exempt employee. We need to “complete our work” and not be governed by a 37.5 hour work week. Points of interest – 2 hour rule. As professionals we cannot and should not be charging time out of the office for under 2 hours. If you are on campus at a PSS meeting, aren’t you really at work? You’re not off campus, you’re on campus at a meeting. Realistically, how could you charge time off then?

Finally Janiece said the Bob Shibley will be at the next General Membership meeting.

Ann Marie encouraged the group to bring a friend to the next meeting.

Nancy Battaglia liked that these meetings with the Senators occurred. She likes the smaller group meetings. She also asked how HR is establishing program for professionals to promote themselves.

A question came up for to have our meetings videos or audios online. The audio can be put up on UTunes or PodCast.

4. Meeting adjourned
APPENDIX A

Compilation of General Membership Meeting Ideas

Introduction:
UB has been involved in significant changes over the last 5 years which include: UB202, The Master Planning Process, H/R Transformation, IT Transformation, as well as budget reductions.

Question #1:
Given these changes, what are the two most significant issues that you struggle with as a professional. Let’s take staffing off the table as far as discussions, because that’s a given. We want to know what are the challenges that you face that you think PSS can assist with.

Answers to question 1

1. **Career pathing** – professionals need opportunities for more defined career paths.*****
2. **Advancement** – how to recognize and motivate staff, including internal recruitment and promotions, job growth vs. stagnation****
3. **Budget/Personnel Reductions.***
4. **Flexible schedule/flex time.****
5. Accountability issues – inconsistent policies. Resource page/guide for policies***
   Results in lack of motivation
6. **IT Transformation** – not knowing what’s going on. Staff and faculty left out of the loop. **
7. **Different cultures pitted against each other** – UUP, Research, etc. Need forum for all staff to meet and consistent policies. Equal treatment of bargaining units. ** (including insubordination, violence, other issues).
8. Vacancy policy needs to be reviewed/understood. Need a mechanism. PSS needs to establish a system of trust so this was done equitably.
9. Maintaining work load even with reduced staffing, or even increased work load.
10. Since H/R transformation, a fellow H/R divisional person finds them less available and not as accurate.
11. Lack of strategic discussions for changing to the bigger picture. “This is how we’ve always done it”.
12. Low morale due to poor communication from administration.
13. Low morale due to budget cuts.
15. Fewer dollars for professional development.
17. Resistance to change and new ideas.
19. Trouble finding time to improve skills.
21. Duplication of effort due to a lack of communication.
22. Maintaining levels of excellence due to increased workloads, not enough hours in the day.
23. Need more in the area of recognizing, motivating, maintaining and improving skills.
24. Master Plan, is it going to happen?

Question 2.
At your table you will find the Professional Staff Senate’s purpose and functions according to our bylaws. Here’s the link to it: http://www.pss.buffalo.edu/about/bylaws.php

Given our purpose and functions, how would PSS represent you best and what would the organization be involved in doing for you? For instance, we provide a forum for exchange of information, discussion of ideas, etc. How can we best do that for you? And also, what do you think professionals can do for PSS?

Answers to Question 2:
1. There needs to be an opportunity to promote and recognize professional staff – not enough of this occurs. Profiles of people in their careers, what has been their career growth path. *** Awards?
2. Profiles of people.***
3. Need a more “global” view of how to develop careers (could include mentoring from fellow PSS members, coaching). ***
4. PSS could moderate an on-line forum – policy or social discussions. As well as an opportunity for feedback.***
6. Mentoring program. Mentoring less rigid. Flexible mentoring.** Group mentoring or list of people to meet with. Formal mentoring – have a report to show supervisor?
7. Community work, golf, music. **
8. Have UUP as a partner in addition to H/R, co-sponsor events with UUP.**
9. Collect information about policies before decisions are made. Talk about those governance issues. Ask to be consulted about policies decisions (focus groups/polling). Provide a forum to share thoughts/opinions with administration. Encourage staff to get involved and get (informational) to administration.
10. Need a mechanism to inform administration about issues from #1.
11. Develop a strategic plan for direction of PSS – like the master plan. Really put the work in to develop a real plan.
12. Professional development plans should be included in performance programs.
13. “Getting to know you” before each meeting.
14. Continue round table discussions. Round tables are preferred.
15. Continue staff development and training – members from different areas meet and connect.
16. PSS myth busters – for instance IT Reorg. JK could report on what she’s able to share from the meetings she attends.
17. Continue to bring in outside speakers.

**Question 3:**
In light of the answers to the two previous questions, what do you think PSS’s mission should be? (keep in mind we didn’t have much time to answer this question).

**Mission:**
1. We promote the highest level of excellence and motivation and service of professional staff in fulfillment of the university mission. Spirit.
2. Use short phrases/words on website that will define what PSS does or who we are. Learning, discovery and engagement defined for instance.
APPENDIX B

Summary of PSS/HR Meeting on February 3, 2010 between Ann Marie Landel, Kathleen Kielar, Jennifer Bowen, Jim Jarvis, and Scott Morris

- Talk about findings from 1st General Membership meeting – round table
- Feb General membership meeting – attendance by Scott, Jim – what is the agenda?
- Goal - group together
- PSS future is understanding where the university isn’t. We fill in holes. What holes exist?

Looked and categorized items into 4 areas:
1. **Change in culture** – PSS and HR Culture - moral, accountability, cultures pitted against each other, transformation, lack of strategic discussion, low moral, resistance to change, siloed environment, motivating, maintaining and improving skills, motivating.
2. **Career advancement** - Growth and advancement goes to HR
3. **Communication** - PSS can communicate via Senators
4. **Budget** – not much we can do with this
5. **Connectedness**

How do you measure happiness – not money it’s recognition, who you work for, oral = achievement and self worth. Employee engagement is more of a management concern so long as a person is doing their job. Engagement and measuring engagement.

- Scott – remove 3,4,9,10,12,14,15,16,19,22,24 – these all relate to working conditions/workload
- Change in culture – important yet don’t know what to do
- Scott suggested that 1,2 go Under growth and advancement
- Scott suggested that 6,8,18,20,21 belong in Communication
- Moral and accountability 7-13-23

Significance of connecting people with departments… departments. don’t have resources to campaign the things that are going on. “Pride of place and pride of creating” is missing… i.e. Great place to work. Communication to get people to be prideful isn’t happening. Communication is biggest bucket.. How do we go about creating pride and involvement?

#4 – Flexibility generally is piece of culture and is a major need. Culture which is flexible and less rigid. Change and adaptability.

PSS can control / impact – highly important – comes to discretion and enlightenment of manager…have people talk about what’s great about their manager. Have the exec committee get more involvement from area sentators:
1. Have senators get involved with their departments…. culture change – develop the profile and present to exec committee.


3. Talk about the Senators job duties – help staff become more informed, point to point, small group networking, trading stories… then bring to Executive Committee Meeting. Learn techniques.

4. Senators – don’t know how to lead… don’t know what PSS does. Don’t know our role. Don’t know what the value is to them.

5. Ways to get to the ideal …. We only have 1 senator meeting in the fall… have more senator meetings, make required, make an expectation of senator. Reinforce senators duties. Get more senator participation with the Executive Committee and Area staff.

6. Do monthly meetings – toolkits can be great, but people don’t know how to use it… Get the together to discuss things…focus on the ones who participate

7. Round table meetings / where you involve senators – have senators lead. Bring out the stories from a certain dept.

8. Have senators group come in and communicate to the general public.

9. Have panel discussions. Talk about department.

10. Learning discovery and engagement. PSS gets people engaged – union and PSS… have engagement. Message to governor… involve local level.. UBgreen. Etc. career path.

Talked about Agenda for General Membership meeting for February

1. Scott N – focus on where we are going…

2. Scott M – talk about CPM – transition of HR in Training
   Jim - workforce development – career pathing – how to prepare people to be considered for a career at the university. How to build the career. Jim is working on external employees. How can we get people to want to come to UB. How to get UB employees in there?
APPENDIX C – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF WEB QUESTIONS

Survey Results & Analysis

Survey: Professional Staff Senate Feedback Form
Author:
Filter:
Responses Received: 30

Was this your first Professional Staff Senate (PSS) Meeting?

![Pie chart showing survey results for the first PSS Meeting question.]
How many PSS meetings or events have you attended during the academic year?
Why did you attend the January General Membership Meeting? (check all that apply)

- Wanted to learn more about the UB ... 23
- Interested in Providing Feedback ... 11
- Seeking Interaction with Other U ... 16
- Want to stay updated about happen ... 21
- Other ... 3

Want to stay updated about happen ... 70.0 %
Seeking Interaction with Other U ... 53.3 %
Interested in Providing Feedback ... 30.7 %
Wanted to learn more about the UB ... 76.7 %
Did you find Ryan McPherson’s presentation on the budget to be informative and/or useful?

- Extremely useful to me: 7
- Very useful to me: 7
- Useful to me: 12
- Somewhat useful to me: 3
- Not useful to me: 0

24.1% 24.1% 41.4% 10.3% 0.0%
Did you find the roundtable activity to be informative and/or useful?

- Extremely useful to me: 4%
- Very useful to me: 6%
- Useful to me: 8%
- Somewhat useful to me: 3%
- Not useful to me: 3%
- Didn't stay for the roundtable: 10.7%
What was the most useful aspect of the meeting?

| Getting useful information that I cannot get elsewhere on campus. |
| Hearing from Ryan regarding the budget |
| The ability to express our views on the operation of the PSS |

Questions/ feedback

| roundtable discussion |
| ryan's presentation |

In all PSS meetings, I learn most from the informational presentations, and seeing the faces behind the administrative titles. I also like the committee reports. For future meetings (perhaps September), I would like to hear how issues for those who work in higher education could be impacted by a shift to a split Congress (Dem lose House to Republicans or lose an easy majority and same with the Senate) in the upcoming 2010 mid-term elections. Could PSS offer more on the policy issues involved in what is now an industry of higher education? And how mid-can affect us? I am sure the Poli Sci or other dept. has someone researching election issues. Or have Ryan back to speak to this.

Information on the UB2020 legislation

| Information from administration. |
| Discussing and listening to other staff members' issues with policy was extremely useful. It helped me understand what problems are part of UB in general, and what might be more localized in my department. It also helped me better understand where my job/area fit with respect to the rest of UB. |
| Ryan McPherson's presentation. I thought it was thorough and definitely interesting. |

The round table discussion/sharing everyone's thoughts

| updates on UB's perspective of legislation |
| The focus groups were useful to me bec. it gave me a chance to hear other professionals comment or express their opinions openly. I realized that many of us share the same thoughts and frustrations re career paths and other subjects. |
| Being able to provide input regarding issues in an open dialogue roundtable session. |

It was interesting to hear other professionals voice the same struggles with career paths/advancement. This seems to be an area that PSS should advocate for.

Hearing Ryan McPherson presentation and his response to questions asked. It seems easier to hear a negative view of the UB 2020 legislation so it was interesting to hear a positive spin on it.

| the debate about the facts. I also liked talking with people from a different unit. |
| Hearing from others what was important to them. Seeing that most in the room were heading in the same direction |
| Hearing other people's concerns. |
Differing perceptions regarding UB2020 from Ryan McPherson and UUP
Michael Behun

It's good to know UB administration offers this kind of transparency.
I enjoyed the presentation and the Q&A session that followed.

What was the least useful aspect of the meeting?

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| Can't think of anything
| The round table discussion as my table had a hard time sticking to the topics
| Discussion about the separation of PSS and HR as I am not a member of the union or a direct hire of UB
| not sure
| none
| Some aspects of the roundtable, although I think that, rightly, was more for the planning of PSS activities and agenda rather than my own selfish needs.
| The question about the PSS mission statement - that's really a maximum 2-3 person task, even if it's based on ideas from the general membership. It's not easy to articulate that type of thing in sound bites.
| I was disappointed at the UUP president's remarks. I understand having differing viewpoints, but I thought the comments should be made in a different forum. It felt to me like the UUP president came to the PSS meeting solely to disagree with Ryan.
| I would have liked to hear what the one union rep. had to say but he was cut off by someone. I realize he went on a bit but he may have been able to offer us some information that we were not aware of.
| none
| It would have been helpful to have the PSS questions available before the meeting, so I could have thought out more suggestions.
| the unprofessional manner in which some of the individuals engaged in.
| UUP comments about Ryan's presentation. It's obvious that all they cared about was giving their "negative" two cents -- they didn't even sit or take off their coats, but rather stood at the back. Very tacky.
| people's questions after Ryan's presentation.
| Unable to comment because my schedule didn't allow me to stay for the roundtable discussion.
| The union thing in the middle of a meeting. Why the interruption, like the police coming in -- seemed strange.
| Although I like the concept of roundtables, I thought there were too many items/questions to get through, which was confusing for some groups. Maybe a simpler topic, which can elicit multiple points of view would be nice.
We welcome you to offer other comments or suggestions.

Keep up the good work!
I suggest a review of the membership of the PSS. There are multiple groups of employees at UB that have no vote to help decide how the University operates. Ask people to limit themselves to questions or follow-up questions refrain from becoming emotional.

You need some method for getting people to mingle more before the meeting. I've been attending for two years and still don't know anyone that I didn't know before. Perhaps nametags and an icebreaker activity, not for every meeting, but once or twice a year.

While not volunteering for any committee or running for a PSS rep. position, I appreciate the fact that the PSS has been much more active over the past 2 years. Thank you.

I would like to see some sort of informative debate between interested parties regarding the UB2020 legislation and initiatives.

Something was brought up about communication between senators and their area constituents - it would be great to have a better idea of who those people are and what we should be communicating to them. I'm not even sure how other senators utilize the PSS meeting information outside of the meetings. An online discussion forum seems like a good idea, and senators could volunteer to moderate.

I think there should be some sort of activity for the group at every meeting. People tend to drift off if they listen to a speaker, then the minutes, and any new business. If they are involved and feel they are making a difference, they might be more attentive.

Maybe a debate could be hosted by PSS bet. UB Adm. and the Union reps. McPherson's presentation was somewhat informative. I think the presentation may have been more helpful to the Proff staff if the Union reps. would have been able to present their side in a more formal/organized manner, rather than talking loudly from the back of the room. It seems there is a difference of opinion as to what is written in the new (more recent) proposal. These are serious issues that will impact all of UB and our community, we should know what the facts are. It would have been helpful if BOTH parties could have addressed several main concerns such as tuition increases, leasing property, parking etc. and discussed or challenged any area where there might be a difference of opinion, so we might have a better idea of what is actually going on. Maybe PSS could host such a debate, and soon.
Good job!
I strongly suggest PSS come up with a way to advocate positions to the administration. However, I would encourage membership approval (vote) before these are carried forward.

I like the snacks. The time works well for me, as does the location.

It's sad to say but you should outline some groundrules for participation in the Q&A's and group exercises. If the intent is to gather feedback from all present, individuals should refrain from shooting down others ideas, cutting them off, and personally choosing not to share others ideas.

Think more planning by the Board would be helpful in setting direction for PSS and University.

I would welcome a panel discussion regarding UB2020 to hear differing perspectives and engage in dialogue.

I enjoy hearing other people's opinions about UB issues. I would welcome a debate or panel discussion!

Would it be ok with you if we used your comments on the PSS Web site? (comments would be used anonymously)
2010 Professional Staff Senate
Executive Committee Attendance

Date of Meeting: February 4, 2010

Area I:
Absent  Mathew Deck
Present  Rebecca Goodman
Absent  Fred Covelli

Guests: Laura Yates

Area II:
Excused  Dave Ballard
Present  Letitia Thomas
Absent  Ilene Fleischmann

Area III:
Present  Randy Borst
Present  Amy Wilson
Absent  Dan Ryan

Area IV:
Present  Laura Pruski
Present  Cherie Williams
Present  Anne Marie Swartz

Area V:
Present  Amanda Brown
Present  James Jarvis
Absent  Laura Barnum

Officers:
Present  Janicee Kiedrowski
Present  Ann Marie Landel
Present  Kathleen M. Kielar

SUNY Senators:
Excused  David Ballard
Present  William Coles
Absent  Henry Durand