



MINUTES (Draft)  
BHSU Staff Senate  
Monday, February 27, 2023 – 10 am

Present: Gary Caillies, Kristin Carmichael, Dawn Hunter, Roxanne Lewis, Ven Thompson, Thayer Trenhaile, Tim Tyler, April Yenglin, Nancy Shuck

Guests: President Laurie Nichols, Kelli Hatch, Abby Driscoll, Jin Kim

Senate President Nancy Shuck called the meeting to order at 10am.

President Laurie Nichols was invited to give updates. She discussed the HLC review, explaining that BHSU was on the Open Pathway plan and was completing the 10-year review this year. The report on the Quality Initiative, Professional Advising, was submitted in June and the review report was over the rest of the university operations. The report, written by the members of BHSU's committee, is in the process of being reviewed by the President and the Provost, and then will be given to a professional writer (a faculty member) to translate it into one "voice" before submission on March 10. The student survey, completed by 150 students, has already been sent to HLC and shared with the university and a response plan is being implemented already. Some strengths summarized from that survey included faculty knowledge of the subject, satisfaction with academic progress, placement in appropriate courses, and availability of faculty and advisors. Some weaknesses were financial aid, clarity of cost, and assistance to select a degree matching goals. The names of the review team were provided to the university just this morning with five members (three males and two females). The review team will be on campus April 17 and 18, all day both days. The review will be discussed at the March 25 Town Hall.

President Nichols briefly discussed the re-organization proposal under discussion (Provost Kilpinen will discuss it with the Senate at an upcoming meeting). Five ideas have been proposed with one being do / change nothing. Four outline different changes. The study has been requested by the Faculty Senate and the President is awaiting the university's decision. The plan has been discussed with no agenda and no pressure to change and proposals will be brought forward for all to consider.

President Nichols gave a brief description of legislative actions and considerations. The Board of Regents have requested a tuition freeze and pay increases for staff and faculty (a 5% increase would mean an increase of \$1 million in BHSU's budget). Health insurance costs are currently \$2,000 per person and those costs are under consideration as well with the hope of no additional costs to employees. She also discussed other requests (additional maintenance and renovation dollars, money for cybersecurity upgrades, the West River Health Science Center construction project, money for deferred maintenance and renovation projects separate from the additional dollars, repurposing the day-care facility into a preschool with a special education focus, and a renovation of Woodburn Auditorium). The bill for the creation of a Center for American Exceptionalism failed even after reconsideration; the BOR was officially silent on that bill.

President Nichols reported the Strategic Plan went live on January 1 with the website up. Implementation teams are working on each goal to finalize the year 1 plans and the chairs will give updates at the March 22 Town Hall.

Dawn Hunter brought forward a question about CSA wages and a concern that most BHSU employees are at the bottom of the pay range and have no mechanism to advance. President Nichols reported that was being considered within Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan and supported hiring within a range as most universities do and not at the bottom of the pay scale. She suggested hiring as a standard at the quarter point of the pay scale.

Dawn also asked for a direction and purpose for the Staff Senate. President Nichols suggested working to change the campus culture as students have reported in their survey unhappiness with their treatment within offices on campus. (Specific citations included responses to student emails within 24 hours.) She also encouraged Senate to ask for help with funding if they have initiatives (professional development, for example) they wish to pursue.

President Nichols was thanked for her updates and reports which were much appreciated.

Kristin Carmichael moved and Thayer Trenhaile seconded to approve the minutes of January 23, 2023. The minutes were approved.

Dawn Hunter briefly discussed Goal 3 (staff environment) of the Strategic Plan as she is part of the committee. One proposal is to work with Sodexo to create half-price meals for staff (various options have been discussed – plates can only be filled once, smaller to-go boxes, 1 day per week reduced prices). Senators voiced support for the idea and committee members will talk with Ron Showman about possibilities.

Jin Kim reported that Career Development will be hosting a week of appreciation for student employees (April 10-14 which is set by the National Student Employment Association). He asked for ideas and information will be forthcoming.

It was also reported the Educators Rising Conference will be on campus with approximately 200 students tomorrow.

The next meeting will be March 20, 2023, at 10am in the Trump Conference Room of the Student Union with a Zoom option as well.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Shuck  
Staff Senate President and Secretary pro tempore