William & Mary Staff Assembly Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

The October 13, 2021 Staff Assembly meeting was held via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Sonya Worden, Staff Assembly President, at 10:03 am.

Abbey Childs conducted roll call via chat and a quorum was established. See attendance sheet.

**Ground Rules**

-If you’re not speaking, stay muted.

-If you need to speak, raise your hand.

- Be respectful and courteous.

**Approval of August Minutes**

* Motion to approve by Candice Vinson.
* Seconded by Tami Rudnicky.
* Approved.

**President’s Report**

* Low number of COVID cases on campus.
* Watercooler on November 17- Becca Marcus will join from the Wellness Center to share some wellness techniques.
* Fall General Meeting on November 10, Ginger Ambler and Brian Mann will attend. Staff should look for a survey to submit questions for them.
* Register for W&M&You- a resource to gauge the pulse of campus and influence decision-making processes. Staff can sign up for text surveys to participate.

**Report from Shannon White- PPFA President and Staff Liaison to the BOV**

* Shannon shared out about the recent BOV meetings, held September 22-24, 2021 (Notes available here: <https://www.wm.edu/about/administration/bov/meetings/index.php>)
* As Staff Liaison to the BOV, Shannon also delivered a report to the Board:
  + Executive: Vision 2026 Plan review; University and VIMS have both submitted their 6-year plans for fiscal planning and the General Assembly meetings
  + Institutional Advancement: focused on the ‘All In’ and ‘For the Bold’ campaigns
  + Student Experience: focused on the Cohen Career Center
  + Audit, Risk, & Compliance: Title IX restorative justice measures that are available to students are not always available to employees. Committee is focused on reviewing and auditing processes.
  + Organizational Sustainability & Innovation: focus on enrollment growth
    - Where it was indicated that there are 600 more students in the freshman class, please note that 600 is actually the targeted increase in the full, four-year enrollment to be phased in over a multi-year period, and the growth this year accelerated our progress toward that. We have approx. 160 more than we did for fall 2020, and we'll anticipate welcoming approx. 200 more to campus via spring-semester entry.
    - As to increasing the staff, Henry Broaddus told Shannon, “The extent to which accommodation of increased enrollment requires additional resources has been an important consideration in the recent and ongoing budgeting process. This summer's urgent budget request process, for example, took into account needs related to enrollment growth, and the upcoming budgeting process will as well.”
  + Financial Affairs: focused on last year’s financial gap and measures to mitigate it
  + Academic Affairs: Featured a student presentation about modalities of teaching
  + Administration, Buildings, & Grounds: Focused on construction projects updates, Amy Sebring shared information about state policy changes around hiring contractors that will impact our budgeting process, and Dr. Lee presented on open mission-critical positions to provide context on higher education and current job market.

**Committee Reports**

* Policies & Issues:
  + Still rounding out the committee and gathering members.
  + Kris M. sat in on the HR Committee for Policies & Issues.
  + Committee will meet in the near future.
* Communications
  + No updates.
  + Still regrouping after Kelly’s departure.
* Elections & Nominations
  + New members announced.
  + Will meet in the spring to talk about next election cycle.
* Activities and Events:
  + New member: Sara Titcomb.

**Open Discussion**

* Salary compression: Employees can submit an alignment request for updating salary with their supervisor. It must be approved by their supervisor and supervisor’s supervisor.
  + HR sets pay ranges, but leadership sets the amount.
* Jenny Call (Health & Wellness) has been hosting listening sessions for employees in response to the past years’ event to gather feedback about employee challenges, concerns, and needs, as well as to process successes.
  + Reach out for individual or department listening sessions: [jfcall@wm.edu](mailto:jfcall@wm.edu).
* Enrollment changes: Will there be more staff in order to accommodate the support of new students?
  + Increased happened because of changes in admissions process and because more students accepted offers of enrollment.
  + Staffing changes have not been discussed.
* W&M Staff Assembly can share other units’ and departments’ announcements on social media.
  + If you have posts to share, reach out to Candice Vinson at [cmvinson@vims.edu](mailto:cmvinson@vims.edu)
* New member introductions:
  + Alisa Whitehead- new senator, Mason School of Business
  + Sara Titcomb- new senator, Law School
  + Toni Sturdivant- new senator, Mason School of Business
* Indigenous People’s Day:
  + Lots of questions still to be answered: Will it still be rolled into the winter holiday, or will we get the day off? Can it be observed on the day if staff members choose to?
  + HR has not discussed any plans at this point.
  + Suggestion that W&M should find a way to recognize the role it played in disenfranchising Indigenous people on that day moving forward.
* Supervisors Forum update:
  + A new telework agreement will be coming later this year. The biggest change is that employees won’t have to redo it every year, it will just carry over until the policy or situation changes.

**Amy Sebring’s Q&A**

* Employee concern about employees with young children who can’t be vaccinated: Some feel that the university is prioritizing revenue-generating students over employees and their families’ wellbeing.
  + Kids are more likely to get COVID from other unvaccinated children, out at restaurants than to get it from an employee because our vaccination rates are so high.
  + Messaging has been focused on students because the spread we’ve seen has been student-to-student.
* Is there an overall COVID strategy if we are never ‘risk-free’?
  + People want to know what the indicator is for shutting down and reopening, but we are trying to figure out what it’s like to live with COVID indefinitely.
  + Vaccination is helping, and when transmission rates lower, the situation might change, but we are also looking toward the holidays when people go indoors and gather, and possible new variants emerging.
  + 90% of W&M’s cases were vaccinated, but this is because our community’s vaccination rate is so high.
    - Our cases were very mild, relatively to pre-vaccination cases.
* Reporting COVID cases: It’s better to over-report possible cases than under-report.
  + If you have COVID and don’t know until after you’re no longer sick, still report it so our data is up to date.
  + Data analysis helps identify pattern and look for classroom & workplace spread.
* Can supervisors encourage 1-2 days per week of work from home flex days?
  + Cabinet members should be working with their staff to determine the best mode of work for each position and team and how much flexibility they can provide.
* Higher staff starting salaries is creating salary compression. Will there be review for existing employees?
  + Before the pandemic, HR did a market survey to assess how our salaries compare to other institutions.
  + HR is currently working on position classification to categorize similar positions with similar experience and requirements in order to make sense of salary benchmarks on an institutional level.
  + In the coming months, as we emerge from the strategic planning process and start financial planning for the next several years, this will be a priority.
* Amy is working on a message to campus with an update on our finances to come next week.
  + Not out of the woods, but we ended last year in a solid position.
* Leave balances are high across the institution and administration recognizes that it’s an issue and are working through what the options are to make time for people to take leave.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:11am.

**Minutes submitted by Abbey Childs, Staff Assembly Secretary.**