Board of Trustees Report

August 12, 2019

Honorable Trustees,

The NC State Staff Senate is a communication conduit between NC State staff and university administration, receiving input from staff members while also providing staff with information and resources to help foster a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive work environment. As an advisory body to the university chancellor, the Staff Senate:

- provides feedback and consultation regarding interests/concerns that affect staff members;
- receives proposed policies or policy changes from the chancellor or other executive officers of the university for review, and makes recommendations on policies and regulations that affect staff members;
- initiates the consideration of new or review of existing policies and regulations affecting staff members, and offers informal suggestions or formal resolutions for changes or improvements;
- assists in the communication of issues and institutional activities affecting staff members;
- serves as the primary liaison between staff members and the chancellor, University Council, Board of Trustees, Chancellor’s Liaison Committee, Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and the UNC System Staff Assembly;
- represents SHRA and EHRA professional and support staff; and
- encourages a sense of community and engagement among all university employees by the promotion and facilitation of staff participation in the university community.

To successfully accomplish our mission, three skill sets are critical—leadership, communication, and collaboration. To that end, our late spring and summer activities have focused on enhancing these skills.

In April, Staff Senate hosted:

- A booth at Employee Appreciation Day in order to meet constituents and collect feedback, questions, and concerns. In order to collect a “swag” item, an employee needed to complete a comment card; the collected comments were compiled into a spreadsheet, enabling us to analyze the data and identify opportunities for action items.
- A table at Earth Fair, held on the Brickyard, a crossroads for all university constituents—students, staff, faculty, and community members. This event was used to build awareness of the environmental activities of Staff Senate’s Resources and Environment Committee (REC), and to sign people up for the Sustainability Partners listserv. Sustainability Partners, a partnership between REC and the University Sustainability Office, is a community of NC State employees and students (as well as community members) interested in sustainability on campus and beyond.
- Bike at Work lunchtime bike ride, in an effort to support Bike to Work Day while recognizing that not all employees can do so. This guided greenway ride was a collaboration among Staff Senate, Wellness and Recreation, Transportation, and City of Raleigh Department of Transportation. To
make participation accessible to all those who wished to attend, individuals could “rent” a bicycle free of charge from WolfWheels. Participants were treated to end-of-ride snacks and bicycle swag such as lights and bells to encourage their continued, safe riding.

In May, we held our elections for officers and committee chairs. In the past, committee chairs were selected at the first meeting of the new term; this earlier election process facilitates greater organization and planning capabilities.

Also in May, NC State not only participated in but also co-hosted the UNC Staff Assembly Chancellors’ Cup Golf Tournament. Held at the Tobacco Road Golf Course in Sanford, the tournament raises money for the Janet B. Royster Memorial Staff Scholarship Fund, which provides monies for staff professional development opportunities (including academic degrees, certifications, and other continuing education). As a co-host, NC State provided tournament supplies and volunteers, some of whom woke up as early as 3:30 a.m. in order to help. In addition to the chancellor’s team placing third in the tournament, the NC State Staff Senate tent at hole 6 won “most spirited” (not only earning bragging rights, but also setting the bar quite high for next year’s tournament).

In June, after a four-year effort, we completed revisions to the Staff Senate bylaws, making them more reflective of who we represent, what we do, and how we do it; Chancellor Woodson approved the updated document on June 17.

At the end of the month, we held our kick-off retreat at the McKimmon Conference and Training Center. Marie Williams, associate vice chancellor for human resources and liaison between the chancellor and Staff Senate, shared greetings from Chancellor Woodson and made comments to guide us in the upcoming year. The retreat focused on creating engagement and the sharing of ideas. Stephanie Davis, Makeba Jackson, and Ann Davis, from Learning & Organization Development, led attendees in four interactive activities that demonstrated the principles of teamwork and communication. Extended periods were dedicated to meeting in districts and as committees, in order to strategize and plan. In support of the university’s sustainability plan, efforts were taken to make the retreat a zero waste event; staff senators also received reusable stainless steel drinking straws for their continued use.

During July, NC State delegates participated in the UNC System Staff Assembly meeting in Boone, where we received updates on the Clear Pricing Project, the budget, and state retirement plans, among other items. These topics were relayed to the NC State Staff Senate during our August meeting, at which we also heard from Erin Amari on Wolftime.

An additional focus of our discussions and activities for the year ahead is how we can be more inclusive of those staff whose voices may have historically been under-heard—specifically, extension, facilities, and housekeeping. The Staff Senate body is excited for the coming year.

Respectfully Submitted,

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