

SBS Staff Advisory Council Meeting

November 7, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kelley Merriam Castro (Mexican American Studies), Jennifer Columbus (Linguistics), Elizabeth Cordova (Geography/Regional Development), Jeanne Davenport (Judaic Studies), Margaret Dugan (NES), Tom Gelson (Mexican American Studies), Julieta Gonzalez (LAAC), Michael Greeley (Political Science), Nova Hinrichs (Cognitive Science), Molly Holleran (Women's Studies), Debbie Jackson (Philosophy), Nancy Kelly (Communication), Sandra Kimball (Late Medieval/Reformation), Catherine Lehman (Anthropology), Cynthia Malbrough (History), Beth Marlatt (Near Eastern Studies), Jennifer Rascon (SBS Development), Marie Roberts (SBS Administration), Maria Rodriguez (BARA), Linda L. Shaird (SIROW), April Thompson (Journalism), Armando Vargas (BARA). This meeting was open to all staff.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Lupita Cruz (Southwest Studies), Kelly Huff (SBSRI), Jennifer Paine (CMES), SIRLS representative, Sociology representative, Becky Tsang (Psychology).

I. Welcome and Call to Order—Co-Chairs

- Jennifer Columbus welcomed Dean Ed Donnerstein and Assistant to the Dean, Cherie McCollum, to the meeting. Jennifer suggested proceeding with formal questions gathered from SBS staff over the past month, followed by an opportunity for related questions after the Dean's response.

II. Question 1: Some SBS unit staff feel more stress than others (more majors = more student needs, more faculty needs = more staff needs). Are there plans for a reassessment of resources in the future, specifically regarding an increase in state operation budgets and additional state-funded staff lines?

- Dean Donnerstein said that even though the UA is in fairly good financial shape, the state still needs help and therefore we can count on a decrease in state budget money, or at least that there will be no new money. This is the case especially considering that the new Provost, Eugene Sander, is conservative in his approach to the budget.
- As for new staff lines, SBS is trying not to lose any positions. Hiring is being done at lower levels of pay and residual money is being pooled. Currently summer allocations are even being used for salary. The idea for centralizing IT has worked out so far, but it is a change that is still in progress. The Dean understands that ideally we are trying to get the dollars to follow the students but that is virtually impossible to do and rarely happens. The current financial model doesn't work like that. It relies on an increase in tuition which the Board of Regents is not in favor of. Program fees will help in certain units such as Journalism. We can be proud however that SBS is the only college that hasn't laid anybody off.

III. Question 2: Regarding the UA's *Shared Governance* Mandate: Are there any examples of *Shared Governance* within the College of SBS? [See Shared Governance Memorandum of Understanding (2006):

<http://w3fp.arizona.edu/senate/shared%20governance%20MOU%204-4-05.html>

and Plan of Extending Shared Governance (1998):

<http://fp.arizona.edu/senate/ShGovExtending.html>.]

- Dean Donnerstein listed the IT Advisory Group, Heads and Directors, and the Faculty Advisory Group, among others, as examples of where he has sought staff involvement. Of course, he likes to remand total authority to within the departments themselves. If opportunities for shared governance are lacking within the department, perhaps new ways of improving communication should be sought between administration, faculty, and staff. The Dean does try to put together as many ad hoc groups as possible; but at the end of the day, someone had to make the decisions and that is him.

IV. Question 3: Do SBS staff having voting privileges? (For instance, when it comes to specific college policies relating to staff working conditions and rights, including how layoffs are handled, do staff having voting privileges?)

- Dean Donnerstein couldn't think of a situation where the staff would vote; Cherie said she remembered only one occurrence involving SAC.
- A SAC member commented that staff are only involved in decision-making when department heads include them. Dean Donnerstein suggested that staff request to sit in on department meetings, although ultimately it is up to the head of the unit whether this is permitted. Dean Donnerstein commented that the best time to re-direct heads and their procedures are when they've just come in to the position.

V. Question 4: With additional budget cuts around the corner again this year, how does the Dean's office see SBS staff handling budget cuts; i.e., staff morale? How does the Dean's office decide who's laid off?

- The Dean said he can be held to the following statement: There are no layoffs, and there will be no layoffs. SBS can't lose staff and function.
- The Dean reported that SBS needs to get faculty and staff off one-time dollars, and that this college *can* absorb budget cuts. Also, we should feel safe with Provost Sander because he won't spend money he doesn't have and realizes that we shouldn't be extending ourselves.
- A question arose about what SBS is doing to retain the employees coming in at lower salaries. Dean Donnerstein said that in most cases certainly the departments can do something, and the college has helped bridge funds on occasion. Staff, fortunately, have the ability to move across positions at the UA without having to leave Tucson as faculty would have to do.
- SBS salary rates are all over the board from classification to classification, and the Dean's Office has tried to work on this. Human Resources has looked at SBS and the resulting reclassification was reasonably successful. Dean Donnerstein stated that if the college could catch a break—being as the UA is not in debt and the state is—full lines would be returned and redistributed accordingly. Cherie added that at an employee's

one-year anniversary, the college does provide funds for a one-year raise. The Dean stated that he understands the staff is tremendously overworked. Governor Janet Napolitano wants to give Arizona employees across-the-board increases. And the Dean's Office is working on backfilling funds.

VI. Question 5: Some Department Heads are unaware of the SBS Staff Advisory Council. Would you consider sending out an email to Heads defining SBS-SAC stating that you support our mission?

- Dean Donnerstein agreed.

VII. Question 6: Has the Dean considered following President Shelton's model of updating staff via email and maintaining a website where those letters and memos would be posted?

- A staff member echoed the sentiment that we're not given this information about all the Dean's Office is doing for us and that might be important for staff to know. The Dean suggested that a follow-up agenda with notes be circulated to staff following Heads and Directors' meetings. Or if someone has a question or an issue to raise, the Dean is always available by e-mail.
- Karen Coleman, Dean's Office Executive Assistant, commented that the Dean meets with his staff weekly to discuss upcoming issues, and that perhaps this should be a model for other units.

VIII. Question 7: Cherie was once described as the SBS "staff advocate." What exactly does this mean and what types of issues has she advocated for on behalf of staff in the past? What can SBS-SAC bring to her in the future? Finally, how does Cherie view her interactions with SBS-SAC?

- The Dean said that Cherie has always been an incredibly strong advocate for the staff: handling reclassifications and the Human Resources compression as well as numerous confidential meetings with staff members. Cherie is constantly in contact with Human Resources.
- Cherie stated that she has an open-door policy and staff are always welcome. 90-95% of her and the Dean's meetings with staff and faculty are confidential.
- A staff member commented that our jobs become difficult when faculty members are depressed about budget crisis after budget crisis. Dean Donnerstein said he hoped to alleviate some of this tension through building the Magellan Circle and using some of the money for faculty fellowships; a \$50,000 gift was just contributed.
- A staff member commented that staff lines *are* the most vulnerable lines, and the Dean reiterated that staff will not be laid off. SBS is putting aside funds for a possible (likely) future budget cut, and focusing on raising private funds to raise morale: for salary, for bricks and mortar, etc. We can't wait for the state to bail us out.
- A staff member asked if letters to the Board of Regents would help, and the Dean responded that letters would be very supportive but he still doubts that the Board will raise tuition. A 10% increase in tuition would help the college break even, but the board is not willing to raise tuition.

IX. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- The short list of agenda items for this meeting will be forwarded to the next meeting. Please send any additional issues to either Jennifer Columbus, Cynthia Malbrough or Marie Roberts as Co-Chairs.
- The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 5**, 9-10am, in Social Sciences 332.