UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Business Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2020
Carmen Zoom
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

In Attendance:
Chrissy Sprouse, Steven Loborec, Shea Ryan, Steven Blalock, Randall McKenzie, Justin Lahmers, Debbie Pond, Faith Kline, Stacey Houser, Lauren Gannon-Evans, Tina Bogac, Holly Davis, Kynthia Drosch, Kate Blevins, Emily Kelley, Annie Bingman, Katie Watkins, Danielle Jennings, Drew Miller, Ferdinand Avila-Medina, Sandy Otis, Courtney Gandy, Brittany Savko, Patrick Weeks, Jacob Hollar, Brittany Crall, Laurel Van Dromme, Brandon Gibbs.

Call to Order
Adoption of the Agenda
Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes will occur at next meeting

Executive Committee Reports
Chair:

Chair Elect:

Communications:

Secretary/Treasurer:

Subcommittee Reports
Inclusive Excellence (IE):

Governance:

Outreach & Engagement (O&E):

Staff Affairs (SA):

Task Forces

OHR Liaison Report

Items for Informational Purposes
Health & Wellness by University Chief Wellness Officer Bernadette Melnyk (8:30 – 9:30 a.m.)
- As part of the Work of the Safe Campus Scientific Advisory Subgroup of the Post-pandemic Operations Task Force, Bern led the creation of a survey with assistance from OCWO’s team, OHR, Office of Student Life, and Institutional Research & Planning.
Survey was sent to staff, faculty, and students during first 2 weeks of August. The survey was a random sample allowing for generalizability of findings to rest of OSU population: survey sent to >14,000 students with 30.7% response rate, 6,000 staff with 38% response rate, and 6,000 faculty with 36% response rate, most of the latter 2 groups were working from home.

- Student participants covered all levels of academic programs, and while about 50% were confident of returning to campus safety, 45% of grad students were not at all confident. Most pressing concern was contracting Covid-19 or passing it to a family member. Only 43% of students thought they knew how to prevent spread of Covid-19, and this has informed health promotion messaging to students. 39% of students screened positive for anxiety and 24% screened positive for depression. Mental health is incredibly important right now—as it’s like a mental health epidemic within the pandemic—so university is increasing programming to give people cognitive behavioral skills to deal with life’s stressors. Bern will apply for more CARES funding from State of Ohio to support mental health programming at university. 29% of students are feeling burnt out.

- A range of behaviors are being used to deal with stress: 34% students report increase in sleep, 25% eating more, 15.5% increased use of alcohol, while 70.1% are staying connected with family and friends. 52.5% participated in less physical activity. 1/3 Americans have chronic conditions.

- Bern noted that 85% of chronic conditions can be prevented by healthy lifestyle behaviors, and she predicts more chronic conditions in the long term as a result of poor healthy behavioral lifestyles. We need to move from a sick care system to one focused on health and prevention.

- Classified staff were less confident of returning to campus safely than non-classified staff. At home staff and faculty felt more stress about returning to campus, with similar concerns to those of students: contracting Covid-19 or passing it to a family member. 81% of staff and 87% of faculty believed peers would follow health protocols on return to campus.

- 25% of people do not have high blood pressure under control. Bern’s Buckeye Wellness team wants to help pre-hypertensive employees become healthier in order to prevent more serious chronic conditions. We want to create the best wellness culture at the university, so that healthy behaviors are the norm: physically active, healthy eating, stress reduction, and reduced prolonged sitting:
  - 30 minutes of physical activity x 5 days/week,
  - 5 fruits and vegetables/day,
  - No smoking,
  - Limit alcohol consumption: 1 drink/day for women and men, and
  - 7 hours of sleep/night and engage in stress reduction.
• Bern combines emotional stories with evidence to help encourage people to make healthy changes.

• Be aware of your own burnout: If you feel 3-5 on the 1-item screening scale for burnout, then please seek mental health support. Take care of yourself, especially employees who are parents: take even 5-10 minutes for self-care, every day, to bring joy and to reduce stress. Can self-monitor your stress and well-being at this website: https://go.osu.edu/checkyourstressemployees. Follow the acronym COPE with COVID:
  o C  Control the things that we can
  o O  Open up and share feelings
  o P  Practice daily stress reduction, including physical activity: reduce (videoconference) meetings by 5-10 minutes to be active in-between
  o E  Engage in Mindfulness
  o C  Count your blessings daily
  o O  Overturn negative thoughts to positive
  o V  Volunteer to help others
  o I  Identify helpful supports and resources
  o D  Do your part to prevent spread of virus

• Visit Safe and Healthy Buckeyes Website https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu

• Take a resiliency screening at https://www.everydayhealth.com/wellness/resilience/get-your-resilience-score. We can build resilience, it's not something only some people are born with. Gratitude increases dopamine and serotonin in the brain, so practice gratitude every day: write 2-3 things/people for which we are grateful in the morning, and look at it again before you go to bed. Choose gratitude like Nick Vujicic.

• We can still access lectures on Staying Well & Calm series on OWCO's website: https://wellness.osu.edu/. Bern has manualized a Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) as a manualized, skills-building program called MindStrong: https://nursing.osu.edu/offices-and-initiatives/mindstrong. MindStrong is an evidence-based treatment for treating and preventing mild-moderate forms of depression, anxiety, and stress and builds resilience. A negative pattern of thought leads to depression. MindStrong teaches staff, faculty, and students to learn to alter negative thinking patterns and behavioral activation: doing healthy/positive things (even when we don’t want to), because they lead to positive feelings and thoughts.

• Try deep breathing: 5 deep breaths each hour. Habits take 30 - 60 days to make or break. Pick one healthy habit to practice: such as add 5 minutes of physical activity every day. Make small changes to increase likelihood that you can make it a new habit.

• Bern asks all USAC members to become Buckeye Wellness Innovators (BWIs). They go through Health Athlete course at no charge, see https://healthathlete.org/. The program is now virtual. Bern will offer a new USAC-specific Health Athlete for any of our members.

• Bern wants to extend WMC Buckeye Paws program to rest of university. Chrissy and Steven expressed their support of it to OHR’s Susan Basso last week.

• Bern asked “Who is your ‘why’ to take a little better self-care? Who is your motivator to practice healthy lifestyle?” Look for silver linings, because rainbows follow rain.

• USAC Qs:
  1. How can COM BWIs reach staff, many of whom are working from home, to support their wellness? Bern suggested offering a) a virtual health athlete or b) virtual MindStrong. Bern’s wellness team is also starting Moving and Mindful Mondays for the university at 11:50 am on Monday mornings; tune in for a few minutes of movement and mindfulness.
2. If employees are concerned others on campus won’t comply with health safety precautions, then there may be bigger safety compliance issues at play. Can our offices work together? Bern welcomes ways to work together to improve employees’ compliance and believes that others will comply, too.

3. Will the Return to Campus survey will be sent again? Yes, in December to look for change over time.

- Bern meets with all the deans and Senior leaders to share with them their unit’s (de-identified) wellness data and encourages them to be good role models and share communication on being well with their units.
- Bern appreciates USAC’s interest and support of wellness; she asks us to elevate wellness in the name of one of the Subcommittees. Chrissy responded that USAC may establish a taskforce to look at best ways for USAC to support wellness. Bern wants 1-2 USAC members to serve on H&W Council’s subcommittee for staff wellness.

Office of Institutional Equity & Interim Title IX policy by Molly Peirano, Director of Education and Engagement and Allan Williams, Director of Resolutions (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.)

- This office has been in existence for just over 1 year. To eliminate discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Want to stop unacceptable behavior, and university now has more avenues by which they can do that.
- 17 protective classes: no one should treat you differently, poorly, or keep you out of a program because of your identity: age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status.
- Sexual misconduct includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, relationship violence, stalking, and prohibited relationships.
- This office coordinates a response to all reports of discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct; provides information on support resources, assists with supportive measures, and provides information about resolution options; and conduct investigations and adjudicates complaints.
- Complaints may be reported online at https://equity.osu.edu/, or call OIE 614.247.5838 or TTY 614.688.8605, email equity@osu.edu. After someone makes a report, keeping them safe is top priority as part of information collection. Complainant is informed of the options to remedy a situation. The Office of Institutional Equity will assist in remedying the situation and stopping the negative behavior from occurring in the future.
- 2 policies cover the 17 protected classes: they were in interim policies issued when office opened 8.1.2019, with a 2nd iteration effective 9.14.2020, and fully revised policies expected in 2021.
  2. Sexual Misconduct Policy
- Sexual Misconduct Policy changes include adding “ethnicity” to the protected class list, clarification of duty that any HR professional must report any discrimination and harassment about which they become aware, aligning definitions with Final Title IX Rule, add formal complaint process; continues to include under university jurisdiction threats beyond what federal Title IX covers even after recent US Dept. of Education changes in the federal regulations.
• All university employees must report sexual assault immediately. The following must report all other forms of sexual misconduct within 5 days: any HR professional, anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students or volunteers, Chair/director, faculty member. Any person practicing under privilege is exempt: counselors, clergy, healthcare providers, and/or attorneys.

• The work on Resolutions is newer, and regulations include both formal and informal complaints. Mediation, to which both parties must agree to enter, is not applicable to complaints about staff and faculty involving students. Students, staff, and faculty, be they complainant or respondent, will need advisors to provide guidance and to ask questions on their behalf. If someone does not have an advisor, then the university will provide one w/o fee or charge to the complainant or respondent. This is not a legal advisor, but will prevent parties communicate with one another directly.

• Does anyone from USAC want to serve as an Advisor? The office will have a pool of advisors, who will be trained in the role, and volunteers’ availability is variable. No particular experience or skills are required. The only disqualification is if there is a conflict of interest.

• Hearings are now required for Title IX formal complaints, and this opportunity is new for staff (although it was already in place for faculty and students). This does include cross-examination, which can be difficult for some, yet also mean fair representation to others. Refers to university Faculty Rule 3335-5-04. Witnesses and expert witnesses are allowed, although definition of the latter is not clear.

• Appeals process is now available for all formal complaints, which is also new to staff. Appeals can be made for: procedural irregularity, new evidence, conflict of interest, or inappropriate sanction.

• There’s a significant match between Non Discrimination Harassment Policy and Sexual Misconduct Policy, so if we combine these, then we can make Affirmative Action EEO policy more robust. USAC wants to connect Sandy Otis, from our Staff Affairs Subcommittee, to participate in listening sessions as part of review of these policies.

• Molly asked “what is the best way that this office can reach our university employees at regional campuses and across all 88 counties through Extension?” Chrissy shared that many units struggle with reaching all of the university community. Last year, the office conducted 110 of these kids of information sessions. Email equityeducation@osu.edu to schedule an information session. The office will love to be able to share information at New Employee Orientation.

Items for Group Discussion

Adjournment at 10:30 a.m.