GENESEE STAFF COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda: February 9, 2024

Zoom Link: https://rochester.zoom.us/j/94778414428

9:00 – 9:15 AM – Welcome, Housekeeping, Announcements
- Group Norms
- Approval of January meeting minutes
- Updates from Co-Chairs

9:15 – 10:20 AM – Discussion/activity: Clarifying the role of the GSC
- Review language from website about Council mission and responsibilities
- Discuss current understandings of expectations and role of Council and desired expectations and role of Council
- Explore updating language and implications of doing so (if applicable)

10:20 – 10:30 AM – Break

10:30 – 11:30 AM – CPM Feedback discussion

11:30 – 11:45 AM – Wrap-Up
- Expansion Evaluation Committee (Sarah)
- Matters arising
- Summary, wrap up, and takeaways
- Good news

Attendees: Co-Chair Jane Bryant, Co-Chair Jon Powers, Melinda Adelman, Chennel Anderson, Laura Ballou, Brandi Bangle, Rachel Bills, Kristi Brock, Jamie Brown, Leah Brown, Amanda Carter, Karen Cera, Lindsay Chasse, Marisa Chiodo, Leslie Collison, Kris Condello, Jazmin Dunham, Maria Fagnano, Scott Fearing, Shari Hofmann, Arian Horbovetz, Austin Jackson, Aaron Landcastle, Charles LaBrake, David Lanni, Hannah McClow, Andria Mutrie, Michael Occhino, Ted Pagano, Katie Papas, Brenda Pitoni, Tacarah Reyes, Nate Ridley, Lauren Sageer, Marc Seigfred, Amanda Sharpe, Sarah Siddiqui, Ashley Smith, Lisa Smith, Molly Snyder, Rachel Stuckey, Jessica Syposs, Thuy Tran, Dan Watts, Joe Williams

Co-Chair Jon Powers welcomed the representatives and reviewed the day's agenda and group norms. Council Secretary Karen Cera presented the January meeting minutes for approval. The minutes were approved by the present Council members.

Co-Chair Updates

Jon Powers: Nominations are open for the Simon School of Business district representative. If you know anyone there, please nominate them or encourage them to self-nominate. The GSC Co-Chairs met with Kathy Gallucci and President Mangelsdorf recently, and we talked about Jon Blackshear, the new VP for Student Life. He would like to come to a future meeting to go over the demonstration, vigils, and peaceful protests policy.

Jane Bryant: We have been asked to appoint representatives to serve on the University's transportation and parking master plan committee, and the new hire orientation committee.

Jon Powers: Our next meeting, March 8 will be in person. Details to come.

Discussion/activity: Clarifying the role of the GSC

Jane Bryant: We will use Menti for our next activity centered around the published language on our website about who we are and what we do. We hope that this activity will help us set goals and related action items for the coming year.

Reviewing the statement: "For the first time in the University's history, staff now have a representative voice and get a seat at the table." GSC Reps feel that this statement should be revised.

Amanda Sharpe: It's not accurate for us to say "for the first time in the University's history" when we've existed for five years at this point. We need some additional context around that, like "beginning in 2019."

Brenda Pitoni: I feel like saying we have a seat at the table is a little bit of an exaggeration. Until we have a charter or something that guarantees our existence, I don't feel we necessarily have a seat.

Jessica Syposs: Not all staff have a seat at the table, we still have a large amount of staff at our university that do not have representation.

Dan Watts: Union-represented staff have had a voice since before the GSC.

Lisa Smith (in chat): Suggests the language "GSC provides an opportunity for a voice and representation..."

Reviewing the statement: "Facilitate active and direct communication between University staff and senior administration…" GSC Reps voted for this statement to remain unchanged.

Reviewing the statement: "…and to provide a forum for input and discussion of issues important to the staff and the University." GSC Reps voted for this statement to remain unchanged.

Amanda Sharpe: Grammatically, these two pieces together bother me because it's like one run-on sentence.

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Act intentionally to promote the vision and values of the University and to provide a positive environment for employment and to promote engagement." GSC Reps voted for this to be revised.

Jessica Syposs: I almost feel that this statement should be reversed. Our focus should be to provide a positive environment and engagement first.

Laura Ballou: This feels like three separate things all stuck together. Engagement with what? Engagement with each other, with other staff, with the university community? I'm not quite sure where the emphasis is.

Karen Cera: I can't stand the use of promote twice in the same sentence.

Brenda Pitoni: Is it actually our job to provide a positive environment for employment?

Melinda Adelman (in chat): There's also an assumption of agency here. Do we actually have the power to provide a positive environment?

Arian Horbovetz (in chat): Maybe "help facilitate" a positive environment? "contribute to" a positive environment? *Others in the chat agree with contribute.*

Lisa Smith (in chat): "promote the vision" feels uncomfortable in the midst of CPM.

Marc Seigfred (in chat): Vision and values is a specific reference in this context: https://www.rochester.edu/about/values.html

Melinda Adelman (in chat): Engagement with the vision and values? (Resistance can also be engagement…)

Leah Brown: I think that most people won't look to the posted 'vision', they'll look at what's happening on the day to day, and how it makes them feel.

Jessica Syposs: Aren't the vision and values ever-evolving in the university?

Lindsay Chasse (in chat): Yes - I agree being careful with language about mission and vision so to doesn't appear (or continue to appear) that we are the "suck ups" who are recruited to promote the "propaganda"… my language sounds harsher than the reality, but to sum it simply, it seems many view the council as agents of the administration rather than advocates for the staff

Ted Pagano (in chat): And the iCARE Values at the med center may be different or related to the main values.

Scott Fearing (in chat): There is an effort underway to connect the University Values (MELIORA) with the URMC Values (ICARE) and expanding an employee recognition program connected to MELIORA the way that ICARE has.

Amanda Sharpe: The university's vision and values don't change. We can use these values to hold leadership accountable and to be more open and transparent. Linking to these or laying them out on our own website might be useful.

Marc Seigfred: I agree with Amanda about the vision and values being core philosophical tenants of being here at the university. It's our responsibility to call out administration who do not uphold University vision and values.

Sarah Siddiqui: Earlier last year we had Nathan Harris come and give us a talk on staff councils. He was talking about "advisory" vs. "advocacy" staff councils. This might be a good opportunity for us to include "advocacy" in our language.

Lindsay Chasse: How do we say we promote the vision and values without looking like we're reciting the "party line."

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Represent staff in the University's decision-making process regarding issues that directly affect staff."

Jane Bryant: I have a comment on this one, I feel like "represent staff" should be defined in this context, even if just internally.

Amanda Sharpe: It may make more sense to change the word "represent" to "advocate for," because unionized staff have other people to represent them.

Kristi Brock: To me, the word represent means that it's our responsibility to communicate feedback that's actually coming from our constituents. Whereas advocate could mean more like we're just saying what we think is best for staff, and it's our input.

Jon Powers: I think represent might be a better term for our role. Advocate sounds more like "pushing for change," where as when we represent staff, we are representing the staff viewpoint when requests come through to us.

Jane Bryant: There are some suggestions in the chat, such as "serve as representatives of our constituents." Melinda mentioned that she's questioning the word "directly." Maybe excluding it could make sense. Marc says there are issues where some of our represented staff would be at odds with other represented staff, so deciding on a way to advocate in the event of a disagreement. Kristi suggested maybe "represent the staff voice."

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Select staff members to serve on important institutional committees." Some GSC Reps voted to edit this statement.

Amanda Sharpe: Sometimes we are asked to select a GSC Rep to serve on the committee, other times we make a recommendation and someone else does the selecting.

Dan Watts: Recommend' might be more appropriate. We were not included in the AS&E Dean selection, and we pushed until we did get representation on that selection committee.

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Provide input on policies and procedures which pertain to or affect staff and the University community." Some GSC Reps voted to edit this statement slightly.

Amanda Sharpe: Pertain and affect could be changed to impact.

Ashley Smith (in chat): How are defining university community and do we really have an opportunity to affect "community"?

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Create networking opportunities for staff across the University." Some GSC Reps voted to edit this statement slightly.

Jane Bryant: My initial thought is that we should define 'networking opportunities.'

Amanda Sharpe (in chat): I think this is where we could incorporate the engagement piece if that's the intention

Karen Cera: Are we talking about GSC Reps getting opportunities to network, or engagement events that we hold as the GSC?

Jane Bryant: Marc mentioned in the chat that vague is good. In my observations, vague can be really helpful for certain steps in the process, but if we break it down in terms of actionable items and creating a roadmap so that new members know what's to be done will be useful.

Marc Seigfred: Over time, we've done a variety of different things. Some more like Town Halls, or newsletters where we're specifically talking about topics, but other times it's been a walking tour or a happy hour. So networking opportunities is vague enough that you can lump a bunch of different things together without having to be too specific.

Jon Powers: Do we mean that we're creating opportunities for those on the Council, or beyond that? Should it be our responsibility to create networking opportunities for staff across the university?

Leah Brown: We have to look at how other people will view the words that we're using, since this will be public. Remember who our audience is.

Arian Horbovetz: I think of networking as more of social events, whereas 'engagement' is more broad, and connecting with staff in different ways.

Molly Snyder: I agree with the term 'engagement' as opposed to networking.

Kristi Brock: Maybe this is a place where we can incorporate the "One University" concept, and break down the siloed nature of the university.

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "Help amplify initiatives and ideas from the senior administration to the University staff." Some GSC reps voted to edit this statement, and some voted to remove it.

Lindsay Chasse: This again gives the appearance of us being agents of the administration. I think there is a way to say we're communicating these things from senior administration, or facilitating, or sharing.

Amanda Sharpe: I am one of the people that selected that this should be removed. It's covered in other ways in other statements that we have.

Laura Ballou: I agree, I think we should remove this statement. Which messages are we amplifying, and how are we amplifying it? This might just add to the communication challenges we've identified by saying we're another avenue for communication.

Dan Watts: I don't think it's our job to do this. The university has invested a lot of money into communications.

Marc Seigfred (in chat): I recommend removing altogether. Let's get out of the business of communications/amplification for leadership.

Arian Horbovetz: Maybe we can state that we connect people to resources.

Reviewing the stated responsibility of the GSC: "It is the commitment of the Genesee Staff Council to represent the diverse voices and experiences of our staff..." The majority of GSC Reps voted to leave this statement unchanged.

Lisa Smith: "Represent the diverse voices" is difficult to me. I don't think we're a culturally diverse enough group to do that.

Jon Powers: I read 'diverse voices' to mean not just cultural diversity, but different staff viewpoints.

Jane Bryant: Maybe if we are looking at these statements from a vision standpoint, it's that this is what we would ideally like to see.

Reviewing the statement: "...as we partner with University leadership..."

Jane Bryant: I had to break the full statement up into pieces for this activity, but the full statement is *"It is the commitment of the Genesee Staff Council to represent the diverse voices and experiences of our staff as we partner with University leadership to strengthen opportunities for staff to learn, grow and know their value, and to create a more equitable and inclusive place to work."*

Amanda Sharpe: Personally, I think we could take out the "as we partner with University leadership," entirely, and just separate this into two statements.

Dan Watts: It's already clear that we are partnering with university leadership, so we don't need to include this, it's too wordy and unnecessary.

Amanda Sharpe: I also have a problem with "know their value," I think that's a big ask, and it will not strike the right tone with people.

Lindsay Chasse: Where is this all living ultimately? We've already said all of the things in this statement, so why are we re-stating it?

Ashley Smith: Do we as a collective have the ability to do what this statement says? I don't think we have any authority or influence over these things.

Lisa Smith: Re-visiting grow, what does that actually mean? Are we trying to help staff identify opportunities for their own growth?

CPM Feedback

Jon Powers: Our next topic/activity is Career Path Modernization (CPM). The initial roll-out happened on January 31, and we've received a lot of feedback from staff so far. So we want to start a conversation about what we've been hearing as a Council and as representatives. We expect to have Dan Salamone and Kathy Gallucci to discuss what we've been hearing, and what updates they may have based on feedback that they've received. As a reminder, please fill out the internal GSC feedback form as you receive CPM feedback from staff. The Faculty Senate has also heard concerns about CPM, and has invited the Executive Committee to participate in their discussion next week.

Brenda Pitoni: It's been important to collect feedback, and we've gotten quite a bit. It's important to share what we've been hearing. I would love to come up with some directives or recommendations for the CPM team for our next meeting.

Ashley Smith: In the arts and sciences chairs and directors meeting the other day, they were very complimentary of the speediness of the appeals process, but I believe that is due to their HR Business Partner, it's not consistent.

Jessica Syposs: I've had conversations across several departments in SMD. Many individuals are at a breaking point with the CPM roll-out. Across the board, there's been a lot of negativity. People are reluctant to go on record with their feedback.

Jon Powers: We are not sharing our feedback spreadsheet overall with leadership, we are planning to boil it down to common themes.

Marc Seigfred: One of the things I've heard is that one of the biggest misses is not having the job ladders and job descriptions available, because it makes it hard for people to know if they should appeal or not. From a connecting resources perspective, finding ways to make sure people are aware of the appeals process and who their HRBP's are would be a good way to help staff.

Jon Powers: Kathy stated that the appeals process for managers would continue to be ongoing over time.

Brenda Pitoni: I've heard more than one person say they don't even know what they based this feedback on. If they could share that information. Where are the job code definitions that have been disseminated?

Jon Powers: In December, managers were given job codes and overall job descriptions. Job descriptions were later removed and now it's just job title and job code. According to their timeline, I believe the job descriptions are supposed to be live in March.

Lauren Sageer: I've heard from managers that said they feel like they're being set up for failure because of the quick turn-around for the appeals process. It also feels pre-mature to appeal something that we don't have all the information for. It feels like smaller units are at a disadvantage. We're taking on a lot of the workload that might be spread out amongst people in bigger units, and it feels that's not really being acknowledged in CPM.

Amanda Sharpe (in chat): I think it's important to remind everyone that this is about the position responsibilities and does not factor in any elements of the person holding the position - education, years of service, etc.

Arian Horbovetz: Most of what I've heard is from managers and directors. This has put an enormous responsibility on them, specifically with timelines. A lot of people feel that this might be the thing that pushes a lot of people out of the university. This put a tremendous amount of pressure on directors with regard to both time and staff retention.

Jamie Brown (reading questions on behalf of other Council members): There's one specific question for HR that has come up: On the leveling chart, P3 is the same as L2, L1 is the same as P2. What does this same level mean? Do they share similar pay scales and level of job responsibilities? Another question was: Can the descriptions for all levels—A4, P1, P2, etc. be shared or put on the CPM website?

Kristi Brock: I think the CPM team has worked very hard on this and has done a lot of great work. It's unfortunate that they're probably not receiving any of that feedback right now. I think a lot of the communication breakdowns have happened at the HRBP level or at the department level. Personally, my department did not get the opportunity to complete the department level review. Now we're at a point where I've had 9 days to try and write appeals for 9 direct reports without access to general purpose job descriptions because now they've been removed. That's at the department level and the CPM team does not have control over that. I think it's important to give Dan Salamone positive feedback about the structure they've built, while acknowledging to senior leadership where the breakdown actually happened.

Sarah Siddiqui: Reiterating what people have said about sharing the levels and job codes. One of the ideas with this project was that people would have a clear path of how to move forward in their career, and they don't really have that now without access to the levelling structure or rubrics.

Jamie Brown: I have a lot of direct reports, and traditionally, these people have been paid far under market value. A positive outcome of CPM has been that these people have been given pay raises up to market value, however they're all being paid at the bare minimum of their pay range in CPM, so they want to know when their raises will come.

Jon Powers: Another thing we've heard a lot about is that CPM is creating a lot of wage compression in general. The CPM team had said compensation changes will be addressed more later in the process.

Karen Cera: The upset with people not feeling valued or feeling demoted, we had a lot of people hired into manager or director titles, that have recently lost that title and become something like a tech or a specialist. That's demoralizing for people. A question for Dan Salamone, what is the CPM team planning to do with this feedback?

Jamie Brown (reading questions on behalf of other Council members): Title changes make sense within the university, but people don't like the fact that their title looks like a downgrade on their resume for positions outside the university. There are directors who are now managers with the new title changes which has huge implications for a resume.

Marisa Chiodo: Even though this process feels very personal, it is designed to help know what the department needs for this position. So to reframe this conversation, more messaging around the fact that this is about what the role requires, not about the actual person in the role would be helpful.

Laura Ballou: I agree that the CPM team did a wonderful job at the beginning releasing information. As the project came to a close, we lost some of those important pieces. The titling piece felt thrown on at the end without as much thought, time, and feedback. We were also a department that did the pilot a year ago, so their patience is getting thin especially since it felt so rushed at the end. The business titling seems to be the hardest piece. We had to do our own benchmarking for student services because they couldn't produce benchmarking that aligned with any of the work that we do, so that was frustrating. I have heard a lot of concerns also about the titling, and concerns from managers that are worried they won't be able to hire people in the position titles we're being asked to use. The other piece is the appeals process, which really focuses on the manager. Staff that don't have a supportive manager don't feel that they are able to make an appeal. Finally, the wage compression issue. Staff expected wages to be addressed differently, and some have ended up in a pay range lower than their current pay range, which isn't making them feel valued. Staff are also wondering how they can move up within their pay range.

Lisa Smith: Our department was also a pilot group. One thing I have observed is this bottleneck with leadership. The CPM team has taken a very long time to respond to an email. We would find ourselves stuck in a loop where something had been agreed to, something was going to be implemented, and it didn't happen. When GSC talks to leadership, I think providing managers with a clear, concise, and realistic expectation on timeline for response would be helpful.

Wrap-Up

Jon Powers: In your district newsletters, you are welcome to invite people to give feedback of any kind. You can point out that the Council has been receiving a lot of feedback on CPM, and invite people openly to give any kind of feedback that we can then provide to leadership at our meeting next month. Please don't send the link to the CPM form to your constituencies, it's only for the use of GSC Reps. The Executive Committee will review the minutes from this meeting, compile feedback, and work on recommendations for leadership.

Sarah Siddiqui: On behalf of the Expansion Evaluation Committee, we would like to ask that you please complete this survey regarding the expansion within the next week. At next month's meeting, we will have a longer conversation about the expansion. We will share the survey link via email and in Teams.