**Staff Council Attendees:**
Lisa Heiskell, Sierra Krippner, Traci Siriprathane, Sarah Lof, Erin Merrill, Alison Vasquez, Hannah Thorne, Erin Gibson

**Chair Update** – Alison Vasquez
**President Dobkin & HR** – Monthly meeting
- Reported on preliminary data from Staff Retention survey to President Dobkin and Julie Freestone
- Discussed why staff feel they don’t have a voice
- Discussed utilizing speakers and guests to campus for professional development opportunities
- Board Meeting on November 7th, Staff Council Chair will present on goals for the year along with other campus representatives

**Committee Updates** – Committee Chairs

**Professional Development** – Lisa Heiskell
- Professional Development Deadline is November 1st.
- The committee will meet on November 5th to review and award the professional development funds.

**Recognition** – Sierra Krippner
- After this month, the recognition committee will be sending applause cards to those who nominate the Staff of the Month Award Recipient rather than providing bagels for their department.
- The bagel budget will be used for staff council members to visit different departments each month.

**Community Engagement** – Traci Siriprathane
- All of the upcoming events are posted on the Staff Council webpage
- Traci will be sending reminder emails before each of the events, and they will also be announced in the Campus Events newsletter
- Upcoming events:
  - Soccer Tailgate: November 1st from 3:30-6:00 PM
  - Pie Contest: November 26th from 12-2:00 PM
  - Paint Night: December 5th from 6-8:00 PM
**Discussion Items**

**StrengthsFinder Training** – Lisa Heiskell

- The Professional Development Committee met to discuss what to offer for professional development. They decided to provide StrengthsFinder training because it applies to all employees regardless of their position, and it has been proven to increase job satisfaction. Additionally, several people on campus are certified StrengthsFinder trainers, which will make the workshops more affordable.
- **Background:** StrengthsFinder is a tool to enhance leadership skills that is based on positive psychology and can increase job satisfaction. It applies to all employees and helps people use their strengths within their roles and communicate more effectively.
- **Format:** The training will consist of an initial three-hour session in February, followed by a shorter follow-up session later in the spring. Two sessions will be offered at different times of day to accommodate schedules. Participants will be required to take the assessment online before the initial meeting. The cost of the assessment will be covered.
- Staff Council members will all take the assessment and participate in an abbreviated training session in November.

**Applause Cards** – Traci Siriprathane

- Applause cards are now available!
- Traci coordinated the delivery of applause cards to all of the departments around campus. If you need more, please contact Traci.
- If your department wants to order a large quantity for your purposes, you can use the online Alphagraphics print request form.

**Timing of Staff of the Month** – Hannah

- Due to some confusion about the delay between when Staff of the Month award recipient was selected and when we were announcing their names in the Griffin Gazette (the announcement came out at the end of the month after the nomination, leading to a month delay), we have changed the process slightly to provide more timely recognition.
- The award will now be announced in the first newsletter the following month and will specify the month of the award. The deadline for nominations is still the 25th of every month.

**Timing of the November and December Meetings** – Alison

- The November and December meetings landed on or near the holidays, so we have moved the next meeting to Tuesday, December 10th, from 10:00–12:00. We will not have a meeting in November; instead, the staff council will meet to do their StrengthsFinder training.
Staff Open Forum – Staff Retention – Survey Follow-up

Staff Attendees: Valerie Burnett, Stephanie Santarosa, Laura Kendellen, Sara Demko, Winter Morse, Joshua Montovan, Tyler Kay, Christopher Ossana, Emily Swanson, Erin Gibson, Christopher Dasanjh, Elise, Lisa Heiskell, Sierra Krippner, Traci Siriprathane, Sarah Lof, Erin Merrill, Alison Vasquez, Hannah Thorne

Presentation:

Staff Council Members Sarah Lof, Erin Merrill, Hannah Thorne, and Alison Vasquez presented the results of the staff retention survey. Results were emailed to all staff on October, 31st and also archived in the Staff Council OneDrive Folder “Projects.”

Discussion:

Opportunities for growth and development
- Our campus is small and may not have as many opportunities to advance by moving into different positions. However, we could still model what other colleges do to promote staff by changing job descriptions when responsibilities are added and creating a formal process for recognizing professional growth and accompanying changes in responsibility. An example from the University of Utah was brought to HR several years ago but has not been pursued.
- While staff members are aware of budget constraints and the necessity of temporary reductions in benefits, many would like to see a formal plan for how and when benefits will be restored, and how the cost of living and merit raises will be reinstated. The last time that staff compensation was leveled, staff were told that a plan to implement raises for years of service, merit, etc. would also be implemented, but the project was dropped without an explanation. Staff members want to have more clear and direct communication regarding compensation and benefits in the future.

Communication
- Senior Leadership – Staff members feel that they are not always invited to the table to discuss issues that directly impact their work. Sometimes this means that staff members are not consulted before changes are made that they or other staff members are accountable for implementing.
- Committees – The group discussed different committees across campus and how it would be helpful to have a staff member representative on campus committees and an opportunity for them to report to the staff on the work that is being done by their committee. Faculty Senate is a venue for faculty to disseminate this information to faculty, but it hasn’t been done consistently on the staff side, so this may need to be addressed. The Staff Council may need to consider how to improve staff representation on campus committees and how to disseminate updates from those committees.

Professional Development
- Supervisor training – one theme identified through the survey is the impact that supervisors have on the experience of their supervisees. Supervisor support was a
determining factor in whether staff felt that they had opportunities for growth and development or felt comfortable asking when they had a need. Required training for supervisors could lead to more consistent employee experience and improve staff satisfaction in their positions.

- **Work from home policy** – In response to the question, “what would improve your work-life balance,” the ability to work from home was the low-cost benefit that was mentioned most often in the survey. While the survey highlighted how much interest there is in this idea, the group discussion led to the conclusion that proposing a formal institutional policy on working from home might lead to less flexibility than currently exists for some departments. A supervisor training program might partially address the issue by providing more information to supervisors about what kind of flexibility they can offer and by improving trust and communication between the supervisor and supervisee.

- **Wellness release time** – Wellness release time was another popular low-cost benefit that was mentioned in the survey. Traci Siriprathane and Laura Iverson have proposed similar programs, and Salt Lake Community College has a program that we could review and possibly use as a model.

- **Morale** – Staff morale is very low, and the institution is stuck in survival rhetoric. Staff would like to feel a greater sense of connection to the institution by understanding the mission and how our individual work contributes to that mission. A staff member described how difficult it is to find our mission statement on the website, which illustrated the distance staff members feel from our institutional goals. Increased communication from the senior team about our institutional goals and information about what staff can expect in the coming year may help to alleviate this concern.

**Staff council is working on two proposals based on this discussion. The proposals will be shared after they are completed and have been reviewed by HR.**