

Rural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2009

Present: Juella Sparks, Nichole Kloepfer, Jennifer Elhard, Ashley Munro, Jennifer Youngberg, Liz Recchia

Excused: Shawn Russell, Crystal Wilson, Byrd Norton, Holly Royce

1. Call to Order – Liz called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.
2. Discuss Theme(s) for Committee to Focus on this Year
 - a. Consistent Annual Training in Current Field--Jennifer Youngberg took questions from the group about training. Jennifer Elhard wanted to know about required job training in certain positions and how to find out what is required for certain positions. Jennifer Youngberg said that there isn't anything in place right now and that she wasn't really sure how something like that could be done. Juella reported that Anne Sakumoto was working on developing recommended trainings based on the different job families. What has been done so far can be found at the bottom of this page: <http://www.alaska.edu/hr/training/e-learning/skillsoft.xml> Juella said that she thinks Anne is looking for direction on how to decide on trainings that go along with the different job families.
 - b. Cost of Living Differential--The issue is still being monitored. Liz said she would check with someone from the Alaska State Employees Union to see if there have been any developments and would report those back to the group.
 - c. Creating a Strong Rural Voice with UAF--Liz reported that she drafted up two possible memos to go to Chancellor Brian Rogers and another to UAF departments asking for rural representation on university committees. Jennifer Elhard said the memos looked good and just need more detail. Juella suggested contacting Jennie Carroll because she might have useful ideas to share. Not everyone could open up the document because of the formatting. Liz said she would resend it to the group and it could be discussed at February's meeting.
 - d. Special Topics Workshops for Staff--Jennifer Elhard said that the top 4 topics wanted from the staff she surveyed were health benefits, planning for retirement, distribution of university budget, and training on distance delivery modes. Liz reported her staff's top 4 picks were university budget, health benefits, planning for retirement, and distance delivery. There were no other responses and Liz said she would try to solicit more input from other representatives before beginning to line up presentations. Liz suggested that these presentations be delivered the first Friday of every month from 1:30-2:30pm (normal Rural Affairs meeting time) and then the rural affairs meeting would follow afterwards from 2:30-3 or 3:30pm.

3. E-Learning--Juella reported that the university signed a 3 year contract with Skillsoft that will be in effect from 1/31/09-1/30/12. She also reported that an additional component called Books 24/7 will be available as well.
4. Update on Campus Suggestion Boxes--Jennifer Elhard reported that she had no suggestions in her box as did Liz. Jennifer thought that instead of having a suggestion box that in the future, the rural affairs representative would approach their staff members and presents any possible action that the rural affairs committee is considering. It seems like this will be more effective of getting feedback.
5. Staff Recognition Award--Ashley reported that the award committee met and had several suggestions concerning the award process. The award committee wanted to move the nomination date up to mid-March in the hopes that more people will be nominated. The committee wanted to include award names in the longevity awards and other awards during staff appreciation day in April. The committee wanted to use the leftover money, about \$105, to make posters that can be used year after year at each rural site to publicize the nominating period and award. Holly is looking into setting up an account with the UA Foundation for the director's to put their donations into. They would also like to add a stipulation about the requirements by opening up the opportunity to staff who work on an eligible campus at any point in the year. This would allow for staff who retire mid-year to be nominated. Currently, the eligibility requirements only address the location of where staff members must work to be eligible. Juella wanted to know where the origins of this award came from; whether it was from staff council or the rural affairs committee. Ashley said it came from rural affairs. No one at the meeting objected to these changes and so the committee will go forward and implement these changes.
6. Other--
 - i. Nichole introduced herself. She has taken on the position previously held by Lynette Washington. She was welcomed by the rural affairs committee.
 - ii. Juella mentioned to Liz that she is to have a 5 minute presentation prepared for the staff council at the orientation on rural affairs. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, just what the committee does and why new members should get involved. Liz promised she would work on that
7. Next Meeting: February 6, 2009 at 1:30pm
8. Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 2:05pm.