

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION
OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE FACULTY MEET and CONFER NOTES
Thursday, May 5, 2022 | 1:15-2:45 p.m. , via zoom and in person**

The following notes are provided as a way for the MSUAASF Meet and Confer representatives to communicate conversations that occur at Meet and Confer with membership and to concur with administration summaries of points discussed. They are not reflective of exact statements shared in the meeting and are not meant to serve as a transcript. Any members with questions can reach out to their ASF Meet and Confer representatives for clarifications. The previous month's notes are reviewed at Meet and Confer by all attendees to ensure the overall essence of the meeting was captured and updates can be made accordingly when necessary.

Attendees: Mandy Weister, Jennifer Velstos, Mark Johnson, Steve Barrett, David Jones, Lynn Akey, Sheri Sargent, President Edward Inch, Brian Martensen, Shirley Murray, Lindsay Smith, Henry Morris, Liz Steinborn-Gourley, Tracy Stokes Hernandez, Debra Schulz, Rick Straka, Oscar Gonzalez, Katie Hodgden, Marie Slotemaker, Anne Dahlman, Moses Langley

Documents Referenced in Meeting:

[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Enrollment Report](#)

[Vacancies by Status](#)

[Vacancies by Bargaining Unit](#)

[ASF Fixed Term](#)

[IT Meet and Confer Talking Points](#)

[Emergency Plans and Fire Evacuation Task Force Report and Recommendations 041222](#)

[05-05-2022 Flexible Work May Meet and Confer Update](#)

[Strategic Budget Planning Website](#)

Meeting Chair: MSUAASF President, Mandy Weister

Review of [Notes](#): No corrections are needed

MSU President's Report (E. Inch):

- We have reached the end of my first academic year here
- In taking on a new role, you rely on those around you, learn from those dedicated to their work and help, so thank you as I feel supported and believe this is a place where people are invited to do their best
- At this time reflective of the good deed upcoming positions:
 - There was a moment last week—fountain running, people are happy, celebratory sense, after dance (prom)---it's impressive the pride people have for MSU
 - This year we had 6 commencements compared to normal 3
 - In Jan./Feb. decisions were made by covid-19 omicron variant and we didn't want limited guests to attend so by dividing 6 ways it gave us more space

- Another by product we hope: to make it more college central. Students work most closely with faculty, and those who have supported their educational journey. Celebrate in a more intimate setting with all.
 - Afterwards we will ask opinions and adjust if/as needed.
- All of community coming together: hockey, international family, so much great pride about kind of work we do and students are appreciative . One student at end of her comments last night—what she learned institutions will never love you but people will love you. Powerful sentiment was one of belonging and inclusion.
- Attended listening sessions with majority of units across campus and will finish a few more yet. What I have learned: We are immensely proud of our students—what they accomplished here and where they are going which is what inspires our curriculum and how to support them.
- New provost: Dr. David Hood
- Thank you for your work this year.

MSUAASF President Report (M. Weister):

About 4 years ago I sat in an ASF General Membership meeting in CSU 245 and listened to the words of our then President Jamie Van Boxel. He was newly elected and it was one of the first meetings he was leading in the role. Some of the words he said that day have been bouncing around in my head for the past 2 years as I fulfilled my duties as ASF President from 2020-2022. Jamie noted that every ASF President seemed to have a topic during their term that dominated their work and became a theme for their term as President. With that memory and observation in mind, over the past 24 months I've often asked myself what would the big topics of my term be remembered for? But you know, it's been a pretty quiet 2 years, I couldn't come up with much. JOKES! Here's a few from the past 2 years you may recall:

- A Global Pandemic
- Budget concerns and the possibility of retrenchment that hung with us for most of the 2020-2021 academic year.
- A complex and intricate college merger
- Leadership Transition: President, Provost, Deans, Directors, and more
- Pervasive issues that just wouldn't quit like: getting accurate vacation/sick time accrual at System Service Center, correcting ASF employee overpayment issues, and polishing our practices regarding reassignments.
- Or maybe people will think of how challenging it was to navigate COVID leave, sick leave, staff shortages, office coverage, quarantine, testing procedures, vax tracking, and the new hybrid world of virtual and in-person options.

But I am not content to let these narratives write themselves. "What we see depends mainly on what we look for" - John Lubbock. Here's what I saw through the experience of serving in this role:

- Yes, we lived through the declaration of a global pandemic and were forced and stretched in new ways because of it. But through all that, I saw persistence, resilience, and dedication.
- Yes, we feared budget concerns would lead to retrenchment, but through all of that, I saw our Stewards respond with resources and options, I saw thoughtful questions rooted in concern. I

saw care and consideration consistently demonstrated for this community and it's staff & faculty by administration.

- Yes, we went through the growing pains of planning the merge of two colleges. But I saw data inform action, priorities in consultation, and plans being adjusted as needed to best serve faculty, staff, and students.
- Yes, we saw transition of leadership, and had natural anxieties about the future of Minnesota State University, Mankato, but through the process I saw everything good that Mankato had to offer new leadership and was able to witness the launch of another bright era for our university under the leadership of President Inch and his cabinet.
- Yes, we are still seeking solutions for some of those pervasive issues, but through the process I was witness to a willingness to listen, problem solve, and collaborate with many of you around this table. Special thanks to President Inch, VP Jones as our Management Representative, Provost Martinson, and HR Director Steve Barrett. Many of these began or ended with you, and the professionalism, care, and intention that you approach your work with has not gone unnoticed. I am thankful we are the envy of the MinnState system in having a positive working relationship with management and look forward to that continuing on.
- And yes, we dealt with more issues related to COVID than we could imagine. And they were complicated and diverse and still are not completely solved. But I saw compassion, flexibility, adaption, innovation, and teamwork.

And at this moment in time, as I reflect back, I also envision a bright future. The coming summer months bring some important milestones we must recognize:

- ASF members are currently working diligently to help students end the semester successfully. Advising, Events, Career, Housing, Admission, Travel, Graduation, Academics, Registration, Retention. There are so many ways our members impact student success this time of year.
- At the same time, ASF member are preparing for a productive summer. Orientation, Admission, Advising, Registration, Summer Camps, Housing. There are so many ways our members lay the foundation for a vibrant 2022-2023 academic year.
- Speaking of summer months: it is with sincere gravitas that ASF prepares to recognize Juneteenth, a new addition to our 2021-2023 contract. Juneteenth recognizes the day the last remaining enslaved people in Galveston, Texas were freed from slavery on June 19th, 1865 – two years after Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation, only freed enslaved people in the Confederacy. It wasn't until the ratification of the 13th amendment that abolished chattel slavery in the United States. All of this took place only three short years before the Mankato Normal School opened its doors in 1968. Juneteenth is considered the longest-running African American holiday and Americas' second Independence Day – a day to celebrate, to educate, to agitate. We hope to keep celebrating, educating, and agitating on this important day and let it be part of our collective memory as we look forward to creating a more equitable and inclusive University.
- I am proud to share that next year Liz Steinborn-Gourley will be your ASF Vice-President, Tracy Stokes-Hernandez will be in the Negotiator role, and Katie Hodgden has been re-elected as Secretary. On June 1 leadership will transition to Marie Slotemaker as she steps into the Presidency and I move to Past President role. My thanks to everyone who served this year, it

has been transformative to work alongside you and represent you. What we have achieved has only been possible because we did it together.

My term has been anything but dull. Certainly not the quiet 2 years I secretly hoped for when I agreed to run. But nothing is improved if not challenged. We're stronger, we're better, we've adapted. When faced with the worst, I've seen us respond with our best: both ASF members and administration alike. And for that – I thank you. Thank you for 2 memorable years as ASF President. For the opportunity and great honor to represent so many dedicated and caring colleagues. For the chance to learn, develop, and grow in my own leadership. And for the experience of convening with a group of decision-makers (ASF and Administration alike) who are eager to equitably serve students in a way that propels them into future success. This work matters. I am grateful.

Vice President Student Affairs & Enrollment Management Report (D. Jones):

- Thank you for a great year, wish you the best in next adventure Mandy
- Most significant is [enrollment report](#) attached
- Fall:
 - much stronger domestic numbers--about 300 extra,
 - we have had to pivot and add more in-person orientations which is more opportunity to celebrate and more work onto your members and appreciate flexibility to respond
 - Families are responding they want to be in person
 - International numbers: more movement with approvals and with the wars in Europe, U.S. will likely be a beneficiary as individuals are not wanting to go to Europe to study

HR Topics (S. Barrett):

- Vacancy Lists:
 - [Vacancies by Status](#)
 - [Vacancies by Bargaining Unit](#)
 - [ASF Fixed Term](#)
 - sent yesterday
 - a couple needing to fix up due to typos
 - any questions let Steve know directly
- Workplace Environment Investigations:
 - close to end of year and complaint numbers are higher than last year--- expected with transition back to campus
 - Time to complete has gone down: average 39 days, goal is 30
 - HR Generalists have done a great job in conducting much more efficiently
- Employee Recognition breakfast:
 - Monday at 8am, outstanding achievement awards.
 - Catch-up we have had 3 years of employee recognition that was impacted by the pandemic.
 - Will have more in fall but first one is Monday with the breakfast.

MinnState/Legislative Relations (President Inch & R. Straka)

- Not in the neighborhood we expected, most concern is a funded tuition freeze.
- A lot of conversation on course development for law enforcement and criminal justice.

- Remain hopeful for Armstrong Hall but it's been a relatively quiet journey
- Minnstate asked for \$60 million in supplemental budget requested and \$20 million of that for MSU, Mankato
- House is moving forward with \$24 million of campus support only 6 million is based in moving forward
- Senate is recommending \$10.6 million but a portion of that is criminal justice and law enforcement
- Our share may be only end up being \$60,000
- House has been supportive of bonding bills
- Senate more tight-lipped on providing budget targets
- Busy next couple of weeks to get work done and not have to go to special session
- Higher Education is included in a recent law/policy passed where workers who were on the front line during covid are being compensated— will there be any more information we should see coming through HR on this? (M. Weister)
- Governor Walz signed it but it needs to go to MMB and other agencies to establish how the money would be applied and once established, HR will get word out to employees later this spring and early summer (S. Barrett)
- Our members can expect to hear from HR on updates (M. Weister)

Return to Learn/COVID-19 Update (B. Martensen & D. Jones)

- Significant changes: look at infection rates, east of us have gone from low to medium and some to high and we will pay attention to lead us on what behaviors we will follow to protect campus
- No updates from MMB, any changes would be 30-day notice
- Will continue to have testing, about 100 people take advantage of this, any employees or students that want other testing that is available as well in Student Health
- Not a lot of changes from Academic Affairs...
 - continue to reiterate looking at fall offerings that reflect student needs
 - Summer not as much change as that is usually online—reflective of demand
 - We do need advising, registration, etc. to help monitor where students are registering, and we need to be ready for them.
 - More help the quicker we can be responsive.
 - Message to faculty, initially at the start of everything we recognized needing to be flexible, now setting expectations for more to be in person for some courses.
 - New data for this fall: 67% fall in person, 18 online, 6 hy-flex, some in-person as a whole but might have a flex sync lecture, 10% variety of other (hybrid, arranged).
 - Is there a target number for those percentages and offerings? (M. Weister)
 - The historical number is 11% online asynchronous/synchronous... highest was 31% so we are at 18% from that 11. (B. Martensen)
 - Good question—is that what the natural progression would have been? (B. Martensen)
 - Not totally alarmed, remains to be seen what that stabilizing number is. (B. Martensen)
 - Students are looking for an in-person experience and market of students that need fully online. (B. Martensen)

- Typical student likes having 1-2 online courses for flexibility. Some research shows it leads to better performance and varies by student population. (B. Martensen)
- We need to look at pockets of population. How much is a program online when students don't expect that? We are going to be looking at 4 year maps. (B. Martensen)
- Not just demand but equity gaps and success as well. (B. Martensen)
- Need vs. want, time + experience= relationship. Need to have options because there are markets (M. Weister)
- building relationship is important but those things where you are working in person is important.....I don't foresee us ever becoming a fully online university, we are grounded here in-person (E. Inch)
- Being in person allows for memories yet understand that balance were we don't want that to become a barrier either (M. Weister)
- Means different things to different people, area continue to manage (E. Inch)
- We hear a small percentage of hy-flex, but faculty share they don't want the technology taken away, they want to be able to be flexible and accommodate. There are different ways to engage students. (B. Martensen)
- I think we see that not just with classes but in other offices as well (M. Weister)

Budget (R. Straka)

- Fairly positive budget year
- All appropriation this year and expecting none outside of supplemental budget next year
- See patterns of rich cash year in first year of biennium
- HEERF will help cover lost revenue \$1.4; \$15 million will go to general fund for tuition
- Offset declined enrollment with lost revenues of HEERF funding built into next year's budget
- University also saw \$1 million savings from insurance holiday
- Reserve and cash balance have gone up this year
- Salary increases are less than what we set aside
- Increase in percent share allocation model \$660k in first draft
- Projections right now: little less than what we set aside over the years which will offset the loss originally projected which means more balanced
- We will develop a one-time initiative money going into strategic planning
- Just submitted HEERF report—thanks to Lynn's shop, financial aid shop, Steve Smith's team
- Still some money not spent which will recommend an aid to students to offset the surge in January and February. Automatic and consider how we distribute.
- Incredibly helpful for our general fund and also auxiliary funds as we have had to react significantly in residence halls with changes we had and stabilize our operations in those areas

Fire Evacuation Task Force (H. Morris & D. Jones)

- Work-group to how University responds to evacuation emergency response processes.
 - We had representatives from this unit—Oscar Gonzalez, played a leading role.
 - Look at where we have gaps and look at best practices nationwide and look at additional fire drill scheduling and what do we do when we have evacuations.
 - What triggered this when a student in the Residence Hall didn't get the best service in that process.

- [Emergency Plans and Fire Evacuation Task Force Report and Recommendations 041222](#)
- We are attempting to get feedback from individuals that we are talking about.
 - Asked Oscar to work with students.
 - Mankato Public Safety and they gave us feedback.
 - Asking you to look, give us feedback and talk to members.
- Thank you for keeping us moving forward in the right direction
- Feedback to H. Morris and D. Jones

Strategic Budget Planning Update (Lynn Akey)

- This week crossed another milestone—wrapped up work on 3rd phase and categorization for academic and non-academic.
- Yesterday shared in provost newsletter and it is in the internal sharepoint site—on strategic planning website available to campus community: [Strategic Budget Planning | Minnesota State University, Mankato \(mnsu.edu\)](#)
- Final Phase:
 - Will launch in fall
 - It is review and evaluation.
 - We have collected information and now we will assemble a team.
- Thanks to everyone who has engaged: it's a large process and all individuals who helped create, submitted, evaluated, ...it's a lot of time and effort.

IT Update (Mark Johnson)

- [IT Meet and Confer Talking Points](#)
- Zoom has an events software and are moving into an area to replace phone systems
 - So we have a pilot project right now looking at zoom phones to replace desk phones,
 - Many have used Jabber, zoom would replace,
 - It would replace text message from desk phone, also incorporated long-distance.
 - Has advantages.
 - We have been with CISCO for 20 years, but next year will talk through final decision on what's decided with the product.
 - Pilot group is set.
- MavLife App:
 - Since we have our own app, the maker of the product has allowed us to be more involved in their student retention initiatives.
 - We will be part of more involved using the map.
 - When you see students make sure they use the map.
 - If successful, can adopt these best practices.
- Website:
 - Finished website to new website only. Good news.
 - Next news: Marketing has started a project with consultants looking at website. Continue with strategies for website and how we support.
 - Some indicated it's too internal and looking for ways to help separate that with information for external.
 - It's an ongoing challenge for us.

- No major changes coming but if they are, we will communicate (marketing or myself).
- Continue evolution of what it looks like, what it does, any questions contact me directly and happy to walk you through it and help resolve.
- In regards to the website, we are eager to learn more and would like invite to the table for MSUAASF (M. Weister)
- Will have to continue to improve and make steps (M. Johnson)
- When I currently go to communicate to students—to posts events, goes on Mav Life, social Media, etc. Will there be a day when there is: “this is the spot” that we advertise events?(L. Steinborn Gourley)
- Can’t say yes—need to post on 4-5 different app based on what they use. We aren’t ultimately going back to just one place to post –maybe one place to post to disseminate in multiple different places. We have never been able to target so not able to but may be able to streamline. (M. Johnson)

Administrative Searches & Future College Update (Brian Martensen)

- 3 Administrative Search Updates:
 - Thank you to everyone, we had high participation including from ASF members
 - Have seen candidates for all Dean positions
 - We are just getting last minute input form search committees
 - Met with President Inch and Incoming Provost Hood to discuss agreements on candidates
 - Looking to make offers very soon so look for announcement in relatively near future
- Merger update:
 - last meeting for spring, once new dean is in place will see if want to reconvene.
 - Recommendations report to the group and to colleges of where things stand as well as indicate what things are waiting for dean and what is already worked out (like space).
 - Catalog goes live May 23rd—while the college is not official until July 1, it made sense to have the catalog and website to reflect that change and have redirects going from old structures to new structures. You will then will notice little things like signages in buildings, moving of various offices.

Destination 2030 Strategic Planning Update (L. Akey)

- Setting the stage for next year
- Launched into process when President Inch arrived and 5 themes
- Then we moved into a section on futuring and then visioning
- Started process in drafting mission, value statement
- As we close out this year then look forward to next year—putting it into strategic directions and a more formal part of the process.
 - The directions, articulate strategies, and action plans.
 - 6 dimensions guiding us and thinking about how they can evolve over time and not losing sight of 2030 direction.

Flexible Work Taskforce (S. Barrett)

[05-05-2022 Flexible Work May Meet and Confer Update](#)

President Inch:

- Project started in September and asked HR to spearhead to find a way to create some flexibility in people's schedule for better work-life balance. The task force came back with recommendations, and we vetted with students and system office.
- No doubt, whatever comes out will not be perfect, we will experiment over the year and then work in collaboration to refine, develop and improve then make modifications next year.
- Want to be clear: this is not a day off a week. We still work the same hours per week but the place where we work is different. Can people do their job in a location that might serve them better?
- Goal 1: Help provide flexibility to increase job satisfaction and attract talent
- Goal 2: Serves quality and level services to students. Maybe expand service opportunities.
- Goal 3: Equity issue, the pandemic did not hit populations in the same way and helps our campus understand what is equitable work?
- Asking that every manager has training in how to manage remote teams. It is a different skillset. It becomes more project based.
- Talked this morning at other meet and confers—some mentioned maybe it should be postponed but would like if this could be launched July 1--to work through and be adaptable.

S. Barrett:

- We have all these concepts dealing with many months and starting to put puzzle pieces together.
- Anything we do has to fit within the MMB policy.
- Equity piece is vitally important and the training piece. Will offer more training options on how to manage hybrid—a couple options now available and working—HR will get word out to all supervisors soon.
- Updating Position descriptions so that those positions that could qualify and that it reflects accurately. HR has a work-plan under way.
- Confident in HR to have this up and running July 1.
- Could lead to fairly significant change: What should a 21st century workplace look like?

Discussion:

- Are the 4 boxes that were originally presented to us archived? Is that set aside and this is the new plan? (M. Weister)
- MMB has those 4 boxes just titled differently (E. Inch and S. Barrett)
- Will there be a decision-making matrix? (T. Stokes Hernandez)
- Yes, that is still in the works (S. Barrett)
- The goal is everyone has a day a week they get to flex (E. Inch)
- Could that be worded more strongly in this document?...Some could read "such as.." and see it as an example or optional (M. Weister)
- We could put it in the preamble at the top (E. Inch)
- Do we want it to be decisions from divisions for consistency? (M. Weister)
- Do we want it to be consistent across—this says by units in order to be equitable. Equal or equitable (E. Inch)
- That makes sense, it might just help to drive home that goal 1 day a week (M. Weister)

- It might help to provide in this document: what is the outcome or guidance that is different than what has already been provided differently (K. Hodgden)
- Steward lens question: What if 1 day doesn't work but last 2 hours of a work day (S. Murray)
- It's difficult for those who can't shift their work. (E. Inch)
- Encourage people to not be locked into one way—is it work hours that need to be redesigned? (L. Akey)
- Overall goal: is meet flexibility job satisfaction and meet needs of the students/services we provide
- Really like that. Like those with children—may not imagine right away when reading this what could we include to help them imagine their possibilities? (M. Weister)
- Any flexibility that allows us to meet those goals belong in the conversation. Framework in place that can meet goals and fall under policies. (S. Barrett)
- Appeals process—there will be someone that says “I don't think that's fair” This is a wonderful initiative which will bring opportunities for appeals—is that build into the pilot? (S. Murray)
- It should be (S. Barrett)
- Use existing process (E. Inch)
- Not a need for a big pause, just a couple key questions worked out (S. Murray)
- We have to work together to problem-solve, open to that, prefer to just get started and use the year to create a model (E. Inch)
- colleagues are interested and great to be willing to try, is this something we can share? (M. Weister)
- Yes, there might be some changes; Like these 2 issues, 8 hours of flexible space in preamble and the other I refer to Steve. Something like that. It is public (E. Inch)

Florence Cobb Dance Studio Naming Request (Brian Martensen)

- Test case through naming policy on campus to name a space on a former employee.
- Dance professor—first African American, first full professor on-campus and honor her and her work and building the dance program from scratch, built into minor that later became major.
- She also really engaged with Mankato community to understand dance as an art form.
- Well attended events, passed away in 2016 and family would be honored.
- Over in Highland.
- Went to cabinet, supported, would have a plaque.
- Would also like to include QR codes and library collection information on history and context.
- Potentially also a mural in this space done by students to honor legacy and her work.
- Women's center would love to be involved (L. Steinborn Gourley)

Just want to end with saying how much felt care and appreciate Mandy as a partner with her in this role (B. Martensen)