**Engineering Staff Council Meeting Minutes**

May 14, 2020 – 10 a.m.-12 p.m., via Zoom

**Present:** Mike Collier, Kellen Short, Victoria Lanaghan, Sharon Anderson, Kim Goho, Maria Kuntz, Alisha Bennett Stewart, Kassie Van Pelt, Aju Jugessur, Otha Barrow, Lou Rutherford, Bill Doe, Emily Flanagan, Cherie Summers, Christina Oerter, Stephanie Morris

**Absent:** Joanne Uleau, Kai Amey

**Updates from the College** – Cherie Summers

* Many communications are coming from campus
* 2 big updates:
  + Remote phase “Phase Zero” now shifting toward “re-entry/Phase 1” on May 26 – 10-25% return of research personnel – faculty, staff and grad students who must return to the lab for grant deadlines, completions for graduation, time sensitive and urgent matters
  + Each PI is reaching out to lab members now – will be 100% voluntary to return
  + Phase 2 will include voluntary return to campus, uncertain when Phase 2 will begin. Will include PPE supplies, health checks, etc.
  + Budgetary reductions – total impact is not yet known, but it will be large. Colleges have created 5%, 10% and 20% budget reduction scenarios and submitted to campus last Friday.
  + Each college being asked to be extremely fiscally conservative now.
  + Campus has paid full salaries for employees through end of semester; administrative leave option for staff ends May 31. So, staff will continue to get paid even if they don’t have a full workload.
  + Conversations starting now with supervisors on how many hours can be worked by each individual employee. May involve some temporary reassignment of tasks for employees that aren’t currently reaching 40 hours/week to make whole.
  + People’s jobs are not at risk right now; trying to do all we can to voluntarily save money for college so huge budget reductions may not be required.
  + Furloughs – temporary unpaid leave for all or part of June 1-July 31 time period is occurring for some employees. If someone is furloughed, employee is eligible for unemployment (normal unemployment benefits provide up to 55% of salary, federal CARES Act also includes automatic $600/week check through July 31(?). For employee making $60,000 per year, for example, they could actually make more income for those two months.)
  + Question: How are department chairs being notified about process?
    - Keith met with chairs yesterday. Chairs will be receiving unit spreadsheets today from Cherie with guidelines, examples, talking points, decision tree. Program directors also will be contacted today and told about process. Unit spreadsheets will be completed by next Wednesday.
  + Question: Classified staff and H1B holders cannot be mandatorily furloughed unless legislature acts? Correct. President Kennedy has submitted request to state to have classified employees included with university staff through this process, awaiting word from state. If that’s not permitted, classified staff will be offered voluntary furlough – there will be university exception so that benefits will still be paid by university during that voluntary furlough.
  + Note: Employee still must pay their portion of benefits on furlough.
  + Question: Message yesterday discussed furloughs converting to layoffs. That raises concern. Cherie: Some employees have been 100% administrative leave since we left in March. Example: Rec Center employee that couldn’t do job at all remotely. So those types of employees need to be furloughed June 1-July 31, with decision made later on whether to continue furlough or undergo layoffs. That message was not meant for our situation in our college.
  + Question: Any information been sent to chairs on what it means to be fiscally conservative? Virtual conferences are still going on, for example. Chairs have been asked for input and had discussion/guidance from Keith, Rory and others about what this means. Conversation yesterday with chairs also delivered this message more forcefully. Request for more guidance around this topic. Cherie: May get more specific once campus gives more firm information.
  + Maria: Number of confirmed first-year students could change dramatically between now and fall. Cherie: Information being gathered suggested we should expect 30% “melt” (confirmations that don’t end up attending), and that’s being incorporated into planning. CU Engineering is in a very strong position compared to campus due to popularity of majors, etc., and also has boosted its number of admitted students.
  + Question: How does unemployment piece work for furloughs? What would take an employee from furloughed status to layoff status, if CU isn’t paying the unemployment benefits anyway? Cherie: Furloughs in engineering in summer may be attractive option for some, and those furloughed employees are not “first in line” for layoffs, and doesn’t mean those furloughed employees are being considered for layoff.
  + Unemployment benefit: 55% still has a maximum - Look at maximum o f$1600 per week - ??
  + Staff Council will request that Keith hold a staff town hall to share this information in the coming weeks.
  + Further questions may be directed to Cherie or Alisha.

**Boulder Staff Council Updates** – Alisha Bennett Stewart

* Full council met May 13.
* May have to cancel events and services if Boulder Staff Council budget is reduced.
* COVID response planning committee
* Expanding Staff Council from 30-34 members for 4,000 campus staff; considering 10-18 additional new members starting in July.
* Inclusive Excellence Committee now formal, standing committee.
* Officer elections just occurred, new leadership and members coming in.
* Blood drive through Boulder and Westminster donor centers- June 15-20 CU will sponsor blood drive week.

**Division of staff representation/outreach duties** - Christina Oerter

* <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UplabvzWeXvN-4L4kLhB88_K0z-fRWZM/view?usp=sharing>
* Goal is to reach out to all staff members within the college to let them know about Engineering Staff Council, make a personal connection, answer questions and put face to name.
* Committees should discuss at next meetings to ensure there is representation for all assigned sectors.
* Question: How many employees should each Staff Council member expect to be responsible for? Christina: About 18 employees.
* Expectation for Council members is to reach out by end of May, will help with morale during transition to summer, etc.
* Lou has an email template available if you want to use and customize.
* Committees need to assign names in spreadsheet by May 26.
* Lou and Kellen will prepare draft template and send to ESC members.

**Lunchtime Connections drop-in sessions** – Lou Rutherford

* Attendance has been low (2-4 staff, sometimes none) during sessions.
* Originally included presentation, but now becoming informal discussion and time to take concerns, questions.
* Otha: Email outreach may increase our engagement levels.
* Aju: Yesterday’s session, presented an overview of ESC, but there were not many questions. Might help to have more specific theme or ask for feedback on proposed solutions.
* Cherie: The 30-minute Staff Council time set-aside can be used however it’s needed, including for individual outreach if that’s more helpful. Shouldn’t be a burden.
* Lunchtime Connections will continue indefinitely.
* Lou and Victoria will collect feedback on this session and let Cherie/Alisha know the plan.

**Should PRAs be included in outreach and represented by Engineering Staff Council?** – Victoria Lanaghan

* PRA: Professional Research Assistant/Associate
* PRA are technically member of faculty, so ESC does not currently represent them.
* Stephanie: PRAs are governed by different rules and are within RIO, follow some different processes.
* Aju: My PRA staff work is more similar to staff than to faculty (providing service, rather than research), and salaries are partially from college and from unit, not from research grants. They are not represented by any group on campus that they are aware of.
* Alisha: Roughly 400 researchers in engineering. Will connect with Aju to consider whether to change those employees’ “job family.”
* PRAs – a body to represent them is in discussion within CEAS faculty governance group. Victoria will mention to Keith.
* Postdocs are a different category.
* Most PRAs are funded by research grants, so would get tricky if we create policies that impact their grant funding.
* Kassie: ME has many of these research faculty positions; they should definitely not be considered staff and part of the Birthday Leave Policy. PRAs should not be separated out from research faculty.

**Google Drive organization and standards** – Lou Rutherford

* A Committee Charters folder has been created to put finalized charters.
* Additional organization/standardization plans being discussed. JoAnne will also be part of the discussion as secretary.

**CEAS Staff Feedback to Keith** – Lou Rutherford

* Feedback has been provided to Keith.
* Will be incorporated into future trainings for department chairs/other leaders.

**Summer ESC Meetings** – Lou Rutherford

* Will be scheduled soon.

**Letter to Staff Council** – Victoria Lanaghan

* Concerns raised about communications practices from campus around COVID.

1. Timing of emails

2. FCQ information shared with faculty should also have gone to staff

3. More inclusive language that doesn’t put “staff” last

4. Notification for provost town hall was too short

* Aju: Short notice is OK, since circumstances are changing rapidly.
* Otha: Worth mentioning to campus leadership. Thinks inclusive language question is irrelevant.
* Bill: Communication has been challenging for everyone. These concerns are best handled by Boulder Staff Council, since these concerns are campus ones.
* Emily: More advance notice is helpful, a week if possible; sessions held this week were full and unavailable. Multiple emails on same topic, but with different language, is challenging. Too many emails with too many words that aren’t saying exactly the same thing.
* Kassie: Would be nice if campus could separate email invitations to meetings out from other messages – separate email with invitation makes it easier to navigate.
* Victoria will forward this to Alisha and Deb for Boulder Staff Council and talk to Keith about a staff town hall.
* Submitters name off letter – and share with comms team.
* Lou: What do we do with sensitive information shared with us?
* Bylaws could discuss this topic?
* VOTE: UNANIMOUS. Motion to: 1) Forward letter to Boulder Staff Council 2) request to Keith for Town Hall 3) Victoria will draft reply to letter-writer 4)send redacted email to college Comms Team for awareness. – Motion made by Victoria, seconded by Maria, passed unanimously.

**Workgroup Discussions for Committee Goals** – Lou Rutherford

* Will occur at next meeting

**Committee Updates**

* Bylaws (Christina): Will meet next week, work on outreach plan, proposal on handling sensitive information.
* Communications (Kellen): Will meet next week, work on outreach plan.
* Events (Mike): Decided to postpone activities and look toward spring semester for planning in-person events.
* Professional Development (Kim): Will work on outreach plan, Emily working on staff professional development funds proposal, will move forward with it so it’s in the queue when more is known about budget. Holding pattern for Professional Development Week; could piggyback on university week in December or postponing for Spring 2021. Could be held virtually.

**Other Business**

Lou: Would be great at next meeting to hear outcomes from workgroup discussions last meeting.

* General Admin
  + College Updates – Cherie (if she’s able to attend)
  + BSC Updates – Deb Prestiani
    - See letter from BSC to campus leadership: <https://www.colorado.edu/staffcouncil/2020/04/16/cu-boulder-staff-council-resolution-2020-01-covid-19-response>
  + Assignments of Council committees/members to CEAS departments and certain individuals - Christina
    - Are there changes that Council members want to make?
    - Update on what each committee/member has done so far in their outreach
  + Lunchtime Connection drop-in session – thoughts and feedback - Lou
  + Should professional research assistants be included in our outreach, and more broadly, represented by the ESC? - Kai/Victoria/Lou
  + Files/documentation organization and standards in Council Google Drive folders - Kai/Lou
  + CEAS Staff Feedback to Keith regarding supervisory/management training (**see attached**) - Lou
  + Committee Updates – Victoria
* Discussion: Staff concern relating to leadership COVID communication (**see attached letter**). Please do not share this letter outside of the Council.  - Victoria
* Briefings of committee workgroup discussions from last month
  + Events and Outreach – Mike Collier
  + Bylaws and Governance – Christina Oerter
* Future  Zoom workgroup sessions to set goals for the following committees (Lou):
  + - Staff Recognition, Development and Achievement
    - Communications and Outreach