



WKU STAFF SENATE

Monthly Meeting – November 6, 2024 (10:00 AM) DSU 2081

View Full Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTyNVq0ErIE>

Call to Order: 10:00 AM CST

Roll Call: 17 Senators in attendance; in person and via Zoom.

Approval of the Agenda & Prior Monthly Meeting Minutes: Both approved by unanimous consent.

Christopher Ware Staff Star Awards

Brian Ahern, [Advising and Career Development Center](#)

Abby Whitaker, [Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement](#)

Guest Speakers:

- **Dr. Martha Sales, Vice President of Student Experience and Dean of Students**

Dr. Martha Sales shared information about her role as Vice President of Student Experience and Dean of Students. The Dean of Students serves as an advocate for students, helping them navigate the complexities of higher education at WKU. This includes educating students on university systems, resources, and communication processes, as many students may not be familiar with these aspects upon their arrival. The Dean of Students office empowers students, encouraging them to trust themselves and ask questions without fear of judgement. The office also provides support for students by connecting them to appropriate campus and community resources. She encouraged staff to help support students by being aware of what is going on with students and referring students to her office for assistance. Faculty and staff can also support students by being familiar with available resources and volunteering.

- **Cierra Waller and April McCauley, Student Success and First Gen Advocates**

Cierra Waller and April McCauley spoke about WKU's F1rst Gen initiative. First-gen students at WKU are defined as those whose parents did not graduate from a traditional four-year college. Over 4,000 first-year students are on campus, making up around one-third of the student body. They aim to support first-gen students and raise awareness about the unique challenges they face. The initiative aims to support them in navigating college life, focusing on their strengths rather than deficiencies.

The F1rst Gen at WKU initiative includes various programs to help first-gen students, The Make It Count program has workshops on various topics including professionalism, social skills, and self-advocacy. There are also mentorship programs, an academy for sophomore students (F1rst 2 the Hill Academy), and a free summer camp for high school students considering college. Other resources include a F1rst Gen Living Learning Community and a team of ambassadors who help spread the word about F1rst Gen and plan events.

To stay up-to-date on all F1rst Gen initiatives and events, visit the WKU F1rst Gen website at <https://www.wku.edu/firstgen/>.

Officer, Committee, and Staff Regent Reports

- **Staff Regent – Jennifer Hammonds**

There was a Committee Meeting on October 18th. Everything discussed in the committee meeting will be included in the Quarterly meeting in December.

Academic Affairs

- Six emeriti appointments were approved.
- Department Name Change:
 - Sociology, Folk Studies, and Anthropology merged to form the **Department of Society, Culture, Crime, and Justice Studies**.
 - The name change and restructuring were implemented earlier this year and are reflected in the 2024–2025 academic catalog.

Finance Committee

- **Auditor's Report:** No significant findings were reported.
- **Line of Credit:**
 - Approval to maintain a line of credit as a precautionary measure.
 - Noted the benefit of having a line of credit in place even if unused.

Personnel Actions

- No significant personnel updates were discussed.

Bylaws Update

- Proposal to rename the "Finance Committee" to the **Finance, Budget, and Audit Committee** to reflect its broader scope.
- Final approval pending at the December meeting.

- **Communications – Deanna Jenkins:** No Report

- **Treasurer – Andria Henry**

Treasurer's Report

November 2024

AS OF 11/6/2024, FY25:

E&G Index – 100600

- Starting Balance = \$3,532.29
- Additions = \$0.00
- Disbursements = \$39.05
- Ending Balance = \$3,493.24

WKUF Account (Staff Senate Excellence Fund) – 1108600

- Starting Balance = \$2,155.12
- Additions = \$15.00
- Disbursements = \$0.00
- Ending Balance = \$2,170.12

CHF Account (Book Scholarship) – 800139

- Starting Balance = \$1,849.84
- Additions = \$15.00
- Disbursements = \$0.00
- Ending Balance = \$1,864.84

- **Technology – Kent Johnson:** No Report

- **Parliamentarian – Jordan Ray:** No Report

- **Secretary – Morgan Moran:** No Report
- **Vice-Chair – Leslie Vanderpool:** No Report
- **Chair – Tanya Vincent**
 - Meeting with President Caboni:
 - Chair Vincent voiced our concern that a 2% pool does not seem like enough to include merit raises. The President confirmed his belief that the current 2% is enough to administer merit raises. They discussed the importance of supervisor training to effectively implement merit raises.
 - Federal Wage Increase: Preparations are underway for the federal wage increase expected in January. Adjustments may include overtime or altered schedules, with HR and departments actively addressing the change.
 - Health Insurance: Chair Vincent shared concerns about the recent 22% increase in health insurance premiums, which poses a significant burden. The university covers 83% of health insurance costs, leaving 17% for employees. The President plans to task the Benefits Committee with exploring cost-saving measures for future years to mitigate further premium increases.
 - VSIP (Voluntary Separation Incentive Program): The President did not have updates on the number of participants or specific names yet. Susan Howarth shared that a campus-wide communication regarding the VSIP will be released later today.
 - Budget Executive Committee:
 - Each college is currently presenting last year's budget spending and plans for the upcoming budget cycle.
 - The BEC proposed a **2% across-the-board raise** for employees. This proposal was accepted and will take effect on **January 1st**.
 - Staff Ombudsperson
 - Dr. Laves is retiring at the end of the year. Staff do not have a formal policy or process to appoint a new ombudsperson. Chair Vincent has reached out to HR for guidance but there has been no response yet. She proposed creating a subcommittee to propose a policy to HR so that we can get an Ombudsperson in place. If interested in serving on the committee, please reach out to Chair Vincent.
 - Bereavement Policy: A staff member reached out wanting to increase the days off for a death in the family to 5 days. After some discussion, Chair Vincent will look at benchmark institutions and see what bereavement policies they have in place and revisit the conversation.

Old Business

- Spring Meet and Greet: The Garage has a \$40 fee. Chair Vincent made a motion that Staff Senate use \$300 for the Spring Meet and Greet to pay the space fee and buy food. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
- Bylaws Update: Senator Ray sent an email with the Bylaw updates. Five senators must cosign the amendment petition and then it will go up for voting at the next meeting. Senator Jenkins will send it out to Senators for signature.

New Business

- December Workshop: The Staff Engagement Survey findings will be discussed after the December meeting.
- Holiday Lunch at Fresh Food: Chair Vincent will send an email to find a good date to meet for a meal. Interested Senators can participate in an ornament exchange.

Public Comment: None

Announcements & Notable Events:

- Next Staff Senate Meeting: December 4, 2024, 10:00 am

Adjournment: 11:27 AM CST