

Wilkes University

University Staff Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 9 a.m.

Weckesser Board Room and [Zoom](#)

Present: Jen McLaughlin, Mandy Pennington, Teri Shovlin, Jackie Klahold, Michele Garrison, Joseph Housenick, Julia Jacien, Lee Plank, Janet Cussatt, Robert Eskra, Lois Grimm

Absent: Cathy Lee Arcuino, Kayci Brady, Corey Moore, Kelly Siegfried

I. Call to order and attendance

- A. Meeting began at 9:03 am.

II. Discussion items:

A. Campus Updates - President Cant

1. Not present

B. Human Resources updates and discussion – Joe Housenick

1. Discussed summer hours at board meeting
 - a) Will continue as last year - two options just like last year
2. Working on seeking a new VP of Finance and Operations Search
 - a) Partnered with a company for assistance
 - b) Hoping to have the position filled by June
3. Lunch & Learn is Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - a) March 11th
4. Dana Reed is no longer in the HR office, seeking a replacement now
 - a) Kelly Beishline and Kelly Langkham are actively interviewing candidates
5. Joint USAC/FAC meeting
 - a) More discussion needed toward survey ideas

C. Executive Actions Presentation - Elizabeth Leo

1. Board met last week and a lot of discussion regarding changes at the federal level and how it might affect Wilkes
2. Approx 10 orders that affect higher ed, mostly surrounding immigration, DEI, funding and gender identity
3. DEI
 - a) Two separate orders implemented 1/20 and 1/21
 - (1) Currently subject to injunction
 - (2) For the moment, there is no enforcement due to this
 - (3) Some universities already removed DEI clubs/etc but Wilkes has not at this time unless it becomes required by federal law at some point in the future
 - (4) At this time, seems as though DEI programs and affiliation groups are safe, and that support for DEI on campus will be

permitted. Matter making its way through the courts - more to come.

(5) Lots of constitutional legal issues to be decided

- b) Titles like first-gen students remain permissive because it is race neutral - goes across all races, ethnicities etc.
- c) No changes needed to curriculum at this point - will only become necessary if required by law - constitutional challenges continue
- 4. Federal Funding and DOGE
 - a) There will be increased focus on grant funding
 - b) Any grant with DEI wording will likely be under scrutiny
 - c) DOGE has requested wide-spread access to Department of Education data, but they were denied as of now
- 5. Immigration
 - a) Can affect campus and community
 - b) Universities, churches and hospitals are no longer safe havens, so ICE is technically legally allowed to enter campus to seek illegal immigrants
 - c) If they did show up, they would likely check in with public safety so there would be some sort of knowledge when/if they arrive
 - d) If ICE is seen, all campus members are instructed to tell them to report to Public Safety as buildings are private property and they cannot enter unless invited in
- 6. Gender identity and expression and Sexual orientation
 - a) Reversion of Title IX regulations to 2020 regs should not affect our campus as we have anti-discrimination laws and policies in place already to protect those who fall under this category
 - b) Our policies protect our students from discrimination will not change no matter what Title IX includes in its scope
- 7. Elizabeth Leo offered to attend any meeting or groups that would like her to speak on any of these issues for open communication
- 8. If the Department of Education was dismantled today, what would happen?
 - a) Likely won't happen, would get caught up in courts
 - b) Another agency would take over enforcement arm
 - c) Likely nothing would change for us in terms of Title IX implementation and enforcement
- 9. As far as "any college that allows illegal protests" goes, what does that mean for us?
 - a) Too vague - hard to comply
 - b) What is an "illegal protest"? Protests are protected by the first amendment so what would that even mean? Only exceptions to free speech (ie violence or inciting violence) could render a protest illegal
 - c) Free speech, after all, is protected

D. Joint USAC/FAC Meeting Recap

- 1. Follow Up: Survey
 - a) Call for internal campus climate survey
 - b) Work will be similar to last time we did an internal survey
 - c) IRB will execute the survey after questions are developed

- d) This will not replace the larger for Great Colleges to Work For survey we follow every three years, this internal survey will supplement it and be more specific to Wilkes
- e) Seeking volunteers from USAC to help form the survey
- f) Should we work on getting a joint USAC/FAC workgroup or meeting to make some progress
- g) Maybe aim for 2 people from each group to form a smaller work group
- h) Aim to release the survey at end of spring semester but running out of time - but want it to be consistent in future
- i) Robert volunteered to help

E. Athletics - Faculty/Staff Nights

- 1. No updates currently

F. Volunteers Needed: VP of Finance and Operations Search

- 1. David Ward reached out for two representatives
- 2. Jen and Mandy will represent USAC

G. Upcoming campus events:

- 1. Saturday Family Hour in the Sordoni Gallery - March 8
- 2. Lunch & Learn: Mental Health - March 11
- 3. Career Fair - March 13th
- 4. "Counted Out" Film Screening - March 14
- 5. Rosenn Lecture - March 16 - registration required
- 6. Allan Hamilton Dickson Spring Writers Series: Helena D. Lewis - March 18
- 7. Arts in Context Lecture with Julia Grummitt - March 20
- 8. Health Fair - March 20
- 9. TGIF: Marketing Communications & Title IX - March 21
- 10. Upcoming Title IX Bystander Intervention Training - March
- 11. Admitted Colonels Day - April 5
- 12. Anatomy of a Scandal author Virtual Q&A - April 24
- 13. E-Sports Hosts Super Smash Bro - Open to Public Every Wednesday

H. Campus Subcommittee updates:

- 1. Employee Recognition: Michele Garrison
 - a) Six nominations currently
 - b) Another reminder will go out next week
- 2. Mentor Program: Julia Jacien
 - a) No updates
- 3. Treasury update: Julia Jacien
 - a) \$673.62
 - b) No transactions
- 4. USAC Newsletter: Mandy Pennington
 - a) None
- 5. Strategic & Long Range Planning: Jennifer McLaughlin
 - a) None at this time
- 6. United Way/Taste of Wilkes - Jeanne Rabel
 - a) None
- 7. Staff Community Service

- a) Always reach out to Catie Becker!
- 8. Wellness Committee: Lois Grimm
 - a) Planning a nutrition focused event later this month
 - b) Affordable healthy meal planning
- 9. Advancement Committee: Julia Jacien
 - a) None
- 10. Human Resources: Julia Jacien
 - a) Mandy presented the campus listening tour report
 - b) Well received
- 11. Budget Committee: Michele Garrison
 - a) Meeting March 13th
- 12. Retirement Committee: Michele Garrison
 - a) Meeting March 14th
- 13. Employee Discount: Corey Moore
 - a) None
- 14. Finance Committee: Robert Eskra
 - a) None
- 15. Academic Excellence and Student Success: Jen McLaughlin
 - a) I was away for the meeting, requested minutes be sent once ready for review. At this time, I have no information
 - b) Task force is breaking down wellness among students and creating big picture items for overall wellness
 - c) Broken into four subgroups
 - d) Actively working
- 16. Student Recruitment and Retention: Corey Moore
 - a) None
- 17. Marketing, Communication and Branding: Jackie Klahold
 - a) Discussed work plan and recapped what was achieved in 2024
 - b) Will be starting a brand effectiveness survey
 - c) Exploring new brand's effectiveness to see if changes should be made
 - d) Surveys will be sent out internally and externally to faculty, staff, students, and alumni
 - e) Also likely to have focus groups
- 18. Master Planning: Jackie Klahold
 - a) No updates

- I. Open forum
 - 1. none

- J. CONCLUSION
 - 1. Meeting ended at 9:58 am.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 9 a.m., Weckesser Board Room and via [Zoom](#).