ESAC November minutes

1. Call to order 8:31 by President Jacob Heiden

   Councilors present: Travis Greenlee, Dawn Marshall, Katie Schnedler, Josh Lobb, Casey Westlake, Michelle Reyes

   Advisors/Liaisons: April Tippett, Cathy Koebrick, Jenny Simpson

   Guests: Travis Klopfenstein, Rajan Bhatt, Bill Easton, Brian Morelli

2. Announcements:
   a. Jeremy Roszell has stepped down from ESAC due to work and school commitments
   b. Jacob thanked everyone for coming to this meeting with everything that is going on (i.e., pandemic, election, F&A changes). Transparency and staff involvement/engagement are important and overlap with much of our discussions today.

3. Minutes of October meeting. Jacob reviewed minutes and revisions at a high level. No comments from councilors. Travis moved to approve the minutes; Dawn seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed.

4. New business agenda items. None offered

5. Liaison reports
   a. Finance and Operations Update – April Tippett
      i. First budget review board meeting (first of three for the year) was held Oct. 30. It was a different format this year, organized as a Q&A session for VPs and deans to ask questions of the University administration. Separate meetings were/are being held with the financial officers within each of the collegiate and auxiliary units. In this budget review board meeting, we finalized the FY20 budget to FY21 actuals that showed CoE with a shortfall in revenue. This was anticipated in May and most of the amount owed was carried forward. Next revised revenue projections are due in February.
      ii. F&A discussions continue. Representatives of the President’s, Provost’s, and VPR’s offices and COE (Dean Nembhard, AD Udaykumar, April) have been meeting almost weekly with directors and business officers each of the centers. Generally, they have been looking at FY21 budgets and determining how each of the expenses would be paid in the future, looking at contractual obligations, capital expenses. April has learned a lot, and she appreciates everyone’s input. Dean has updated F&A FAQ website and the EAC subcommittees are in the process of being formed.
      iii. EAC has formed two subcommittees. One is Budget led by AD Grosland, with April providing admin support, and other is Policy, led by AD Udaykumar, with Cathy providing admin support. DEOs and center directors have volunteered to join one or both subcommittees. Dean Nembhard is creating charges to the subcommittees. The subcommittees will make recommendations to Dean Nembhard.
   b. Individuals raised a number of concerns regarding the F&A transition, which included:
i. The F&A FAQ website has not been updated since 10/13. April said the website should be updated very soon. There was a comment that the FAQ website seems to include a number of discrepancies compared to other communications from the Deans. The subsequent discussion indicated some confusion about the FAQ information.

ii. Confusion about the duration of the transition, some reported they have heard three years. April said that all the meetings she’s been in have been planning for at least 5 years.

iii. There is a perception that staff have not been included and represented.

iv. Many attending the meeting were concerned about whether staff are being involved in the process. Are staff stakeholders or just followers? Staff involvement in the centers’ meetings with the COE and Central administration has seems ad hoc. Concern that centers will be reorganized and staff will be impacted. That the process has not been inclusive.

v. Jacob said that he would be glad to share staff concerns with the Dean. Some agreed that Dean Nembhard has been more open and transparent and has added the ESAC president to the EAC. Dean wants communications to staff to flow down from directors and Jacob, so that’s why ESAC update included F&A updates

c. Jacob’s EAC updates engineering administrative council
   i. Recent presentation on UI Budget model, including the indirect cost recoveries
   ii. Was sharing of information, there has not been a place for Jacob to be involved
   iii. Presentations are from DEOs or directors, breakdown of students, DEI, strategies, overall updates on things happening in the college, not as much as he would like on the F&A model

d. Cathy DEI
   i. DEI update from council came out through emails last week
   ii. DEI council reports directly to dean, gave update to EAC
   iii. Council has full membership, 6 undergrad students
   iv. Focus on action plan
      1. ASEE diversity recognition program submittal in process, via subcommittee led by Kristin Worthington. This will provide baseline, show that DEI is important
      2. Communication, email messages, how to clean up website a little bit more. One student said should use social media to push out information to students. Currently promoting funding opportunities, including undergrad scholarships, but also faculty and staff initiatives and student development grants (used to be travel grants)

e. Cathy HR update
   i. Recap of staff longevity awards, nice event, received some feedback, maybe there should always be a virtual element to that event, lessons learned. A little
technical snafu with the meet and greet rooms at the end, people liked it but we didn’t get it to work completely. Awards are still being personalized and will be delivered once pandemic restrictions are eased

ii. One staff departure

iii. Benefits enrollment wraps up a week from today. If you do nothing, keep same benefits other than saving accounts go to $0.

iv. Performance reviews for staff, hopefully most or all of you have done your part, HR team will be following up with people who have not started, gentle nudging. COE wants them done by 11/30. Cathy did lunch and learn on this.

v. Cathy wants to send message out to college next week, outlook to spring, even coming after Thanksgiving, expect it to continue through the spring semester, maybe some info about SC being open or not

vi. Travis K brings up that medical benefits are tied to the state of Iowa, additions to the benefit plan who are UI employed but not living in Iowa. Cathy is now a member of Funded retirement and insurance committee. Iowa Now article formed about the future of work at UI which may also address.

f. Jenny – No Staff Council updates as she not able to attend the meeting and the minutes are not available yet.

6. Katie - Budget update

   a. Nothing too exciting, just staff hours being charged out.
   
   b. If any of the committees are going to be spending money, please send estimates to Katie.
   
   c. Jacob reminds us that budget review is coming up. ESAC budget re-evaluation in December-January timeframe, we are not anticipating a mid-year cut in funds.

7. ESAC committees

   a. Executive committee
   
      i. Q&A with Dean has been scheduled
   
      ii. Jacob will ask committee to meet next week to review submitted questions and plan, he can put those up on share point. If you can attend, please try to take notes.
   
      iii. Dawn proposed sending a reminder out, make sure people know they can submit questions anonymously.
   
      iv. Publicity committee has talked about sending a separate email, with the Zoom link, maybe a calendar invites, so definitely will include anonymous. Agreement that reminder would be sent one week in advance and then the day of
   
      v. ESAC listening post?
   
      vi. Brian M asked if Sharepoint is public and also shared interest in helping with publicity

   b. Elections committee – ESAC Vacancies

      i. Travis G shared college stats 62% of staff are in the research centers
ii. Targeted recruitment of councils from IIHR, ITI or ETC, one more department representative. Katie says she’s really ETC, not usually classified as Admin

c. Engagement committee
   i. Nov 20 ESAC Thanksgiving celebration, ugly sweater, gift cards to machine shop and electronics shops
   ii. Food drive with CommUnity Food Bank
   iii. Trying to find way for a modified in-person event in the spring, donuts with the dean, drive through event

d. Desk cycle – Tabled to next month

8. At least one Councilor has conflict with Dec. 4. Discussion resulted in moving ESAC meeting to the second Friday of the month for the rest of the FY

9. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 AM