

Staff Council Minutes
September 16, 2008

In attendance: Craig Turnbull, Bob Casmus, Shane Flowe, Tonia Black-Gold, Peggy Mason, Sharon Newsome, Curt Cribb, Calvin Hunter, Jane Snider, Trish Powlas, Lisa Hilliard, Karen Setliff, and Amy Williams. Dr. Craig Turner, President was present to address the group.

Dr. Turner informed the group that he would be spending the fall speaking about improvement issues. At Fall Conference, he asked three questions, who are we as a College, Who do we want to become? Moreover, how do we get to where we want to be? Dr. Turner has since spoken to the Department heads and it seems as though everyone has different answers as to who we are. He would like to hear from the Staff Council their response to these questions. Dr. Turner also gave ground rules such as no personal complaints, no names or departments, and reasons how things are done. Be open-minded about new suggestions, do not say – We always do it this way, we never do it that way; and we have tried it before and it did not work. In essence, we need to look in the mirror and then re-invent ourselves as a College. The consensus is that everyone sees Catawba differently and we need to all be on the same page and send the same message. Our Academic programs – Theatre, Music, Environmental Science and Athletic programs are very good, but there are some things that need improvement. Once the College fills two critical positions – Provost and Dean of Admissions- we will be moving forward very quickly. As it stands the search committee for the Provost is contacting the top four candidates and will be conducting telephone interviews in approximately two weeks. Applications are still coming in and we will review those as well. We want a good fit to help us become what we want to be. The search committee for Admissions is meeting this week and will review applications from approximately 35 candidates. Both searches are moving forward.

Dr. Turner then mentioned that there will be some re-structuring on campus, Academics is talking about going back to the “division” structure. There will also be some staff re-alignment – nothing drastic, just arranged in a way that he likes to work with things. He is also in the process of reviewing the Employee survey and will be tackling the issues reported by the staff. As a matter of fact some issues have already been addressed.

Dr. Turner then focused on the time-frame for “Who are we?”. He suggested that we have a five year set of initiatives and look at a handful of initiatives and proceed to accomplish those first. His major initiative is to build endowment. The consensus is that we are not some of the things that we have been selling ourselves as. Dr. Turner suggested that we are not a Liberal Arts college and we are not a residential college. However, one of the things that Catawba does really well is giving personal attention to the students – both inside and outside the classroom. We need to continue to do this well in order to remain a viable institution. Dr. Turner feels that we need to look at all programs and see what works best for us. Maybe we should offer a Finance Major or Master of Accountancy with our proximity to Charlotte- a major banking center of the United States. There was some discussion of adding unique programs and the need to grow the Schools of Business, Education and Liberal Arts.

Tonia Black-Gold commented that Catawba will be installing Dr. Turner as the new President on February 16th, 2009 (President’s Day). Dr. Turner asked that we forward him our response to his questions and left the meeting.

Craig Turnbull moved to the next agenda item which was Staff Council Community Service Project. Our next drive is scheduled for October 20 – 31, 2008. This drive is headed by Peggy Mason and we will be collecting items for the winter such as socks, hats, gloves, scarves and coats for Rowan Helping Ministries. Please encourage all staff members to participate. An e-mail will go out soon to all Catawba reminding them of the drop-off locations.

Bob Casmus updated the group on the Staff Evaluation form. They are just working out the logistics of how to send the form to staff members. Right now the plan is to set a week for supervisor evaluations in February 2009, maybe a week or so before supervisors evaluate staff, then have an outside firm tabulate the information so that everything remains confidential. Updates will be given as these details are worked out.

The last agenda item was to discuss additional “green” initiatives and where we stand as employees in moving this initiative forward. There was a discussion of what we are doing as a campus and what individual staff members can do to contribute. The Office of Waste Recycling and Reduction has been working with the City of Salisbury for public transportation to get a bus stop on campus. Facilities Maintenance and Housekeeping Department has introduced “green” cleaning products and are successfully using them in several buildings already. The Office Supply Committee has chosen a new office supply vendor that contributes heavily to preserving the environment. Catawba staff will be using FSI Office Supplies beginning October 1, 2009. FSI uses only recyclable packing materials as well as bio-diesel in their delivery vehicles. Some ways to assist staff members who order supplies for their office is to compile a list of green vendors and let everyone have access to the list. Then suggest having specific order and delivery dates so that vendors are only coming to campus on a weekly/bi-weekly basis. Another suggestion was to curb transportation costs and some departments/staff members have already implemented this, by using public transportation or carpooling when possible. Reduce the size of Catawba’s “fleet”. For a college our size, we own a lot of vehicles, is it possible to reduce the number of vehicles? and therefore save two birds with one act – assist with preventing global warming and save costs on gas/fuel, maintenance of vehicles as well as insurance costs. Bob Casmus suggested using more electric mules/golf carts instead of vehicles on campus. Amy Williams suggested posting a ride board so students, faculty and staff can share a ride when possible. Staff Council agreed to send these suggestions to Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling and encourage all staff members to support the “green” initiatives on campus.

Finally, the discussion turned back to Dr. Turner’s request. There was a lot of discussion about who we are and who we want to be. Maybe we are spending too much time on trying to build weaknesses that really don’t identify us rather than building our strengths. Craig Turnbull asked that the Council discuss it with our areas, then email him the results. We will pick up the discussion next meeting, and send Dr. Turner our response at that time.

The next Staff Council meeting will be on October 16 at 11:00 a.m. in the Student Affairs Conference Room.

Sharon Newsome
Recorder