

## **Professional Council Meeting 11/13/2015**

**In Attendance:** Cherie Dolehanty, Dennis Hicks, Amy Jarecki, Sarah Soper, Jamie Rippey, Nichole Mann, John Burkhart, Liz Ferris, Logan Halley, Latishea Varnesdeel, Elizabeth South, Andrew Lenhardt

Cherie Dolehanty opened the meeting by introducing Andrew Lenhardt. She had invited Chancellor Kathy Cruz-Uribe to the meeting to respond to questions and concerns about the change in campus hours over winter break. Kathy was unavailable for today's meeting and invited Andrew in her place.

Andrew began with noting that he was aware of two primary concerns: the timing of the notice and the reasons behind the change. He stated that the issue arose shortly after census for the fall term, and from an enrollment perspective, it makes sense that if a student had a need over break, that we want to be able to meet that need. There are also fewer weeks between the fall and spring terms now, with the move to the IU common calendar, so there is less time for offices involved in enrollment services to respond to needs before the spring term begins. Staying open the week between December 25 and January 1 provides more time to help midterm transfers and midyear admits to enroll.

There had also been concerns about employees being forced to take time off, and that it may be harming some employees financially to need to bank that time across the year in order to have paid time off.

The idea was first vetted through extended cabinet and then to Dean's Council. The announcement was issued shortly after those discussions. It was decided that in this first year it would be wise to allow for flexibility within units, to determine staffing levels for the week. Since this is the first year, it's not clear whether or not the policy will stay like this, going forward. The VCs were charged with coordinating office coverage. The change was not supposed to come across as punitive.

Noted items from the discussion:

- Some individuals stated that they are not opposed to the change, but that from a change management perspective, the change felt very sudden. More time for communication and buy-in would've improved the response to the change.
- The announcement came out so shortly after the annual reminder about banking time for that week, and so close to the time period in question. People plan their time off carefully (how much must be used or banked to sick time) and this didn't give much time to alter those plans. It seems like it would've made more sense to make an announcement about a change for next year, to give everyone time to plan accordingly.
- Our students are our most important clients, but our employees are our most important resource. And most of the employees impacted by this change were not consulted or informed that this idea was in consideration. If the topic was vetted at other levels, the communication had stopped short at that level.
- If the idea springs from enrollment management pressure, it is important to note that data indicates that the spring starters, as a group, do not succeed academically and are often not retained. If we are moving to encouraging spring starters to enroll, we need to commit to providing appropriate support for that group (i.e., an actual NSO similar to the summer

sessions). Perhaps this could be framed as a “Welcome Back” event for current students with a portion of the event focused on students new to IUE.

- Is this change really cost effective? How/When will we know if it was successful? It was suggested that everyone track their contacts that week, similarly to tracking traffic during extended hours and Saturday hours, to collect data about the efficacy of the change.
- If the change isn’t publicized to students, it defeats the purpose of being open (i.e., if they don’t know we’re open, it won’t matter). However, it seems unwise to publicize that campus will be open when each area is determining their own staffing and hours. A student could find that one office is open from 8 – 12, and another is open from 10 – 2. It may be best to wait to publicize until there is a more standard practice across offices, next year.
- A suggestion was made that IUE think about staffing a call center with a skeleton crew of reps from important areas, to handle calls and inquiries, rather than keeping entire offices open.
- There are class/socioeconomic concerns with forcing employees to bank or borrow paid time to be paid that week, but many employees looked at the break as a benefit (“perk”) because it’s the only time of the year when administrative staff can take time off and know that you aren’t coming back to a pile of pending commitments. How widespread were the complaints about the prior practice?
- The timing and delivery of the communication about this change has created anxiety about other issues that may be under discussion, and how employees will learn about future changes.
- Were students consulted? SGA?

Cherie reported that we have no information from the Books Are Fun company about our proceeds from the sale at the end of October. We may need to generate new ideas if we want to continue fundraising as a group, to support community outreach.

There are opportunities for individual support through several campus groups: IU Whitewater Valley Alumnae group, and the Blue Jean Drive and Angel Tree through IUE Social Work.

The group expressed thanks to Dennis Hicks for leading the campus Veteran’s Day event.

Liz Ferris expressed thanks for those who participated in the Grad panel, and also announced that we have a student interning at the US Naval Academy.