

MAPE Meet & Confer

March 27, 2023 • 2:00-3:00 pm • Via Zoom

Present: President Johnson, Tara Strey and MAPE members (in no particular order) Lorna King, Heather Marcus Jay Morrison Amy Birkland, Kari Kuhlman, Stephanie Holland, Dave Fischer, Laura Kriese, Samantha Henkel, Eleonora Pernilladotter, Kim Boysen, Sara Maddox, Nichole Bredeson, Ellery Knight, Tamara Howe, Katie Haefs, Missy Rothwell, Stacy Kohn, Mikiaela Meyer, Josh Morgan, Nellie Schmalz, Davontay Stevens, David Hearth (MAPE).

Introductions & Opening Statement

Lorna introduced David Hearth, the MAPE representative.

Legislative Update – Budget Request Support

- a. \$350M Additional Base Funding/Expectation of Getting Funding - President Johnson shared we are waiting for the legislature to determine the amount of funding we will be receiving – there are three different packages – the Governor, the House and the Senate. Last week we heard the total amount being discussed is \$650M overall for all of higher education. \$450M of that would be going to the U of M and Minnesota State, with Minnesota State requesting \$350M. We do not know when the final decision is going to be made at this time. President Johnson said we don't know if tuition is going to be addressed, however, we said if we received the full \$350M we would not increase tuition.
- b. New Information, Conversations, Plans - As for Ridgewater's budget, we are experiencing some challenges because we didn't have any overlap of our previous and interim CFO's working together, so Judy Tebben, our Interim Vice President of Finance and Operations, is trying to navigate her way through an unknown process. With that said, Judy does expect we will have a deficit this year with the numbers she is projecting, and we will need to use some of our fund balance. She is also putting processes in place to try to help more accurately identify our actual expenses. In addition, once the federal COVID funds end on June 30, 2023, we are looking at an approximate \$2M shortfall.
- c. Impact of Changes to Union Members - The MAPE employee group has grown over the past few years, versus some bargaining groups that have reduced. The increase is most likely due to the need for more student support in roles that are MAPE related.

Vacancy Notices

1. Organization Changes – Tara Strey, Director of Human Resources, said we currently have 14 vacancies on campus with searches in process and some in the final stages. Reporting structures have temporarily changed in a few positions while we wait for replacement hires to be put in place. Other than those changes, President Johnson said he believes the organization structure overall is in place.
2. Hiring Committees
Lorna King shared it is important we get more MAPE members involved in hiring committees. President Johnson said we want to encourage people to participate and create the strongest committee possible. We need to consider the position, what bargaining unit the position is in, what subject experts are on the committee and make sure we limit individuals to serving on one committee at a time so we don't burn them out on being on screening committees. He also said we are revising the Employee Search and Hiring Policy to more clearly define our screening

committee structures and processes. As far as attrition, President Johnson said he doesn't feel there is an unreasonable or high rate of attrition that cannot be explained. Some of it has been the age of our workforce and some has been because of moving for career advancement. There are challenges in small colleges to provide positions that allow people to spend their entire career in one place, including Ridgewater. We are hopeful once Tara Strey gets to the point where searches don't consume so much of her time, she can start looking at helping employees with career development. President Johnson said we do try to provide work out of class pay during temporary situations where employees take on additional work. Tara said if people feel they qualify for work out of class they should contact their supervisor and we will work within the limits established by each bargaining unit.

Campus Counseling Services

The MAPE members thanked President Johnson for providing counselling services through Sam Rickertsen. President Johnson agreed it has been a valuable resource, and if we want to continue it moving forward, we need to figure out how to pay for it. We also are unsure if we are allowed to keep offering it using state money since we have a responsibility of being good stewards of state funds, and because employees have access to counselling through the state Employee Assistance Program and through health insurance. The executive team will have discussions about what is possible and communicate their decision to the campus within the next couple of weeks.

Summer Telework

President Johnson said summer telework will be discussed within the next couple of weeks with the hopes of making a decision by the end of April. He also said at a minimum we will most likely be keeping what we have in place now, but will discuss the possibility of expanding it for the summer. Salary savings could also be a possibility.

Future Meeting

President Johnson said he is happy to have Meet and Confers more often, if requested, and would appreciate getting agenda items in advance so he can prepare and provide as much information as possible at the meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Submitted by Debbie Ardoff
Executive Assistant to the President

CJ/da