

Classified Employee Council minutes for October 14, 2025

Council Members Present: Barb Kandalis, Danielle Stephenson, Yulia Friman, Nazahne Veach-Ross, Sharon Carpenter, Florencia Gonzalez, Karen James, Dee Wilson, Matthew Stitely

Guests: Tammy Gill, Lori Moy, Jayne Angle, Tori Orr, Elizabeth Krinock, Paul Teter, Donna Shipley, and guest speaker Jason Best

Barb called the meeting to order. Minutes were accepted as written. Barb turned the meeting over to Dr. Jason Best to give us information on the HLC accreditation visit Shepherd will have in the spring.

Dr. Best is a Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Liaison officer. He oversees various responses to our creditors and aspects of the 10-year accreditation cycle. He opened the floor for anyone who has questions or concerns to help prepare for the upcoming visit.

What should be expected? The staff will be invited to meetings to discuss Shepherd. Accreditation is a status that is bestowed upon the university. We must have it to get federal financial aid for students and to be able to operate as a university within the state. Everyone must be involved – faculty, staff, students, and the community. Every 10 years, we go through 2 waypoints. Four years in, we are at the mid-cycle, and at 10 years, we are at reaffirmation. They are almost identical with a couple of small differences. If we don't do well in the mid-cycle, penalties can be applied to the university, so both phases are equally important. A 40,000-word argument will be posed to the accreditors. They will give us a large set of criteria and we must respond. We can provide evidence; a student opinion survey will also be run. The HLC team will be visiting on March 9-10, 2026. They should be here by 8:00 am on the 9th and probably leave about noon on the 10th. During this visit, the five-person team will want to engage with various members of the campus. You may be asked to attend a session, or open sessions will be held. These open sessions do not allow senior administrators to attend the meetings, so open conversation can be held. The administrators will have different meeting times.

What is an example of a question staff might have to answer? There are 4 criteria we must meet. Each criterion has components. You may need to answer how your area aligns, how do you serve the public good, is there are enough faculty and staff, training programs, share your experience, and how the classified employee council works.

Who makes up the team? The Higher Learning Commission has approximately 1,500 peer core members who are specifically trained to engage in reviews of the institution. The team that will be coming to Shepherd will be pulled from other institutions across the nation with different areas of expertise. They will have already read the document we submitted and will have questions. The response must be given in a couple of days.

Is it a pass fail situation? There are 3 levels. You can meet the criteria; you can meet with concerns; or you cannot meet. In 2022, we met everything- there were no concerns. If there are severe concerns, they will send in a focus group to visit and address the issues. If you receive a not met rating, this is when the university's existence can come into question. We want to meet across the board.

The criteria were changed in September, so we don't have a document yet. The 2016 is up on the website as a reference. Jason will be happy to answer questions or come back to meet with us again if needed before the visit.

Committee Reports

ACCE Yulia – No report.

Board of Governors Danielle – She will post 2 links in the chat. One to the Presidential Search Committee (President Hendricks will be retiring on June 26) and the other to the most recent BOG board book. The BOG wants to make sure that the classified employees, faculty, and students still know their voice is seriously taken into consideration, even if their vote isn't counted anymore. All of what would be our votes will be listed in the minutes, so people can see how we would have voted. As you are reading the individual committee reports, look at the strategic reinvestment process for staff and faculty compensation. The next meeting will be on November 6th at 4:15 in the Storer ballroom or on Zoom.

Classified Employees Children's Scholarship Fund: Chris - No report.

Staff Development Lori – Good news. Our budget has been loaded into Banner, so we have \$8,900.00. Four requests have been approved. We may look at increasing the annual cap for reimbursement in the future. This would be brought forward to the committee for a vote. Maybe we could look at finding a speaker or other training for the campus, as we have done in the past.

Safety Representative Sharon – No report. We haven't met this semester.

TOC Naz – A meeting is scheduled for Oct 22nd at 3:00 pm. Updates after that meeting.

New Business

Great Colleges to Work for Committee -A reminder that Hocus Pocus will be showing free at the Opera House on Oct. 18th at 3:00 pm.

The committee is working on friction areas on campus on the "Shepherd Shuffle." if you know of any suggestions on ways to work better with these areas, please email Barb.

The window washing has started. They hope to have it finished before homecoming on East campus.

Has there been any information on getting a place on campus where shredding can happen at any time of the year? There may be another one in the spring for the campus.

Notifications for employees when they leave? They are working on getting this information out.

The next meeting will be on November 11, 2025, at 1:00 pm by ZOOM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Carpenter