

Agenda
Kent State University Staff Council
September 9, 2025

Welcome-Alice Kopunovitz

Introduction of Guest Speaker: Jeannie Reifsnyder, Interim Sr. Vice President, Finance and Administration

Minutes-Virginia Wright

Approval of July 8, 2025, minutes

Shared Governance Update-Craig Berger

Committee Reports

- **E-Board-Alice Kopunovitz**
- **Finance Committee-Nikki Mills**
- **Communications Committee-Ruth Pittman**
- **Elections & Bylaws Review Committee-Shaunte Rouse**
- **Membership/Activities/Professional Development Committee-Kara Barnett**
- **Advocacy Committee-Susan Kieklak/Rachel Rundo**

Kent State University Staff Council Meeting

September 9, 2025

Teams Meeting

The meeting began at 2:01 pm. In attendance: Kara Barnett, Erin Beseda, Paul Creed III, Anita Francisco, Crystal Halozan, Crystal Hamon, Aimee Johnson, Keturah Kneuss, Alice Kopunovitz, Jaclyn Macomber, Katie Mattise, Darcy McBride, Nikki Mills, Phillip Nelson, Barbara Ozimek, Ruth Pittman, Shaunte Rouse, Rachel Rundo, Megan Smeznik, Mariah Taylor, Jen Villanueva, Tiffany Williams, Virginia Wright, Judith Yasenosky. Guests: Amoaba Gooden, Jeannie Reifsnyder

Welcome and Announcements-Alice Kopunovitz

Alice welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced guest Jeannie Reifsnyder Sr VP with University budget update.

Budget:

- The Board of Trustees will be approving the FY 2026 budget next week on September 17. Budgets will be uploaded after approval for the September month end report.
- How FY 2026 budget was balanced
 - No across-the-board reductions
 - University saved \$4.5 million due to expected retirements and continuing the hiring freeze
 - There was a reduction in the cost escalation of property/casualty insurance
 - Implemented recommendations for strategic benefits
 - Made changes in the auxiliary service charge model
 - Reallocation of SSI between Kent Campus and Regional Campuses
 - Continued Reorganization within the Regional Campuses
 - Savings due to Transformation 2028
- FY 2025 Ending Budget:
 - University had surplus of \$4.8 million for ending budget FY 25 and strives to have 1% of the University budget (\$7 million) as target
 - Tuition 7.2 % higher at Kent and Regional Campuses. Continue to experience challenges at the College of Podiatric Medicine (down the last 2 years).
 - Housing experienced higher occupancy.
 - Dining experienced higher meal plan with sales to faculty and staff and increased cash retail sales.
 - Other revenue \$2.2 million from the KSU Foundation
 - SSI was lower than budgeted (\$1.7 million less)
- FY 2026 Budget Expense Assumptions:
 - Wage increases: 2% for non-represented staff; TT and NTT faculty according to contracts
 - Projected 9.2% budget increase for healthcare benefits. Amount projected represents the cost of inflation offset by fewer faculty and staff
 - Non-personnel expenses projected at 2% increase.
 - Aligned auxiliary to conservative estimate with the real budget for past 3 years.
- FY 2026 Budget Revenue Assumptions:
 - Project 1.4% decrease in full-time equivalent (FTE) from Fall 2024 (-319 FTE) at Kent Campus

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- Project .4% increase in FTE from Fall 2024 (+25 FTE) at Regional Campuses
- Project tuition increases over Fall 2024:
 - Tuition Guarantee Program (3%)
 - Non-resident surcharge (3%)
 - Graduate (3%)
 - Continuing undergraduate students not on a Tuition Guarantee (0%)
- Project flat SSI compared to FY 2025 actual
- Assume \$14.6 million in support operations for investment income
- Dining Services projected 6,647 meal plan sales compared to prior year actual
- Resident Services projects occupancy of 5,833 beds compared to actual 97% occupancy in prior year

Question: Does the University receive state funding for faculty, staff and their dependents who graduate using the tuition waiver benefit, given that the state share funding is allocated to institutions based on degree completions:

Answer: Yes. There is no designation. It is based on who is getting to that mark, not how they received funding.

Question: Are you aware of any change with tuition waivers?

Answer: I am not aware of any.

Question: What are the anticipated changes in healthcare costs to employees?

Answer: Jeannie deferred to Amoaba Gooden to answer. Amoaba stated that the benefits are still being worked on. Meetings are scheduled with constituents in the next two weeks. The information is not available today. Open enrollment will be coming out in October. The University was hit with many changes this year from the state, and it was a very challenging year. Getting away from RCM was also a big change.

Question: Will the hiring freeze continue in FY26?

Answer: Yes. The University faces challenges as we get closer to the big drop off with undergraduate and international enrollment. It depends if international students can get visas approved. The University will keep an eye on Spring semester.

Question: Can you say more about the projected impact of T28 on the budget?

Answer: The University has factored in the timeline and what happens with T28 in consultation with the Provost. This information was built into the budget. More changes will happen in FY 27 and FY 28. As the plan rolls out, there may be some minor changes in FY 26 as hubs come together. These changes would also be made in consultation with the Provost.

Question: People are feeling the crunch of workload and the hiring freeze.

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Answer: The Strategic Hiring Committee will review for people taking on additional work. Human Resources can also review to see if work is outside the scope of the job to see if supplemental pay or stipend is needed.

Minutes-Alice Kopunovitz

- Alice called for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 8, 2025, meeting. Judith Yasenosky made a motion, and Phillip Nelson seconded the motion.

Shared Governance Update-Crystal Hamon

- In lieu of SB 1, Crystal Hamon, Craig Berger, and Megan Smeznik are working on making changes to reflect that with updated bylaws and new charter
- Meeting next week
- Met with Amoaba Gooden over the summer
- Amoaba indicated that this is a good thing to move forward
- They need information so that they can present to the Cabinet
- They will keep working through and will keep everyone posted

Committee Reports

- **E-Board-Alice Kopunovitz**
 - By laws sent to Dr. Gooden
 - OCHE conference in October
 - Meeting at Rays on September 23rd for a get together
 - October will be an extended meeting
- **Finance Committee – Nikki Mills**
 - Request in for the conference
 - Approval for the OCHE conference
 - Budget line is \$1000
 - Katie Mattise mentioned that it is worth looking into getting another direct line to support Staff Council through finance
- **Communications Committee-Ruth Pittman**
 - Communications Committee would be meeting to discuss a KSU staff council logo
- **Elections & Bylaws Review Committee-Shaunte Rouse**
 - Fall election process
 - Will be developing a Qualtrics survey to send out to members
- **Membership/Activities/Professional Development Committee-Kara Barnett**
 - Sending email for the wellness fair for volunteers and the link was in the chat
 - Hoping for reimbursement for those that travel to the different wellness fair sites
 - Discussion about the application process to Staff Council
 - Teams forum where interested people can come and talk with current members

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- **Advocacy Committee-Susan Kieklak**
 - Anti-bullying policy

Meeting Adjourned at 3:05 pm