Change in the Status of the Orientation Committee

Rationale: The Orientation Committee is requesting approval to change its status from standing committee back to a Subcommittee of the Academic Staff Senate. The Co-Chairs met with and provided a rationale (below) to the Academic Staff Committee regarding this change in status; the ASC agrees with the request.

January 22, 2016

Dear Academic Staff Committee,

The Academic Staff Orientation Committee (ASOC) is proposing to change its status from a standing committee to its previous status as a subcommittee of the Academic Staff. The ASOC has continued to struggle to define its focus and purpose, its constituents, as well as filling vacancies on the committee.

We believe that switching to a subcommittee would allow the ASOC the flexibility, time and space necessary to determine its purpose and focus, as well as to determine if other standing committees or subcommittees could fulfill the objectives of the ASOC (Communications Subcommittee, Non-Instructional Academic Staff Subcommittee/Instructional and Research Academic Staff Subcommittee) to avoid overlap and duplication of efforts. Currently the Non-Instructional Academic Staff Subcommittee holds presentations with a focus on finding opportunities for university service as well as “taking care of business” on where to go for things on campus such as reserving rooms, getting an interpreter, ordering catering, etc. The Communications Subcommittee creates a newsletter for Academic Staff information and updates each semester, all of which are beneficial to new employees and could be considered part of orienting new staff to campus.

In addition, we currently have two vacancies on the committee that have not been filled. Changing to a subcommittee will alleviate the need for elected positions and allow any academic staff to participate at any time, which could allow more individuals to participate.

Finally, in light of the campus budget crisis, hiring freezes, state challenges to shared governance and anticipated layoff of academic staff, the purpose of ASOC, to orient new academic staff to
shared governance, is in question. At the present time there may not be many new staff members on campus, which may change over time, and the flexibility of being a subcommittee would allow this group to adjust with meeting the campus needs as those needs change.

Please feel free to contact us with further questions.

Best wishes,

Dana Northrup
Laura Stark
Co-Chairs of the Academic Staff Orientation Committee