Senate Launches Winter/Spring “Hidden Gems of USM” Series

The Professional Development Committee sponsored a series of professional development and learning workshops for Professional Staff. In February, the Senate partnered with USM Strengths to offer all Professional Staff the opportunity to participate in a Gallop Strengths workshop. The workshop includes a self-assessment to identify your top 5 strengths and follows with a workshop designed to introduce the strengths concepts and teach employees how to apply their strengths to their work tasks and teams. Employees who were unable to attend this workshop and would like to learn about future opportunities to participate should contact Strengths@USM.

March and April brought the Hidden Gems of USM series which provided Professional Staff the opportunity to learn more about the work of their colleagues. In March, ProStaff gathered at the Osher Map Library for a private guided tour of the exhibit, Masterpieces at USM: Celebrating Five Centuries of Maps and Globes.

In April, ProStaff were invited to join Carolyn Eyler for a private tour of the Gorham Art Gallery. The exhibit featured the works of undergraduate art students. Both events were well attended and participants welcomed the opportunity to truly discover two of USM’s hidden gems.
This year the Professional Staff Senate welcomed a guest speaker at each monthly meeting. These meetings provided Senators and Professional Staff in attendance to learn more about administrative changes and strategic initiatives underway at USM. 2015-2016 Guest Speakers included:

- August 2015 – Beth Higgins, Director of Advising and Academic Resources
- September 2015 – Nancy Griffin, VP Enrollment Management & Student Affairs
- October 2015 – Gail Minichiello, TRIO Student Support Services
- November 2015 – Glenn Cummings, President
- December 2015 – Buster Neel, Chief Business Officer
- January 2016 – Natalie Jones, Director of Human Resources
- February 2016 – Bob Stein, Executive Director of Public Affairs
- March 2016 – George Campbell, VP Advancement and President of the USM Foundation
- April 2016 – No guest speaker; planning meeting for Employee Recognition Event
- May 2016 – Andrew King, Director of Admissions

The Professional Recognition and Awards is responsible for the development of ProStaff recognition initiatives. Traditionally this has meant sponsoring the Emerging and Distinguished Professional Staff Award and partnering with the Classified Staff Senate, Human Resources, and the President’s Office to sponsor the annual staff recognition event in May.

This year the committee wanted to start by hearing ProStaff’s thoughts related to recognition. Are we getting enough? How do we want to be recognized and for what? A survey was distributed to ProStaff and barring the obvious absence of money as a way to recognize staff, the results indicated that meaningful recognition isn’t difficult and can be free.

Two-thirds of ProStaff at USM believe recognition is important and identify their top 5 reasons for recognition: going above and beyond, teamwork excellence, service to USM, consistency in job performance and focus on innovation. Sixty percent of ProStaff indicated they currently receive adequate recognition from their direct supervisor with slightly less (58%) reporting adequate recognition from their colleagues and USM/UMS Administration.

What can you do to recognize your staff & colleagues? Survey results indicate that a handwritten note can go a long way. Other no-cost options include flexible work schedule, connection to a professional mentor, and establishing a professional development and promotion plan at USM. If all that sounds like a lot of work, employees would also enjoy lunch with their supervisor, a personal day, a free parking pass, or small gift certificate to a favorite location. To see a full summary of survey results, visit the ProSen website.
The Professional Staff Senate Welcomes New, Returning, and Reclassified Employees.

Do you remember when you started at USM? Did you know where to get your parking pass? Did you know what your library lending privileges were or whether or not you could use the fitness facilities? Did you spend time looking for the 4th floor of Payson Smith only to learn that rooms numbered in the 40’s were in the basement? Did you know MaineStreet was more than just a great place in Brunswick with quaint shopping and incredible restaurants?

One of the goals established by the FY 2015 Senate and carried over to the FY 2016 ProSen was the desire to make sure that Professional Staff had a point of contact, a “go-to” when settling into a new position or role at USM. It is important to feel connected to your work, your colleagues, and to know how you fit into the bigger picture.

Collaborating with Human Resources, the ProSen reaches out to all newly appointed Professional Staff each quarter, offering the opportunity for a face to face introductory meeting and orientation to USM. This is a great opportunity for people to meet someone outside of their department, begin to build relationships and learn more about USM. To date, the ProSen has reached out to 41 people in FY 2016.

The ProSen is always looking for volunteers who are interested in assisting with outreach to new appointees. You do not need to be a Senator or be a USM know-it-all. You just need to believe in the importance of connection to USM, to work and to one another. Those interested in assisting with the Welcome program can contact Martha.Scott@maine.edu.
ProSen Announces FY 2016 Professional Development Scholarship Recipients

Each year the ProSen Professional Development Subcommittee is tasked with creating programs that enrich the lives of Professional Staff at USM. This year, in addition to the Professional Development Series, the committee wanted to support Professional Staff with the opportunity to pursue their own professional development goals. To that end, they established the Professional Development Scholarship Fund encouraging all Professional Staff to apply for the grants that were awarded in April 2016. Congratulations to all of the award recipients!

Blaise Maccarrone is a Professional Academic Advisor in the Portland Advising office. Blaise is finishing her first year at USM. Reflecting on the past year, Blaise has enjoyed the privilege of watching her freshman students grow and finds great interest in the similarities between the "first year new job experience" and the "first year new student experience". Blaise will be using her scholarship funds to develop a reading library in the Portland advising office. The library will include both professional publications and academic topic texts so advisors can better understand the student experience while also increasing access to professional resources. "This scholarship will allow us to grab a volume on topics we want to learn more about, then return for others to enjoy. As Academic Advisors we want to make sure students see us continuing to learn. This will also satisfy my secret desire to be a librarian..."

Beth Round is a Professional Academic Advisor in the Gorham Advising office. She also teaches a section of LAC 188: Academic & Career Success each semester. Beth has served USM for nearly 15 years. Before joining the advising team, she was the Assistant Director of Honors. Beth will be using her scholarship award to continue her personal training in Motivational Interviewing, a therapeutic method designed to engage people in the work of change. "Much of our work in advising is building relationships with students and listening for the 'language of change'. I hope to enhance my abilities to assist USM students as they discover their goals."

Jennifer Sherwood is a Project Assistant at the Maine Small Business Development Center. She has worked at USM for 6 years. Jennifer plans to use her scholarship to continue her studies in the Professional Communications certificate program at USM’s Professional and Continuing Education. Jennifer is looking to gain "better, more effective communication skills, as this is currently a huge part of my job."

Margaret Brownlee worked in USM’s Admission Office before transferring to the Gorham Advising Office earlier this year to work as a Professional Advisor. Margaret is enrolled in HCE 612 Multicultural Counseling: Societal and Cultural Foundations course this summer and will be using her scholarship award to purchase textbooks for her class. "I think the class will help me understand the needs of my students at USM. It’s my goal to improve the advising experience for students of color."
Nominate Yourself for the Senate

Yes! It's totally appropriate to nominate yourself for the Professional Staff Senate. By nominating yourself, you're saying “I’ve thought about the commitment and I want to make a difference.” Watch your email inbox in early May for a call for ProSen Nominations. Nominations will remain open through May 27th, with voting occurring in early June following the Memorial Day holiday. The new Senate will convene in July 2016 to schedule their Annual Retreat for August. For more information about being a senator, please visit the ProSen website or contact ProSen Chair Justin Swift via email justin.swift@maine.edu.

Join a Committee

Don’t have time to be a Senator but still want to make a difference? Join a ProSen Subcommittee. Senate meetings are generally dedicated to information sharing, guest speakers and reporting. The real work happens in the ProSen Committees. Standing Committees include Professional Development, Professional Recognition, and Awards and Election. Ad Hoc Committees include By-Laws & Governance and Communications. In addition, ProSen also supports the work and collaborates with other Senates and campus activities. These groups include the Staff Recognition Committee a.k.a. Longevity Awards Committee, the Classified Staff Senate, the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, the USM Board of Visitors, the USM Parking and Transportation Committee, the President’s Council on Diversity and the President’s Council on Climate Neutrality. If any of these opportunities are of interest, please contact Vice Chair Martha Scott via email at martha.scott@maine.edu.

Welcome a New Employee

Want to help welcome new Professional Staff to USM? This is a great way to give back to your work community. The commitment is minimal- a coffee here, a question there. New employees really don’t need much to feel connected. A go-to person can go a long way in helping someone embrace all that USM has to offer. Want to be part of the welcome wagon? Contact Vice Chair Martha Scott at martha.scott@maine.edu.

www.usm.maine.edu/prosen