Unclassified Staff Advisory Council Town Hall Meeting with Dr. Bruce Murphy
Friday, April 11, 2014 – 10:00am
Student Union Ballroom

Dr. Murphy spoke about the inauguration. He mentioned that other institutions took notice of Nicholls and the event was very successful. He would like to see other celebrations with a Nicholls focus.

Dr. Murphy reviewed the results of the unclassified staff survey and was surprised to discover that some employees are not aware of the Council. He announced that the Council is here to voice unclassified staff issues and to represent unclassified staff.

In the past, two groups met regularly; the Executive Council and the Cabinet. Dr. Murphy stated that the President’s Cabinet will now be made up of Vice Presidents and other special individuals. The University Council will now include many Directors, Deans and other specific individuals. The University Council will meet every week. Dr. Murphy said that many people on this Council are now aware of information that they may not have known about before. Dr. Murphy and Candace Park meet once a month and she brings him all issues sent to her.

Other issues dealing with the survey include pay. Most employees have not received a raise in the past six years. Dr. Murphy said that this is a major issue on his list. He said that the Governor has not cut our budget yet and has agreed not to pay Universities less any tuition raise this year.

Some of the processes and procedures followed at Nicholls are cumbersome and difficult to follow. Dr. Murphy is aware that some of these are done specifically to comply with state and/or federal regulations however, there is room for improvement.

Dr. Michele Caruso announced that the serenity space will open on Tuesday. It is open to all faculty, staff and students.

Brandie Toups asked if there is anything that the Murphy’s have observed and/or learned after being here at Nicholls for ninety days. Dr. Murphy thinks that the most gratifying thing so far was hosting the inauguration. He has had many people comment about how uplifting this event was. He spoke about the financial challenges of Nicholls. He said that we cannot depend on state funding only and Nicholls may want to take on additional functions and have other agreements with industry. Dr. Murphy has also met several graduates who are still very excited about Nicholls. Mrs. Murphy said that the excitement level for Nicholls and the community is amazing. She suggested that a standard University presentation be created so that everyone can use it to promote Nicholls.

Tracy Purvis asked what Dr. Murphy plans to do to enhance teamwork on campus. Dr. Murphy stated that he has asked supervisors to make time for him to come to each department to speak with them directly. He would like to create goals with strategic planning. He especially liked that he was told that “we ought to treat students like they have a choice”. If everyone accepts this, Nicholls may not have some of the issues that it has now.

Becky Durocher reminded everyone “be nice or leave”. She said that we should all move on from this day forward. We should remember that it is a pleasure and a privilege to work here.

An audience member asked what is expected of the employees as far as selling Nicholls to the public is concerned. We should all know how to promote Nicholls to others. Dr. Murphy has requested that each Dean present an information sheet on their College so this information can be shared with all employees.
An audience member said that they are trying to promote Nicholls and all functions happening at Nicholls. If there is an event, him or “Mike”.

Dr. Murphy has noticed that Nicholls needs work in University Advancement. He believes that there is a lot of potential for Nicholls to raise money. Candace Park asked about the restructuring of this area of the University. He stated that Development (fundraising) will be part of this area. Alumni and University Media will also be included.

An audience member stated that she has attended Scholar’s night and was impressed by the videos that Admissions uses during these functions. Dr. Murphy stated that these should be presented at the University Council meetings. Becky Durocher mentioned that Admissions would like to show these videos and have Q&A sessions periodically.

Mrs. Murphy spoke about the family legacies in this area. She has begun focusing on those families who have Nicholls connections and these stories will be included in the Inside.

Ashley Munson spoke about the Dyslexia center. She stated that they advise students, and that many students are unsure about what to take to graduate. She stated that some of the degree plans are very confusing. Dr. Murphy stated that Nicholls retains freshmen and sophomores more so than juniors and seniors. He is aware that there are issues with advising since students are advised first by advisors then by faculty. Dr. Murphy would like to streamline this process. He stated that there are many processes that need to be streamlined.

Candace Park reported that many employees do multiple jobs. She asked what can be done when the multiple jobs become too much. She would like to know how that employee can advocate for themselves. Dr. Murphy would like to see job descriptions for all positions. He said that this should be part of the evaluation process. He said that there should be some negotiation with employee and supervisor regarding expectations. Supervisors should know how much their employees are having to go above and beyond and their departmental needs at any given time. Candace Park stated that many employees are met with negative replies from their supervisors when they ask for assistance or more time. Dr. Murphy stated that the University has not had a consistent needs report and/or needs funneled through one voice.

Brandon from Athletics stated that he is often asked “Where is Nicholls?” He is amazed that the Marketing department does not have a marketing budget. He asked if there are any plans to change this and to begin any kind of online marketing. Dr. Murphy stated that this will be part of the University Advancement area. He stated that University Relations did make a presentation at a University Council meeting regarding social media and how that is used at Nicholls. He stated that as the programs at Nicholls are marketed, this should improve media exposure.

Mrs. Murphy said that they would like to use information from employees about what works here. They are willing to hear what employees have to say.

Candace Park thanked everyone for attending and for completing the survey. She advised that unclassified employees contact her or any other USAC member with any issues.