

Good morning.

When I was a brand-new English teacher at Fort Morgan High School, in Fort Morgan, CO, the executive assistant to the principal was a woman named Vickie Lapp. Mrs. Lapp was sharp, organized, and professional. She was calmly unafraid of students, parents, teachers, even her boss. In short, she had all the traits you expect to see in a high-functioning administrative assistant. She was also firm with the school's new teachers, who were typically bright-eyed 22-year-olds so proud of their shiny, new bachelor's degrees.

One day, I ran by the office to check my mailbox before leaving. Unfortunately, it was past 4:30pm, and the office doors were locked. I could see Mrs. Lapp through the front glass of the office, so I made eye contact and motioned toward the door, pantomiming an ask for her to open it. Undeterred, she looked right back at me, lifted her hand, and tapped her watch. Rules were rules, and Mrs. Lapp had dealt with plenty of 20-somethings who didn't respect her time.

Over the next four years, Mrs. Lapp and I got to know each other well. I appreciated her impartiality, her protectiveness of hard-working teachers, and her willingness to stand up to irate parents. And one morning, in my last year at the FMHS, I was fighting the Xerox machine. I was frantic, because I needed the copies for my first-hour class, and the machine kept jamming. Mrs. Lapp took note of what was going on, asked me how many copies I needed, and offered to finish the job herself and have a student deliver the copies to my classroom. The change in my relationship with Mrs. Lapp came from persistent, demonstrated mutual respect and admiration. While I had certainly never thought of her as my own personal secretary; after four years, I had come to understand that Mrs. Lapp was not actually an administrative assistant working to support teachers and a principal, but a **fellow professional working in service to the district.**

Like Mrs. Lapp, staff members at FHSU are often appreciated and praised merely for how the work **they do** enables their **supervisors** to function well. And because of Mrs. Lapp and so many colleagues like her, my highest goal is to help create a **culture** wherein administrators and faculty alike view staff members not as great support people who enable **their work**, but as professionals who work alongside them in service to Fort Hays State University; **a culture** where these 510 staff members are recognized meaningfully at an institutional level; **a culture** where they receive fair compensation and a voice in all University policies.

I would like to introduce to you the Staff Senators who are hard at work with me, to ensure these things happen: (*Could all Staff Senators stand at this time?*)

Representing Academic Affairs:

Amy Richecky
Falynn Rogers
Misty Koonse
Staci Kinderknecht
Lacey Wegner

Representing Administration and Finance

Kerri Schifflbein
Lisa Morgan
Raeleann Weigel
Susan Relaford
Tyler Marcotte

Representing Student Affairs and the President's Office

Ali Colwell
Brett Gerber
Hannah Hearld
Marnie Kohl
Tobi Neuberger

And finally, our Executive Team

President-Elect Les Mackey
Secretary and Academic Affairs Senator Diana Staab
Past President Bob Duffy

Thank you all. It's going to be a great year!