

# The University of Southern Mississippi

## Approved Staff Council Minutes

November 7, 2000

Carolyn Neblett and Angela Benvenutti spoke to Staff Council members about the conference center. Room rates are \$30.00 per night. USM employees can reserve a room by calling Susan Hoffman. Clubs and professional organizations can reserve rooms. There are fifty-five rooms available, and they have twin beds, phones, and a television. There are six meeting rooms available.

Bob Lowe spoke about the proposed Student Life Center. They will take the existing student facility and add on at a cost of \$10 million. It will be one of the University's biggest projects ever. Students, faculty, staff, and the community will use it. It will contain a ballroom for 800 people, a theater, a game room, and dining facilities. The second phase will have new cash food operations that will go into the current Hub building. Several universities have tried to have outside food vendors; some work, some don't.

The challenge is to sort out what we want, upscale or fast food? Do we want a food court like the mall or do we want a unique atmosphere? Seymour's has received some criticism because of the lack of healthy food; however, this type of food doesn't sell well. We have to choose very carefully whom we do business with because some people don't make good business partners. The food service industry is ever changing. We want as much input from people as possible.

Mr. Lowe opened the floor for questions/feedback.

The new facility won't be called Seymour's; it will be scramble style where the patron walks to several food stations; however, people don't like standing in lines.

Is there a benefit to having national chains or local vendors? National chains provide a better profit. We have to overcome downtime (when students are out).

Will students pay as they do now or will they have to pay as they go like at Burger King? Room and board will continue. Meal plans can be configured many different ways. Many students feel that it's better to pay as you go, but many don't realize it sometimes costs more. Food services would probably buy the franchise if we choose to bring in outside franchises. Nothing is leased now; we own the current businesses operating in Seymour's. We don't have to buy franchises.

When the new dining facility opens, other cafeterias will still be open. New residence halls will not have dining facilities.

There is talk of renovating the power plant into a coffee house. There are negotiations going on now with PJ's Coffee in New Orleans. Until funding is available to renovate, the project will be on hold. Other coffee franchises have been considered, and they are all the same. We want to restore the Hub building, which has 210,000 square feet, to the grandeur of the 1930's. The cost to renovate would be \$40 million.

Food would be served in stations similar to casinos. Mr. Lowe said we would have a dessert-making station so people could watch the preparation. If we're going to compete with other universities, we have to be innovative. State and Ole Miss do not charge room and board. The Commons has never had a major renovation. The Student Food Committee meets once a month.

The hospitality industry is the second largest generator of jobs in Mississippi. We want to get the best students to train. We also have to get away from the minimum wage notion. USM teaches Hospitality Management, which is critical to USM. Mr. Lowe can be contacted at Robert. Lowe (robert.lowe@usm.edu). Call Mr. Lowe and let him know your thoughts.

A proposal to boost morale at USM advocates discounted costs at Seymours' and Commons. Employees currently receive a discount of 25 cents per meal on a commuter plan before sales tax. Most companies have half-price lunch, and the company subsidizes the cost. If the University gives faculty and staff discounts, students will want it also. Also, there are overhead costs.

1.0 Call to Order

President Townsend called the meeting to order at 10: 17 a.m.

The following members were present: Victoria Adams, Terry Bethea, Cindy Burnette, Jennifer Blalock, Joan Brashears, Bradley Bridges, Kim Busche, Kalin Butirich, Melissa Carpenter, Shannon Davis, John Green, Lin Harper, John Hayman, Mary Ann Iverson, Faye Mallette, Janeal McKee, Larry McMickle, Charlene McMillin, Polly Odom, Jessie Person, Pam Posey, Veda Spencer, Mary Sumrall, Tracy Townsend, Ruby Waits, and Sam Williams.

## 2.0 Adoption of Agenda

Adopted as read.

## 3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Shannon Davis for Ronnie Williamson, Virginia Kittrell for David Kinsey, Joan Brashears for Jan Roberts, Mary Sumrall for Rusty Anderson, Tracy Townsend for Dick Vogel, John Hayman for Mike Giles, Polly Odom for Susan Sanders, Kim Buche for Connie Morgan.

## 4.0 Approval of Minutes

The spelling of the name of the basketball player should be "Vandarel." October minutes were approved as changed.

## 5.0 Officers' Reports

### 5.1 President's Report

(Picture of ground-breaking of Athletic Center.) Information was given on Stennis site plan. Legislative Forum is Friday, and some of the issues that will be discussed are: parity funding, better insurance/cheaper premiums, and raises. We want the legislators to know about these before the legislative session starts.

Royce Pierce and Tracy Townsend met about the five-year plan on parking. Ms. Townsend proposed that staff feel there are too many parking meters on campus and that you can park too long of a time. Ms. Townsend e-mailed him, and he forwarded it to the

Transportation Committee. Decals will not increase until morale improves. Ms. Townsend asked him for that in writing.

Chain of Process–Parking Committee, Cabinet

## 5.2 President–elect's Report

The University was exempt from budget cuts.

Staff Council brochures were passed out. Some action items are still outstanding and need to be closed.

## 5.3 Assignment of Action Items

No action items.

## 6.0 Old Business

### 6.1 Biweekly Conversion

Biweekly conversion has taken place. Ms. Townsend received a message from Linda Purvis because her transition check appeared on her biweek paycheck stub. Sam Thomas e-mailed Ms. Townsend and said this amount will not be reported to the IRS and won't be included in the W2. If anyone has problems, call Jay Weinstein or Ruby on the coast. A letter was distributed at the time transition checks were distributed that listed specifications regarding the transition check.

### 6.2 Christmas Party

No report.

### 6.3 Proposal

A proposal whereby faculty and staff could use the Payne Center at no cost was proposed years ago, and Sid Gonsoulin will rework the proposal and submit it to the current administration. Also, some agencies on the coast have agreed to provide similar services to USM employees there.

Spring employee appreciation day costs about \$65,000. The one this year was cut because of the budget cuts. Plans are to have three smaller appreciation days next year, one in spring, summer and fall.

Staff Council is asking for all the items on the proposals list, and we will see what the administration will agree to give us. Dr. Fleming has the flexible spending proposal but hasn't responded yet. Pam Posey asked about the format in which the proposals will be presented. Ms. Townsend responded that each would be listed with explanations. Executive Council will meet Tuesday to prepare those proposals.

## 7.0 Committee Reports

### 7.1 Constitution & Bylaws – Pam Posey, Chair

No report.

### 7.2 Legislative – Charlene McMillin, Chair

Twenty-six legislators were invited to the Legislative Forum. Usually seven or eight come. Faculty wants to ask specific questions that pertain to concerns of faculty and staff. We will probably have larger turnout with specific issues. The meeting will be Friday, November 10, from 1:00 –3:00 p.m. in the Payne Center Oak Tree Room.

### 7.3 Salaries & Benefits – Rusty Anderson, Chair

No report.

### 7.4 University Relations & Cultural Diversity – Jennifer Blalock, Chair

This committee was asked by the chair to meet afterwards to discuss an action item.

### 7.5 Technology & Training – Lin Harper, Chair

Expanding Excellence training is still going very well. Trainers are welcome to contact Lin ([lin.harper@usm.edu](mailto:lin.harper@usm.edu)).

USM Web Team says it will cost between \$300 – \$500 to clean up the Staff Council web page and also maintain it for free. The site should be ready by Christmas. Ms. Harper proposed authorizing expenditure of the money to overhaul our web site. Approved with no opposition.

## 7.6 Other Committee Reports

No reports.

Lin Harper agreed to serve on the Leon Eubanks Estate committee.

## 8.0 New Business

### 8.1 Resignation Letter

Resignation letter from Ann Billings. Cindy Burnett will serve the remainder of Ann's term.

### 8.2 OTR Campus Community Broadcast E-mail Services Policy

Monitored and maintained by OTR. A written policy statement was distributed.

### 8.3 Budget

The universities were exempt from budget reductions.

## 9.0 Announcements

The date for the Bookstore Open House is November 12, not November 1.

Mediation Pilot Program has begun.

USM currently uses gold PMS 124 as official color. Bob Pierce, Director of Alumni Affairs, oversees compliance with official color. Bob will make a presentation at the next cabinet meeting.

## 10.0 Adjournment

Adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Connie Morgan

Recording Secretary

11-7-00

Attachments

President's Report

November 7, 2000

I got several emails about rumors that decal cost would increase, so in Expanded Cabinet, I asked the

question Is this going to happen. The response given was that the Parking Task Force meets on the 10th and

that committee would give the recommendation to increase parking decals. Once approved from the

committee, the recommendation comes to Cabinet and is discussed. The Cabinet then decides if that

recommendation is approved or not. Nothing has been finalized.

Terrell Tisdale has been asked to head a committee on communications. Key leaders met after Expanded Cabinet to decide who would serve with Terrell on that committee. Sherry Laughlin (Faculty Senate), John (Graduate Student Association), Angela (Student Government Association), and Tracy Townsend (Staff Council) will serve on that committee.

Nate Anderson, SGA President gave a presentation. Students will be counting parking spaces to check for zone reallocation. SGA are looking into shuttle systems. Lunch date with Nate is on Tuesdays

from 12:15–1:00. There will be a new precinct for voting in the Liberal Arts building to allow more students to exercise their right to vote for Homecoming activities. SGA is working on a letter writing campaign for the legislature and are holding legislative week November 6–10. The SGA is working on many other opportunities for students.

John McGowan announced that 107 buildings would be wired by February of 2001. PeopleSoft should be fully implemented by July 2001. A technology advisory committee has been established to use expertise from within. The Chronicle of Higher Education is on campus this week to see our wireless systems and they plan to write an article.

Subject to approval, we are purchasing the West Property for \$875,000. The money used for this purchase is money we cannot use for anything but buying property. We will begin to look at benefits that we can give ourselves.

The groundbreaking on the coast went well. Shelia White had an excellent idea: dirt was taken from Hattiesburg and mixed with dirt at the groundbreaking site so that the two could become one. That process will be done also in Hattiesburg.

Nothing new on budgets, we are continuing to make our plea in Jackson

Joe Paul will be inducted to the Alumni Hall of Fame.

October 6: Ground Breaking for Athletics

There were about 100–150 people at the groundbreaking for the Athletic Building. Lt Governor Amy Tuck spoke as well as several other key people. I participated in the actual groundbreaking and was honored to be there

October 10: Fitness Facility Meeting

There is a fitness trail in the process of planning around the Payne Center. Money was approved by a grant that Sid Gonsolin prepared. The efforts of the planning committee are still underway, but the facility will be located to the right of the Payne Center near the

waterway between the Polymer Science Building and the Payne Center. More to come later.

#### October 13 : Cabinet

Faculty salaries are \$8000 under State and \$6000 under Ole Miss. The legislature needs to see that we are a team and that all areas need to be funded adequately and we cannot take another cut without hurting programs and people.

The Lt. Governor will visit on October 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 in the Presidents Conference Room. Jim Ford will be in attendance for the 2:30 commencement exercises. We are planning for a visit from the Governor at the November 24<sup>th</sup> ballgame; kickoff is at 12:30.

Transportation Committee –have a recommendation to go to hang tags instead of permanent decals. There is a fee for temporary decals if you bring another car on campus, but no charge for visitors. There will be efforts in the future to not tow cars unless they are in a marked tow zone.

Dr. Wiesenberg came from Stennis to show the master plan for SSC. I have a copy with me if you would like to see it.

The IHL board will get a recommendation from USM to purchase West property across 4h Street. The cost is \$875,000 + 65,000 for updates. This money can only be used for this type of purchase.

Cedar Point is still in the process of being finalized but will be completed by the deadline of November 23.

#### October 17: Communications Committee

We talked about dates to meet and what plan to start with. Basically, we are looking for an organizational chart to help with filters and will then communicate with VPs on an individual basis and other key leaders on the USM campus.

#### October 20: Cabinet

Mediation Training, attached copy of plan. Homecoming events, attached copy of events.

Contributions to United Way are lagging.

We will possibly get a 5% cutback on funds for the coming year.. That means that money we have been given, we will have to give 5% back. Five percent is a reality, and will probably not be recovered next year.

October 23: Communications Committee

We were to look at an organizational chart, which we cannot locate at this time. We talked about questions we wanted to pose to the VPs and key administrators when we begin to interview them on the processes.

October 24: Budget Meeting

The bottom line is that we may be asked to cut our budgets 5%. To USM that means 3.7 million dollars, and frankly, we don't have that kind of money just lying around. This kind of cut will hit USM hard, but Dr. Fleming's main goals are to protect programs and people. We may have a tuition rise in January (if board approved) to offset some expenses. I will keep you posted.

November 3: Cabinet – Cancelled

November 3: Meet to discuss Legislative Day

Met with Charlene McMillin and Jessie Palmer about Legislative Day and how the day should be presented. We discussed three issues that need to be the main topic of conversation and those three are: parity funding, insurance, and raises.

November 3: Dedication of Shoemaker Square

November 6: Meet with John McGowan

Discussed implementation of PeopleSoft and how this process and the software will affect USM employees. Discussed the cost of the process, which has come in (so far) under what was projected. Discussed some problems with the Helpdesk that should be fixed: the Helpdesk should respond to requests within 48 hours. OTR is

getting bad publicity for a number of reasons, but Dr. McGowan wants to keep an open line of communication with the staff and will meet with Lin Harper, Training and Technology Chair for Staff Council, on the Monday before each Staff Council meeting to make sure any concerns are addressed.

## President-Elect's Report

### USM Staff Council

November 7, 2000

### October 20: Faculty Senate

University Registrar Jayne Perkins discussed PeopleSoft changes with faculty. She needs input regarding ways to configure software to handle prerequisite, co-requisites, PACE program, etc. She also sought suggestions on how to distribute PIN codes to students because sometimes students are given the PIN code without being advised. Beginning Fall Semester 2001 students will register online.

Faculty Senate President Sherry Laughlin gave her report, which dealt mainly with information distributed at the Board of Trustees meeting regarding a five percent budget cut. Each month the state is receiving approximately \$20 million less in revenue than expected, so a budget cut is imminent; K-12, Highway Patrol, and a few other state agencies will be exempt from the cut. USM's cut would amount to approximately \$3.75 million. When asked what USM would do to handle this cut, Dr. Fleming said he would freeze spending on technology, staff position, and library funding, He also mentioned that we would request a tuition increase in January. USM's tuition is already \$200 below that of State and Ole Miss. Sherry talked with Jim Borsig, Governmental Relations Officer, and he advised faculty to encourage the Governor to use the "rainy day" fund rather than cut budgets. The "rainy day" fund has \$272 million in it; the Governor can take out only \$50 million from the fund without having to pay it back, so the chances of the Governor using this money are slim.

Committee reports were given, and announcements were made. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution recommending that a communications consultant be hired at no more than \$5,000 to

assist the University with communication problems. A resolution was also passed regarding biweekly payroll for faculty to urge the administration to "abandon all present and future plans for such a scheme." A third resolution was passed that "The Senate emphatically rejects any proposal to increase parking/transportation fees until such time as salary increases are resumed and parking regulations in Zone 4 and 5 lots are rigorously and consistently enforced."

The Legislative Forum will be held Friday, November 10, in Gonzales Auditorium. Major concerns of the faculty to be discussed at the Forum are parity funding for USM, salary increases, and health insurance.

#### October 24: Meeting re. Budget Cuts

The executive committees of Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association met with the administration to talk about the expected 5% budget cut. Dr. Fleming and Dr. Gilbert explained the state budget situation and how much USM's cut would be. Each vice president will submit a plan for a 5% cut in his/her area by Monday, November 6. The Cabinet will reach a consensus based on the vice presidents' plans and then provide this information to the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government Association for consideration. The University's final decisions will be made before the November Board meeting. You received an email from Tracy regarding the proposed procedures.

#### October 25, 2000: Fitness Trail

The committee met with Larry Singleton, Architect, and Ed Blake, Landscape Architect, to provide input on the Bruce and Virginia Wilgus Fitness Trail at the Payne Center. Monies for the trail are coming from a federal grant which provides 80% funding; USM will provide 20% of the funding from surplus funds from construction of the Payne Center. The committee, as well as Dr. Bob Wales' class in conservation of natural resources, discussed issues such as safety, type of plants, surface and width of the track, environmental issues, etc. The architects will take information discussed and prepare a final plan/schematic which will be proposed to the committee. Upon the committee's approval, bids will be taken on the contract.

Sid Gonsoulin said the fitness trail could possibly be usable by next summer.

### Campus Community Broadcast E-mail Service Policy

The University of Southern Mississippi has the capability of transmitting announcements to all faculty, staff, and/or students via email. These services place a heavy load on campus network services, and such messages add to the burdensome load of mail that must be processed by each of us. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain a specific policy regarding its use.

Broadcast email services may be used only by University administration, departmental directors, deans and chairs and duly authorized members of University affiliated or sanctioned organizations.

Broadcast email services are to be limited to important informational messages or announcements of events of community interest. No use of these services for political statements, editorials or other statements of opinion shall be allowed. No use of these services for solicitation of membership or petition signatures shall be allowed. No use of these services for any commercial interest shall be allowed.

To request the transmittal of an announcement, email the specific content of the message to . . . (whomever is deemed most appropriate, or a special email address can be created).

### Staff Proposals

Reinstate charging

Allow Staff to borrow textbooks

Free decals for employee (only one); pay higher price for 2nd decal

Discount at food services facilities

Discount at Payne Center for use

Allow spouse to take 6 hours free courses if employee is not using those course benefits

Discount on Continuing Education courses

Use graduated plan for dependent tuition –

1–2 yrs. 10%; 3–4 yrs. – 20%; 5–6 yrs. – 30%; and so on. After 15 years of service, receive 80% benefit.

Free admission to sports events for employee

Discounts in textbooks and bookstore

Allow time off to work out in Payne Center

The University match our 403(b) contributions.

Dr. Fleming

50% scholarship for dependents for both USM employees

9 credit hours free per semester per employee

Reinstate Staff Appreciation Day to full

Retirement @ 20 years

Full tuition for dependents

Vice Presidents

Flexible work hours

"I caught you doing your job" recognition

Fridays – casual day

Time off for professional seminars

4 day work week

Employee of the day (special parking and recognition)

Extended lunches

Not Feasible

Bonus at Christmas

Free membership to Sam's Warehouse Club

Provide parking for staff & faculty & have students park on perimeter of campus

No copay if prescriptions are filled in clinic

Reserved parking

Single rose (during blooming season)

Free clinic services

State Mandated

Wellness day

Mardi Gras Holiday

2 days off during Spring Break

Extra paid day at Christmas

Few extra hours of leave time each month

1/2 day off on Wednesday

Better insurance premiums

USM Mediation Pilot Program

Department of Human Resources & Office of Affirmative Action/EEO

What is mediation? Mediation is the more commonly known terminology for "Alternative

Dispute Resolution." Mediation offers USM students and employees an alternative to resolving

grievances, complaints or concerns without having to access a formal university procedure.

Mediation doesn't replace the option to file a grievance; it merely provides an alternative route to

a mutually agreed-upon resolution to conflict.

Why offer this option? Mediation will allow persons the option to resolve their differences in a non-threatening, non-administrative setting. In many situations where conflict exists, the parties involved merely need a safe place, with a neutral facilitator, to reach their own agreements about how to interact with each other effectively. Mediation will not replace the option to file a grievance. In fact, if mediation fails to reach a mutually satisfactory solution, either party may move forward with a formal grievance process.

What actually happens in a mediation session? Mediation typically involves only three persons: the two persons involved in a conflict, and the neutral third party, or mediator. The mediator serves as "referee" and as a facilitator. S/he will guide the process to completion and will keep the session on target. Typically, a mediation session will give both parties a chance to state their views, with the mediator asking clarification questions along the way that will lead toward areas in which the two parties find mutual agreement. Mediation sessions are often a controlled 'give and take,' with the ultimate goal to have both parties mutually agree to abide by certain guidelines that they, with the help of the mediator, reach themselves.

Who are the mediators? Nineteen employees have agreed to participate in training that will be offered November 8, at which time they will be available, when called upon, to mediate disputes. They represent a diversity of gender, race, employee groups and USM campus locations. Every effort will be made to achieve total impartiality between the mediator and the parties involved in the dispute. All participants must agree to maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the mediation process. Mediators are listed on the back of this handout.

How do I access this service? Contact either the Department of Human Resources or the Office of Affirmative Action/EEO for help in determining if a conflict or dispute is appropriate for mediation. Mediation will also be offered, when appropriate, during the course of a grievance process either in the Human Resources Department or in the Office of Affirmative Action/EEO.