

# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

## Approved Staff Council Minutes

October 3, 2000

Speaker: Gerry Parish, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) representative.

Ms. Parish gave us a talk about the CHIP program. The program is for lower income or single parent families. If anyone is interested, he or she can contact Human Resources for a brochure.

Speaker: Linda McFall, Director of Human Resources and Ginger Sanders, Benefit Specialist,

Human Resources

Fringe Benefits Open Enrollment Highlights were reviewed. Please review your check stub to determine what plans you currently carry. You may find the USM Fringe Benefit Summary on the web at [www.hr.usm.edu](http://www.hr.usm.edu)

### 1.0 Call to Order

President Townsend called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

The following members were present: Victoria Adams, Rusty Anderson, Joan Brashears, Bradley Bridges, Kim Busche, Kalin Butirich, Melissa Carpenter, Shannon Davis, John Green, Lin Harper, John Hayman, Mary Ann Iverson, David Kinsey, Faye Mallette, Janeal McKee, Charlene McMillin, Connie Morgan, Jessie Person, Jan Roberts, Susan Sanders, Mary Surnrall, Tracy Townsend, Dick Vogel, and Ronnie Williamson.

### 2.0 Adoption of Agenda

Addition 8.3 Staff Convocation. Agenda adopted as amended.

### 3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Charlene McMillin for Terry Bethea, Janeal McKee for Jennifer Blalock, Susan Sanders for Polly Odom, Eric Jude Hatcher for Pam Posey, Faye Mallette for Ruby Waits, and John Hayman for Sam Williams.

The following members were absent without representation: Ann Billings, Mike Giles, Larry McMickle, and Veda Spencer.

#### 4.0 Approval of Minutes

September minutes were approved as written.

#### 5.0 Officers' Reports

##### 5.1 President's Report – Tracy Townsend

###### President's Report

September 5, 2000

###### September 7 Meetiniz with Dr. Fleming

We discussed.– bi-weekly pay, flexible benefits package, morale, 2.5 GPA increases for dependants of staff, staff charges, capital campaign, compensation study. Dr. Gilbert brought in newspapers from the area about school systems being charized, for their overtime recording processes.

###### Seotember 8 Cabinet

. Faculty and Staff will have separate convocations in the fall semester and will have one combined in the Spring. This will allow each group to discuss issues related to their needs.

. Awards week, will be around the first week of April. We will have Employee Appreciation Day on Halloween Day in the fall. This year that will be on Tuesday. Offices are invited to dress up, as well as Employees.

. USM received the Carnegie Classification, which distinguishes us as a doctorate–research institution,

. Dr. Fleming stated that money from departments or foundation monies cannot be used to purchase tickets for dinners to honor individual people. If there is a banquet, that money must come from your pocket, not the University.

. PeopleSoft should be upgraded to 8.0 next summer. Admissions went live on Tuesday, September 12. That go-live went fine. No problems.

. Bi-weekly pay: Graduates are upset because they have to work 6 weeks before receiving a paycheck, and they would like to get paid on a bi-weekly basis.

. Tuesday/Wednesday – IHL fair in Jackson

. September 14 – 1:30, wire cutting in front of Bolton Hall,

. October 4 – Gulf Park ground breaking

. October 6 – 4:00, ground breaking for athletic complex

\* ASB will do presentation at Expanded Cabinet on October 6. Mr. And Ms. USM elections start next week. Angela Gray is the new Ms. Southern.

September 8 Meeting with Dr. Gilbert

Met with Dr. Gilbert about bi-weekly pay and staff convocation. I questioned (again) the process of biweekly and if we HAD to do this and the questions and concerns from staff that I have heard.

September 14 MASCO. Jackson State University

Senator Alice Hardin and Commissioner Toni Lavzell were present at the meeting'. Senator Hardin is very upset that Higher Education is getting the brunt of the cuts. She stated that we need to, be very open, 'rs to senators about insurance so that they will get the picture that something has to be done. Dr Lavzell said that revenues are increasing, but not as much as we thought they would and there have been commitments made in the near future– and that is why we are having a hard time right now

What alternatives do we have to boost moral! .- \nvthinL, that doesn't cost money LMASCO did a proposal to have the 2.0 GPA reinstated for dependant students. where does that stand? Dr Layzell said that the board is highly against that and Layzell will have to talk to University Presidents to see their stance on the issue

September 15 Cabinet

Please plan to attend both convocations, one for faculty, September 25 and one for staff, October 2.

Format will be an introduction of the program, President briefing, panel set-up with VPs and

President Fleming, then we will move into town meeting type questions. Chairs of each division will

moderate the session.

State budget committee hearings – 2001–02, hearings September 27th. Should hear decisions in late

October, early November.

First home game, September 30, Demolition of field house should start soon.

Joint Chief of staff on campus for home game.

Gulf Park – beginning construction of library and classroom building. Ground breaking October 4.

Higher Education Fair – usually about 6500 high school student attend. Great job by Student Affairs

and Recruitment.

A Retirement Community is being discussed – more later.

Mike Forester and Barbara Bolton will be co-chairs of the United Way campaign. The campaign

kicks off October 29 and the goal is \$105,000.

September 15

Meet with Dr. Henry, Dr. Harris, Dr. Gilbert, and Sherry Laughlin briefly after Cabinet to discuss the convocation process and any concerns.

September 19: Meeting with Dr. Fleming

Met with Dr. Fleming, all VPs, Executive committees of faculty senate, staff council, and AOP and other key administrators.

We WILL go to bi-weekly pay. The transition check will be increased to 75% of 160 hours instead of 75% of 80 hours, We are not to pay interest on that money and it is not obligated for payment until we leave the University. There are 800 employees already on bi-weekly and the University felt changing them to monthly would be more of a detriment than changing the 380 to bi-weekly. The rationale for this process is that non-exempt employees MUST be paid hourly, The system must be changed to account for overtime pay, and to pay employees on an hourly basis.

Timesheets should be turned in on the day they are due (NO LATER) or Dr. Fleming will be calling you to see why they are not there.

September 22: Cabinet

There will be a 6.4 million dollar cut by January in financial aid.

Bi-weekly pay, we misunderstood cash flow of employees, We are giving them 160 hours transition check to allow them to get ahead from the beginning. Employees can deposit the check and write another check to pay it back immediately, they can hold it until they know they won't need it, or they can use it. Mike Espey is suing 39 schools for this same issue.

Master planning meeting – November 3, Lynn Craig has received information from committee and will make recommendations that will be posted on the web

Rumors on technology are not based on fact, Wireless vs- wired--- you cannot get anywhere without wires. You must have the wires in place to be able to access the straight. connections. Cellularphone contract is not costing USM anything- they will just provide the service. Internet 2 is not going to cost USM money for up to two years- PeopleSoft is working under budget.

State law says all IHL approved regulations should be published 1) campus newspaper, 2) city newspaper. 3) bulletin boards So if you see regulations posted (i.e. parking regs), you know why.

Mr. USM is Amonde Younger

Ms. USM is Chasattee Greenfield

September 25: Faculty Convocation

Many issues were discussed from promotion and tenure, top-heavy administration, OTP, traffic signs, morale, and bi-weekly pay. Money used for new traffic signs was money that could not be used for anything else, money going to OTR from student tuition is going there because of the need to increase technology on campus. Faculty are not planning to go to bi-weekly pay.

What are the PeopleSoft requirements? All new Pentiums are compatible and usable and Apple computers are being looked at.

18 tenure track faculty positions have been lost; they were positions not filled. 17 staff positions were cut, they were all filled positions.

September 27: Honorary DeLyree Committee

Meet to discuss an Honorary Degree for Spring Commencement.

September 29: Cabinet

If anyone has agenda items for Cabinet please let Dr. Harris know prior to meetings.

Dr. Fleming would like to meet with Staff Council every 2–3 months.

Dr. Fleming was told by the commissioners office to ask for \$4.9 million for new funds and they have done so. One point six million will be for substitute funding and faculty enhancements. There is rumor that we will take 5% cut at the end of this year and 5% cut in next budget year. If we are asked to do this, we will ask IHL to dip into the rainy day fund or other funds. We can also dip into our fund balance, which we don't want to do, but will if we need to, with the assurance that the stat will help reimburse that fund.

We have been given Leon Eubanks property and a committee is being established to discuss the best use for the facility.

We are trying to save opportunities for people who work a second job on campus to be allowed to do so. More as we have new information.

Financial Affairs is having some turn over and with new employees in place there has been opposition that new rules are being made and not being advertised to USM employees. These rules are actually rules that have been in place that are now being carried out. Please bear with the staff in Financial Affairs and refer to HR website for rules and regulations that you have question about.

November 3, Shoemaker Square will be dedicated at 3:00, Heart Walk is October 21 if you are interested in participating. October 6, Expanded Cabinet, Room C 10:00.

The elected University Research Council lifted policy regarding summer faculty program. The new rule is that summer faculty can apply and get salary of an assistant professor (\$7500).

October 2: Staff Convocation

Moderated the Staff Convocation

President Townsend commented on several issues from her report.

Staff members need to correspond with their legislators. Seven percent of seventy percent of our insurance is paid out to retirees.

We don't want that stopped, but now is the time for the retirees to be put on a separate policy. We need to have another legislature meeting in October rather than after the legislature session so we can voice our concerns.

Dr. Fleming has asked to come to the December meeting of Staff Council.

An English professor, Leon Eubanks, has donated some land and a committee is being set up to handle that land. They would like for a Staff Council member to be on that committee. President Townsend asked for volunteers.

Financial Affairs offices are enforcing policies. If anyone needs a copy of the policies you can go to the Human Resources web site.

November 3 is the dedication of the Tom Shoemaker plaza. It will be held at 3:00 p.m.

The Staff Council would like to commend everyone that attended the staff convocation for his or her professionalism. Most staff feels that the convocation went very well. Some people felt very disappointed in the news coverage. Staff convocation was not reported accurately. President Townsend will report this to Mr. Bud Kirkpatrick.

President Townsend handed out a letter from Dr. Fleming. It is below:

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Interoffice Correspondence

President's Office

Box 5001

TO: Cabinet

FROM: Horace Fleming

DATE: September 28, 2000

RE: Communications

If we learned one thing from the biweekly payroll issue, it was that we did not communicate the change effectively to those who were impacted the most. We must make appropriate changes to make sure our colleagues are informed properly, regardless of the issue or impact.

I am asking the University Relations office to be the clearinghouse for materials that are used to communicate change, crisis, new processes and procedures, guidelines, notifications of all types, and other conditions. Your need may be a complete plan or a single form or personal letter. Regardless, the University Relations office will work with you to meet your need for thorough and complete communication and follow-up.

Please contact Bud Kirkpatrick, Assistant to the President for University Relations. He and his staff will provide guidance and direction in these matters. Timing is one of the critical factors in communication, and you should allow as much time as possible for University Relations to do their part.

Thank you.

5.2 President-Elect's Report – Mary Sumrall

USM Staff Council President-Elect's Report

October 3, 2000

MASCO (Mississippi Association of Staff Council Organizations) meeting in Jackson with Tracy Townsend and Connie Morgan.

September 15, 2000: Faculty Senate

Attended the very lively and interesting Faculty Senate meeting on Friday, September 15, which lasted from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The Faculty Senate voted unanimously to support the non-exempt staff

in their efforts regarding the conversion to bi-weekly payroll. One comment was made that their efforts to "fight" this conversion when faculty are converted would be less effective if they did not support staff at this time. Several faculty members added that the real issue is the low salaries of some staff.

Parking issues continue to concern faculty. Faculty Senate will vote in October regarding a resolution condemning University Police's blatant disregard of their resolution passed last year stating that parking tickets would be written the first day of the semester. Also, the ticket writers are now under Dr. Gilbert's supervision and are not a part of University Police.

The Faculty Senate suspended the rules and voted on a resolution presented by Art Kaul that the state Faculty Senates organization take action regarding salaries and that the faculty at the institutions of higher learning want consistent, annual salary increases.

Most of the meeting was spent deciding on issues the faculty want Dr. Fleming and the vice presidents to address at the convocation on Monday, September 25. Those issues are:

- 1 . The impact of the increasing cost of technology on teaching positions
2. Tenure/promotion guidelines
3. Tendency of administration to exclude faculty from decision-making process and communications
4. Update on the University's progress in terms of the strategic plan
5. Appointment of faculty elected by the faculty to decision-making committees
6. Report on how technology has improved teaching
7. increasing size of administration

It became evident that many issues the Faculty Senate and Staff Council are dealing with are similar.

#### September 19, 2000: Bi-Weekly Payroll Conversion

Attended a meeting with the Executive Committees of the Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and Association of Office Professionals and administrators concerning bi-weekly payroll conversion. A proposal was presented by the administration whereby the transition check paid to staff would be increased from 80 hours to 160 hours. Members of these organizations were instructed to talk with their various constituencies and give feedback to the administration regarding this proposal.

#### 5.1 Assignment of Action Items – Mary Sumrall

Mary Sumrall moved that the rules be suspended in order to consider an action item that must be considered in a timely manner. Motion passed. The action item stated as follows: Regarding the transition check for the biweekly conversion, I request Staff Council to write a letter for the staff stating that the check we are receiving is "interest free and is not required to be paid back before a person's last day of employment." Also, I request that Staff Council hire an attorney to ensure us, that our wording is correct and that there is no way the Administration can require us to pay back the transition check before our last day of employment. Staff Council voted against hiring a lawyer to write a letter. President Townsend will have Dr. Lynda Gilbert and Lee Gore prepare a letter stating that the transition check is interest free and will not have to be paid back until the employee leaves the University. Dr. Fleming will also sign the letter. Staff Council moved to have the letter prepared.

#### 6.0 Old Business

#### 7.0 Committee Reports

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

No report

#### 7.2 Legislative – Charlene McMillin, Chair

Charlene, President Townsend and Faculty Senate President Sherry Laughlin have been discussing the legislative day in October.

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

No report

### 7.4 University Relations – Jennifer Blalock, Chair

No report

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

There are many Expanding Excellence workshops with many attendees. If anyone is interested in volunteering to teach, please contact Lin (Lin.Harper@usm.edu).

### 7.6 Other Committee Reports

#### Student Life Committee – Charlene McMillin, Chair

A program will be held in November to get the feedback of the students.

#### Master Plan Committee – Rusty Anderson, Chair

The next meeting will be November 16 at 2:30 p.m.

#### Parking Appeals – David Kinsey, Chair

The parking committee met on Thursday, September 21. We had a total of seventy-eight tickets. Fifty-eight tickets were upheld and twenty were dismissed.

#### Parking Task Force – Polly Odom, Chair

No report

## 8.0 New Business

### 8.1 Christmas Party

Kim Busche volunteered to chair the Christmas Party. The following council members volunteered to assist her: Joan Brashears, Mary Ann Iverson, Shannon Davis, and Victoria Adams.

## 8.2 Proposal

President Townsend feels that the staff are in a position to regain some of the benefits we have lost. Below is a list of suggested benefits she has received; if you have others, please e-mail her those suggestions to present.

Staff/Faculty charging

More classes, more hours

Dependent tuition scholarship increased

Equity pay, level to being hired

Extra vacation days

Free parking

Free Payne Center

Four day work week

2.0 GPA for dependents

## 8.3 Staff Convocation

Some staff expressed disappointment and felt like nothing has changed. The Gulf Coast lost the connection and regained it toward the end. Those employees believe that the staff does need to have some benefits reinstated. When Dr. Fleming was hired, the Gulf Coast campus remodeled an office for him, and he stated that he would be there once a week. He has never occupied that office. The classification system is a real problem for every staff member. If someone leaves the University, then someone is hired at more money. The positive thing is that the administrators came and listened. Staff Council members now think that it is time to press

forward and try to get something back and focus on improving morale.

## 9.0 Announcements

### 9.1 Open Enrollment, October 16–18, 2000

### 9.2 Travel Plans for November Meeting

We will be traveling to the Gulf Coast for our November meeting. If you want to ride in a van or follow the vans to the Gulf Coast, be at the Physical Plant at 7:30 a.m.

### 9.3 November Meeting

We will be traveling to the Gulf Coast. Bob Lowe, Director of Food Services, will be our guest speaker, and we will have a tour of the Culinary Arts School.

USM Women's Caucus, October 5, 2000, at 12:15 p.m.

## 10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Connie Morgan

Recording Secretary

10-3-00