

****Approved****

The University of Southern Mississippi
Staff Council Minutes
January 15, 2002

1.0 Call to Order

President Sumrall called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

The following members were present: Rusty Anderson, Russell Beard, Joan Brashears, Cheryl Burnette, Kim Busche, Melissa Carpenter, Mike Giles, John Green, John Hayman, Kathy Hayman, Mary Ann Iverson, Robin Johnson, David Kinsey, Faye Mallette, Charlene McMillin, Kenton McNeese, Connie Morgan, Polly Odom, Pam Posey, Jan Roberts, Susan Sanders, CJ Sims, Arlin Steen, Mary Sumrall, and Sam Williams.

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

Add 8.2 Election Committee. Agenda was adopted as amended.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Bradley Bridges by Rusty Anderson, Cindy Burnett by Robin Johnson, Kalin Butirich by Kathy Hayman, Shannon Davis by Charlene McMillin, Carol Dunaway by CJ Sims, Lin Harper by Sam Williams, Ronnie Williamson by John Green.

The following members were absent with no representation: Jessie Person and Veda Spencer

4.0 Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the December meeting were amended in the 4th paragraph of the president's report to read "The IHL Board has received notice from Safety Service Associates, Inc." The December minutes were approved as amended.

5.0 Officers' Reports

5.1 President's Report – Mary Sumrall

Monday, December 17, 2001, Cabinet

The budget was the main topic of discussion. We don't know how much the cut to IHL will be, and we don't know what USM's share of the cuts to IHL will be, but we know any additional cuts will be serious. The vice presidents will meet the week after the Christmas holidays to propose several scenarios to present to IHL

and to key legislators regarding the effects of various funding levels and tuition increases on the budget at USM. Dr. Joe Paul reported that by 7:00 a.m. Monday, December 17, 91 percent of all grades had been entered through SOAR. I presented the Staff Council's resolution regarding a spring break the week of March 11-15, 2002. Dr. Lucas indicated that we have a generous holiday policy as well as generous vacation and sick leave policies. He will discuss this resolution at the January Presidents' Council meeting because he agrees there should be some consistency throughout the state regarding a spring break.

Monday, January 7, 2002, Cabinet – Canceled

Thursday, January 10, 2002, MASCO, Jackson

Representatives from all eight universities except Alcorn State met at Jackson State with Dr. Phil Pepper, State Economist, to discuss the financial situation in Mississippi. The state has serious economic problems. We have lost one in seven manufacturing jobs in the last two years. Many of the workers who lost jobs are uneducated and unskilled. Closings of businesses mean less revenue for the state. Because of commitments made a few years ago and an election coming up, many legislators want to keep the commitments to public school teachers; that means that other state agencies will be cut. IHL will probably see additional cuts. He was told that university employees are not taken as seriously as state employees are because "state employees march on the Capitol and university employees march on the presidents." Dr. Pepper suggested the state needs to make changes in adult work force training programs. He also said that a two percent raise for university employees in January 2003 won't help our budgets much because that money will come by lowering our operating and other budgets. If an employee is close to retirement, he recommends retiring and finding another job. MASCO approved preparing letters of support to change the GPA requirement from 2.5 to 2.0 for dependent scholarships and to allow for a probationary period. Also, at some institutions, if both spouses are university employees, their children get 100 percent tuition remission.

There is inconsistency among the institutions about days off for spring break and other holidays. MUW leaders proposed organizing all university employees to voice our concerns much as the teachers have done. MASCO leaders encouraged us to talk with local colleagues and contact our legislators when issues pertaining specifically to higher education are introduced in the Legislature.

Monday, January 14, 2002, Cabinet

It seems that every meeting focuses on our budget situation, which is very serious. Based on the recommendations of the Legislative Budget Committee, the cut to IHL may be around 16 percent if we receive no bridge money and if there is no tuition increase. There is also "talk" among legislators that they want to approve any tuition increases. Administrators are discussing several courses of action should this happen and are working with our legislators to prevent this severe cut. A bill has been introduced to create a universities' center on the Gulf Coast. The University of Mississippi and Itawamba Community College are working toward an agreement to create a "ninth" university in North Mississippi (in the Tupelo area). Dr. Lucas is proposing to the IHL Board in January that the new residence hall be named for Miss Oseola McCarty, and the Gates Foundation is naming a space in its new facility for Miss McCarty. We have six home football games scheduled this fall. The "In God We Trust" posters are currently being placed in buildings on campus. The July financial reports are now available on PeopleSoft, and we should be current by the end of February. Campus academic program reviews are complete, and the IHL Board will consider marked programs at its February meeting. The SGA is planning a Government Day in February.

Presidential Search

I have spent several days reviewing applications for the presidency and have reviewed 27 applications at this time. The next meeting of the campus advisory committee is scheduled for January 24, and we will begin making our short list to submit to the IHL Board search committee.

5.2 President Elect – Pam Posey

There was no Faculty Senate meeting in December. I attended both December commencement exercises on December 14 for Mary. I also attended the MASCO meeting with Mary at Jackson State University on Thursday, January 10. The representatives from MUW proposed that we organize ourselves to be more vocal at the Capitol, hopefully drawing more attention to our needs. There wasn't support from some of the representatives for this action, however. A set of common issues could not be determined. This is a sensitive issue and needs to be addressed in a more in-depth manner. For those interested in locating IHL policies, visit their Web site.

5.3 Assignment of Action Items – None

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Spring Break Resolution

Dr. Lucas will discuss our suggestion of a spring break holiday for staff at the next Presidents' Council meeting. This holiday doesn't apply to faculty because they already have time off for spring break, and most faculty are on a nine-month contract.

6.2 Staff Council Benefits Request

It is now approved for staff to take USM correspondence courses as part of the six free credit hours allowed with the faculty/staff scholarship. Registration for these is done through Continuing Education or by going online to SOAR.

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution & Bylaws – Kathy Hayman – no report

7.2 Legislative – Rusty Anderson

Dates have been set for Legislative Updates by our area legislators. These meetings will be held at the Lake Terrace Convention Center beginning with a breakfast at 7:15 a.m., followed by the program at 7:30 a.m. The schedule is as follows:

February 11 Rep. Mike Lott

February 25 Rep. Percy Watson

March 11 Rep. Joey Fillingane

March 25 Sen. Ron Farris

April 8 Sen. Tom King

April 22 Rep. Lee Jarrell Davis

7.3 Salaries and Benefits – Jan Roberts

Russ Willis is researching dependent scholarships. There will be a report on this at the next meeting.

7.4 University Relations – Susan Sanders/Sam Williams

Action Item #74 – Parking for temporary employees is still being worked on.

7.5 Technology and Training – Lin Harper

If you are responsible for budget training, please sign up and attend the educational sessions. This is a different process than last year. The budget information is up-to-date and online through July 2001. Budget information should be current by the end of February.

7.6 Other Committee Reports

A. Parking Appeals Committee – David Kinsey

There were a total of 44 appeal forms accepted and presented to the court. Number of appeals noted that wished to be present were 15 – 5 upheld and 10 denied. Number of appeals noted that did not wish to be present were 29 – 12 upheld and 17 denied.

B. Transportation Committee – Polly Odom

The Transportation Committee met on Tuesday, December 4, 2001. A request was received from the College of The Arts for six reserved spaces at the PAC for loading/unloading. The committee members discussed the request, and a suggestion was made to invite Dean Stringer to a committee meeting. The Staff Council's decision not to endorse the charging of visitors to park on campus, the charging of departments for event parking, and the charging of contractors for the staging of construction was discussed with no further comments at this time. A suggestion was made to issue visitor passes to University departments for issuance to visitors. Further discussion will take place relative to this suggestion. The committee members voted to change the Arthell Kelly Hall lot to a commuter lot in order to help eliminate some of the traffic congestion in that area. The extension of the new residence hall lot will begin in January. A total of 2,037 tickets were issued in November. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 15.

C. Campus Master Plan Committee – Rusty Anderson

A subcommittee is being formed to locate a professional planner as our consultant. Funding for the consultant is a wrinkle that needs to be ironed out. The model that was originally put together is no longer on display. The question was asked if our last consultant was a professional planner; the answer was he is not, he is an architect.

D. Student Life Center – Kathy Hayman

Today's speaker was Larry Albert of Albert and Associates, PA, architects for the Student Life Center project, who was accompanied by Christian Landry. Bids for this project will go out this spring, most probably in April. A large amount of research has been done to bring us to where we are now. Before a master plan was produced, the base committee looked at the current union facility, visited other campuses that have added a new student union, and met with students at great length. This project will bring a 250,000-square-foot addition to the current building. Construction will hopefully begin in July of this year. Phase one will take approximately two years. A slide presentation of the façade of the new building and its intended location was given. Mr. Albert opened the floor for questions.

- Was the old creek bed considered when the ground level service drive was designed?

A very in-depth team looked at all locations during the research phase. Soil samples, area, and grading were taken into consideration.

- How will this project affect the quality of life for residents of Scott Hall, not only during the construction phase but when the building is finished? When the project is completed, Scott Hall will be a very convenient place to live. There will be a bridge that connects Scott Hall to the Student Life Center. Lorinda Krhut, director of student housing, has been on the base committee for this project. The quality of student life in that area will be maintained in the best manner possible during construction.

- What direction will delivery trucks use when entering and leaving campus?

It is planned that they will come in off of 4th Street at the new dorm, turn west at the new field house, and enter the service drive between the new field house and Scott Hall. They will exit headed west and turn north in front of the Thames Polymer Science Building, returning to 4th Street.

- Has handicap access been considered?

The new building ADA codes will be adhered to completely. During the construction phase, several temporary ramps will be constructed to assist handicapped individuals maneuvering around the construction area.

- Where is the money coming from for this project?

Student fees, monies from the state funding, and savings from the respective auxiliary budgets that will be housed in the new Student Life Center.

- Have upkeep and extra staffing been considered for budgeting purposes after the building is finished? Yes.

- How many construction jobs will this bring into the area? With a project of this size, there should be a lot of local people employed to help complete it. This project is being done in several phases and could take between five to six years to completely finish.

E. Sexual Assault/Harassment Committee – Joan Brashears

There was no meeting in December.

8.0 New Business

8.1 List of Concerns from Staff Member

The staff council received a list of concerns from an anonymous staff member, which pointed out some suggestions that Staff Council could do to help improve the working conditions for staff at

USM. In the discussion of this list it was determined that ensuring that all staff know that they can forward their concerns to us was very important. Staff Council discussed sending a survey to staff. Everyone decided that the top three concerns would most probably be pay raises, insurance, and morale. However, it is important that Staff Council receive feedback from all staff on any issue of concern, either by signed letter or anonymously. The point was made that some staff may not know how to contact us. Any comment or concern can be mailed to the Staff Council, Post Office box 10027, or by contacting any Staff Council member. One point made was not all staff have the availability to send or receive e-mail messages or go online to read the minutes on the Web site. It was decided hard copies of each month's minutes would be made available for posting to departments who had staff who fell into this category. These could be posted by the time clock so that all employees would be kept informed. There was discussion on trying to resolve the rift between staff and faculty. It was pointed out that most faculty do not treat staff as second-class citizens. President Sumrall reminded Staff Council that as the voice of the staff we are to work with the administration and not against it to get things done to improve the working conditions at USM.

8.2 Election Committee

The election committee will consist of the following Staff Council members: John Hayman, chair; Charlene McMillin; Robin Johnson; Russell Beard; John Green; Ronnie Williamson; CJ Sims. Rusty Anderson graciously offered to send John Hayman a plethora of information concerning Staff Council elections.

9.0 Announcements

Southern Miss graduate and past quarterback Jeff Kelly was awarded the Woody Hayes National Male Scholar Athlete for Division 1A by the Northwestern University and NW Sertoma Club of Columbus, OH.

Information from OTR sent out on campuswide e-mail is very important. Individuals should take the time to read each notice.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Kim Busche
Recording Secretary
January 15, 2002