

July 2, 2002

Dr. Shelby Thames, President of USM, was the guest speaker at the regular meeting of Staff Council on July 2, 2002. Dr. Thames asked that everyone (including visitors) introduce himself or herself. Dr. Thames informed us that this was the third year of budget reductions to USM. This year 18 staff positions were lost due to the cuts. USM will have to set aside \$3 million in case of midyear budget cuts. Even with the tuition increase, higher education is still a bargain at USM. In 1995 with MTAG and a 2.5 GPA, the cost of attending USM was \$1,000 for fall and spring semesters. With the proposed tuition increase, the cost will be \$1,028 for fall and spring semesters. This is the cost of one cell phone bill. Dr. Thames said that his guess would be that the tuition increase would be approved by IHL. When approved, the tuition increase will generate approximately \$1.8 million per year.

On Wednesday, July 3, 2002, Dr. Thames will hold a press conference to name the individuals who will be filling very important positions on campus. A lot of thought has gone into the appointments. He encouraged everyone to show support for the new administrators. In order to save the University money, Dr. Thames will be moving into the USM presidential home. He will not be having an inaugural ball, but he will be having a reception at the president's home.

Mr. Ray Sims of L & A Construction, a big supporter of USM, will be hosting a "shindig" at his ranch July 20. Political leaders from the Gulf Coast, Jackson, and Hattiesburg will be among the invited guests. This is being done to help USM make new friends across the state.

On August 31, USM will host Jackson State for a football game. Dr. Thames is encouraging everyone to attend this game. Even though this is an in-state rival, USM should work on leaving a positive first impression. This will leave a lasting impression on the attendees of the game and USM.

If anyone is interested in purchasing polymer paint, you can contact Mr. Rocky Pryor with Southern Diversified Products. The flat base paint is competitively priced. USM receives a portion of the profits on the sales of polymer paint.

1.0 Call to Order

President Sumrall called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

The following members were present: Rusty Anderson, Susan Blackwell, Joan Brashears, Bradley Bridges, Cheryl Burnette, Melissa Carpenter, Shannon Davis, Sally Donovan, Carol Dunaway, Tommy Dye, John Green, Lin Harper, John Hayman, Kathy Hayman, Keri Hensarling, Myra Herndon, Mary Ann Iverson, Robin Johnson, Kenton McNeese, Pam Posey, Jan Roberts, Ray Scott, Mary Sumrall, Mary Virgil, Trisha Wilbanks, and Sam Williams.

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with an addition to Old Business under 6.1 – Election of 2002–2003 Officers and the deletion under Other Committees of 7.6 G – Nomination Committee.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Kim Busche by Cheryl Burnette, Mike Giles by Rusty Anderson, Charmaine Hill by Frankie Royals, Polly Odom by Mary Sumrall, and Arlin Steen by Mary Ann Steen.

The following members were absent without representation: David Kinsey, Larry McMickle, C J Sims, and Frances Sudduth.

4.0 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June regular meeting were approved with minor corrections.

5.0 Officer's Reports

5.1 President's Report – Mary Sumrall

Monday, June 17, 2002, Cabinet

The Cabinet met as usual, and Dr. Thames asked Sue Hubble, President of the Faculty Senate, how the faculty would feel about

having July 5th off. She said there would be no problem as long as the staff was given a holiday also. Dr. Thames said we would take July 4th and 5th off as holidays. Human Resources will notify faculty, staff, and students. University budgets were cut an average of six percent, with the academic areas less than six percent and nonacademic areas more than six percent. Fifty positions were eliminated; of that number, 18 were filled. Faculty will have to teach more classes with more students. Dr. Thames plans to ask the Board of Trustees this month to close the gap in USM's tuition to that of Mississippi State. If approved, USM would generate an additional \$1.8 million in revenue. Provost Andy Griffin reported that the deans would discuss the restructuring of the core curriculum proposed by the Academic Council. The changes in the core would cost about \$250,000 more each year. What has been happening is that courses have been added in the core curriculum, but some obsolete courses have not been deleted from the core. There are many athletic camps at USM this summer. The first floor of the new field house should be completed by June 28. Preview will be held tomorrow, so all employees should remember to treat students well. Eventually the administration wants to require all students to have E-mail accounts. Enrollment in freshmen courses at Gulf Coast are good; they have received approximately 140 applications for summer and fall, and they should be able to admit the targeted 75 students easily.

Thursday, June 20, 2002, Board of Trustees Meeting

Sue Hubble and I attended the monthly Board meeting. The Budget and Financial Affairs agenda was considered first to accommodate Board members who had to leave for a funeral. The Board approved operating budgets at the eight state institutions, approved salary increase guidelines for midyear raises, talked about 2004 budget priorities which will be discussed at the July meeting, and discussed an additional tuition increase for USM and Jackson State. The commissioner recommended an increase of \$150 per semester for Jackson State and \$85 per semester for USM effective spring semester 2003. Ms. Garrett made a substitute motion that USM be given a \$184 per semester increase. Mr. Crawford asked that action be delayed until the July meeting. Ms. Newton made a motion that this item be considered at the June meeting and had support for her motion. However, several Board members said they were in support of an additional tuition increase for USM and Jackson State, but they

felt that there was no pressing need to vote until the July meeting. Ms. Newton withdrew her motion, so the Board will vote on the tuition increase in July. Those expressing openly their support were Ms. Garrett, Ms. Newton, Mr. Ross, Mr. Colbert, Mr. Nicholson, and Dr. Davidson. Mr. Klumb again stated his concern that the number of scholarships being given should be reduced, especially out-of-state tuition scholarships. He also strongly supports getting a “handle” on the growth of non-teaching employees and wants this to be a priority in 2004. The other business considered by the Board was fairly routine, and the Board went into executive session to discuss a legal issue dealing with Point Cadet. I left before the Board discussed the salary increases for university presidents.

Thursday, June 27, 2002, Meeting with President Shelby Thames

Pam and I met with Dr. Thames at 11 a.m. We thanked him for the July 5th holiday. We presented the Staff Council request that dependents of employees be given a 100 percent tuition remission when both parents are employed at the University. Since we did not know the number of employees who would be affected by this, Dr. Thames will check with Human Resources. He said that if the number is not too large, he didn't see why we couldn't do this at USM as is done at Ole Miss. We discussed more time off for staff during the rest of the summer or during the break. Then we presented the eight proposals, which Staff Council approved in April 2001. Dr. Thames is agreeable to looking into some of them, such as staff being able to charge if we have the capability to do this and using a graduated tuition remission plan for employee dependents. He likes the idea of rewarding loyal employees and thinks that it would help morale if longtime employees received a higher percentage of tuition remission for their dependent children. Some proposals have been taken care of, such as charging textbooks at Textbook Services, and he is not sure about our changing the law so that staff can choose an optional retirement program. He has concern about providing benefits which entail taking time off during the day to use the Payne Center, etc., because he feels this conveys the idea that staff don't have enough work to do. If that is the case, then we are overstaffed and can cut back on positions. Also, some staff would be able to take the time off, and others would not. He was very open to the ideas presented. He stressed the importance of being customer friendly to students, parents, other employees, etc., and asked that we help get that message to

everyone. If we encounter rude employees, we should talk with their supervisors.

Monday, July 1, 2002, Cabinet and Expanded Cabinet

I will summarize both meetings since Expanded Cabinet was a repeat of the Cabinet meeting. The University received \$62,663,771 in external contracts and grants this year, \$12 million more than last year. The decision about the additional tuition increase for USM and Jackson State was delayed until the July Board meeting. Dr. Thames will hold a press conference Wednesday, July 3, to announce several appointments. The season ticket sales for football are going well. The Cabinet discussed the number of scholarships given by the University as opposed to the number reported by State and Ole Miss. We feel that they report their numbers differently. Dr. Thames asked Dr. Paul to determine how they report their numbers since they have as many graduate students as USM and provide other scholarships also. Two final previews will be held July 9 and 13. Enrollment numbers for fall are level. The bid opening for the student life center will be held July 11; we are expecting a bid of \$27 million. This August is the 40th anniversary of USM's awarding its first doctoral degree. These students will be invited back to campus. Purchasing laws have changed, and the University has to go through the normal bidding process for items more than \$15,000; items less than \$3,500 require no bids. Faculty and staff will be offered two free tickets to the USM v. Illinois football game on September 7, and the University will also provide free tailgating. There will also be an ice cream social for faculty and staff held the end of July. Expanded Cabinet will meet only once a quarter, rather than monthly.

YEAR-END REPORT – STAFF COUNCIL PRESIDENT – 2001–2002

It has truly been a privilege and honor to serve as Staff Council President this year. My goal for the year has been to be as visible as possible and speak out in behalf of the staff and also to keep the Staff Council and all staff informed.

This has been a challenging year. It seems to be an unspoken rule that each President has only one crisis to deal with each year, and mine came a week and a half into my presidency during the time the Board of Trustees was discussing the extension of President

Fleming's contract. I am pleased that we let our voices be heard even though the outcome was not as we wished.

I am probably the only President of Staff Council who has served under three presidents in one year. I began the year with Dr. Horace Fleming as President, followed by Dr. Aubrey Lucas, and then served with Dr. Shelby Thames.

At the beginning of the year the officers met with administrators to present eight proposals which were approved during the previous year. Though we are not entirely pleased with the results, we can proudly announce that the staff is now allowed to charge textbooks and take correspondence courses as a free course (this concession was given since Continuing Education no longer offers noncredit courses). In addition, Dr. Thames is presently considering the request of Staff Council to provide 100 percent tuition remission for dependents when both parents are employed at the University. Some of the proposals can only be accomplished by changing state laws and Board policy. The officers were pleased with the support of administrators, but some issues are more complex and beyond their areas of responsibility.

This entire year the University has struggled with budget problems. The state's lagging economy and the wishful thinking of our legislators presented some challenges for higher education. Much discussion in many meetings dealt with our money situation and how we could improve it as well as handle the cuts to USM.

I have attended numerous Cabinet meetings and monthly Board of Trustees meetings as well as two MASCO meetings. I honestly will miss attending the monthly Board meetings because I enjoy the discussion and seeing how the Board makes decisions. In addition to the usual meetings, I have attended dedications, alumni breakfasts, presentations by the Office of Technology Resources, opening of a wellness/fitness lounge in the Payne Center, represented staff on the Eagle Walk, and attended press conferences. I represented staff at two commencements and thank Pam for filling in for me at the December commencement.

It was my privilege to serve on the search committee for our new President, and I spent many hours reviewing applications and meeting with the committee to prepare the brochure to "entice"

candidates and narrow down the list of finalists. I met with each candidate and later presided at the interviews for the three finalists, helped prepare data compiled from the evaluations of staff, and presented those data to the Board of Trustees. At those meetings Board members asked other questions about staff issues, and I tried to relay to the Board areas of concern for staff, such as salary, increased health insurance costs, PeopleSoft, and more work due to staff leaving and retiring with no additional compensation. Even though the schedule was very demanding, this was a learning experience for me. It was exciting to be a part of the selection of our President.

We have had a special working relationship with the President of the Faculty Senate this year. President Susan Hubble often spoke in support of the staff, and Pam and I traveled to Jackson to Board meetings with Dr. Hubble. We shared the cost of a vehicle, which helped the Staff Council budget tremendously.

I must thank Dr. Lucas for his support this year. He has understood my responsibilities in leading the Staff Council and has allowed me to be out of the office to represent staff because he knows that staff members are important to the operation of the University. Special thanks to Pam, Kim, and Cheryl, who are such congenial colleagues and who are willing to work hard for the staff. Thank all of you for your support of me this year. You have agreed to serve on various committees to guarantee a staff voice, and you have assisted whenever I asked, and I appreciate you.

5.2 President-Elect's Report – Pam Posey – no report

5.3 Assignment of Action Items – none.

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Election of 2002–2003 Officers

Ballots for the 2002–2003 Officers were distributed. After all members of Staff Council had voted, the ballots were collected and counted by John Hayman, chair of the Election Committee, and Rusty Anderson.

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution and By Laws – Kathy Hayman – no report

7.2 Legislative – Rusty Anderson – no report

7.3 Salaries and Benefits – Jan Roberts – no report

7.4 University Relations and Cultural Diversity – Sam Williams -- no report

7.5 Technology and Training – Lin Harper – no report

7.6 Other Committee Reports

A. Parking Appeals Committee – David Kinsey

Appeals noted:

Those present 37: 9 upheld and 28 denied

Those not present 44: 8 upheld and 36 denied

Total upheld 17, total denied 64

Of the 64 denied appeals, 22 citations were reduced fines at a total of \$1,020.00.

B. Transportation Committee – Polly Odom – no report

C. Master Plan – Rusty Anderson – no report

D. Student Life Center – Kathy Hayman

Bids will be opened soon.

E. Sexual Harassment Committee – Joan Brashears – no report

F. Election Committee – John Hayman

Welcome new Staff Council members: Susan Blackwell, Sally Donovan, Tommy Dye, Keri Hensarling, Myra Herndon, Charmaine Hill, Ray Scott Frances Sudduth, and Mary Virgil.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Transition of the President's Position

Mary Sumrall passed the Staff Council gavel to Pam Posey, 2002–2003 Staff Council President. She also presented Pam with a ceramic lighthouse to help her through the year ahead. President Posey presented a plaque and gavel to Mary Sumrall in appreciation of her outstanding performance as President of Staff Council for 2001–2002.

8.1a Committee Assignment Sheets

President Posey distributed Committee Assignment Sheets to all of the members and requested that members indicate which committees they would agree to serve on and to indicate if members would be willing to chair a committee.

8.1b Member Information List

President Posey distributed the current Staff Council Member Information List to all of the members. A couple of changes were requested by a couple of members. President Posey will make the corrections and redistribute the corrected member list at the August 6 meeting.

8.1c Meeting Dates

President Posey distributed a listing of this year's meeting dates.

8.1d Category Representative Selection

President Posey asked that members in their EEOC category to meet briefly at the end of the meeting to elect a representative from their category to be that category's EEOC Representative for 2002–2003.

8.2 Election of 2002–2003 Officers

The elected officers for 2002–2003 are Kenton McNeese as President–Elect, Kim Busche as Recording Secretary, and Susan Blackwell as Corresponding Secretary.

8.3 Mississippi State University Interium President Charles Lee's e-mail

A copy of an e-mail from Mississippi State University Interium President Charles Lee was distributed. This e-mail announced that employees of MSU would receive a four percent raise effective July 1, 2002. After discussion, it was decided that President Posey would immediately send USM President Thames a letter stating concern of the staff regarding this issue.

9.0 Announcements – no announcements

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 AM.

Cheryl Burnette for Kim Busche,
Recording Secretary
July 2, 2002