

Staff Council Minutes
The University of Southern Mississippi
March 7, 2006

1.0 Call to Order

President Horne called the meeting to order at 9:52 a.m.

The following members were present: Susan Bone, Tyia Brooks, Kim Busche, Kameron Dale, Michelle Fleming, Valerie Horne, Valerie Horne, Susan King, Karen Lott, Robert Lowe, Keith Mitchell, Pam Posey, Ray Stevens, and Mary Sumrall.

2.0 Adoption of Agenda

President Horne asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none. Motion to accept the agenda as written was made by Michelle Fleming and seconded by Susan King. Unanimously approved.

3.0 Recognition of Staff of the Month

Michael Funk of the Gulf Coast Research Lab was presented a certificate and gift certificates for being selected as February's Staff of the Month.

4.0 Guest Speaker - Dr. Patricia Joachim

Dr. Joachim thanked Staff Council for coming to the Gulf Coast campus. She recognized Michael Funk's wife, Mary, and his children who were in attendance. She also thanked Barbara Griffin for arranging for the Krispie Kreme Donuts.

Dr. Joachim expressed her great appreciation for staff who are the lifeblood of the university. The hard work and dedication of the staff at the Gulf Coast campus is what made it possible for the campus to open to students just six weeks after the storm. There is no possible way it could have been done without such determined and loyal dedication. All of the staff was affected by the storm with several losing everything they owned.

The Garden Park location is a temporary campus location until a permanent one can be selected. At this time the permanent location has not been decided on.

The reality of the situation is that USM Gulf Coast went from 330,000 square feet of education space to 50,000 square feet. The enrollment for fall was approximately 65 percent of what was expected before the storm. There was an increase in enrollment for the spring semester. The Garden Park Building had been vacant for five years and needed modification and cleaning. The Southern Miss Research Foundation purchased this building. One shining accomplishment is that with everything that has happened since Katrina, not one employee has been laid off - no one has lost his or her job.

Stennis had little damage compared to the other campus locations. There were staff and faculty who stayed in the buildings there during the storm who saved the day by moving valuable information and equipment when necessary.

The J. L. Scott Marine Science Center was destroyed. The Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs received major damage. The staff in Ocean Springs showed up the next day to assess the damage and began clean up even when they had no power, water, and had to cut their way to the campus.

We have been able to reopen after the storm and offer 28 bachelor's degrees, 23 master's degrees, one specialist degree, and five doctoral degrees.

The new coast campus will be larger and better than ever before. We are very excited about the opportunity.

Staff Council saw a PowerPoint presentation that showed before-and-after pictures relating to Hurricane Katrina. The floor was then opened to questions.

- ❖ What were enrollment figures? 1677 for fall 05, 1870 for spring 06.
- ❖ How many faculty and staff were affected by Hurricane Katrina? 128 Faculty and Staff lost their homes.
- ❖ What have you heard from students? Many of our students have had to live in their cars. A large number of students had to drop classes because they couldn't get here and no longer had a place to live. We have had students who are dropped off in the morning and have to stay all day until their ride can pick them up in the evening. One fortunate thing is that some of the students who have relocated to other areas are taking classes online.

Dr. Joachim thanked Staff Council again. She invited us all to take a tour of the facility after the meeting.

5.0 Phone Cards from the University of North Dakota Staff Senate

President Horne presented Dr. Joachim with 40 phone cards that were sent to us from the University of North Dakota Staff Senate. A list of the recipients of these phone cards was distributed to the council. Dr. Joachim thanked President Horne as well as the University of North Dakota Staff Senate for the gift.

6.0 Officer Reports

6.1 President's Report - Valerie Horne

6.1.1 Action Items -

New Action Item #117 concerning e-mail server problems was assigned to the Technology Committee. Donna Donegan addressed this situation. She advised that the server we currently have is old and can not handle the traffic. We have gone from 60,000 e-mails per day to over 200,000. The iTech Web page should have a daily report about

the status of the e-mail system. Homer Coffman is getting notifications out concerning the system.

6.1.2 Professional Development Workshops

Both of our professional development workshops were very good. We had 27 attend on the first day and 21 attend on the second day. The comments received were very good and those who attended felt it was very successful.

Becky Woodrick will have two more training sessions. A handout was given to Staff Council members concerning these.

6.1.3 Fleece Jackets

Our new order will arrive on March 10. We have really done well, and we should have a final amount of what we collected by the next meeting.

6.1.4 *Eagle's Eye*

David Tisdale did a wonderful job with the article in the *Eagle's Eye* about Staff Council. If you see him, please thank him.

6.1.5 Brochures

This project is frozen due to questions by the Proofreader. President Horne is working on this. They do look good and hopefully will be done soon.

6.1.6 Interest Inquiry Forms

The forms went out last week to the Staff. There seems to be a challenge with people getting the forms. The forms were on yellow paper. Names for these forms were obtained from Danny Montgomery. Kameron Dale will check to make sure all the names were obtained.

6.2 Secretary's Report - Kim Busche

6.2.1 Call for Proxies

John Burks by Ray Stevens, Melissa Carpenter by Mary Sumrall, Scott Carr by Kameron Dale, Steve Coleman by Donna Donegan, Margaret Firth by Susan Bone, Wynde Fitts by Michelle Fleming, Sharon Hughes by Tyia Brooks, Virginia Kittrell by Valerie Horne, Beverly McNeese by Robert Lowe, Vassie Owens by Karen Lott, Stacey Ready By Pam Posey, Tonia Shaw by Susan King, Toni Stringer by Kim Busche.

6.2.2 Minutes

If the challenges with e-mail continue, minutes will be sent by campus mail if necessary.

7.0 Unfinished Business

7.1 Unfilled Positions

We are still looking for people to fill our vacant positions.

8.0 Standing Committee Reports

8.1 Constitution and Bylaws - Ray Stevens

At the April meeting we will present a proposal concerning outsourced personnel. The subcommittee has met and the full committee needs to review their recommendation. We will send the final draft of the proposal out in advance so that all can review.

8.2 Legislative - John Burks and Margaret Firth - no report

8.3 Salaries and Benefits - Susan King

8.3.1 Action Item #115 - Loss of services at the counseling center.

The Southern Miss Counseling center currently sees staff and faculty members on a crisis basis only. Dr. Wyble advised that the center is a part of the division of Student Affairs and is there to support students. They currently do not have the funds or personnel to support the staff and faculty on a regular basis as well. However, will continue, as they always have, to handle faculty and staff crisis situations. Should a staff or faculty member need crisis services, they will not be released by the Southern Miss Counseling center until the crisis is resolved.

Employee Assistance Program - Human Resources was contacted and advised that we currently do not have an Employee Assistance Program. Human Resources will try to get one. Human Resources called Pine Grove recovery center to see what the cost would be to begin this program. We should hear about this by our next meeting.

8.3.2 Action Item #116 - Childcare reimbursement

Human Resources advised that childcare reimbursement works differently than medical reimbursement. You can not be reimbursed up front. The reimbursement must come after the bill is sent in to payroll. This generally takes a month. Human Resources has spoken directly to the employee who turned this action item in to make sure she understands the process. This action item is considered closed.

8.4 University Relations and Cultural Diversity - Mary Sumrall

The committee recommends that Action Item #114, regarding a drop box for time sheets for Financial Affairs, be closed. Financial Affairs has accommodated the staff by placing someone in the Union to receive time sheets on the Monday they are due.

Russ Willis has the information about the spouse tuition waiver, but I have been unable to contact him to determine if he has submitted the proposal to Dr. Thames.

The committee also met on Friday, February 24, to select the Staff of the Month. Mike Funk of Gulf Coast Research Laboratory was chosen from the four nominations. He will be recognized at the Staff Council meeting today.

The committee also recommends that the wording "No current Staff Council member will be eligible for the Staff of the Month

Award" be added to the guidelines. Please encourage your colleagues to submit nominations for this award.

8.5 Technology and Training - Steve Coleman

The Staff Council Web site now has new on a scrolling marquee. We need to make sure the information forms are available on the Web site. It seems to have been removed. Donna will check on this.

9.0 Liaison to University Committee reports

9.1 President's Council - Stacy Ready and Mary Sumrall

The President's Council met on February 8, 2006.

Dr. Thames stressed the purpose of the Staff Council, which is to communicate accurate and timely information to faculty and staff colleagues. Any concerns should be put on the agenda to be discussed at the President's Council meeting.

Joe Paul reported on enrollment. We are down in numbers but recovering nicely after Katrina. Ninety-five million dollars has been given to Mississippi higher education to help students affected by Hurricane Katrina. The lion's share of that money went to Southern Miss (\$27.5 million). The University is spreading the word that scholarships are available.

Homer Coffman reported on the problems with e-mail. E-mails have increased from 60,000 per day prior to Katrina to over 200,000 daily after Katrina. iTech is working diligently to resolve this problem. iTech is also working to determine how Cisco can assist higher education with wireless network needs. (Cisco donated \$40 million after Katrina to help K-12 education with computing needs.)

Dr. Mary Lux discussed the QEP, which is the Quality Enhancement Program. This program addresses the need to improve writing and speaking skills for all students. Skill development will be incorporated into several curricula, not just English. Writing labs and oral communication labs will be developed.

Dr. Thames stressed that vendors are determining the needs of our physical plant and will submit proposals by the end of March. The committee will review the proposals and make recommendations on whether or not to outsource the physical plant and, if so, to which company.

Since the state has received so much money following Katrina, Dr. Thames is hopeful raises will be given to faculty and staff.

9.2 Wellness Program - Susan Bone

The Wellness Council needs to meet. The proposal concerning the staff wellness program has not moved forward. It is still sitting on the desk it was turned in to. Susan has a meeting scheduled with the grant writing office for help on possibly writing a grant to cover this proposal.

March 28 is the Student Health Services Health Fair in the Union Lobby from 11 - 2. Everyone is invited.

A survey of five questions is going out to all staff and faculty on what would be a suitable employee recognition and appreciation event. It was mentioned that it might need to go out in hard copy, as a large number of staff do not have access to e-mail.

Human Resources sent a letter to all 10-, 20-, and 30-year pin recipients letting them know about Founders' Day. The pins will be distributed at the reception in The Courtyard. Offices on campus will be closed from 3 p.m. until 4 p.m. that day.

10.0 Announcements

10.1 United Way Celebration - Wednesday, March 8, 2006

10.2 IHL Board Meeting - Thursday, March 16, 2006

10.3 MASCO Meeting - Thursday, March 23, 2006

10.4 The April Staff Council meeting will be held in the Union Room C

11.0 Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn by Susan King and seconded by Mary Sumrall. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Busche
Secretary
March 7, 2006