

The University of Southern Mississippi
Staff Council Minutes
Tuesday, February 3, 2009
Thad Cochran Center Room 216

Staff Council president Mandy Nace introduced our guest speaker, Ms. Becky Woodrick, director of the Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Becky presented information to the council about a pilot program that her office, Human Resources and the Child and Family Studies Department will launch later this month. It is a support group for all university employees who are caregivers for persons with chronic and terminal illnesses. Many times they have found that when an employee has to come in and meet with them concerning workplace related issues and are possibly one step away from termination, what they found out is the employee is caring for someone at home with an illness. They leave their work here and immediately go home to another full time job as caregiver. They often feel stressed and isolated. Some of that stress often plays into what happens in the workplace.

They are offering a way not only to assist the caregivers, but also to help them be more productive. They also want to assist the supervisors on how to manage the employee's work performance. Many university employees, who have state insurance with a \$500.00 deductible, can never access the mental health care that is provided under our program because it becomes catastrophic care. In theory they have coverage, but in reality they do not. This service is free and confidential, but it is not therapy. It is an opportunity to get and give support to persons who are in similar situations. The support group will meet each Tuesday during the spring semester in Owings-McQuagge Hall Room 127 at 12:10 – 12:50 p.m.

The program will be facilitated by a second year Master's student in the Child and Family Studies program. The Child and Family Studies program also offers a marriage and family therapy clinic next door to the Child Care Center and they offer individual counseling. Ms. Woodrick requests council members to be aware of and share the information about the clinic and that the program offers help on a "sliding fee" scale. Many employees are unaware that these services are available.

Becky wanted to let the Coast council members know that they are in the process of surveying the Gulf Coast employees to see if a similar program is needed there. The deadline for the survey was this past Friday and they had very little feedback. Becky opened the floor for any questions. Pam Posey asked if retirees were eligible to be a part of the support group. The answer was no, because what they are looking at specifically is stress of working while caring for someone. President Nace thanked Becky for taking the time to share this information with the council.

- 1.0 Call to Order – Mandy Nace, president
Called to order at 9:43 a.m.
- 2.0 Adoption of Agenda – The president added two amendments to the agenda. New Action Item #6 as 5.1.3 under President’s Report and move Faculty Senate report to 5.1.4. Under Announcements 10.4 she changed departing time for Cedar Point visit from 7:45 to 7:30 a.m. A motion to adopt with amendments was made by Dianne Coleman and Kay Bruening seconded the motion. The agenda with amendments was approved by council members.
- 3.0 Call for Proxies – Teresa Loveless Allen for Ida Coleman
Rusty Anderson for Tommy Dye
Robin Barnett for Bridgett May
Amy Byxbe for Cynthia Render-Leach
Amanda Belsom for Susan Scott
April Jordan for Cory Williams
JJ Crawley for Patience Wise

Members present were Teresa Loveless Allen, Rusty Anderson, Amanda Belsom, Christy Bjork-Elias, Heather Brown, Kay Bruening, Amy Byxbe, Dianne Coleman, JJ Crawley, Shannon Davis, Linda Dorsey, Mike Giles, Tina Griffin, John Hayman, April Jordan, Larry Lee, Twillia Morgan, Mandy Nace, Andrea Phillips, Amy Thornton, Mary Virgil and Lou Ellen Williams.

Auxiliary member, Kathy Hayman, and parliamentarian, Pam Posey, were present. Pat Foley, auxiliary member, was absent.

Verlee Breland and Paul Lott were absent without proxy.

- 4.0 Approval of Minutes
 - 4.1 December and January minutes were proposed. Mike Giles moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Shannon Davis. Mandy informed the council that at this time the University does not have a proofreader. She asked that the council continue to assist with proofing the monthly minutes, as they will be posted on the Staff Council web site. Kay Bruening brought to attention that there is an error in the January minutes under 5.2.1 Faculty Senate Report, fifth bullet; the parenthesis needs to be closed. Tina will make the correction and email December and January minutes to Amy Thornton to post on our website.
- 5.0 Officer’s Reports
 - 5.1 President’s Report – Mandy Nace
 - 5.1.1 2008/09 Staff Excellence Awards
The awards are on schedule to be presented at Founders’ Day on Monday, March 30. The awards will be listed in the program without the names of the recipients. It is still undecided when the

awards will be presented, during the actual ceremony or after at the faculty/staff appreciation reception. Human Resources Department will post requests for award nominations around mid-February. President Nace will send out emails to usmtalk listserv. We need to encourage staff employees to nominate their coworkers.

5.1.2 New Action Item #5

The Action item reads as follows:

“With the known dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke (and associated public costs), the fact that cigarette butts are the number one litter item in Mississippi, and our place as educators of our students and role models or influencers to all who look to us for leadership, shouldn’t Southern Miss follow other visionary institutions and ban smoking on campus?”

“Would the staff council consider researching the issue and making a recommendation to the administration?”

The Executive Committee has assigned the action item to the Salaries and Benefits Committee.

5.1.3 New Action Item #6

The Action Item reads as follows:

“I have a suggestion since we are trying to find ways to save money. Would closing USM during Spring Break not be feasible? I work in LAB. During this time there will be a total of 25 people in the building. The building has four floors, the bottom and second floors are classrooms. I’m not sure this will help save money or not, just a thought since we’re cutting budgets as much as possible.”

After discussing the Action Item with the Executive Committee, Mandy stated that this action item would not be assigned to a committee. First of all, a committee would not have time to address and bring forward. Also, this same question has been asked time and time again over the past several years. Mandy referenced an Action Item from September 2007 that was addressed by a Staff Council Ad Hoc Committee and Tina Griffin was chair of that committee. A statement from university president, Dr Saunders reads as follows:

“IHL Board Policy specifically allows fifteen days as holidays throughout the year. We are already at the max. Any variation from that policy would require specific Board approval. I have been told that the situation in 2001 (Spring Break that was given by president, Dr. Horace Fleming) was a unique one and not likely to be viewed as a precedent. Still, I am prepared to share this proposal with Dr. Meredith and get his advice.”

The action will be addressed using the above statement from Dr. Saunders.

President Nace and President-Elect Rusty Anderson have been asked to serve as members on the Academic Planning Group, which has been put together by the provost to address the budget cuts for this fiscal year and for the 2009-2010 year. The group will meet every Tuesday afternoon in February. President Nace anticipates that this suggestion of closing the university during spring break will probably be brought forward at the first meeting. The list of names of other group members was provided and President Nace will keep us updated on what takes place at the meetings.

A campus wide meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12 at 3:00 pm. Dr. Saunders is going to speak to the university campus about budget cuts and concerns. Staff Council members were urged to attend.

5.1.4 Faculty Senate Report

Provost Lyman's Report

- six per cent budget cut within this fiscal year; three per cent in September 2008 and 3 per cent this spring
- departments are not losing budget lines; at this time unfilled budgets lines will have a zero balance
- furloughs were mentioned; it is easy to have furloughs for staff, but more difficult for faculty
- concerns about the Academic Planning Group; he assured the faculty that the committee had a good representation from the faculty
- recommendation for salary cuts for faculty teaching mini sessions; the recommendation is going to equalize the salary based on teaching summer classes and mini session and rank

5.2 President-Elect's Report - Rusty Anderson

5.2.1 IHL Meeting

Ms. Whitten welcomed the two new presidents, Dr. Mark Keenum of Mississippi State University and Dr. Donna Oliver of Mississippi Valley State University. Ms. Whitten expressed her satisfaction with the search process. She noted that she has been hearing accolades on the work that has been accomplished by each president in the short time they have been serving. Each president briefly thanked the Board for their votes of confidence.

Ms. Whitten announced that Dr. Robert Khayat, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, announced his retirement as of June 30, 2009. She thanked Chancellor Khayat for his service to the university and to the state of Mississippi. Chancellor Khayat noted that his tenure had been a remarkable experience.

Dr. Jim Borsig provided a Power Point presentation titled “Keeping Talent in Mississippi.” His report focused on programs to attract and maintain graduates for employment in Mississippi. Retention efforts were discussed for increasing the number of students graduating for the Mississippi work force. The report also included trying to identify and increase college enrollment in areas that would lead to career opportunities in critical needs areas.

Dr. House and Dr. McFall reported on a study of system efficiency and effectiveness for IHL institutions. MCAT courses have been redesigned and 16 courses are currently being offered. The study found in the area of enrollment management-retention Mississippi is at the bottom of 16 states in our region. Information demonstrating a need for review of duplication of programs was provided, to make sure goals and budgets align. One recommendation included finding new delivery options for courses on community college campuses as a shared resource allowing for students to complete coursework closer to home. Some discussion focused on collaborative efforts to contract services, facilities, and best practices among IHL institutions. This should have a cost reduction affect on operations. Dr. McFall reported that efficiency is critical for our survival and that we must look at things differently.

Other Business - Ms. Whitten reported that she and Mr. Patterson met with Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant, Chairman Alan Nunnelee of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Senator Billy Hewes, the President Pro Tempore, to discuss the legislative session. Yesterday, Ms. Whitten and Mr. Patterson met with Speaker Billy McCoy who is very supportive of the Board’s current structure. Ms. Whitten informed the Board of two bills to be introduced this session. One concerns the structure of the Board; the other concerns tuition. There was a meeting on Monday, January 19 with the Senate Universities and Colleges Committee to discuss the search process for the position of Chancellor at the University of Mississippi. This same discussion will probably occur with the House Universities and Colleges Committee within the next week or so. The House Appropriations Committee hearing for the IHL System was set for the morning of Thursday, January 22. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing was scheduled for the afternoon of Monday, January 26.

5.3 Secretary's Report – Tina Griffin

5.3.1 Gulf Coast Cedar Point Visit

Tina has corresponded with Pam Moeller, Dr. Bill Hawkin's assistant, and the council is set to visit on March 3. After we hold our monthly meeting, we will take a "tour" of the facilities. We can have lunch on-site and Tina is waiting on additional information on those arrangements.

5.4 Secretary Elect's Report – Andrea Phillips

5.4.1 Election of New Staff Council Members for 2009/10

Andrea asked to meet with the Election Committee (John Hayman, JJ Crawley, Cory Williams and Mary Virgil) after our meeting. She requested a census from Human Resources, which shows how many staff employees are in each EEOC category. According to the census and the number of current council members whose terms will expire this year, we will need to elect 15 new members for 2009/10. The total number of council members for 09/10 will be thirty-seven. New members will be elected in the Professional, Clerical/Secretarial, Service Maintenance/Skilled Craft and Technical categories. No new members will be elected for the Executive/Administration category or the Gulf Coast areas. Interest Inquiry Surveys will be mailed out by the first week of March. Election Ballots will follow in April. President Nace encouraged everyone to talk to their colleagues about serving on the council and how to get their name on the ballot. Faculty Senate and Student Government Association (SGA) are moving towards online elections. We are going to look at this process and see if it could work for our elections.

5.4.2 New Staff Orientation follow-up – January 29

Andrea thanked everyone that participated in the orientation session. Fifteen new staff employees were in attendance. Information packets were mailed to the employees who did not attend. President Nace stated that since the university has a hiring freeze, we would wait and see how many new staff employees had been hired before offering the next orientation that is scheduled for March 26.

Robin Barnett (proxy for Bridgett May) asked, if the election ballots were to go to online, had we thought about our Physical Plant employees who might not have access to computers. Andrea explained that we always take that into consideration. If we are asking university employees to complete anything online, we send paper copies to Physical Plant.

6.0 Unfinished Business

6.1 Staff Council Scholarship Committee

Lou Ellen Williams has agreed to chair the committee. The members will be Twillia Morgan, Amy Byxbe, and Christy Elias-Bjork. President Nace asked for an additional member and Amanda Belsom volunteered. Lou Ellen stated that she would schedule a meeting for the committee.

7.0 Standing Committee Report

7.1 Constitution and Bylaws – Amy Byxbe

No report.

7.2 Legislative Forum–Mike Giles

No report.

7.3 Salaries and Benefits – Dianne Coleman

No report.

7.4 Technology and Training – Amy Thornton

No report.

President Nace stated the new email system would go in effect on Monday, February 9. iTech is conducting training sessions this week and they will have support groups across campus to assist people with problems. The switch is for faculty and staff. The decision has not been made yet, but they are looking at switching students to Gmail.

Rusty Anderson asked if this switch was going to affect Outlook Calendar. Mandy explained that at this time it is not going to affect Outlook's Calendar. However, in the future they are looking at making a transition to a calendar that coincides with this new system. Robin Barnett stated that she works with someone who is already using the new email system and that it looks a lot like Outlook. April Jordan told the council that a special help line has been set up just for the email switch. The number on campus is 6-4000. Kay Bruening asked if we were still going to have to change passwords as often. Mandy said that the request for password changes comes from the SOAR system. It has nothing to do with email.

7.5 University Relations and Cultural Diversity – JJ Crawley

7.5.1 Action Item #1 – Compressed Work Week

JJ apologized to the council for taking so long on getting the stats together. She will email her committee for help. President Nace asked about nominations for the Staff Council awards for the spring. JJ has some nominations and will also talk to her committee about the awards. President Nace stated that since we are traveling to Cedar Point in March, we would need to present the awards in April.

8.0 Liaison to University Committee Reports

8.1 Department of Parking Management – April Jordan

A meeting was held on January 22 and there were two tickets reviewed. One was upheld, and the other was voted on being dismissed. Other discussion entailed a parking issue between the lot on Pearl Street and the Robinson Apartments. Action has been taken to prevent traffic from going back and forth between the two but people keep removing it so something more substantial is being reviewed to replace it. Rusty Postlewate

mentioned that approval was made to begin building the new dorms on 4th Street and that construction should begin sometime in February. This could impact large event parking that is already scheduled, so alternate areas to park buses, etc. will need to be secured prior to those events. Lucy Bowen will review the dates to see if there is any impact.

- 8.2 Fundraising – Twillia Morgan
No report.
 - 8.3 IT Advisory Board – John Hayman
No report.
 - 8.4 Wellness Program – Heather Brown
Susan Bone had sent out a Wellness Survey to the university campus. Heather wanted to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey.
- 9.0 New Business
No new issues or concerns.
- 10.0 Announcements
President Nace reminded everyone to be at the Payne Center Parking Lot at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3 to go to Cedar Point.
- 11.0 Adjournment
Motion was made by Teresa Loveless Allen to adjourn meeting; it was seconded by Shannon Davis.