

***** PROPOSED MINUTES *****

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Proposed Staff Council Minutes

February 1, 2000

1.0 Call to Order

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

The following members were present: Victoria Adams, Terry Bethea, Ann Billings, Kalin Butirich, Mike Giles, Kim Henson, Marsha Hinton, Becky Holder, Susan King, Virginia Kittrell, James Mackabee, Charlene McMillin, Connie Morgan, Cheryl Mowdy, Jessie Person, Ray Scott, Jennifer Spring, Mary Sumrall, Sam Thomas, Tracy Townsend, Dick Vogel, Ruby Waits, Betty White, and Ronnie Williamson.

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda was approved as written.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Susan King for Patricia Brewer, Tracy Townsend for Carolyn Cawthon, Ronnie Williamson for Tommy Dye, Mike Giles for Patricia Linton, Ann Billings for Janeal McKee, Virginia Kittrell for Larry McMickle, Mary Sumrall for Susan Sanders, and James Mackabee for Veda Spencer.

The following member was absent without representation: Regina Knight.

4.0 Approval of the Minutes

Minutes were approved as printed.

5.0 Officers' Reports

5.1 President's Report – Sam Thomas

*January 8 – The Staff Council Executive Committee selected Melissa Carpenter as Staff Council's nominee for honoring Black History Month. President Thomas thanked everyone for the nominations that were submitted. At a subsequent meeting, the University selected Bobs Tusa, University Archivist, McCain Library, as its nominee for honoring Black History Month. Ms. Tusa's nomination package was submitted to the IHL for inclusion in the selection of one individual from the eight universities as the honoree for Black History Month.

*January 20 – MASCO. Tracy Townsend and President Thomas attended the MASCO meeting at Jackson State University. Therese Hanna with the Department of Finance and Administration was the guest speaker. She talked about the new health insurance changes. Therese pointed out that our health insurance plan is a self-insured plan. The funds to pay claims come from our premiums, and the plan does not receive any appropriated money from the state of Mississippi. She said that their office has seen a large growth in the amount of claims. The increases have been in the areas of hospital charges, pharmacy, and retiree claims. She gave one example of a pharmacy claim that involves a new arthritis medicine that is very effective in relieving arthritis pain. The insured pays an \$18 copayment, and the drug costs the insurance plan \$900.00 a month. She said that they have paid out approximately \$1 million dollars on this one type of claim. Previously, there was a problem with doctors enrolling in the new network plan. They now have approximately 2,000 doctors in the plan and are receiving around 50 applications a day to enroll others. All of the large hospitals in the state are enrolled, with the exception of Gulfport Memorial Hospital. They are working on the contract with Gulfport Memorial, and there is an upcoming meeting with representatives from the Legislature, Gulfport Memorial, AHS Network, and the Department of Finance and Administration. Teresa said she didn't know why the hospital hasn't joined the network yet. Teresa also mentioned that there was a very strong possibility that we will see an increase in premiums in July. Employee premiums paid by the employer may increase 12%; dependent/retiree premiums may increase 15%. The reasoning behind the premium increase is that we are dipping into our reserves to pay claims.

In other business, we discussed the 100% tuition remission and portability resolutions. The MASCO president tabled voting until the March meeting to decide how they wanted to vote on these two issues. The next MASCO meeting will be held at Mississippi State University, on March 2. During the February 1 Staff Council meeting, President Thomas said that after discussion with Art Kaul, President of Faculty Senate, a resolution may be drawn up in conjunction with Faculty Senate to be presented at the next board meeting.

Also, during the February 1 Staff Council meeting, in reference to the increase in GPA for dependent students of USM employees, a suggestion was presented by Dick Vogel to lower the GPA to 2.0, which is the minimum graduation requirement. Dick pointed out that the 50% tuition is a benefit and not a scholarship. Tracy Townsend suggested putting forth a resolution and taking a proactive role in this matter. Sam asked Marsha Hinton to check with Scott Jones in Human Resources to find out the details behind increasing the minimum GPA.

*January 31 – Cabinet. USM reached its United Way goal this year.

The Chief Financial Officers at the universities are looking into equity funding issues. Senator Trent Lott has accepted an invitation to be the spring 2000 commencement speaker at the 6:30 ceremony.

5.2 President-elect's Report – Tracy Townsend

*January 21 – Faculty Senate. Jim Borsig was the guest speaker. Mr. Borsig is the new Director of Governance. He discussed activity in the Legislature as far as times and dates of the schedule. February 17 is when bills are introduced. He suggested that we look to the state Web site for committee assignments or to e-mail him, if we have any concerns. He is in Jackson on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and he is in his office on Mondays and Fridays. His e-mail address is <Jim.Borsig@usm.edu>.

*Posttenure review resolution made by Faculty Senate was passed through Deans Council and Council of Chairs.

*Restoration and portability resolutions have been endorsed and will go to IHL next month.

*Human Resources increased the GPA for dependent students attending USM to 2.5. The Benefits Committee for Faculty Senate is reviewing this and the issue of typing the address for metered mail.

*Liam Kennedy is the new USMtalk listserv keeper.

*Transportation Committee – The lot north of the Liberal Arts Building is now Zone 4; rigid and consistent enforcement of zone privileges is in place. There is a new parking lot for commuters by the Theatre and Dance Building that holds 400–500 cars. Construction of the plaza was delayed because of drainage problems. Thirty–three additional parking meters were installed at PAC. Persons who receive seven tickets or more will be towed.

5.3 – Assignment of Action Items – Tracy Townsend. None

6.0 Old Business

6.1 Distribution of Minutes – Staff Council minutes will be distributed as usual next month. President Thomas will submit a notification to all staff that the March minutes will be distributed via a listserv. Departments such as Food Service, Physical Plant, and Residence Life will continue to receive hard copies of the minutes; however, the minutes, without labels, will be sent to a point of contact for distribution.

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution & Bylaws – Carolyn Cawthon – No report

7.2 Legislative – Charlene McMillin. The tentative date for hosting the legislative day is June 2, 2000. Faculty Senate will assist with the cost of refreshments. The reason for delaying until June is because the legislative session will last longer this year.

7.3 Salaries & Benefits – Marsha Hinton. Action Item #55 – An action item regarding reinstatement of discounted athletic season tickets for faculty and staff was submitted to Staff Council. This issue was discussed with Human Resources, Internal Auditing, and

the Office of Vice President for Business and Finance. The reason the original faculty/staff discounts were discontinued was because of changes needed to comply with the IRS. Also, the software used at the time did not have the capability to furnish needed information for the W-2s. Currently, PeopleSoft has been implemented in our payroll system, but, because of the current financial restraints in the University's budget and the athletic budget, it is not financially feasible to reinstate the benefit at this time.

7.4 University Relations and Cultural Diversity – Mary Sumrall. The committee discussed action item # 57 regarding the posting of office hours. The Staff Handbook states, "All offices shall be open during the hours of 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on official University holidays or administrative closings. Certain University departments may be required to remain open during the noon hour. When this work schedule is necessary, the department managers will arrange for alternate lunch periods for staff." Because it is necessary for some offices to remain open during the noon hour, while others close, the committee recommends that all administrative offices post their office hours on their main doors. We are requesting that the Office of Human Resources notify all vice presidents, deans, directors, and department chairs that office hours should be posted.

7.5 Technology & Training – Regina Knight – No report

7.6 Other Committee Reports

*Parking Appeals – Carolyn Cawthon – No report

*Parking Task Force – Terry Bethea – An action item was submitted inquiring about the details of the gated lot between PAC and McCain Library. The fee to park in the lot will be \$50 per semester. Payment may not be split.

*Some people voiced concerns about the number of meters being added on campus.

President Thomas thanked Mike Giles for volunteering to take Terry Bethea's place on this committee.

8.0 New Business

9.0 Announcements

9.1 March meeting – The March Staff Council meeting will be on February 29 because of the spring break holiday. The meeting will be at Stennis, Building 1103 conference room. Presently, no speaker is scheduled; Kalin Butirich will check to see if we can obtain a speaker. Directions to Stennis are as follows: HWY 59 south to Exit 3. Follow signs to Stennis. President Thomas asked members to send proxies in early for persons not able to attend.

9.2 Online AHS Network Physician Directory – The Web site for the directory is <www.dfa.state.ms.us>.

10.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Virginia Kittrell, Recording Secretary
2/1/00 vk