

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

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Proposed Staff Council Minutes

June 6, 2000

Speakers:

Dr. Lynda Gilbert, Dr. Linda McFall, and Nancy Whittaker. USM started into the biweekly payroll process as a reaction to a state law that requires that all state employees be paid twice a month by January 2001. This particular law was repealed on the last day of the legislative session. A steering committee, consisting of people from Human Resources, Financial Affairs, Student Employment, and OTR was then asked to reexamine the overall payroll issue and to look at state and federal regulations, best practices, available resources, both within the payroll office and throughout the campus community who manage payroll issues. One of the recommendations was that all nonexempt employees will be converted to biweekly payroll schedule. Federal law states that if you are a nonexempt employee, you are to be paid on a per hour basis, you must be paid overtime if you are entitled to it, and USM has to do positive reporting on the time. USM has not traditionally done this for all nonexempt employees on our campus. We will be bringing this part of the payroll system into full compliance with federal law. New, nonexempt employees, who have been hired into positions that were formerly monthly, are hired into biweekly, delayed pay schedule. We will be converting the rest of the current nonexempt employees at the end of September. Your duties define whether you are classified as a nonexempt employee or not. Your title and level do not. If you are a nonexempt employee, your department does not have a choice in paying overtime. If you are eligible for overtime, the department has to give comp time or pay overtime. The compensation method must be decided prior to working any overtime. If you are an exempt employee, you are not entitled to overtime or comp time. New timekeeping forms will be distributed for each employee to complete and maintain in the department. Time will be submitted similar to current bi-weekly employees. The process of changing to a biweekly payroll system has been discussed since January, and we are not starting this until

the end of September. There are two months left to prepare for the change. The clerical group is the only nonexempt group that is currently not on the biweekly schedule. The Consumer Credit Counseling Service will be available to help people adjust their schedules with banks, credit companies, etc. There will be ten sessions, and people will be able to schedule a one-on-one appointment. They will take your paycheck and help you look at your bills to see which ones may be moved, i.e., phone bills, power bills, etc. Attending a session will help you plan your bill payments affected by the change. Employees will receive their monthly paycheck at the end of September and two weeks later receive a check for actual hours of work. Two times a year, employees will receive a third paycheck within a month that will have no voluntary deductions withheld. Right now, all of the nonexempt employees will be moved to biweekly. Everyone else will be converted eventually. Banking institutions, including those on the coast, are aware of this change and most will work with people. Human Resources will provide an open letter for credit companies that were not notified, if necessary, to notify them of the change to a biweekly schedule. Bradley Bridges, in Human Resources, has been working on the classification system. The job description should state whether the employee is exempt or nonexempt. There are probably some in EEOC category 3 and 5 that have not been identified yet.

There was a question about moving the parking fines fund to the general fund. Dr. Gilbert stated that parking fines will never be in the general fund because they are an unsteady source of revenue, and we can't count on them for scholarships. Money that goes into the parking fund will be used to improve parking lots and those type issues. It is not good business practice to use a nonreliable source of funding to support a cost that is a commitment.

A comment was made about the state health insurance program, that the legislators were going to be reviewing the program to see about getting us into a larger pool. It was stated that it would be to our benefit to be in our own health insurance program, rather than with other state institutions, but the legislators would have to approve it. Dr. Gilbert commented that there was a movement a few years ago to take IHL out because, as a general group, we take better care of ourselves, healthwise. Linda McFall stated that retirees and disabled retirees account for the majority of claims.

A question was asked about the budget shortfall and how it affected the staff with regard to layoffs. Dr. Gilbert commented that the only people who lost jobs were under the Business and Finance area. A lot of it was handled through retirement and attrition with only four people who are either looking for employment or have other employment in place. Those people were in Human Resources and the Physical Plant. A comment was made that eight people were laid off in another area. Dr. Gilbert stated that the administration tried to keep layoffs to a minimum.

Dr. Gilbert stated that state revenues continue to increase, but expenditures are growing faster than revenues. Our reduction is in one-time money that was cash surpluses carried over from the end of the year to the next year. This year, they are projecting that there will be no cash surplus to fund next year's one-time money – House Bill 400.

1. Call to Order

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m.

The following members were present: Victoria Adams, Terry Bethea, Ann Billings, Patricia Brewer, Kalin Butirich, Carolyn Cawthon, Tommy Dye, Mike Giles, Marsha Hinton, Becky Holder, Susan King, Virginia Kittrell, Patricia Linton, James Mackabee, Janeal McKee, Larry McMickle, Charlene McMillin, Connie Morgan, Cheryl Mowdy, Jessie Person, Susan Sanders, Jennifer Spring, Mary Sumrall, Sam Thomas, Tracy Townsend, Dick Vogel, and Ruby Waits.

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda was adopted as written.

3.0 Call for Proxies

The following members were represented by proxy: Alrie' Poillion for Janeal McKee, Jessie Person for Veda Spencer, and Barbara Clinton for Betty White.

The following members were absent without representation: Kim Henson, Regina Knight, Ray Scott, and Ronnie Williamson.

4.0 Approval of the Minutes

Minutes were approved as written.

5.0 Officers' Reports

5.1 President's Report – Sam Thomas

*End-of-Year Report. Staff Council had a very productive year. For the 1999–2000 year, we had 33 members on Staff Council. This membership included two representatives from Gulf Coast, two from GCRL, and one from Stennis Space Center. The balance of the membership came from the Hattiesburg campus in the following EEOC categories: Clerical, Executive/Managerial, Professional, Service Maintenance, Skilled Craft, and Technical. Polly Odom also served as the Parliamentarian. We met twelve times during the year. The November meeting was held at the Gulf Park campus, and the March meeting was held for the first time at the Stennis Space Center. The following individuals were keynote speakers during the year at the meetings: Richard Giannini – Athletic Director; Kathy Hayman – Cochair of the United Way Campaign; Dr. Shirley Bowles – Assistant Professor at Gulf Coast campus; Scott Jones – Benefits Manager of Human Resources; Dr. Fleming – USM President; Linda McFall – Human Resources Director; and Dr. Lynda Gilbert – Vice President for Business and Finance. We didn't have a speaker at Stennis Space Center; however, a bus tour of the facilities was provided.

Two resolutions were passed during the year. The first resolution concerned restoring full tuition benefits to USM faculty, staff, and their qualified dependents. The second resolution requested that tuition benefits to USM faculty, staff, and qualified dependents be allowed to be used at any of the eight Institutions of Higher Learning under the governance of the IHL Board. These resolutions were also approved by the USM Faculty Senate. The two resolutions were also presented to MASCO. MASCO also passed two resolutions on this issue. The first involved restoring the full tuition benefits to faculty, staff, and qualified dependents. The second involved allowing the portability of the tuition benefit to staff at any of the eight IHL institutions. These resolutions have been submitted to the IHL and are under consideration.

The Staff Council sponsored several events during the year and also participated in other events. The following is a list of those events: co-sponsored a tailgating tent at home football games, hosted a Christmas party, participated in the Benefits Fair hosted by the May MASCO meeting, and co-sponsored a Legislative Day in June. Staff Council also had representation on the President's Cabinet, Expanded Cabinet, IHL Board meetings, commencement exercises, Faculty Senate meetings, Parking Task Force, and Parking Appeals Committee. Several Staff Council members served and represented Staff Council on several other committees, searches, and events.

Staff Council created two computer listservs for dissemination of information. One of the listservs is for Staff Council members only, and the other one is for all staff. Staff members can subscribe to this listserv and receive the minutes and other announcements. There was also a change in the distribution of minutes this year. Minutes are no longer mailed out except to Physical Plant, Residence Life, and Food Service. Staff members can subscribe to the listserv and receive the minutes electronically.

I enjoyed serving as your Staff Council President this year. Thanks for everyone's help.

5.2 President-elect's Report – Tracy Townsend. Tracy asked for a volunteer to serve on an advisory committee for the Student Life Center. If anyone is interested, please contact Tracy. This person needs to be someone who will be serving on Staff Council for two to three years.

5.3 Assignment of Action Items – Tracy Townsend. One action item will be given to the chair of Salaries and Benefits Committee in July. It deals with exceptions for the 100% dependent scholarship.

6.0 Old Business

6.1 MASCO meeting. The May MASCO meeting was hosted by USM and was held in the Payne Center. Thanks to Mike Giles and Patricia Linton for their help. Also, thanks to those for donations for the goody bags. Thanks to everyone who assisted.

7.0 Committee Reports

7.1 Constitution & Bylaws – Carolyn Cawthon. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee had no action items for this year. However, there is discussion underway regarding changes in representation between IMS and Stennis Space Center. As Stennis is part of IMS, consideration needs to be given to changing the representation to be from Gulf Coast Research Lab and Stennis Space Center versus IMS and Stennis Space Center. The new Constitution and Bylaws Committee for 2000–2001 should begin this process at the first of the council year.

7.2 Legislative – Charlene McMillin. The Staff Council hosted a Christmas party on December 15, 1999, 1:30–3:00, in the Union. Twenty-six legislators were invited to attend; three attended.

On June 2, 2000, 10:00–12:00, the Staff Council cohosted Legislator's Day along with Faculty Senate and Student Government in the Union Hall of Honors. Invitations were sent to twenty-six legislators. The six who attended were Senators Ron Farris, Tom King, and Representatives Joey Fillingane, Lee Gerald Davis, Percy Maples, and Mike Lott. Dr. Horace Fleming, Dr. Clyde Ginn, and Mr. Jim Borsig were also in attendance. A representative from Public Relations was present to take pictures and get information for their office. Flyers were sent out to the campus community, including the Gulf Park campus. Parking places were reserved near the Union for those who sent R.S.V.P.s. Continuing Education made name place cards for all the legislators. Refreshments were served to the Legislators, faculty, staff, and students. All of the Legislative Committee members were present.

7.3 Salaries & Benefits – Marsha Hinton. Action Item #49 – Monthly updates to the published budget. A resolution was drafted and presented to the Council for consideration at the June 1999 meeting.

Resolution: "In the past, as changes were made to the published budget, Human Resources would post those changes and send out copies of the changes to the President's office, Vice President's offices, and to the library. Several months ago, this practice was stopped. We recommend, effective July 1, 1999, monthly update changes to the budget be forwarded to the President, Vice Presidents, and the library as was done previously."

Action Item #52 – Leave used for family death. Scott Jones, from Human Resources, confirmed that the IHL board and the State Legislature set the leave policy. The leave policy and procedures cannot be changed within the university itself.

Action Item #55 – Reinstate season tickets at discounted rates for faculty/staff. This item was discussed with Human Resources, Internal Auditing, and the Office of the Vice President of Business and Finance. The reasons the original faculty/staff discounts were discontinued were because of changes needed to comply with the Internal Revenue Service. The software used at the time did not have the capability to furnish needed information for the W-2's. Currently, PeopleSoft has been implemented in our payroll system, but due to the current financial restraints in the university 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 University Relations and Cultural Diversity Committee considered three action items in 1999–2000.

The first action item was assigned on September 7, 1999, and dealt with cleaning weeding the parking lot south of Greene Hall. Mr. Sidney Krhut, in the grounds maintenance area of the Physical Plant, was contacted. He agreed that his crew could weed, prune, and clean the area one Saturday during the fall. The committee reported this information at the October 5, 1999, Staff Council meeting. The work in the parking lot has been done.

The second action item was assigned on December 7, 1999, and dealt with the policy of USM employees writing parking tickets for University Police. The Manager of Administration of University Police, Cecil Wilson, explained the reasons for using USM employees and indicated that as additional ticket writer positions were approved, the need to use USM employees in this capacity would be eliminated. The committee made this report at the January 4, 2000, Staff Council meeting. As a follow-up to this action item, University Police reports that no USM employees are currently being used to write parking tickets.

The third action item was received on January 4, 2000, concerning the posting of office hours on main doors of administrative offices.

In checking with the Staff Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and the Department of Human Resources, it was determined that lunch hours for employees may be staggered, but no mention is made regarding posting office hours. The committee recommended on February 1, 2000, that Human Resources notify administrators that they post office hours on the main doors.

We appreciate the opportunity to represent the staff of the University this year.

7.5 Technology & Training – Regina Knight – No report

7.6 Other Committee Reports

*Parking Appeals – Carolyn Cawthon. As chair of this committee, I have no report for the year, as no attempts were made to contact me regarding meeting dates and times. Mike Giles, chair of the Parking Appeals Committee, informed me at the May 2000 meeting that he would make sure that USM Police made the necessary contacts for next year's Staff Council representative. In addition, Mike said he would prepare a year-end report for this committee.

*Parking Task Force – Mike Giles. Mike reported that parking spaces between Johnson Science Tower and Walker Science will be available after construction is finished, but the design will be different.

8.0 New Business.

1. Nomination Committee – Slate of 2000 Officer Candidates.
The slate of 2000 Officer Candidates is as follows:

President-elect: John Hayman

Mary Sumrall

Recording Secretary: Kim Busche

Connie Morgan

Corresponding Secretary: Shannon Davis

Jan Roberts

This year's Council ends in June. Ballots will be distributed for voting next month. Tracy will become President. President Thomas thanked those who agreed to put their names on the ballot.

9.0 Announcements

1. New Council Members. President Thomas had asked the new members to join the June meeting in order to see how the meetings were generally conducted. New members in attendance were David Kinsey, Rusty Anderson, Sam Williams, Pam Posey, Bradley Bridges, John Hayman, Joan Brashears, Melissa Carpenter, Polly Odom, Jan Roberts, Jennifer Blalock, John Green, and Faye Mallette.

10.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Virginia Kittrell, Recording Secretary

6/20/00 vk