

Staff Council

2015-2016 Annual Report

Officers

Karen Reidenbach, President
Heather Cimino, Secretary

Charles Childress, President-Elect
Heather Miller, Secretary-Elect

Voting Members as of June 30, 2016

Sharon Anderson
Laurie Benvenuti
Charles Childress
Terry Folks
Judy Isbell
Heather Miller
David Myers
Heather Richey
Carlos Sterling

Maryanne Anthony
Dana Berry
Mark Crager
Saundra Garnand
Jean Jovonovich Alvillar
Kim Miller
Karen Reidenbach
Donnie Robbins
Paige Strickland

Bill Barnes
April Broome
Kelly Dunn
Heather Graves
Elayne Lockett
Dorothy Mobley
Martha Resavy
Jodi Ryder

Member Turnover

Martha Brown
Virginia Crawford
Kimberly Cox-Rasmussen

Heather Cimino
Maria Englert
Cassie Varnado

Angela Coats
Keri Hensarling

Non-Voting Members

Pam Posey, Parliamentarian
Kathy Hayman, Auxiliary

Rene' Trigg, Immediate Past President
Ches Roberts, Auxiliary

Meetings

The full Council met at 9:30 on the first Thursday of each month. Typical meetings started with a guest speaker(s), with the business meeting immediately following. In October our meeting was held at the Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs and the March meeting was held at the Gulf Park Campus in Long Beach.

The Executive Officers and Committee Chairs met on a monthly basis to discuss topics pertinent to the Council, set the next month's agenda, and to determine guest speakers.

The Executive Officers met monthly with Dr. Douglas Vinzant, Vice President for Finance and Administration. President Reidenbach's report to the Council included notes from these meetings.

Immediate Past President Rene' Trigg represented the Council on University President Rodney Bennett's executive cabinet. She reported information to the full Council during monthly business meetings.

Events and Philanthropic Efforts

Members of the Council assisted with and or attended various campus events including Freshman Move-In Day, ribbon cuttings, and the Fallen Eagles memorial; served as members of the commencement platform parties, and hosted a Holiday Open House for campus.

We participated in "Stock the Pantry", a canned food drive to support Edwards Street Fellowship Center's food pantry. Representatives from the gulf coast campuses voted to collect food for the Humane Society of South Mississippi and Jackson County Animal Shelter. All employees of the university were encouraged to donate.

To show support of our colleagues we provided Thanksgiving meals for family members of one Gulf Coast staff member and one Hattiesburg staff member. Nominations are submitted by Council members for those who have had a financial hardship or a life changing event. The nominees and final recipients' names remain anonymous except to the Executive Committee that's charged with making the determination. Food items were donated by each Council member and gift cards were donated by Corner Market.

For Christmas we adopted a 'neighborhood' in a memory unit at the Veteran's Hospital in Biloxi. Again, members used personal funds to provide sweatpants, candy, and toiletries to 23 veteran residents. The items were delivered in mid-December and those who made the trip were able to tour the facility and visit with the residents. It was a special day for all involved.

In May we participated in Resident Hall Association's supply drive for the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter. Again, Council members made those donations with personal funds.

Fundraising

Through the Comcast Golf Classic fundraising efforts, we earned \$1,175 for staff scholarships. The silent auction held during the Holiday Reception and sales of jackets and insulated cups raised \$510 needed funds for Council initiatives.

Scholarships and Awards

Staff Council provides scholarships to four deserving staff members each year. Benefits-earning staff are eligible to apply and one recipient is selected from the coast and one from Hattiesburg each spring and fall semester. The Scholarship Committee was pleased with the number and quality of applications and awarded the following:

Fall 2015 – MacKenzie Sher, Hattiesburg and Carmen Stilwell, Gulf Coast

Spring – Jeremy Higgins, Gulf Park and Chris Barrett, Hattiesburg

Each spring the nominations for the Staff Service Awards are accepted. This year's recipients were: Kelly Weaver, Gulf Park and Andre' Heath, Hattiesburg

Guest Speakers

August – Doug Robinson, Veteran Outreach Coordinator, the Center for Military Veterans, Service Members, and Families

September – Robert Hopkins, Chief of Police, University Police Department and Jeffrey George, Student Government Association President

October – Joyce Shaw, Librarian and Professor, Gulf Coast Research Lab

November – Dr. Julie Howdeshell, Director, Quality Enhancement Program and Kathryn Lowery, Director, Institutional Effectiveness

January – Paul Walters, Director of Compliance and Ethics and Associate General Council

February – Dr. Douglas Vinzant, Vice President for Finance and Administration

March – Christy Bjork, Director of Student Affairs, Gulf Park

April – Dr. Rebecca Malley, Title IX Coordinator

May – Megan Burkes, Associate Director for Public Relations and Kelly Ellis, Manager of Annual Giving, USM Foundation

June - Dr. Douglas Vinzant, Vice President for Finance and Administration

Action Items

Action items are concerns or questions that are submitted by any university employee to the Council. The action items are received by the president and forwarded to the appropriate Council committee chair for action and follow up with the sender. The following action items were received and inquiries were completed:

- Questions about the Christmas Break schedule for 2015
- Capital Improvement and Student Activity assessed to staff members who are taking classes
- The timing for the United Way campaign, Heart Walk, and the Campaign for Southern Miss
- Human Resources reduced hours and/or closed for the three days prior to Christmas break
- Immunizations required for registering for classes as an employee
- Concerns about USM firearms policy
- Retirees' returning to work – ACA required break in service

Liaisons to University Committees

A Staff Council representative serves on the following university committees:

Alcohol and Other Drugs
Clery Compliance Committee
Design and Space Review
Diversity Award of Excellence
Grand Marshall Committee
Parking Management – Gulf Park and Hattiesburg
Institutional Diversity Committee
Institutional Leadership Team and Compliance Audit Task Force
Strategic Planning Committee
Textbooks and Course Materials Advisory Committee
University Assessments Committee
Other committees as needed

Mississippi Association of Staff Council Organizations (MASCO)

Members of the executive team continued to work with MASCO membership on the tuition reciprocity between other state institutions. In the summer of 2014 MASCO representatives proposed to the IHL Commissioner that our tuition waived classes benefit be transferred to institutions other than our employer institution. In 2015 we were invited to speak to the Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) during their August IHL meeting. As a follow up we met with the CAOs and the Chief Financial Officers during their November meeting. In the spring of 2016 we learned that because of continued budget cuts (and a strong belief that some schools would suffer financially) the program would not be implemented. It is the desire of the MASCO representatives to re-address the issue at some point in the future.

Other items discussed during the spring MASCO meeting were smoke-free/tobacco-free campus, parking/transportation fees, on-line training (WorkPlace Answers for USM), and various programs and initiatives undertaken by our Staff Council colleagues at our sister institutions.

Additional Points

The Council's website underwent a major overhaul during 2015-2016. Our goal is to reach more staff members by having a more personal style and feel. Council minutes and newsworthy events were posted in a routine manner. The Legislative committee was in regular communication with legislators who kept us updated on issues that would impact the university and the state.

In Staff Council tradition, we closed the year with a luncheon to recognize members whose terms were ending, to welcome newly elected members, and to celebrate a year well-done.