Staff Senate Minutes  
Wednesday, May 08, 2013 - 9:00 AM, Billingsly Boardroom


Member(s) Absent / Excused: Karesa Burr

Determination of Quorum: Fifteen of Sixteen active members present at the beginning of the meeting, quorum established.

Call to Order: Arwood called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Approval of Minutes: Wengert made a motion to approve the minutes; Davies seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Arwood thanked Talley for taking the minutes at the April meeting.

Administrative/Special Guest Comments:

Committee Reports: Arwood called for Staff Senate committee reports:

1 Communications Committee – did not meet, Robert Tessman stepped down as chair. Aaron Lewis volunteered to chair the committee.

2 Elections Committee – Doak reported the committee met to select the Southern Service Champ award winners for the first quarter. This week a request for nominations will go out to the campus; voting will take place the last week of May. Doak asked for verification of the change to the make-up of the senate: 10 classified, 6 professional, 0 at-large. Arwood will confirm with Rob Yust/President’s Council and advise Doak. (Formal approval was received from President’s Council 5/15/13). For the election in May there will be 5 classified and 2 professional seats to fill. New senators will be guests at the June Staff Senate meeting.

3 Executive Committee -

- Arwood and Hughes met with Jared Bruggeman in regard to the coaches’ salaries in comparison to other positions on campus stemming from an anonymous comment. Bruggeman explained Athletics is given a pool of money for their coaching staff to allocate as he determines. Previously coaches were considered faculty and were not included in the Evergreen study. Bruggeman offered to discuss this with any interested person(s); sharing salary figures and other documents. Even though MSSU’s coaches’ salaries seem high they are in the lower half of our division.

- There were 3 topics for the monthly meeting with President’s Council. The first was the anonymous comment concerning administration not attending Staff Senate meetings. Darren Fullerton, the first Staff Senate president, shared that Staff Senate voted that first year not to have administration present to encourage open discussion. All PC members have and continue to state they are available and happy to attend Staff Senate meetings anytime we would like to have them.
• A second anonymous comment had to do with departments being closed during spring break. How were those employees paid, did they get extra vacation or comp time, etc. An example: the nurse in the Health Center works for Freeman Hospital so she takes her vacation through Freeman. As a courtesy she takes her vacation during our spring break; she is working with our schedule. Since there is no nurse on campus, the health center employees also took vacation during that “down” time. The conversation turned to employees working events or “above and beyond” and not listing that on their time sheets. PC feels they need to address this at the supervisor’s level. If employees are working overtime and not putting it on their timesheet they are perjuring themselves; if the supervisor is aware of the situation and signs the timesheet they are also perjuring themselves. There is a gray area: what constitutes a requirement to be at an event – is the employee volunteering? Dr. Speck plans to address this at the next Administrative Council meeting which will take place in the fall semester.

• The third item was in reference to Staff Senate presence on committees. The Insurance Committee had been a topic; how do we figure out who’s on it. The EC goal was to find out who is on these committees so we could have some interaction with them. Most committees are listed on the Intranet, however the Insurance Committee wasn’t listed which made it a topic of conversation. It’s not possible to have Staff Senate representation on every committee, but having an awareness of who is on the various committees and who we can go to with questions is important; we could ask committee members to present updates. Dr. Lipira advised over the summer the university committee list will be updated. Wilmoth noted there needs to be a definition of the types of committees and what representation they require, The Insurance Committee is not a university committee; it was developed out of Human Resources to help with staff concerns about insurance. Talley asked if the question was concerning administrative committees which originate from the president’s office. Talley also asked about the Insurance Committee: when that was developed wasn’t there an effort to have representation from Faculty Welfare Committee….. Wilmoth responded: no, it was designed to have representation from faculty, professional and classified staff. The committee members do not change unless a member elects not to be involved or employment terminates. The Insurance Committee affects the entire campus; as discussed at the previous SS meeting, the goal is to be able to find out who is on the committee (or any committee) and how to get information.

4 Legislative Oversight Committee – Scheduled to meet next week. Arwood asked for the formal proposal header (cover sheet) from the committee for the bylaw changes approved by Staff Senate last month to submit.

5 Staff Welfare Committee – Did not meet but have a proposal under new business.

6 Ad Hoc Committee: Staff Survey – Arnold reported they will begin meeting this summer.

7 Ad Hoc Committee: Merit Pay – Hughes reported they met; reviewed questions. They plan to reach out to other Staff Senates across the state; determine what other schools are doing before moving in one direction or another.

Arwood called for campus committee reports:

1 Administrative Council – Did not meet.

2 Appreciation Committee – Epperson reported they are working on the picnic in August. Talley added the next quarterly coffee will be on a Thursday to accommodate the summer schedule from 7 to 8 AM.

3 Budget Advisory Council – Meets today.

4 Diversity Committee – Arnold reported they met yesterday; reviewed the year and began planning for Martin Luther King day. The campus will be closed that Monday; for 2014 events will take place over two days.
Faculty Senate – Not sure if they meet in May; Staff Senate will need to choose a representative when they begin meeting again in the fall.

Orientation & Training – Wilmoth advised they meet quarterly; have not met yet for the current quarter.

Shared Governance – Talley reported the committee is in the process of breaking into sections representing faculty and staff and will be examining questions on the questionnaire. In addition they are looking for ways to illicit more participation. Hope to have the survey ready to go on the fall.

Strategic Planning – Not currently meeting.

Student Senate – No representative present; Arwood noted it is finals week.

75th Anniversary – Lewis reported there are not more meetings scheduled. The final event is the Gala at Leggett and Platt May 23 from 7 to 9:30 PM. Approximately 230 people have sent in their RSVP, you can still do that by contacting the Foundation office or email Elizabeth Ebert. There will be music, dancing and hors d’oeuvres.

Old Business:
Arwood confirmed the Code of Conduct has been approved. We were waiting for formal approval after making the suggested changes; PC considered it complete once the changes had been made.

New Business:
1 Staff Retreat proposal – Wilmoth introduced the proposal; the purpose is to have something on campus specifically for staff, an opportunity to build camaraderie and meet other people on campus. This would help rebuild the family atmosphere; there are events for students and faculty but not any events just for staff. The suggested name for the event is Restore the Roar. Events could include a picnic, t-shirts, build a Lion, team-building events, and office competitions – fun events. This would take more than the Staff Welfare Committee to put together; the thought was to team up with the Appreciation Committee and possibly other campus committees. There will be financial obligations. Departments on campus have retreats; the library closes for a staff retreat, the athletics department has a retreat of sorts. The committee is seeking Staff Senate feedback
   • Wilmoth made a motion to discuss the proposal. Talley seconded the motion.
   • Wengert gave details about the athletics retreat which took place approximately once per semester. Their main retreat included presentations from campus departments. People choose which sessions they want to attend. Attendance is required. Lunch is usually a guest speaker; possibly a professional development opportunity. Policy is reviewed (as required by NCAA), and training or certification that needs to be done. That afternoon or evening they go bowling or some other fun activity. A survey is done after the event; the feedback has been positive. After finals in the fall athletics will use the gym and play games then have a pot luck lunch. Events have included a personality test, and a map with pins indicating where everyone was born. Wengert coordinated the events, Aaron Lewis booked the rooms.
   • The proposed date is the Thursday after graduation in 2014 to allow time to plan and book speakers.
   • Arwood noted Heather Arnold is experienced at producing events on campus. Staff Senate would take the lead to bring different groups together to make this event happen.
   • There are a lot of offices that don’t have a “retreat” or something similar. Epperson noted this type of event is what the Appreciation Committee was trying to do with the picnic. Many offices are not able to close even for an hour or two to attend a picnic as a group. If the library can close the campus should be able to close for a couple of hours but administration says no.
   • Wengert suggested some kind of required training to make it more appealing to administration. That was the thought behind having some team building events.
   • Rainey suggested having the event the Friday of the first week after graduation, the week we would normally go to summer hours – work regular hours that week; the campus would already be scheduled to be closed.
• Wilmoth suggested an ad hoc committee be formed to work on this proposal if it proceeds. If Staff Welfare takes the lead on this, the ideas need to come from all of us. Maybe we need a survey; what kind of events would staff like to see?
• Do we need President’s Council approval to proceed because of staff missing work and the financial aspect? If Staff Senate votes to approve, Staff Welfare can go back and add a budget to the proposal. Talley suggested one educational component to make it more appealing to administration and open the door to funds for staff development. Discussion about staff development funds – there are funds set aside, has it been used? The Executive Committee will ask President’s Council how the staff professional development process works, how the money is being spent, the accountability factor. Wengert thought each department was given a certain amount; in athletics the application was internal. How is it allocated to departments?
• The educational component could be a general assembly with a campus safety presentation or some other relevant topic. Epperson noted our nurse practitioner wants to do a presentation to the building captains or the campus to review emergency procedures. There were a couple of incidents across campus where a referral was made the Health Center when 911 should have been called.
• Faculty have their all faculty meetings but there are no all staff meetings.
• Staff Welfare meets next week; they could invite people from the Appreciation committee, Heather Arnold, possibly someone from the library to discuss and further define the proposal then bring it back at the next meeting. The Staff Senate voted to support the proposal.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:
Michelle Ducre asked that an announcement be made about a walk to end Alzheimer’s on September 7; groups on campus could put together teams. Arnold advised the Wellness department would like to have more walks and runs on campus; we already host the 4 States Heart Walk. We would love to have the Alzheimer’s walk on campus.

Anonymous Comments
None posted since the last meeting.

Adjournment: Arnold made a motion to adjourn. Nickle seconded the motion; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2013 in Billingsly Board Room

Respectfully submitted by: Brenda McDaniel
Comments or suggestions: Why does the administration no longer attend Staff Senate meetings? This seems to me to be another indication of how the administration views the staff at this university. During the staff senate meetings someone always reports on the Faculty Senate meeting and that report includes important information the administration discusses with the faculty senate. It seems they should extend the same respect to the Staff Senate.

Comments or suggestions: I noticed several departments were closed for spring break (health center, library, coaching staff). I was wondering if these staff members take vacation, are forced to take leave without pay, or do they receive more holidays than the rest of the staff?