Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, September 12, 2012  9:00 AM, Billingsly Boardroom

Members Present: Michelle Arwood, Natalie Bruce, Mike Davies, Josh Doak, Gary Edwards, Melanie Epperson, Alicia Hughes, Aaron Lewis, Brenda McDaniel, Tonya Nickle, Nancy Rainey, Robert Frossard, Olive Talley, Bob Tessman, Julie Wengert, Judy Wilmoth.

Member(s) Absent / Excused:

Determination of Quorum: Sixteen of Sixteen active members present, 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; Tessman seconded the motion. Motion carried and the minutes from August 08, 2012 were approved as written.

Administrative Comments: Arwood welcomed everyone including the gallery.

Administrative/Special Guest Comments

Rob Yust, Vice President for Business Affairs gave an overview of program prioritization process. This is mandated by the Board of Governors. They want to look at the entire university to determine if there are areas where we have inefficiencies. Can we do some eliminations, some consolidation, are there areas we can reallocate the budget, etc. It has been split into academic and non-academic. The financial aspect is only 20% of the criteria.

The academic side has revenue sources, etc. They will be looking at how many majors per program, as well as the revenue stream. Dr. Pat Lipira and Jeff Gibson are deeply involved in this process and doing a phenomenal job.

The non-academic side is much more challenging as there is not a lot of revenue stream on that side. They will be looking at how we can do things better for our students, how we can do things more efficiently, better for our employees in each area.

Once the criteria have been identified, a group of academics and non-academics will do an analysis of academics, non-academics, athletics and the foundation. The board has established a very fast-paced schedule; they want it done by the end of the year. The group has not been established yet; there will be representatives from different areas.

The focus is not on cutting anything; it is mainly for budget reallocation. Yust stressed that anyone is welcome to email him with questions. Arwood noted all member of the President’s Council wanted to take part in todays presentation but scheduling conflicts interfered. The Senate thanked Mr. Yust for his time.

Committee Reports: Arwood called for Staff Senate committee reports:

1. Communications Committee – Did not meet.
2. Elections Committee – Doak reported this is the last month for nominations for the third quarter Southern Service Champ awards and encouraged everyone to nominate someone in each of three categories. Because of the Superior Service award there will not be Southern Service awards for the fourth quarter. In response to a question from Arwood, Doak advised winners of the Southern Service Champ award are still eligible for the Superior Service award.

3. Executive Committee – Various topics were discussed at the meeting with President’s Council: program prioritization (resulting in Rob Yust’s presentation), sick leave pool, event/clerical pool and anonymous comments.

President’s Council stressed how difficult it is for the non-academic side to set values for the program prioritization project; they want to weigh everything equally but they are dealing with programs that are not equal.

A person asked about the sick leave pool process; Rob Yust looked into this and reported there is a committee involved that meets as needed. The policy and forms are on LioNet; it was agreed it would be a good idea to send out a campus-wide email reminding employees that this is available. There is a pool of donated sick leave available for employees in need who have used up their own sick leave/vacation because of a critical illness. The policy details the specific requirements, there are over 5000 hours available. Discussion ensued about who has the responsibility of communicating the existence of the sick leave policy. Guest Debbie Dutch Kelley noted a person must be employed for at least a year to be eligible; sharing this information at orientation is not ideal. In addition, an employee cannot have a pattern of abusing sick leave. The process has not been used for a while; the policy is on LioNet and will be included in the next employee handbook. There is a form on LioNet for employees to donate; there are guidelines and limits to the number of hours that can be donated.

Often people leaving MSSU donate their sick leave.

The events and clerical pool was discussed – who oversees this, is it a campus function or a staff senate function? Wilmot reviewed the policy and noted it is a Staff Welfare Committee policy; they are in charge of implementing, monitoring, advertising and soliciting volunteers. It went into effect last year, it has been used a couple of times. Last year Talley was in charge of the program; this year Melissa Forsythe from the library, a member of the Staff Welfare Committee, will be monitoring the program this year. The policy will be announced in Accents, the policy and forms will be on the Staff Senate SharePoint site as well as the university human resources site. Arwood thanked Wilmot for her follow-up work on this, providing clarification to the Senate.

An employee questioned receiving a ticket for parking in a visitor space on a Sunday. Arwood was unable to find a published parking policy, finally receiving the information from Ken Kennedy. The policy states parking in visitor’s spaces (along with several other areas) is prohibited 24 hours per day. It makes sense if an employee is working during off hours they would want to park as close as possible for safety reasons. If there is an event on campus, that’s a different situation. Darren Fullerton volunteered to check into this.

President’s Council was asked to address a recent anonymous comment:
I like helping our community, but allowing Joplin High to exclusively use the swimming pool Monday-Friday from 4:00-5:30 displaces individuals who pay the rec center/swimming pool fee from swimming during those times. Is it possible to get on or two lanes opened during this time frame?
Joplin rents the facility, we are the only pool available and they have been renting ours for a long time. The rent subsidizes “open swim time”. Joplin owns the lane ropes, it would not be possible to open a lane. Schedules were reviewed and the least busy time was chosen. Pools are very expensive to maintain; several universities in the state have closed theirs due to excessive costs.

At this time Arwood addressed another anonymous comment.

Wages for Secretarial positions. Recently a position was posted for the Secretary to the Dean of Arts and Sciences with a beginning wage of $10.63. The starting hourly wage is more than other secretarial positions that have been here several years. It states that this position compares to a Grade 28 position in the previous Grade & Step System. Today a position for First-Year Experience Program Secretary was posted with a beginning wage of $9.74. It is very confusing. Questions: 1. What are the classifications for Secretarial Positions? Is this information posted any where? 2. Why would the university hire a new employee and start them at a wage higher than current employees when the job description/qualifications are the same? 3. Do we have a Grade & Step Pay System? Is this implemented for all secretarial positions?
The director of Human Resources, Debbie Dutch Kelly, has responded in writing; her response will be included with the minutes. Arwood gave an overview: secretaries pay rate is linked to the supervisor’s level: department head secretary $9.74, dean & assistant vice-president $10.63, vice president $11.61, senior vice president $12.13 and president $12.67. There are still employees on the grade and step program but it is no longer in effect for new employees. In the case of the newly filled dean’s secretary it was filled internally with a department head secretary; basically an internal promotion occurred.

4. Legislative Oversight Committee – Did not meet.

5. Staff Welfare Committee – Wilmoth reported they met last week and discussed the event and clerical support process. They are working on a couple of other items and will report on them at a future meeting.

Arwood called for campus committee reports:
1. Administrative Council – Meets this afternoon; Hughes will represent Staff Senate at this meeting.

2. Appreciation Committee – Did not meet.

3. Budget Advisory Council – Wengert attended her first meeting as Staff Senate representative and has been appointed chair of the cost cutting subcommittee; their charge is to review all of the suggestions from the campus community posted on SharePoint. They are to review the suggestions and determine what could be implemented now and which ones would be implemented later. Elke Howe is the chair of the revenue subcommittee. Edwards added Dr. Groesbeck (Dean of the School of Business) asked Dr. Speck what the strategy of the university is moving forward. Dr. Speck responded we are still looking at a medical school, graduating more nursing students. Speck also addressed potential academic cuts; noting just because a field is not generating money they won’t cut them – we can’t cut Art, Music or Theatre; they are tied in the School of Education.

4. Diversity Committee – The first Lunch & Learn is this coming Friday at noon, an RSVP is requested; the theme is exploring religion.

5. Faculty Senate – Tessman is attending Faculty Senate meetings; he reported they discussed prioritization. There is a copy of the text behind the philosophy of the program prioritization program on file in the library. Maria Bruggeman is Faculty Senate’s rep to Staff Senate. Bruggeman noted Dr. Lipira discussed promotion. The Faculty Senate has set two goals: to improve the communication from all levels up to the board and from the board back down and to review and clean up the faculty handbook.

6. Orientation & Training – Wilmoth reported they reviewed the results of the new adjunct and faculty workshops that were given in conjunction with Dr. Lipira’s office. The results were positive. They are moving forward on Brown Bag lunches; they have been very well received. The committee is working on a lot of other things. Bruce asked about rescheduling current training being offered – Wilmoth suggested contacting Kim Noll, the HR secretary or Debbie Woodmansee. There will be more training offered in the spring. The feedback from yesterday’s webinar was positive.

7. Shared Governance - The committee has completed its charge and all proposals submitted to the BOG in TY 2011 have been approved and are in implementation. This committee listing can be removed from the reporting list until it reconvenes.

8. Strategic Planning – They have not met yet this semester.
9. 75th Anniversary – Lewis announced the committee meets today. Arwood mentioned the success of the August Third Thursday; there were a lot of Southern people in attendance.

    Arwood was contacted by Bob Harrington; he asked for a Staff Senate representative on a new Master Landscaping Plan. Epperson volunteered to serve.

Old Business:

New Business:

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:
    MSSU’s football team is 2 and 0!!!!

Anonymous Comments
    Arwood read a formal response received from Dr. Speck regarding the recreation center fees. The letter will be included in the minutes. Other anonymous comments were addressed in the Executive Committee report.

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 in Billingsly Board Room

Respectfully submitted by: Brenda McDaniel
Secretarial Wage Question

The pay for a Secretary is linked to the supervisor’s level. Higher level supervisors are in offices with greater responsibility and this translates to a higher level of skill, experience and responsibility required – and thus a higher entry wage – for the Secretarial position assigned to that office. For example, the President’s Secretary is higher than a Vice President, etc.

The university had a Grade and Step system through 6/30/1998. As of 7/1/1998 non-exempt employees were no longer hired on that system. However, since there are a number of employees who remained on that system, the posting referenced the prior Grade system for information only.

In the case of the Secretary to the Dean of Arts & Sciences, a person was selected that was in a Secretary to a Department Head position. Thus an internal promotion occurred.

At this time the hiring wage scale is not posted on MSSU’s internal websites. However it will be as that project continues.

The hiring hourly wages and former Grade levels for Secretarial positions are as follows:
Department Head $9.74 (26)
Dean / Assistant Vice President $10.63 (28)
Vice President $11.61 (30)
Senior Vice President $12.13 (31)
President $12.67 (32)

Provided by Debbie Dutch Kelley, Director of Human Resources
August 15, 2012

To: Michelle Axford

From: Bruce W. Spence

Copies: President’s Council

Subject: Response to Questions about Recreation Center Fee

At the meeting on August 7, 2012 between the Staff Senate Executive Committee and the President’s Council, an agenda item questioned why the recreation fee cannot be waived for staff members so that MSSU employees can use the recreational center free.

To explain this, it’s important to know the history of how the center was funded initially. Students voted to assess all students a fee for the recreation center; regardless of whether a student uses the recreation center. That assessment was the basis for MSSU receiving bonding to finance the building of the center. Because each student, whether full-time or part-time, is assessed a fee for the recreation center, it does not seem fair or appropriate for faculty and staff to use the recreation center without paying the same fee.

This is not the first time that questions about free use of the recreation center for faculty and staff has been addressed. However, I hope that this memo clarifies the reasoning for charging faculty and staff who wish to use the recreation center the same rate that students pay.