MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Staff Senate 2011-2012

Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, August 10th, 2011  9:00 AM, Billingsly Board Room #310

Members Present: Michelle Arwood, Natalie Bruce, Mike Davies, Josh Doak, Gary Edwards, Melanie Epperson, Brenda Hayes, Greg Killingsworth, Brenda McDaniel, Ann Quade, Olive Talley, Bob Tessman, Julie Wengert, Judy Wilmoth.

Member(s) Absent / Excused: Hiedi Carlin, Bob Harrington

Determination of Quorum: Fourteen of Sixteen active members present; quorum established.

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

Approval of Minutes: Davies made a motion to approve the minutes; Talley seconded the motion. Motion carried and the minutes from July 13, 2011 were approved as written.

Administrative Comments: The Executive Committee (Killingsworth, Arwood and McDaniel) met with President’s Council Tuesday August 9. In the future this report will be listed on the agenda.

Administrative/Special Guests:

Committee Reports:
Reminder: Sub-committees should be keeping minutes at their meetings.

1. Communications Committee – Nothing to report.

2. Election Committee – Need to discuss the Southern Champs Award (to be awarded in September).

3. Benefits Committee – Have not met.

4. Executive Budget Committee – Have not met.

If you are on a campus committee (outside of Staff Senate) and have information to share; please send it to the secretary to be added to the next meeting agenda.

Wilmoth mentioned the Emergency Management Higher Education Committee – some buildings have been inspected for threat assessment. Building captains will be announced in September. They have a grant to put procedures in place or improve procedures for a campus threat or natural disaster. There are restrictions concerning how the grant money is spent. The contract with Red Cross to be a shelter came from this committee. Other projects include tactical gear, training, and developing a hierarchy for who is in charge during an emergency.

McDaniel reported the Student Senate sponsored an electronic sign for the campus that will be installed on Newman Road. The sign can be programmed with emergency information when needed.
Old Business:
Killingsworth will meet with Yust- the Personal Days proposal is “dead in the water”. Because of the stipend and the summer schedule Yust felt like this was not a good time to approach the President’s Council with this proposal. Talley made a motion to take the proposal off the table, Arwood seconded the motion. Motion carried.

There have been changes and additions to the Distance Learning fees; our proposal needs to be revised. We need to gather more information; the cap needs to be clarified. Yust felt the President’s Council would be in favor of approving the proposal. Arwood noted we may want to look at the full fee structure and what is currently being discounted.

- Will it apply to employees only or will dependents be included? Twenty to twenty-five employees have used the tuition discount during the past two semesters; an additional sixty employees have used the dependent tuition discount.
- Should people have to work at MSSU for a certain amount of time before receiving the tuition discount? Wilmoth advised HR was considering reviewing the policy about a year ago. The fees are not specifically defined in the current policy. The entire tuition/fee discount policy should be reviewed, there have been a lot of changes, for example we now offer master’s degrees which are not included in the waiver policy. (Note: graduate programs are cooperative with other universities and not “eligible” for a discount). The policy doesn’t address students receiving scholarships. Discussion about drawing in students.
- Should we include faculty on that discussion? Dr. Anglin felt once we have something together we should bring it up to Faculty Senate.
- Separate into 2 issues – Distance Learning fees discount for employee continuing education and explore the policy in general; which might need to be reviewed by a larger institutional committee. Would we want to put together a one-time committee that would look at what other institutions are doing? Meet with Dean Kroll to get her input and knowledge? Our goal would be to get a change in place before the spring semester. The tuition discount is a great benefit; we don’t want to lose it! The proposal is only addressing distance learning fees; if employees take online classes it doesn’t take them away from their office and indirectly the university benefits from the employee’s increased job performance.
- Ask Dr. Kroll to speak to Staff Senate and give us a presentation similar to what was given to the Faculty Senate. We want to give this program staff support. Do we want to meet with Dean Kroll to get her input and knowledge? We can gather facts before meeting with Dr. Kroll. Killingsworth suggested a committee to look at benchmarks and come up with questions for the presentation – Talley, Wengert, McDaniel, Arwood (co-chair), and Wilmoth (co-chair) – add Alicia Hughes. Note: Dr. Kroll is on the agenda for the October meeting.

Which battles do we want to fight and how is that determined? Bruce mentioned the Recreation Center and the Child Development Center. The Student Senate voted to fund the Rec. Center and the students pay for it; any discount for that would be shot down. What about a discount for on-campus child care? We want happy employees; taking an interest in employee’s children would go a long way. Are our rates competitive? Yes.

- Talley advised our day care is only open to students, staff, faculty and alumni; it is not open to the community. It is open eleven hours a day, only hire degree teachers, offer hot breakfast & lunch as well as snacks, a defined curriculum and have just opened an infant/toddler center to accommodate families and keep their children together. When there was the threat of closing; we found our prices were in the middle range of day care facilities in the area. Our facility is used for Nursing and Teacher Education observation and practicums. Historically we have lost money; we are now close to the break-even point which is where we want to be.
- Bruce still wants some type of discount to be offered. Talley advised there are over 100 children on a wait list. If the CDC gets to the point of generating revenue, at that point be able to offer scholarships. There was a grant that allowed the infant/toddler center to be added. The goal is to break even, once we are profitable the monies need to go back into the campus community. Custodial and maintenance costs are absorbed by the university. Currently we are required to hire degree individuals and offer benefits there are additional expenses involved. The folks downtown hire high school dropouts and teenagers. Dr. Coltharp would be the person to talk to in order to pursue this. The waitlist kind of negates any discount we could get. Killingsworth suggested we not pursue this particular fight, but is fine with Bruce talking to Dr. Coltharp about this topic.
Killingsworth asked if we want Yust to make a financial presentation to Staff Senate or to the general campus. Doak made a motion to offer it to the campus, Talley seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Secretarial Pool proposal was given back to us; President’s Council had several questions. It will go back to Ann Quade and the Benefits Committee for revision. One question was who pay the wages when someone is working temporarily in another department. They expressed concern about departments abusing the system. We emphasized it is designed for special events, there should be limits or caps. Arwood suggested Bruce be added to the group to assist with the re-writing of the proposal.

- Tessman asked where he could find the proposals we have been discussing. New proposals are handed out at the time of the initial discussion, these are ongoing proposals. Could we have drafts of proposals available on our website with access limited to Staff Senate members only? Tessman advised that is possible. Tessman was added to the Communications committee.

- Wengert reported there was a situation where a department was without a secretary; although the department knew the secretary was going to be gone and there was no coverage arranged for that time frame, which seemed to be an emergency for the department. Yust was asked if we could try using the Secretarial Pool and he agreed. An email was sent out to academic secretaries (this was an academic department). There were 27 available secretaries, 5 responses were received, 4 secretaries were used: Talley, Missy Snow, Michelle Heaney and Mariah Callari. Phones were transferred, most paperwork was handled electronically. Some observations from this trial: the department requesting help needs to be organized and we need to define who constitutes the Secretarial Pool.

- When we revise the proposal, could we consider the possibility of training so more people would be available with the needed skills? Is it better to have a particular person as a back-up for each position within each area? What about a part-time floater for the academic and non-academic side? That get into more of a management-type decision; this proposal is targeted more towards special events that are on the calendar and can be planned and prepared for. The volunteer has an opportunity to cross-train. What about student workers? This is a training issue, including customer service, phone skills, sexual harassment, safety training – it’s a long list.

Where does Staff Senate stand on training? Arwood responded it was discussed with President’s Council, Yust suggested we gather specific areas that need to be addressed as far as training and be sure it is pertinent to the employee. A good example is executives who oversee and approve items in areas they have not been trained in. When we hire new people they may need very specific training. A little bit of training goes a long way. We need to make a list of areas training and policy-wise where we see issues that we would like to have addressed and get back to Yust. (A general list has been submitted to Yust) Training may or may not always pertain to your job – what if you get promoted? It might be relevant then. Wengert noted it seems to be 2 separate issues – new employee training based on their position and then continuing education and/or in-service training. Adjuncts get no training at all.

- Wengert proposed a committee to help set up an orientation program for new employees in all categories. It’s larger than one or two people can handle and encompasses all areas. Wengert mentioned the program developed by the Leadership Academy. In-service was mentioned again – employees have to attend. Timing of training for new employees is tricky because some things need to taught the first day. Would this committee have to be approved?
We can work on anything we want, then propose it to Yust. A certain number of staff senators need to be on our ad hoc committees; the balance can be outside people. A checklist was suggested, some training needs to be one-on-one, do supervisors need training? The key phrase is “new employee” not faculty or staff. Wengoth and Wengert will be co-chairs of this committee (Employee training) to come up with a proposal for President’s Council. Arwood volunteered if needed.

We could use a campus slogan than focuses on the student.

- Bruce suggested doing away with faculty/staff parking. We make our students park in the back woods while we park up front. That would be very symbolic and show that we aren’t setting ourselves above the students we serve. Visitors have to park “half a mile away” from our administrative building. There is a separation between students, staff and faculty – three separate units. If we don’t take care of our students we could be out of a job.

In August/September we need to make a push to get more people involved in our meetings –all senators are encouraged to talk to the people, invite them to the meetings, ask what’s on their mind.
New Business:

1. Appointment to Appreciation Committee chaired by Jared Bruggeman. The structure of the committee is Faculty Senate president, Staff Senate president, a representative from Student Affairs and Human Resources and two people appointed by the President. Erik Hilgendorf previously served as the Staff Senate rep., Talley serves on this committee (appointed by the President). The charge is to find ways to show appreciation to employees. An example was being given two days off during spring break. The committee is planning a blitz for employee involvement/suggestions. Killingsworth would like someone on the senate to serve in his place; preferably someone who has more than one year to serve. Epperson was appointed.

2. Faculty Senate representative – would anyone like to volunteer? Several felt it was important that Killingsworth attend. McDaniel asked if Killingsworth could take along a different senator every month. An additional person should be cleared with the Faculty Senate president ahead of time.

3. Should we have a guest presentation at every meeting (with a time limit)? Last month Dr. Lile spoke to us about the Leadership Academy; we’re hoping to have Dr. Kroll present to us in the near future. We may not have time at every meeting, but if anyone has a topic they would like to have presented please speak up.

4. In addition, if you have topics or ideas that you would like to have brought up during the monthly meeting with President’s Council please submit them ahead of our Staff Senate meetings. The first meeting was informal and comfortable. They prefer we take our time and make a good, solid proposal or presentation. Understanding we are in a growth stage; Dr. Anglin suggested we keep the core unit small but tap into every resource we have. Every member of President’s Council would be happy to speak at our meetings. We don’t want to take the same things over and over to PC, we need to review our proposals, see what progress is being made – possibly focus on completing at least one proposal in a specific timeframe.

5. Bruce mentioned the 4-day school week and asked if that still being discussed? McDaniel advised we do not currently have enough classroom space to change from a 5-day semester to a 4 day semester. All three credit hour classes would have to meet an hour and fifteen minutes like our current Tuesday/Thursday classes. Talley added there are things that would have to change prior to considering a 4-day work week. We do need to be more creative with our offerings – back to more night and weekend classes.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:
Talley expressed appreciation to Quade for always bringing home the point that we are here for the students. We need to remember the students do come first. We are all on the same team.

Yust has asked about the general feeling of the employees; we should talk to the people, see how they are doing. Bruce asked if there had ever been a staff survey, similar to the faculty survey (which was generated by the Faculty Senate). Staff Senate was asking about participating in Faculty Senate’s survey but declined; mainly due to the political culture. Would Staff Senate want to do something ethical and unbiased to take the pulse of the staff? The biggest negative heard is that we are hiring all these high level chiefs, spending money on remodeling yet staff hasn’t had a raise. Distance Learning was mentioned as an example but there is a vision there to grow the department. Communication was also discussed – from the highest level down to the newest employee on campus.

Adjournment: Killingsworth asked if there was any other business to bring to the table. There being none, McDaniel made the motion that the meeting be adjourned; Talley seconded the motion; motion carried.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 14th, 2011 at 9:00 AM. Billingsly Student Center room 310 (Board room).

Respectfully submitted by:
Brenda McDaniel