Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, December 9, 2009  9:00 a.m. Spiva Library 413 A

Members Present: Josh Doak, Gary Edwards, Mike Fox, Erik Hilgendorf, Greg Killingsworth, Greg Needham, Ann Quade, Olive Talley, Debbie Woodmansee, and Ted Wright.

Member(s) Absent / Excused: Darren Fullerton

Determination of Quorum: Ten of eleven members present; quorum established.

Call to Order: In the absence of Darren Fullerton, President of the Staff Senate, Josh Doak, Vice President, presided over the meeting. A motion was made to call the meeting to order by Josh Doak at 9:00 a.m. and was seconded by Mike Fox, seconded by Greg Needham. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Josh called for changes in the minutes; there being none called for a motion to approve; Erik Hilgendorf motioned and Greg Needham seconded; motion carried and the minutes from the November 11, 2009 minutes approved as written.

Administrative Comments: Josh asked if there were guests expected and if any would like the floor. No guests were present and no one had requested the floor. Dr. Parsons will try to address the Senate at the January 2010 meeting. As previously determined, Rob Yust and Jeff Gibson will be asked to address the Senate as they assume their new administrative duties in January 2010.

Committee Reports:
A. Shared Sick Leave Policy Committee – The policy draft was submitted for the Faculty Welfare Sub-Committee for their review. Marty Conklin and Jan Holms have read the policy and have expressed their support. The draft will be presented by the Faculty Welfare Committee to the Faculty Senate in February 10, 2010. Since the Staff Senate would like to see the policy implemented in January 2010, it was motioned by Greg Needham to move forward with presenting to the President’s Council, the motion was seconded by Erik Hilgendorf; the motion was carried with a unanimous vote all in favor.

B. Communications Committee – Greg Needham stated that he had nothing new to report.
   1. On topic, Josh Doak reported to Debbie Woodmansee that the Staff Senate email box has been inundated with SPAM. Josh stated that Darren Fullerton has reported the problem to Al Sadler who will check into the problem. Also, Josh reported that the “comments” page appears to be non-functioning at this time; though it was working through October (2009). Josh tested the page with a comment addressed to himself and it did not appear. Debbie Woodmansee agreed to submit a work request to have the webpage / comments-form examined. In the interest of staying approachable by MSSU staff, the repairs will be considered top priority.
Old Business:

A. Josh opened the floor for comments regarding “staff morale enhancement issues”; bringing ideas and comments from constituents regarding summer hours, etc.

1. Erik Hilgendorf revisited the topic of the (student) Recreational Center use by MSSU staff. He stated that in his opinion it would show interest in wellness if the administration would explore the reduction of fees to faculty/staff. It was questioned during discussion as to the origination of fees to faculty/staff; for instance, was it blueprinted for faculty and staff to always incur a usage fee? And, wouldn’t insurance costs go down if a percentage of faculty/staff could document participation? Josh mentioned that 68 people currently have paid memberships, but the actual attendance is unknown. He reported that the Wellness Committee is exploring per-use charges as well as other ideas to increase usage of the facility among faculty/staff. Greg Needham stated in his research he found one school offered only the use of the walking track as a benefit. Josh stated that the use of an “exercise class” pass and/or ID card could be explored as a means to initiate more use and to determine the “per-usage” fee. Josh reminded the senate that the fees were initiated because the facility was paid for by student fees and the recent addition of swimming pool fees is due to the excessive cost of repairs for which there is no budget.

2. Erik Hilgendorf stated that Crowder College gave (when he was employed there) the Christmas Week vacation without yielding other holidays. Also, he asked if the practice of observing holidays on the actual day was a “letter of the law” matter. He stated that since Crowder is also a public institution, he wouldn’t think that they would have repeatedly year after year broken the law by offering the benefit to their employees.

a. Greg Needham stated that he had read in the News Leader-Springfield an editorial that took the position that it is excessive for staff at Missouri State to have time off other than designated holidays; due to budget constraints. It was the position of the editorial that the institution could save money by not giving extra days to staff and faculty. He stated that there does seem to be some extreme sensitivity to the issue of paid time off other than to observe holidays.

b. Josh Doak asked if anyone knew the history of how MSSU started the tradition of the holiday transference to the week between Christmas and New Year’s Day. Greg Killingsworth stated that it was explained to him by Human Resources upon his hire that school is in session on the actual holidays, so staff level employees are required to work and the staff is given the time off Christmas week.

c. Erik Hilgendorf observed that as part of the planning committee for the Martin Luther King Breakfast annual event, it has been questioned who would attend if we had the day off. If legislators have the day(s) off to observe particular holidays, why doesn’t MSSU. Greg Killingsworth stated regarding Missouri State University in Springfield, that he believes that some staff do receive holidays off and the remaining staff who work are awarded a comp day. Erik stated in the interest of morale that we should explore the use of designated holidays and the week of Christmas off with pay as a means to appease those who have not had a raise. He also stated that he felt that would make MSSU consistent with other colleges. Josh Doak will address the question of the paid holiday time off with Human Resources.

d. Mike Fox asked if the Human Resources Office has made any suggestions as to how to improve the general morale of the campus. None present were aware of any publicly stated ideas, but it was also clarified that we might not know generally what is still in the ‘consideration stage’.

e. Greg Needham mentioned that he spoke with a colleague whose daughter is a Joplin public school teacher and receives discounts from area vendors like Sam’s Club, car rental agencies, etc. The program of discounts present saving opportunities for the teachers as well as providing community support for local businesses. Some discussion ensued regarding the possible initiation of a similar program for MSSU employees. Greg Needham said that the Googled “university staff perks” and
found many listings showing what is offered to maintain good -or improve morale at other institutions; some of which were similar to ours at MSSU, some that included things like movie tickets, etc., but the point is that everything was on the website for all to see. He also discussed local perks for public schools such as a CJ-Ebay (Carl Junction School District); a site on which school district employees can post items for sale. Greg Killingsworth spoke his personal knowledge of discount books for teachers in Willard, MO to receive discounts in Willard and the Springfield area. He admittedly did not know who initiates the discount book, but will make inquiry. Greg Needham stated that he feels that we (MSSU employees and/or HR) should initiate and negotiate “deals” on behalf of the staff. Mike Fox added that he feels the implementation of such a program would prove to enhance the employees experience at MSSU and would be reminiscent when he was hired. He added that he does not feel that the Human Resources Office is focused on representing the employees. Greg Killingsworth noted that he has spoken with many staff members who feel that HR does not represent the welfare of the employee. Erik noted as an example of HR representation; other institutions have a sick pool policy that was initiated by their respective Human Resources Offices. At MSSU it has taken a Staff Senate committee to draft a policy as well as present it to the President’s Council. Ted Wright suggested that perhaps the Staff Senate should circulate a survey that asks employees to report on, “What has the Human Resources Office done for you?”...it should also be made clear that we are soliciting both positive and/or negative reports. Ann Quade asked the senate if the committee wants to do anything to “enhance the employees’ experience” or recognize personnel in any particular way. She also asked if she remembered correctly that Dr. Agee had stated that there might be funds available to the Staff Senate. Erik responded that if we could get sponsorship for the actual components of movie tickets, meal certificates, etc., it would be a very good program for the Staff Senate to initiate and monitor. Erik described in brief activities that are shared from time to time in his building (Hearnes), i.e., pot lucks, etc.

f. In regard to accessibility to the senate and to improve staff morale, Ann Quade suggested cookies and hot chocolate served at the Staff Senate meetings each month in a different building on campus. Josh Doak stated that the alternating locations if the meetings each month would show our willingness to be assessable would show our appreciation for each employee as well as provide better visibility of the Staff Senate. Ann stated that she felt it would build a foundation of trust in the senate as well as provide an opportunity for some to complete a Concern Form. We could set the meeting time that is convenient for the majority of the staff members in each building. Mike Fox volunteered to speak with Mike Wonderly of Sodexho about providing refreshments for the “town meetings”. Erik asked if we had received an answer to the Staff Senate budget question in order to pay for the expenses incurred. It was decided to adopt the roaming meeting and Ann Quade volunteered to contact the Physical Plant for use of their facility and conference room for the January meeting. It was also decided to combine several of the smaller buildings and/or buildings with fewer staff members. Ummel Tech will be included in the January invitation to attend the pre-meeting mixer at the Physical Plant. The mixer will begin at 10:00 AM in a common area and the meeting will move to the conference room at 10:30 AM. It was decided that the “Comments Form” would be provided for completion at the mixer. The secretary will also send copies of the form to the building(s) for distribution prior to the meeting to allow staff adequate time to thoughtfully complete the forms. It was decided among the Staff Senate that meeting times in each building
would be determined by the availability of staff in each building. All agreed that they could be flexible in the monthly meeting schedule.

Locations for the remaining meetings in 2010 will be decided at the January meeting of the Staff Senate under New Business.

g. Greg Killingsworth asked that we consider asking for a restructuring of the Employee of the Year and Service Award program. He stated that he felt the money spent on the awards could be divided among ALL employees with some small token of appreciation (even a $10 Wal-Mart gift card). Others suggested distribution of hams/turkeys/grocery gift cards...anything that could be divided among all equally. Greg Needham asked for an explanation of the selection process for the Employee of the Year awards. Ann Quade recently served on the selection committee and gave a brief overview. Josh Doak stated that he feels that people in general (employees) feel unappreciated and he like’s Mike’s idea of using the $3000 in award money for the distribution of small gift items so that everyone is included. Erik Hilgendorf added that he felt the gesture would aid in “breaking down the lines of demarcation”. He continued with his comparison to other universities that seem to discourage a ‘cast system’ but rather work diligently to achieve a more ‘family atmosphere’ at which all committees comprise of students, faculty, and staff. Olive Talley related how Northwest Missouri State University opens the President’s Office to students every Friday and provides cookies. Discussion ensued regarding what locations on the MSSU campus might be central and convenient for students and staff.

Discussion about the actual Appreciation Dinner ensued. Some suggestions were to move the meal to earlier in the week; include in the service award recipients all part-time employees and professional staff who happen also to be administrators. Mike Fox suggested that perhaps the Staff Senate should take over the responsibility or at least work in tandem with Human Resources for the Service Awards recognition. It could be separated from the Appreciation Luncheon held in December and moved to an earlier date that would be more convenient for employees. Josh Doak stated that the Foundation provides the funding for the service awards and would need to be involved in the planning, etc.

h. Josh Doak asked if any of the senate members were able to bring to the meeting any additional ideas to present to administration regarding Dr. Agee’s request of comments on summer hours; other than those already submitted:
   1) Friday(s) off
   2) Customer service issues
   3) Combining break times to provide longer lunch break
   4) Reconsider 5:00 PM end time

Josh started the dialog with his synopsis of a suggested summer schedule. Other senators offered suggestions. It was determined that once we have received all feed-back from the constituency the Staff Senate would comprise a list of suggestions for Dr. Speck’s consideration.

i. Erik Hilgendorf discussed in brief the recent news that MSSU might soon consider reinstating the Vice President of Student Services position that was abandoned when the last vice president (Dr. Glenn Dolence) retired in the mid 1990’s. Erik suggested that in the development of that position the Staff Senate ask for representation on the selection/interview committee. He also suggested that we request representation by the VPSS as currently staff is not represented administratively. Some discussion ensued regarding the possible implementation of new rules for professional staff who teach in adjunct
positions across campus. Erik will explore the origin/validity of the information and will report at the next meeting.

**New Business:** None to address

**Adjournment:** Josh Doak asked if there was any further business to bring to the table for the benefit of the order. There being none, Mike Fox made the motion that the meeting be adjourned; Ted Wright seconded the motion; motion carried; meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, January 13, 2010 / Mixer at 10:00 AM at the Physical Plant, meeting to follow at 10:30 AM in the Physical Plant Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by:
Olive Talley