Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, January 12th, 2011  9:00 AM, Billingsly Board Room #310

Members Present: Josh Doak, Heidi Carlin, Erik Hilgendorf, Gary Edwards, Bob Harrington, Ted Wright, Leslie Willis, Brenda Hayes, Brenda McDaniel, Olive Talley, Michelle Arwood and Mike Davies.

Member(s) Absent / Excused: Greg Killingsworth, Debbie Woodmansee, Julie Wengert, & Ann Quade

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

Call to Order: Erik Hilgendorf called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

Approval of Minutes: Erik called for changes in the minutes; there being none asked for a motion to approve; Brenda McDaniel motioned and Bob Harrington seconded; all in favor; motion carried and the minutes from Dec. 15th 2010 were approved as written.

Administrative/Special Guest Comments: None

Committee Reports:
1. Communications Committee – Erik informed everyone that Staff Senate e-mail is working again. In hopes of informing all senators on functions and ways to utilize e-mail, Erik is going to request Debbie Woodmansee or another IT staff member be present at the next meeting.

2. Election Committee –No Report

3. Benefits Committee - Erik Hilgendorf updated the senate on the recent update to the bereavement policy and spring break schedule. He along with other senators voiced appreciation to the administration for changes made. Conversation did evolve about misalignments in the spring break schedules of the University and area schools. Erik mentioned that the benefits sub-committee would discuss this and other issues before the next senate meeting.

4. Executive Budget Committee – Erik Hilgendorf reported that Jo Kroll, Dean of Graduate Programs, presented to the committee her areas focus on tapping into the international and out-of-state student market. The University is putting resources into expanding marketing of the distance learning program to these groups.

Erik expressed hope of inviting Jo to one of the future senate meetings to inform the senators on current happenings of her department.

Old Business:
1. Lion’s Roar Award-Erik Hilgendorf stated that criteria is needed for the Lion’s Roar Award. He requested senators submit ideas to him to assist the Benefits committee in formalizing criteria to share at the February senate meeting.
New Business:

1. Superior Service Award-Individuals involved in the nomination process and other staff members expressed concern about lack of formal criteria for nomination and the selection of the award winners. Having no formal criteria of what qualifies a person for the award makes the nomination subjective to the writer of the nomination. It also gives no guidelines to the individuals on the nomination selection committee when they're reviewing award nominations subject to that individual.

The selection of the award winners was presented for discussion. Currently each member of the nomination committee selects their top choice in each staff category (professional, secretarial/clerk and physical plant), and submits those picks to the chair of the nomination committee (currently the Director of Human Resources). The belief of many staff members is that there should be more than one person who officially selects the award winners. This would remove any question of distrust or favoritism from possibly surfacing, by adding accountability and balance.

The role of the staff senators on the nomination committee was also mentioned. The original idea of adding these individuals was to both select from the list of nominees for the Superior Service Awards and to assist the chair of the nomination category in selecting the final winners. Since those individuals were not a part of the final selection, the purpose of their involvement was opened to discussion. Erik Hilgendorf presented the question to the entire staff, “Should senate stay on?” The following answers were submitted:

- Yes, if these individuals help with the final selection of winners
- Yes, it doesn’t hurt having these individuals on the board.
- No, a third party member should assist the chair (ex...member of Foundation).

The final Superior Service topic discussed was the release of nominations to the individuals who were nominated. The general consensus of the senate was that it would be a great morale boost if all the individuals who were nominated would have a copy of the nominations letters they received. Currently the nominations are kept confidential to the nominee. The hope in the future is to further explore the possibility of people to see the nominations they receive.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:

Erik opened the floor for comments and announcements:

1. Bob Harrington announced that the forest agent hired as part of the Trim Grant is inventorying the University’s trees this week.
2. Bob Harrington also announced that the 3rd floor of Hearnes Hall is progressing well. The masonry work bid is now out.

Adjournment: Erik asked if there was any other business to bring to the table. There being none, Michelle Arwood made the motion that the meeting be adjourned; Olive Talley seconded the motion; motion carried; meeting adjourned at 9:58 AM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 16th, 2011 at 9:00 AM. Billingsly Student Center room 310 (Board room).

Respectfully submitted by:
Josh Doak