MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Staff Senate 2009-2010

Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, July 21, 2010  9:00 AM, Billingsly Board Room #310

(2010-11 new members: Michael Davies, Bob Harrington*, Julie Wengert)

Member(s) Absent / Excused: Kathy Feith, Ann Quade
*Kathy Feith has accepted a position at another institution and has resigned her position on the Staff Senate. Examination of the election records revealed that Mr. Robert (Bob) Harrington was runner-up and has accepted Kathy’s vacated seat on the Senate.

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

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

Approval of Minutes: Josh called for changes in the minutes. Erik noted that he thought the wrong Greg was noted as making the second on a motion to adjourn the June 9, 2010 meeting. It was noted that Greg Needham was absent and that indeed it was Greg Killingsworth (not Needham) who made the motion. Julie Wengert motioned for approval upon correction; Ted Wright seconded the motion; all approved.

Administrative Comments: Josh introduced Dr. Bruce Speck, Mr. Rob Yust, and Mr. Darren Fullerton who were in attendance to respond to staff questions. Rob addressed specific questions submitted as follows:
A. In the event that our monetary figures are better than expected over the next few years, how likely is it that staff could see a raise?
   • Very (extremely) likely; the first thing on the agenda at budget meetings with the BOG will be staff raises. Rob stated that he is much more optimistic for a quicker turn-around (fiscal recovery) than previously perceived. State appropriations are still bleak and those funding appropriations are out of the realm of controls for the MSSU administration. They are hopeful that the governor will allow provisions in tuition increases that will supplement losses in appropriations; however the tuition increase(s) will not entirely recoup appropriation losses. As we move forward, increased recruitment and student retention will provide additional funds through tuition. Summer 2010 enrollment for MSSU is up by 6% resulting in 3.9 % increase in credit hours. (statistics provided by Darren Fullerton). Rob stressed that in times when funding is tight, the number one priority is now and will remain focused on job preservation for all MSSU employees.
   • Dr. Speck stated that the future is always uncertain, but to be sure, it truly is during these times. To explain:
      ○ In January, Legislature cut one billion dollars from the budget.
      ○ Federal stimulus money will be exhausted and will the missing funds will not be replaced by the state.
      ○ By booking $5.80 (tuition) in 2010-11 (to be off-set by scholarship) and book another $5.80 in 2011-12, $11.60 per student will offset some of the non-allocated state and federal funds. This booking of tuition with scholarship backing will allow for an official increase in tuition when allowed.
• Some discussion ensued regarding the use of “soft-monies” through grant awards. Dr. Speck stated that until now grant writing had not been a priority nor had it been successful. He said that the institution needs to enlist departments in the writing of grants in the hope that a percentage of requests might be awarded. Dr. Speck stated that the grant writing process needs some work and admits that MSSU is behind in receiving a share of grant monies awarded in the state. He mentioned the TRIO grants in place on campus are reoccurring; are working well within our system; and are popular with the federal government.

 o Dr. Speck spoke about priorities and stated that above all else, student enrollment and retention/graduation rates must improve. He stated that all our efforts will take a minimum of six years until assessment of our process can be made. The students recruited for this fall will take approximately six years to successfully earn a degree.

 o Dr. Speck stated that in our efforts to increase student population, MSSU must plan for the expansion of class size and class offerings. The MSSU focus on the future must be on long term results.

 o Dr. Speck speculated that the MSSU employee health care contribution will probably have to increase to sustain MSSU and the budget crisis.

• Gregg Killingsworth asked Dr. Speck and Rob Yust to email their comments made in this meeting to the MSSU campus (all employees). Gregg stated that he routinely is asked about the improvement dollars spent on deferred maintenance, etc. Both gentlemen agreed to communicate their comments via email to the all campus community as they want to encourage conversational dialog regarding administration decisions, campus stability, and long term planning toward solvency.

• Rob introduced Dr. AJ Anglin, Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Anglin stated that he and his office will explore methods in which to encourage enrollment growth and the continuation of and improvements to quality academic programs. He stated that universities gain reputation through the quality of their programs and the quality of their graduates. He mentioned the newly developed position of Dean of Graduate Studies and Life Long Learning which in his opinion will “ratchet up to a new level” the learning experience at MSSU. Dr. Joann (Jo) Kroll has 25 years experience and has a funding and business approach to program enhancement and improvements.

B. Did Evergreen use the data collected from the classified staff to develop a report similar to professional staff report that gives an expected pay range? If yes, where is the report?

• The simple answer to the question is, “No”. The information gathered by classified staff enabled MSSU to update job descriptions for rehire purposes. The completion of the report would cost $10,000-$15,000 to produce a report utilizing data now 2+ years old. Rob reminded the senate that an effort to level the standard of compensation was implemented when the segment of the classified staff hired post-step received an across the board increase in salary when annual increases were awarded (totally 18%). It was proposed that another survey be commissioned when MSSU can afford the monetary investment. Salary adjustments could be awarded at that time. Currently, the investment of a completed and out of date report would not result in salary adjustments nor would it accurately reflect currents salary standards in the state of Missouri. Gregg reminded Rob that the Staff Senate was told that a report for classified staff would be forthcoming when all appeals and rebuttals for the Professional Staff salary adjustments were complete.

• The administrators reminded the senate that the Professional Staff increases did not necessarily bring those salaries up to standard; rather, the survey fees ($36,000) were paid out of the $186,000 allocated for the survey and resulting adjustments. No one truly knows what they “should” be paid by the standard. What the Professional Staff received by way of increases were distributed portions of the remaining funds after settlement with Evergreen, not necessarily bringing every salary up to recommended levels. The Senators were reminded that the data collected during the survey is the property of the research company, not MSSU. The resulting report is available online.  http://www.mssu.edu/hr/evergreenfinalreport.pdf

C. Why in these poor economic times are we spending money on renovations and moving existing departments to “new” facilities?

• First, the money spent on the new Health Science Building is not from MSSU funds. The departments moving into that facility have been part of the planning of that building since its inception. The areas vacated by the
Health Science programs provide space available for the improvement of programs and services to students for other departments. The movement of all student services into the administration building (Hearnes Hall) will provide a convenient “one-stop” approach for students from enrollment to graduation. Improvements in services and interdepartmental communication will enable MSSU to better serve and track students thus enhancing programs and student retention.

D. Is the contractor for the Health Science building being charged late fees for missing the turn-over deadline?
- Both Rob Yust and Bob Harrington addressed this question: Initially, there was a delay to a construction problem. That was resolved in a satisfactory time-frame. Other delays are primarily the result of alterations to the original blueprint as construction has moved forward. When changes to the original plans are made, deadline adjustments are also revised. Currently, baring additional changes, turn over date is August 13, 2010.

Committee Reports:
A. Shared Sick Leave Policy Committee – The committee has been dismissed as the provision is now MSSU policy. The item will remain on the agenda for consequent updates regarding hours banked balance and usage applications.

B. Communications Committee – Debbie Woodmansee reported that the committee has not met since the last Staff Senate meeting in June. Josh asked that she chair the committee and she agreed. She will provide the list of upcoming 2010-2011 Staff Senate meeting dates to Rod Surber in University Relations and Marketing for posting on the website.

C. Benefits Committee - Erik addressed that the committee seeks to review and possibly revise the Annual Service Awards that are currently supervised by the Human Resources Office and underwritten by the Foundation. Erik spoke with Mark Parsons (Ex Dir, Foundation) / VP Development), who did not have the entire history. However, in their discussion, Mr. Parsons stated that he knows of nothing limiting the awards to a number of three, which opens the discussion for revision and/or expansion. The committee will meet to draft a questionnaire to be distributed to all Professional and Classified Staff. Items discussed for questionnaire are:
   a. Keep the Spirit Awards as currently structured
   b. Keep the Spirit Awards but revise the number presented and the amount of the monetary award accordingly
   c. Keep the Spirit Award recognition, but divide the Foundation funds into some sort of token of appreciation to all Professional and Classified Staff
- It was determined that the questionnaire would need to be distributed hard copy with a return envelope provided. Human Resources could provide a label master of all Professional and Classified Staff to be photo copied to label stock. The copies can be made at the campus print shop as Brian has an index/account number for Staff Senate. The committee will need to discuss the acquisition of envelopes. The committee will meet prior to the next Staff Senate meeting and Erik will give report.

D. Election Committee – under New Business

E. Executive Budget Committee – nothing to report

F. Special Events Committee – nothing to report

Old Business: None

New Business:
A. Selection of new Executive Council by nomination and majority vote by senate are as follows:
   a. Erik Hilgendorf – President
   b. Greg Killingsworth – President Elect
   c. Josh Doak – Secretary
B. Staff Senate Expansion Proposal (from Election Committee agenda item D under Committee Reports)

- The Election Committee is proposing the addition of (2) Professional, (2) Classified and (1) At-Large positions to the current Staff Senate. This would give a total of sixteen Senators made up of (5) Professional, (5) Classified, (3) Physical Plant and (3) At Large positions. Purpose of expansion would be to increase members to service on committees and make senator more accessible to staff.

- Election for additional spots would be in late September (2010) with new senators starting in October (2010). Terms for additional Professional and Classified positions would be three and two years respectively. The individuals with highest vote totals in their category will serve three years, with second highest vote total serving two years. The additional at-large senator will in serve a two year term. Terms will be pro-rated to coincide with July-June terms.

- The Election Committee will seek and accept nominations in September.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:

- Jared Bruggeman, a gallery guest, asked how the Staff Senate “gets information out there”. He was advised that typically, word of mouth and the website posting of agendas and meeting minutes. In that this has been the Staff Senate infant year, efforts have been concentrated in areas of structure and the development and implementation of the Shared Sick Leave Policy. Discussion regarding a newsletter has incurred from time to time, however, in the interest of “green” and the unavailability of funds with which to produce a newsletter, the discussion has been laid on the table. It has been discussed that an online newsletter could be produced when the new content management software goes live campus wide. However, there are many employees whose duties do not include the use of a computer, therefore do not have easy daily access. Other means of dissemination of information include reports by the Staff Senate president to the Executive Budget Committee, President’s Council, the Board of Governors and other various committees as invited. Julie Wengert stated that she will report to the Athletic Committee.

- Josh reported that he had received correspondence from Debbie Dutch Kelly answering the inquiry regarding the bid process for health/benefits. The Insurance Committee report from the consultant indicated that MSSU paid out more claims during the past fiscal year which would increase the prospective health care bids. It was determined to be more economical to remain with current insurance.

Adjournment: Josh turned the meeting over to Erik who asked if there was any other business to bring to the table for the benefit of the order. There being none, Debbie Woodmansee made the motion that the meeting be adjourned; Josh Doak seconded the motion; motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 AM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 11, 2010 at 9:00 AM. Billingsly Student Center room 310 (Board room).

Respectfully submitted by:
Olive Talley