
Member(s) Absent / Excused:

Determination of Quorum: Fifteen of Sixteen active members present when meeting began quorum established.

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

Approval of Minutes: McDaniel advised a name correction was made to the seconding a motion to adjourn and remarks made by Cheryl Cifelli concerning the results of the staff survey were reworded for a more positive effect. Wengert made a motion to approve the minutes; Doak seconded the motion. Motion carried and the minutes from February 8, 2012 were approved as written (with the noted changes).

Administrative Comments: Killingsworth welcomed everyone including the gallery and asked for comments from the gallery to start the meeting off.

Administrative/Special Guest Comments

Committee Reports:
Killingsworth called for committee reports:

1. Benefits Committee – Skipped in Carlin’s absence. Wilmoth advised the committee met and has two proposals to present.

2. Communications Committee – Arwood reported the committee did not meet but the group is working with IT on the Intranet/SharePoint site (an internal website that is a repository for information) to update and make it user friendly. Currently we are posting on the website and SharePoint.

3. Election Committee – Doak advised the Southern Champ Award forms will be available online the last week of March – April 2nd the committee will meet to review nominations. Staff Senate nominations and election will be in April.

4. Executive Committee – Killingsworth reported most items discussed are on the agenda. The question of layoffs and how they would be handled was brought up at the request of several staff members; President’s Council didn’t have a definitive answer. They are looking at all areas for ways to adjust the budget.

5. Campus Committees:
   Administrative Council – Killingsworth advised the group met Monday March 12.
Old Business:

1. Staff Survey – Senator conclusions

Killingsworth advised this topic has been removed from the Board of Governors retreat agenda and replaced with student recruitment, retention and graduation rates. Several comments were made: 1) Noel Levitz was just hired to look at student recruitment, retention and graduation rates and they are the experts. The only way to increase income is to increase the number of students so this is a critical area. 2) Not all staff comes in contact with our students. 3) This is why staff gets so angry; “take this survey and tell us what you think” but now they aren’t going to listen to what we have to say. 4) There are suggestions from the survey that relate to recruitment/retention. 5) Arwood plans to tie into the survey results as much as possible within the topic constraints. 6) Retention of good employees is a part of recruiting and retaining students. 7) The board is very concerned about staff wages and retention; they are also aware of budget and state restraints. 8) The word communication was mentioned 43 times in the staff survey – people are “flipping out” because they don’t know what’s going on (concerning layoffs, budget cuts). 9) What are we communicating to the students? There have been comments from students that faculty are talking negatively about the university. 10) The university looks at ways of getting more money from the students (specifically tuition and recreation center fees), adding to the student’s cost while we’re asking to use the rec. center for free. Why should the students bear this additional financial burden? 11) Can the board share ways to raise revenue and prevent layoffs? Most suggestions to raise revenue are long term versus short term. The state budget cuts are permanent. 12) The Budget Advisory Council stresses cutting jobs and losing people is the last thing they want to do; they are looking at every possible solution to raise revenue. 13) Need more areas for students to congregate. The plan RDG is presenting includes this component. 14) At the next board meeting a report on staff survey results can be presented. Killingsworth suggested senators send suggestions concerning student recruitment, retention and graduation rates to be discussed at the BOG retreat by late Thursday. The board will hear from students, staff and faculty concerning these topics.

Budget Advisory Council – Carlin reported they will meet next week to discuss the suggestions for cutting the budget; results will be published on the Intranet www.intranet.mssu.edu

Shared Governance – Talley reported proposal #4 (Administrative Council and minute format) has been approved by all of the senates. It should be on the agenda for the Board of Governors retreat. The job description needs to be finalized for the person responsible for the posting of all committee minutes on SharePoint. These two items will wrap up the work of this committee.

Faculty Senate – Representative not present.

Return to Benefits Committee - Carlin advised they meet and discussed their next action item; the recreation fee. A proposal was passed out to senators with 4 options: no fee, overall discount, swipe/punch card or free off-season employee use. Talley made a motion to forward this proposal to President’s Council. Wengert seconded the motion. Discussion ensued on several points: 1) concerning options; it was suggested it be revised to ask for no fee or a discount only 2) student pay the fee even if they never use the rec. center 3) health insurance benefits; Humana’s Vitality program is working with the rec. center to give employees points for usage 4) whether to propose one option or multiple options 5) details of punch card option. Carlin will revise the proposal to ask for no fee waiver for all employees, the revised proposal will be emailed out to the senators; senators should review and email their vote to McDaniel.

Postscript: After discussion via email; the proposal was withdrawn and will be added to the April agenda.

A comment was made concerning faculty raises; Killingsworth noted this issue was discussed at President’s Council. They advised promotions and raises are part of faculty contracts and the tenure process.
2. Location of future meetings
As long as school is in session we are very limited on locations available at 9 AM on a Wednesday. Wengert suggested using Leggett & Platt for the April meeting. Talley made a motion to hold the April Staff Senate meeting in Leggett & Platt. Epperson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

New Business:

1. Procedure for processing anonymous comments
A handout listing three anonymous comments and responses from President’s Council was shared. Staff Senate has an anonymous comment area on the web site; it came to light recently that two senators, Doak and Arwood, have access (Doak had access as a former secretary, Arwood had access to the form because of a work related process). Access has not been updated for quite some time; the IT department can add access for any and all senators; we need to determine who that should be. Occasionally comments include a name or other type of confidential information that need to be handled with discretion.
Wilmoth made a motion that all senators have access to anonymous comments and discuss as a group to determine how to respond to each comment using guidelines to be created by a committee. Quade seconded the motion. The motion carried. Arwood will give Tim Owen in the IT department the list of senators. No comments are deleted; they may be moved to a completed status.

Follow up: Status was granted to all senators on March 15, 2012.
Staff members submitting anonymous comments deserve a response; the only way they can receive a response is if it is published. If names are mentioned it will be blacked out. Staff can also refer to their handbook.
A guest from the gallery brought up the comment concerning employees doing homework on university time and stated the comment was directed at them. Wengert read the response from President’s Council. Killingsworth noted approximately 8 to 10 people have made the same comment to him verbally. (Secretary’s note: due to noise due to our location, a lot of the guest’s comments could not be heard clearly on the recorder).

2. New comments from the Staff Senate anonymous web site
There are three new comments:

Received 2/15/12 10:52 AM I have some very grave concerns that certain Staff Senate members are using the Staff Senate as an avenue to promote their own agenda(s). I do not feel that Staff Senate solicits ideas from the staff, but rather takes their own ideas and issues to task (i.e. waiver of Internet Class Fees). It seems there would be items worthy of more focus than waiving fees that impact so few staff. Please make sure that as Staff Senate you are representative of the staff as a whole, not as the wants/needs/vendettas of an individual. 
This is exactly why we did the staff survey, now we know what the staff is thinking and we can better serve them. Tessman commented that if more staff became involved in distance learning classes that would increase revenue and furthers the employee’s education. Even though the distance learning fee waiver proposal would have affected ten percent of the staff; that does not invalidate the proposal. Ten percent represented the current staff, more employees might have taken advantage of the waiver had it been put into effect. Wilmoth noted the next item on the agenda also addresses this comment.

Received 2/17/12 1:51 PM has anyone ever seen (name omitted) working . save the money

Received 3/5/12 3:06 PM Knowing that personnel cuts are likely to happen, I would like the Staff Senate to address the President's Council on estimated time cuts will be announced, and the procedure of informing those individuals. Will individuals be given severance, or be told in advance of last day of employment? Thank You
As noted earlier; President’s Council advised layoffs are at the bottom of their list, they are a last resort. Currently when a staff member retires or leaves; the position is reviewed and approved (or not approved) to be filled.

3. Review of bylaws to include or amend criteria concerning Senators ethical behavior
Carlin suggested Staff Senate form an ad hoc committee to add a code of conduct section to our bylaws. This committee could also create the guidelines for handling anonymous comments.
Wilmoth made a motion to create an ad hoc ethics committee to review and amend the bylaws concerning ethical behavior and a formal procedure to handle anonymous comments. The motion was seconded. The motion carried. Killingsworth appointed Wilmoth chair, additional members include Carlin, Wengert and Talley.

4. Consider adding the position of Parliamentarian
Wengert noted our bylaws state that we follow Robert’s Rules of Order; however there are times we may not be following those rules. Wengert had several suggestions: 1) adding a parliamentarian to ensure we stay within the rules 2) or adding the duties to an existing executive council member 3) adding a charge to the election committee that new senators are required to read and sign off on the bylaws plus a review of Robert’s Rules of Order. Killingsworth added there are several levels of Robert’s Rules from very strict to somewhat loose; we need to be cautious about how strict we want to be. An example of the need to have a parliamentarian would be: at what point is it okay to discuss a motion. If everyone is interested Wengert will bring it to the table at the next meeting. It would enhance our professional appearance and protect the integrity of Staff Senate. Tessman suggested the president elect take on the parliamentarian duties; Wilmoth and Arwood suggested a separate person. McDaniel suggested training on Robert’s Rules of Order for current senators. Several suggested having a system in place for start of the new year (July).
Follow-up: Information provided by Talley concerning Robert’s Rules of Order was emailed to all senators.

5. Campus Evaluation System Proposal (Benefits Committee)
Wilmoth referred to comments from the staff senate; specifically that twenty-five percent of respondents marked not applicable to questions concerning performance evaluations. With no formal system in place and the view that performance evaluations are a benefit to employees the Benefits Committee came up with a proposal requesting the university begin the process of reviewing evaluation systems for individual employees. Killingsworth verified with Rob Yust that President’s Council is not looking into an evaluation system. This proposal would not apply to faculty, should they be included? Carlin noted a formal, ongoing evaluation process for staff, similar to the current faculty process) would have allowed for raises. Discussion continued about staff and faculty having the different evaluation processes; evaluations need to be performance based. Epperson noted employees hired under the step program still receive raises. Arwood noted from staff survey information she received from Bruce and sorted into a different format, Student Affairs by far has better communication in general than the other areas. We would all benefit by getting everyone on the “same page”. Talley suggested looking at what other universities are doing and be specific about an evaluation system. Wilmoth noted our system is at least 15 years old. The proposal is asking the President’s Council to appoint someone to look at evaluation systems. Discussion about who should review performance evaluation systems: Staff Senate, Human Resources, President’s Council, Orientation and Training Committee, jointly with Faculty Senate. Talley stated the hope is that the proposal will initiate some action.
Talley made a motion that the Benefits Committee under Wilmoth’s leadership revise the proposal per today’s discussion, email to all senators, votes to be sent to McDaniel. Carlin seconded the motion. The motion carried.
Follow-up: Debbie Dutch Kelley, Human Resources Director, will be moving forward with looking into merit pay systems for the campus. Since merit pay systems also include performance evaluations, the proposal the Benefits Committee submitted regarding performance evaluations is being removed from the table.

6. Flextime policy for Employee Handbook
Talley noted a dean has approached her more than once regarding the need for a flex time policy. This item has been moved to the Benefits Committee.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:

Adjournment: Carlin made a motion to adjourn. Talley seconded the motion; motion carried.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 11, 2012 in Leggett & Platt Athletic Center

Respectfully submitted by: Brenda McDaniel
Anonymous comments from the Staff Senate website/responses from President’s Council

**Comment received 1/11/12 11:24 AM:** Thank you for your efforts in speaking with administration and seeking approval for staff to be able to receive time off during spring and fall break without having to use vacation time. I think this is a great idea and greatly needed and appreciated. I hope this trend continues. I know I appreciate it. Another idea is to add a floating holiday for staff in honor of their birthday. This "holiday" could be taken as a day off anytime during the year by the employee. Staff Senate is a great addition to campus and your work is appreciated.

**Response:** Floater holiday for staff in honor of their birthday
This is an idea that the President’s Council will consider; however, at present, the President’s Council has provided a variety of days off that are not formally vacation days, and adding more days is probably a discussion for the future.

**Comment received 2/6/12 10:31 AM:** I quit school several years ago because I had a new born baby and could not afford to go. Now that I can afford it, I have a full time job and a family and I do not have the time. Other full time staff here seem to get away daily with doing their homework during their regular work day while sitting at their desk. Does this mean that I can now go back to school and finish my degree because I also will be given the time to do my homework while at work? I am sure the answer is no, so why do other employees seem to keep getting away with it. Numerous complaints have been made to supervisors about it...yet it continues to happen. What a drain on morale to come to work every day and watch someone get paid the same as I do, for sitting there doing their homework as I work 8 hours to keep my head above water with the work that I have. Let's not forget that discount on tuition they are receiving.....so I need to find a job that allows me to go to class every day, do my homework all while getting a discount on tuition, health benefits AND a paycheck for 40 hrs of work that I am NOT doing.

**Response:** Employees completing homework on the job
Employees are expected to use their work time appropriately. We know that as a rule, Missouri Southern employees work hard to help our students and we’re appreciative of that effort. If an employee is not using their work time appropriately, their supervisor should be made aware of the situation so that it can be dealt with on an individual basis.

**Comment received 2/7/12 10:51 AM:** When the last "Blue Book" was published there was some concern among staff members that the coaching staff had been given large raises when the rest of the staff was not. The administration assured us that this was not the case but instead that their salary for coaching and their salary for teaching had been combined into one job (their coaching job). Since this time there has been a large turn over in the coaching staff. It is my understanding that as new coaches are hired they are hired as staff members and no longer teach courses. I would like the Staff Senate to investigate if the salaries of the new coaches have been reduced accordingly (the teaching salary that was rolled into their coaching job has been removed). If this is not the case then once again the administration has lied to us and have given the coaching staff a large raise while telling the rest of the staff there is no way they could politically give anyone raises.

**Response:** Salaries and coaching staff
A little over two years ago, the decision was made to change all coaches from faculty to staff status. This was done for two reasons. First, it was done to enhance the academic quality of our students’ education. By not requiring coaches to teach we are in a better position to ensure that the person teaching the class has expertise in that subject, rather than forcing someone to teach something out of their area because their contract says they must teach.

The second reason this was done was to give coaches more time to focus on their student-athletes and their programs. We have a stronger emphasis on winning than we did in the past, which requires that coaches spend more time in areas such as recruiting student-athletes and working with them once they’re here so that they are successful both on the playing field and in the classroom.

The transition of moving coaches from faculty to staff was to take place as coaches left and new coaches were hired. Thus, new coaches were not hired with an expectation that they would teach as part of their responsibilities, so their contracts were not based on teaching expectations. Salaries for new coaches were set according to competitive salaries elsewhere. Coaches under old contracts continue to teach. No one was given a raise. Indeed, changing work responsibilities means that a person’s time commitments are redistributed, not necessarily that the person’s salary is either raised or lowered. For example, when a particular unit loses a person either through retirement, dismissal, or resignation, the supervisor of that unit may not be given the authority to hire another person to fill the vacant position, but will redistribute the unit’s duties to ensure that all the work is being done. New coaches were hired with a different set of expectations for their time.