Missouri Southern State University
Staff Senate 2010-2011

Staff Senate Minutes
Wednesday, April 13th, 2011 9:00 AM, Billingsly Board Room #310


Member(s) Absent / Excused: Debbie Woodmansee, Leslie Willis and Mike Davies

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

Call to Order: Erik Hilgendorf called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

Approval of Minutes: Erik called for changes in the minutes. Olive Talley stated in the nature of shared governance, the minutes should reflect actual vote numbers. Julie Wengert motioned and Bob Harrington seconded for minutes to be approved with addition of vote count. Motion carried 13-0-0 and the minutes from March 16th, 2011 were approved as written.

Administrative/Special Guest Comments: David Sigars-Student Senate Smoking Policy Update

David Sigars updated the senate on the current standing of the smoking policy review. David informed the group that the Faculty Senate amended the original resolution to make the entire campus tobacco free. The Student Senate will be voting at their meeting on Wednesday, April 13th to accept the resolution that was passed through Faculty Senate. In the anticipation that the resolution passes the Student Senate, then a student body vote would take place to determine if the students vote supports the resolution. If the student’s vote to support the resolution, then resolution would go to the Staff & Faculty Senates for approval before going to the President’s Council and Board of Governors for final passage.

David addressed questions from the senate. Greg Killingsworth asked, “Do you believe resolution will pass Student Senate?” David felt most of the Student Senate was in favor of campus wide ban. Erik Hilgendorf asked if other campuses have passed a smoking ban. David replied that Northwest Missouri State and Washington University in St. Louis each has smoking bans.

Rob Yust-Tuition Proposal and Money Matters (10:05 am)

Rob Yust shared with the senate the tuition and fee rates for the fall 2010 that he was proposing to the Board of Governors. The proposal recommends in-state tuition increase from $143 to $163 and a $10 per credit hour increase in distance learning fee. The tuition increase is a combination of the $5.53 per credit hour increase booked for fiscal year 2011, but not charge to the students because of agreement with the governor this year, and $14.47 per credit hour increase for FY 2012. The $14.47 is a 9.27% increase, which is a higher increase than current year’s consumer price index (CPI) of 1.5%, which is the allowable rate Missouri public colleges and universities can increase tuition.
If the Board of Governors approves the proposal increases, the University’s next step would be to submit the tuition and fee rates to the Commission of Higher Education of Boards for approval. The Commission of Higher Education of Boards would send a letter back to the University acknowledging receipt of rate increase, but 9.27% is above 1.5% CPI rate. Once the University receives an acknowledgement letter, then a waiver must be submitted to the state with justification of proposed rate. If the state approves the waiver, the University can avoid a 5% onetime penalty of allocations, which would amount to around 1 to 1.2 million dollars.

Rob shared that the University has been in communication with state legislatures, and they support the proposals. He hopes the Staff Senate will formally submit a resolution stating they support the University’s moves as well.

In a question and answer session, Michelle Arwood asked Rob about the possibility of a reduction in the distance learning fee for faculty/staff. Rob mentioned that nothing is in place now, but he will look into it.

Greg Killingsworth questioned Rob on the outlook for raises for staff. Rob shared that general raises are heavily frowned on by the Governor’s office. What a couple of colleges and universities have done to circumvent repercussions from the state, is give merit raises. This is an avenue Missouri Southern is looking into.

Erik Hilgendorf questioned Rob on chances of a waiver being approved by the state. Rob shared that the University of Missouri’s waiver was accepted and that a couple of other school’s waiver proposals are pending. He commented that the Coordinating Board of Higher Education looks at the total package cost increase to students. The Missouri Southern package increase if tuition goes up $163 per credit hour, would be $434.

Olive Talley questioned Rob on the impact of financial aid packaging. Rob answered saying that financial aid recipients can absorb most of the increase. The majority of refund checks issued to students totals over $600, which more that covered the package increase of $434.

The question on Hearnes Hall project was raised. Rob shared that purpose of project was to better serve the students. The roughly 1.8 million dollar project was being funded through reserves.

**Committee Reports:**
1. Communications Committee – No Report

2. Election Committee – Josh Doak reported that the Elections Committee will seek nominations in late April for the May election.

3. Benefits Committee – Reports in Old Business

4. Executive Budget Committee – Erik Hilgendorf announced that Rob Yust will present on current tuition proposal later in the meeting (view information in Administrative/Special Guest Comments). Rob will be presenting campus-wide presentation on state of the University in May. He is willing to do presentation for Staff Senate if wanted.

The senate voiced that presentation at Staff Senate meeting wasn’t necessary since he was already doing campus wide presentation.

**Old Business:**
1. Lion’s Roar Award – Erik Hilgendorf reported that Lion’s Roar has been presented by Appreciation Committee to the President’s Council. Council was favorable to the award, but had a few questions for the benefits sub-committee to address before officially deciding whether to pass proposal.

2. Personal Days Proposal – Erik Hilgendorf stated that personal days proposal is on hold till after next board meeting.

3. Secretarial Pool Proposal – Erik Hilgendorf stated that secretarial pool proposal is on hold till after next board meeting.
New Business:

1. Staff Senate Website - Josh Doak and Michelle Arwood presented the new Staff Senate web pages. New site will allow senate full control to add minutes and agenda and post general information quicker.

   Edits requested for the site were addition of previous years meetings, e-mail hyperlink to senator’s names, pictures of senators next to name and list of officers on senators page.

   Motion was made to post meeting minutes online prior to approval by the senate. Motion passed 13-0-0.

   Vote to link new pages to web site was passed 13-0-0. Amanda Gish linked new pages to web site immediately after passage.

2. Office Climate Control - Ann Quade presented the idea of allowing staff to pay a set fee (example $25/year) for permission to use personal heaters/coolers in work office. There are several staff whose office temperatures are poorly regulated.

   Bob Harrington acknowledged that there are certain offices on campus that experience wider temperature extremes, but that the University likely would not allow the personal units in offices due to the original reason they were banned; to reduce danger to fire and reduce energy cost.

   In an effort to address some of the heating and cooling issues, the University will be switching from steam heat to hot water to greatly enhance energy usage. The Physical Plant is working with administration on a strategic plan to make several buildings on campus more energy efficient.

Comments and Announcements/Guest Input:

Erik opened the floor for comments and announcements:

Josh Doak read a message submitted to the Staff Senate e-mail account requesting that individuals who are reclassified from professional to classified staff have benefit package grandfathered. Individuals who are being reclassified retain equal pay and benefits except for a reduction in vacation accrual, which they feel is a demotion of the benefits they accepted when they starting working for the University.

Much discussion ensued revealing that several individuals have been reclassified and don’t fully understand the exact Fair Labor Standards Acts changes that are pushing the University to make changes. A general feeling was that the University was being too understated about the reclassification, and the timetable of reclassifying individuals at different times was causing “feelings of discrimination.” Many individuals also voiced that they are not comfortable having to write down overtime if they work over 40 hours a week.

Bob Harrington commented that there is wage and hour legal liability for individuals if they work more hours than what they are paid. The University can face severe consequences if someone working more than 40 hours as a classified staff isn’t paid for them.

A guest in the gallery pointed out that the University was reclassifying in stages because of time requirement to research job descriptions and make changes.

Another general comment from senate and guest members was the reason for unequal vacation accrual between professional and classified staff. There’s the general thought that professional staff work more than 40 hours, thus more vacation time is benefited to them, but a clearer reason would be nice to know.

Olive Talley had several issues with the entire reclassification process.

- What is the specific objective or reasoning for change?
- Where/who initiated the University to make change?
- Is there a universal timeline for implementing all reclassifications?
• Why is the University not being transparent?
• What is the grand plan?
• Did this go to through the President’s Council?

At the conclusion of discussion, the senate formulated a motion stating, “The Staff Senate makes a motion that employees who are reclassified by wage and hour determination will retain all benefits at time of reclassification.” Motion passed 11 in favor; 0 against; 1 abstain. Grandfather motion will be given to President’s Council.

Erik asked if there were any other comments:

Julie Wengert announced that Missouri Southern would be hosting the regional Special Olympics meet on Friday.

Adjournment: Erik asked if there was any other business to bring to the table. There being none, Bob Harrington made the motion that the meeting be adjourned; Gary Edwards seconded the motion; motion carried; meeting adjourned at 12:02 PM.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 18th, 2011 at 9:00 AM. Billingsly Student Center room 310 (Board room).

Respectfully submitted by:
Josh Doak