

## Mississippi State University

### Staff Council

December 12, 2012

10:30 a.m.

**Present:** Amy Burchfield, Ann Carr, Allen Cooperwood, Mary Dikes, Sherry Fisackerly, Penny French, Kenneth Graves, Lisa Hearn, Sharon Hewlett, Jane Lewis, Marc Measells, Mandy Netadj, Jessica Northcutt, Linda Babcock, Natalie Ray, Cade Smith, Toni Roberson, Faye Smith, Lyle Tate, Angela Waller, Adrienne Washington.

**Absent:** Patricia Cox, Debbie Huffman, Sam Manning, Calvin Mosley, Bekah Sparks.

### GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Gregory Bohach, Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, addressed the Council. Dr. Bohach stressed the extent to which he values the staff. He shared some of the practices that his division has in place, such as evaluation of superiors. The evaluations are done anonymously, and are handled so that the identities of those who evaluate are kept confidential. Dr. Bohach meets with his division staff advisory council on a quarterly basis in order to keep up-to-date on what is happening with staff and also communicate important information to the staff. Dr. Bohach also gave an overview of the division. Cade asked how we as Staff Council can help those who work off campus to feel included. Dr. Bohach suggested making visits to the off campus sites and encouraging others to do so. Council Chair Cade Smith thanked Dr. Bohach for addressing the Council.

Jeremiah Dumas addressed the Council about the recycling efforts on campus. Mr. Dumas explained that recycling is just a part of the overall sustainability effort for the University. Good progress has been made toward the University's sustainability goals. The use of electricity on campus is 37% lower than it was only a couple of years ago. The University has a goal of reducing the metric tons of carbon produced from 83,000 to 53,000 over 40 years. The University reached an agreement with a recycling company in January 2010. We are recycling twice the amount we were just last year. Cade asked what kind of changes were helping the most. Mr. Dumas referred to the early shutdowns on holidays and capital projects such as lighting retrofit. Mr. Dumas said a trial with dual receptacles in McCool Hall was yielding mixed results, and there would need to be further evaluation of that. Cade thanked Mr. Dumas for coming.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the November 14, 2012 meeting were approved after revisions to correct attendance records.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Approved as submitted.

### CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Executive Council**
- **Master planning**
- **President's Committee on Planning**
- **IT Council**
- **Game Day**
- **Special Events and Game Day Operations**

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

President's Commission on the Status of Minorities – met and discussed agenda for next year.

Employee Benefits – Submitted a letter to Executive Council about increasing the tuition remission for employees from 6 to 8 hours.

Information Security- Discussed Cyber Security Awareness week and how it can be more effective. Statistics were given on the different issues facing the University related to online security. Revisions were made to the Information Security Program.

## **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Events – Natalie Ray reported that members of the Events committee have agreed to chair the subcommittees for Staff Appreciation Day, but that all members of the Council will need to contribute for the day to be a success.

Communications – Angie Waller reminded everyone to send in content for the newsletter. She reported that the committee will send out a Christmas Card in December instead of a newsletter.

Policies and Procedures – Cade presented a proposal from the committee in Calvin Mosley's absence. The proposal is for HRM #60-225 (Tuition Remission – Employees Policy) to be revised to:

1. Provide employees tuition remission for two (2) classes per semester, not to exceed eight (8) hours [six (6) classes and twenty-four (24) hours per year];
2. Allow full-time employees to attend one (1) class during work hours without making up the missed work time during the same week or using accrued personal leave or compensatory time.

Cade presented the packet prepared by the committee with research they have conducted at other IHL schools. The research indicated that both Ole Miss and Southern have policies that allow employees to take classes during the work day without making up work time. Cade opened the floor for discussion.

Favorable comments included:

1. The University should want employees to better themselves
2. It could be looked at as an increased benefit for employees
3. The University will reap benefits from a more qualified staff
4. The revision would align our policy more with the other two major universities in the state
5. MSU Extension already has educational leave for employees

Areas of concern mentioned by various Council members included:

1. Added workload for co-workers not taking classes
2. Whether this benefit would extend to online courses
3. Why there is no specification in the policy about the classes taken or GPA requirements
4. Whether the policy is in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act
5. How overtime would be calculated for someone who is taking advantage of the tuition remission policy and missing work to take a class
6. How the other universities are able to have a policy that contradicts IHL policy

Cade asked for a second to the committee's motion, which was granted. A motion was then made to approve the part of the proposal that would increase the hours from 6 hours to 8 hours per semester, and to table the proposal to excuse employees from making up the work hours. Several council members asked for time to get feedback from their divisions. This motion passed by a vote of 14 in favor and 5 against.

Cade made a motion that would officially state the Council's recommendation of increasing the hours from 6 to 8 hours per semester. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Burchfield, Recording Secretary  
December 12, 2012

