

The University of Mississippi

Performing Arts Center

Minutes of the meeting April 2, 2003

A message from the President.

Another year draws closer to an end as we prepare for Commencement and Staff Appreciation day. The year seems to have flown by and, somehow, I missed several months. Or so it seems. It has been a busy year with many significant events. We, as a nation, went to war to end a reign of terror. Many of our staff members were called to active duty during this time. We salute them, and ALL our nations Armed Forces who gave so much, so we may continue to enjoy our freedom. We as a Staff Council have enjoyed the freedom to communicate with our administration. We have been able to express concerns, question decisions and influence outcomes to help all university employees. How blessed we are to have a voice and an administration willing to listen. As preparations to honor us during Staff Appreciation day are finalized, let us show our gratitude to our students, faculty, peers, supervisors and administrators who continue to help our University flourish. Thanks to all for a job well done.

Staff Council Membership: James Akey, Brenda Brannan, Rachel Bost, Joey Brent, Dennis Bullard, Joni Camp, Jason Dean, Matthew Demming, Judy Fos, Mary Harrington, Shellie Harrison, Melissa Hudson, Dino Johnson, Regina Jordan, Buddy Kahler, Ron Kitchens, Cathy Laswell, Barbara Leeton, Shannon Lovejoy, Steven Maples, Michele Mize, Renee More, Jean Pinion, Bettie Puckett, Hilarie Pryor, Amelia Rogers, Linda Sallis, Tony Seaman, Mark Shows, Doug Stuart, Karen Tuttle, Jeanette Wells

Excused Absence: N/A

Unexcused Absence: N/A

The meeting was held in the Rehearsal Room of the Ford Performing Arts Center. President Tony Seaman called the meeting to order. He welcomed all and expressed appreciation to IB Dent for hosting this month's meeting. IB will be the guest speaker at the conclusion of the business meeting.

The minutes for March were approved with no changes.

The Treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Old Business: There were no old business issues.

New Business:

The Staff Book Scholarship Program is available for Summer sessions this year. Scholarship administrator, Melissa Hudson stated that applications are available on the Staff Council web page. Deadlines will be announced by the next meeting.

The upcoming outstanding staff member elections were discussed and a sign up sheet was passed to have volunteers help with ballot stuffing and tabulating. Shellie Harrison, chairperson for the outstanding staff member committee set dates for mailing and tabulating.

The Exam Breakfast has been set for May 6, at Johnson Commons from 9-11:00 pm. Volunteers are needed to help serve. Joni Camp, chairperson for the Exam Breakfast passed a sign up sheet to ask for volunteers.

The Staff Blood Drive has been set for Thursday, May 15 from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. Volunteers are needed to help man one-hour time slots to help with necessary paper work for the blood bank. No official chairperson has been designated for this blood drive although Jeanette Wells has offered to help in any way she can. The blood drive will be held in the Student Union room 404. For eligibility to give blood please ask for a brochure. There have been several changes and they are listed in the brochure and Jeanette Wells has these.

Staff appreciation day has been set for Friday, May 16. The awards ceremony will be in Fulton Chapel starting at 9:00 am. Staff will be recognized for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30+ years of service. The Outstanding staff members will be announced at this time, also. There will be a prize drawing for one lucky person in attendance and another prize awarded for those who voted. Lunch will be served in the Student Union cafeteria area from 11:30 am until 1:00 pm. Festivities will start at 1:00 pm with activities such as Bingo (you must bring a white elephant as an entry fee), Karaoke, Plant swap and a finale featuring the Ole Miss Staff Band.

MASCO meeting. Tony and Joni attended the MASCO meeting held at Jackson State University. The University of Mississippi continues to be a leader in rewards without compensation programs such as our health screening and book scholarship program. Scholarship portability was a topic that will be pursued again by MASCO. A draft has been prepared by Delta State for review and then presentation to the Presidents Council. The next meeting has been set for May 22, 2003 in the Trustee's Conference Room in the IHL basement in Jackson, MS.

Committee Reports: There were several committee reports from staff council representatives. There were no significant areas of change or concern brought up by these reports.

Concerns: There were several concerns expressed to the concerns committee.

- Smoking outside of the buildings in an area close to doorways was a concern expressed. It was asked if there could be a "zone" established around entrances so people who do not smoke would not have to walk through a smoke haze to enter a building. Several areas of administration were approached for responses. There are no guidelines in the handbook to address this and several other factors were pointed out. The ashtrays are placed where they can be protected from rain as much as possible and moving them away from entrances would not be practical. Rain would flood the ashtrays making them smelly and hard to empty and cigarette butts would end up on the ground around the buildings. While there was an understanding for concern the current policy seems to address both sides of the issue.
- Medical Insurance was questioned again. A report in the paper indicated that deductibles might go as high as \$1,000. The situation is a difficult one. There was a shortfall in the States Health Insurance System. The legislator has covered this shortfall this year. The potential is, unless a long-term solution is found, premiums and deductible increases may be the only solution. For now, it is unchanged.
- A concern was expressed regarding compensation for an earned degree. Apparently an employee did not receive expected compensation, as mentioned by a supervisor, for an earned degree. There was some issue as to how it was work related. The current HR policy is that each degree or training classes or courses will be evaluated upon successful completion as to if and how they are work related. (There is no process in place to pre-approve any classes as to if they qualify as work related). If the committee approves the education is work related and recommends an increase based on the earned credits, then before the monetary compensation can be given, the department has to have money in the budget to pay the award. If the budget does not allow for additional funding of this award then there may not be any compensation. The chair of the committee in HR is willing to talk with anyone who has questions relating to this subject.
- Another concern was the timing of Spring Break. There was a concern over when Spring Break would be for Ole Miss next year. It has been traditionally scheduled to coincide with local school breaks. Next year it will not be at the same time as the breaks for Oxford and Lafayette schools. The concern was that many employees schedule time off around Spring Break to be with family and children. This would make it more difficult to arrange. *Late breaking news* from our administration indicates we will change our times to coincide with the local schools. A big thanks to Dr. Staton and the administration for their willingness to be flexible.

The meeting was adjourned and turned over to IB Dent, director of the Ford Center for performing Arts.

Guest Speaker: IB Dent, Director – Performing Arts Center.

IB gave a very good overview of what the center would bring to the University and the City of Oxford in terms of outstanding performances. He outlined many of the shows and events planned for the Center for the upcoming year.

He then gave members of the Staff Council an extensive tour of the facilities and a “behind the scenes” look at what it takes to produce a show. Our sincere appreciation to IB Dent for his outstanding tour and narrative of the Ford Performing Arts Center.

Our next meeting will be in the Student Union room 404 on May 7, at 2:30 pm.

/s/Tony Seaman, President
/s/Joni Camp, President Elect
/s/Secretary

Footnote: Due to unforeseen circumstances Steven Maples resigned as secretary for Staff Council. We are now in need of a secretary. As Officer Elections will be held at our next meeting we will accept volunteers for nominations between now and May 7. We will also accept nominations from the floor at the time of the meeting. We thank Steven for his well-written minutes and service to Staff Council.

Staff Council e-mail address: staffcouncil@olemiss.edu
Staff Council Homepage: http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/staff_council