

Minutes of February 2, 2000 meeting

2:30 p.m., Room 404 A/B Union



Attending:

Julie Andrews, Woodson Boyden, Betty Brown, Joni Camp, Onice Carter, Mary Chrestman, Buster Clark, Cherry Douglas, Laura Gillom, Mary Harrington, Clay Jones, Buddy Kahler, Floyd Klepzig, Theresa Knight, Denise Knighton, Jonnie Manning, Traci Mitchell, Jerry Moore, Conny Parham, Donna Patton, Lamar Pickens, Sherry Wall

Excused:

Shirley Fisher, Judy Fos, Willie Hilliard, Etta Miller, Lynn Mills, Lucienne Savell, Martha Woolfolk

Unexcused:

Thelma Curry

President Traci Mitchell called the meeting to order.

Minutes

There were two corrections to the January minutes--Judy Fos's absence at the January meeting was excused, and in regard to Staff Council elections, the sentence should have read "One-third of current members' terms expire at the end of February." The January minutes were approved as corrected. It was noted that some copies of the January minutes were misprinted. Anyone still needing a corrected copy should contact Conny Parham (ext. 6905).

Guest Speaker

Traci introduced Jeff Alford, new Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing for the University. Mr. Alford reported that employees can expect changes in the public relations and marketing areas. Specifically, he mentioned that there are anticipated changes in *Good Things Are Happening at Ole Miss*, the UM newsletter, where the focus will be on providing more information to all employees. Mr. Alford (ext. 7236) asked for suggestions and ideas from the staff and welcomes visitors to the department.

Project Discover

Buster Clark reported that since the software implementation of changes in the purchasing, financial, and human resources areas is almost complete, the Process Reengineering teams will again be looking at the various business processes of the University and making recommendations to the Steering Committee. Reengineering will be a continuous process for the next several years. Mary Harrington added that we now have an opportunity to assess the changes, evaluate and make any necessary adjustments. Traci Mitchell expressed hers and the Council's appreciation to the hundreds of employees who have spent thousands of hours, including holidays, working on the implementation of SAP.

One important change in travel policy involving airfares is posted on the Project Discover home page (<http://www.olemiss.edu/projects/discover/>). It is expected that state contract prices for airfares will soon be posted on the Web to use for comparison.

Insurance Update

Clay Jones advised that there is not much to report in this area. The AHS web site (

<http://apps.dfa.state.ms.us:90/ahsprov/>) is to be updated every Friday, though some credentialing is lagging behind. Clay talked with the administrator of North Mississippi Physicians Association about our concerns that the number of physicians in this area is still low. Apparently, some local doctors still have a few problems with the AHS contract, but it is hoped that those concerns will be worked out in the next 30 days.

In the Memphis area, AHS is now in on-going negotiations only with the Baptist-affiliated physicians. According to Theresa Hanna, as of January 20 there are fewer doctors in the Memphis area than in the previous networks, and physicians with the UT Medical Center have not yet been approached.

Traci Mitchell reported that at the last MASCO meeting, Theresa Hanna, head of the State Insurance Office, was a guest and she fielded questions regarding health insurance. An insurance rate increase has been proposed in legislative hearings, including a proposed 12% premium increase for employees, and a proposed 15% increase in premiums for dependents. Both of these proposed changes would take effect in the next fiscal year. There may be other proposed changes in the health insurance area which we need to watch carefully so that we might have an opportunity to have input before any changes are actually implemented.

In response to a question regarding why the fees to be paid to doctors are so low, Ms. Hanna replied that regional rate schedules have been set up following an analysis of the medical market in various areas of the state, (i.e., NW Mississippi, etc.), and that rates are budget neutral. There is an allowance of 5% increase for inflation. Another question addressed the issue of why physicians must be re-credentialed if they were participants in the previous networks. Ms. Hanna advised that because of accrediting rules of the agency, each physician must be certified again.

Traci mentioned an interesting fact--only one-quarter of state employees pay for dependent health insurance coverage through the State plan. The contract with AHS is for four years with a one-year renewal, providing AHS meets all the requirements of the contract. There is an Advisory Committee to the State Insurance Board and we need to make sure our concerns regarding health insurance are communicated to that committee. Also, the Insurance Board has a hotline for questions and concerns. Traci noted that we should formulate a list of our concerns and issues to be taken to the next MASCO meeting to be given to the Advisory Board.

Staff Appreciation Week

Traci passed around a sign-up sheet for committee volunteers. There was some discussion about the cancellation of the tournaments last year. It was decided that **anyone with a strong interest in having the tournaments should form a committee and bring a proposal, complete with volunteers, to the Council for consideration at the March meeting.**

Announcements

Traci announced that at the March meeting, Dr. Gerald Walton and Bonnie Brown will be guest speakers and will discuss the Oxford Campus Campaign, another phase of the current Campaign for Excellence.

Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee met on January 28. There was lengthy discussion about the last MASCO meeting. Traci reported that the two proposals our Staff Council had approved regarding portability of tuition and reinstatement of the 100% tuition benefit for dependents have still not been sent forward. MASCO is still awaiting the vote of one school on these two proposals. Traci advises that the prospects are not good for the portability proposal, but that the schools, like Ole Miss, who support this idea have asked the other schools to enumerate their objections. The restitution of 100% tuition benefits proposal has passed by a majority, but is still awaiting a final vote from one school. These proposals seem bogged down in the process, but it is hoped that they will be finalized in March and will go forward to IHL at that time. The March 2 meeting of MASCO at Mississippi State will feature a representative from PERS. Another question regarding dependent benefits--whether dependents can still receive tuition scholarships after an employee dies while working for an institution.

Some schools, including Ole Miss, already have this benefit in place.

A member of the Staff Council clarified another question--if a non-resident Ole Miss student has one parent who is an alumnus of Ole Miss, one-half of the out-of-state tuition is waived. If such a student has two alumni parents, all of the out-of-state tuition is waived.

The Committee is scheduled to meet with Chancellor Khayat on February 22.

- **Concerns:** No report.
- **Election Committee:** Conny Parham, chair, reported that for the upcoming election, there are seven regular vacancies (with three-year terms) and seven replacement vacancies (with varying one to two year terms) to be filled. The Election Committee will meet on February 5 to prepare ballots which are expected to be mailed the following week.
- **Legislative Committee:** Mary Chrestman reported that Dr. Phil Malone is organizing a public forum, including a question and answer session, to focus on health insurance concerns for state employees. It will be jointly sponsored by the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and public school teachers. No date has been set. Anyone with suggestions or ideas should contact Dr. Phil Malone or Dr. Fred Lorenzo, chair of the Faculty Senate.

The meeting was adjourned.

/s/Traci Mitchell, President

/s/Clay Jones, President-Elect

/s/Conny Parham, Secretary

Staff Council e-mail address: staffcouncil@olemiss.edu

Staff Council Homepage: http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/staff_council/

If you are interested in joining the Staff Listserv, please visit the Staff Council Homepage or talk to a Staff Council Representative or send an e-mail message to Majordomo@listserv.olemiss.edu with the words "*subscribe staff*" in the body of the e-mail message.