

## The University of Mississippi

Minutes of the Meeting July 9, 2003

## Staff Council

Union 404 A&B

**PRESENT:** James Akey, Brenda Brannan, Rachel Bost, Joey Brent, Dennis Bullard, Joni Camp, Jason Dean, Mary Harrington, Shellie Harrison, Melissa Hudson, Regina Jordan, Buddy Kahler, Ron Kitchens, Cathy Laswell, Shannon Lovejoy, Renee Moore, Jean Pinion, Hilarie Pryor, Bettie Puckett, Tony Seaman, Doug Stuart, Karen Tuttle, Jeanette Wells

**EXCUSED:** Judy Fos, JoAnn Carothers

**UNEXCUSED:** Barbara Leeton, Michele Mize

2:35pm. Welcome was made by President Joni Camp. The meeting started with the introduction of guest speakers, District 12 Representative Jay Eads, District 33 Representative Tommy Reynolds and District 9 Senator Gray Tollison.

The first speaker was Representative Jay Eads. Representative Eads started by discussing the budget and how it affects everyone. The main goals have been to maintain services to the people in the State of Mississippi, put education first, no layoffs and no tax increases, and these goals have been met. The Gulf War and the war in Iraq as well as other factors have played a part in the state of the economy. Representative Eads explained that the State budget is \$11 billion and \$3.5 billion of the State budget makes up the general fund, which is maintained by the State legislature. The remaining \$7.5 billion makes up the special fund for areas such as special education, road maintenance and gasoline taxes. Sales tax makes up 42.5% of the revenues while individual income tax makes up 28.82%, and corporate income tax makes up 8.5%. All education activities receive 59.82% of the general fund while social welfare receives 9.61% and State Corrections receives 6.26%. Ole Miss is one of the five major entities in Oxford that is dependent on State funds and employs people to bring revenue to Oxford. The others are North Mississippi Regional Center, Oxford City School District, Lafayette County School District and the State Veteran's Home.

The next speaker was Senator Gray Tollison. Senator Tollison talked about the many state agencies that have brought jobs to Lafayette County. He also talked about PERS and how it is a stable benefits plan with a good return and the donated leave program that has been put back in place. He stated that income tax has been the biggest short fall because of the decline in personal-owned businesses in 2002; however, sales tax has increased over the years. Senator Tollison then talked about the Accountability Law in education and how children are tested in elementary school to ensure that they have the reading and mathematic skills to advance. A question was brought up about the doctors that are leaving Oxford because of the loss of malpractice insurance. Senator Tollison explained that an insurance pool has been set up so that if a doctor cannot get insurance elsewhere, they can get it through the State. Another question was raised about the possibility of tax increases. Senator Tollison explained that they would work hard to get the money from other sources so as not to increase taxes.

The next speaker was Representative Tommy Reynolds. Representative Reynolds began by talking about his involvement in the Ways and Means Committee, which comes up with the money for the budget. The committee put a mandate in the Cost Appropriation Budget that the insurance companies cannot raise the deductible or the cost of insurance in the upcoming fiscal year.

At this time, President Camp asked if there were any questions for the speakers. A question was raised regarding how Mississippi's education budget compares to the surrounding states. Senator Tollison explained that the State of Mississippi is a model for other states because it makes sure that every child receives an adequate education; however, Arkansas, Tennessee and other states are trying to get funding for education and are having to lay off teachers.

President Camp thanked the speakers for their time.

The June minutes were approved without correction.

President Camp made a correction to the agenda. The next meeting is set for August 6th, not September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Rachel Bost addressed a question that was raised at last month's meeting. Some textbook scholarships were charged to the Staff Council operating budget in May instead of the Textbook Scholarship account. The Textbook Scholarship account was set up in January 2003. Some of the funds that were transferred in August 2002 still remained in the Staff Council operating budget. In an effort to exhaust all of those funds, some scholarships were charged to the operating budget. The June treasurer's report was approved without correction.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Mary Harrington explained that there were approximately 7 openings on the Council and that the runners-up from the previous election would be asked if they are willing to serve. She stated that by next Staff Council meeting there should be a full membership. President Camp stated that Michele Mize and Jason Dean have both resigned from Staff Council and their places will need to be filled.
- Tony Seaman stated that he had not made the changes to the bylaws yet, but is in the process of doing so.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- Ron Kitchens commented on the email regarding some ER doctors at the Oxford hospital are not included in our network. Upon further investigation, he found that the group that will be taking over the hospital ER on August 1<sup>st</sup> will be in network. Tony Seaman reiterated that if an attending physician in the ER is not in our network, you will pay a \$900 deductible and the insurance will only cover 60% and you have no recourse.
- Ron Kitchens thanked everyone who responded to his email for help with the July 4<sup>th</sup> activities.
- Meet 'N Greet Days will be August 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Ron Kitchens volunteered to chair the committee.
- MASCO meeting will be held July 17<sup>th</sup>. The IHL meeting will be at 8:00 a.m. and the regular meeting, 1:00 p.m.
- Staff Council members are needed to fill openings on standing University committees.
- Melissa Hudson thanked Shannon Lovejoy for all her help with the Textbook Scholarship Program.

Meeting adjourned, 3:50 p.m.

/s/Joni Camp, President

/s/Mary Harrington, President-Elect

/s/Cathy Laswell, Secretary

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