

The University of Mississippi

Minutes of the Meeting, March 3, 2004

Staff Council

Union 404 A & B

Present: James Akey; Hilarie Bain; Shannon Beeman; Rachel Bost; Brenda Brannan; Joni Camp; Nina Cheshier; Kim Chrestman; Tiffany Edwards; Corrie Free; Mary Harrington; Carra Hewitt; Sue Hodge; Melissa Hudson; Buddy Kahler; Ron Kitchens; Shannon Lovejoy; Traci Mitchell; Jennifer Pardoe; Paula Park; Deidra Phillips; Randall Pinion; Tony Seaman; John Sharpe; Gina Starnes; Patti Welch

Excused: Joey Brent; Judy Fos; Shellie Harrison; Barbara Leeton; Ardessa Minor; Renee Moore; Bettie Puckett

Unexcused: Kathy Sanders

Call to Order: At 2:35 pm, President Joni Camp called the meeting to order by welcoming all new Staff Council members: Kim Chrestman, School of Business; Corrie Free, Procurement Services; Sue Hodge, School of Business; Traci Mitchell, Student Media; Jennifer Pardoe, University Relations; Paula Park, UPD; Deidra Phillips, Central Ticket Office; and Patti Welch, Procurement Services. President Camp thanked each member for being willing to serve.

President Camp introduced Thomas Vassar, the first of two guest speakers. Mr. Vassar is the National Communications Coordinator for the Residence Hall Association. Mr. Vassar gave an update on Campus Clean-up Day, to be held on Wednesday, March 24, from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. The purpose of Campus Clean-up Day is to beautify campus through the efforts of students, faculty, staff and alumni. Volunteers will meet in front of Union Plaza, then split up into groups to begin the clean-up. Tools and other items will be provided. T-shirts will be available to the first 350 volunteers. Beginning at 4:00 pm in the Union Plaza, volunteers will be treated to a picnic and entertainment, including a speech by former governor Ronnie Musgrove. Approximately nine Council members plan to volunteer on Campus Clean-up Day.

The second guest speaker was Mr. Norman Easterbrook, Director of the Ford Center for the Performing Arts. Mr. Easterbrook gave an update on the Ford Center's activities during the past year, and discussed what he perceives is the Ford Center's role within the University. The Ford Center exists to support students, faculty, and staff, to serve as a venue for meetings of various on- and off-campus organizations, to provide important outreach to the community, to support alumni functions, and to support state and regional activities and conferences. Mr. Easterbrook projected that over 50,000 people walked through the doors of the Ford Center last year, while over 150 programs were held in the Center. Many programs are planned for the coming year, including the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats, a production of *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, and Legends of Rock and Roll.

Mr. Easterbrook also stated that the Ford Center is sponsoring the Angel Ticket Program. A percentage of proceeds from concessions and sales of t-shirts and other items will go into a fund to provide tickets for people with demonstrated need. While it will not be possible to do a ticket exchange, season ticket holders may donate unused tickets to the Angel Ticket Program. Tax deductions will be offered for donated tickets. Anyone interested in donating tickets or obtaining tickets through the Angel Ticket Program may call 915-2787.

In response to questions from several Council members, Mr. Easterbrook stated that the box office supports only about 50% of the Center's operating costs. The Ford Center is currently partially funded by the Foundation and does not receive student activity funds. Some events will continue to be held in Fulton Chapel, rather than the Ford Center, due to scheduling, costs of programs, appropriateness of venue, and seating capacity (Deidra Phillips added that the Ford Center holds 1250, and Fulton Chapel holds almost 800). Mr. Easterbrook is also looking into the possibility of allowing staff to purchase season tickets through payroll deduction.

Approval of Minutes: The February minutes were approved with no corrections.

Treasurer's Report: Rachel Bost reported that funds in the overhead account were used to purchase a laptop computer, but these funds have not yet been deducted from the budget. Expenditures were also made for postage,

printing of the January minutes, and textbook scholarships. The treasurer's report was approved with no corrections.

Old Business:

- President Camp asked new members to review the Staff Council bylaws published on the website, and encouraged all members to become familiar with the attendance policies. Any Staff Council member who has three unexcused absences within a one-year period, or who misses a total of six meetings within a one-year period, will be automatically dismissed. Any member who has been dismissed for violation of the absenteeism policy must wait two years before being elected again.
- Elections will soon be held for the positions of President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominees should have served on Staff Council for one year before being nominated. Members should obtain a nominee's approval before submitting a nomination. The deadline for nomination of officers is April 15, 2004. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. Secret ballots will be distributed and counted at the May meeting. New officers will begin their terms in July.
- Mary Harrington announced that letters from the Executive Committee addressing the state insurance crisis were mailed to the state legislators. Some responses have been received. Joni Camp added that these letters have made an impact in Jackson.
- Rachel Bost stated that six to nine sets of petitions regarding state insurance have been collected, with a total of 289 signatures. The Council decided to extend the petition deadline to Friday, March 5, to send out a global email to encourage all staff to sign the petitions, and to designate council members to serve as contacts for staff around campus. Staff council members should contact Rachel Bost if they are interested in serving as a contact person for these petitions.

New Business:

- President Camp announced that Cathy Laswell had resigned from Staff Council for personal reasons. Shannon Beeman volunteered to assume Ms. Laswell's position as Staff Council secretary.
- Mary Harrington announced that she will attend the MASCO meeting in Jackson on March 17. Andy Mullins has been asked to present at the meeting.

Committee Reports:

- Ron Kitchens reported for Shellie Harrison that five to six people are needed to work on the Elections Committee for Outstanding Staff Members. Volunteers will help to organize, mail, and count ballots. Interested persons may sign up through Ron Kitchens or Shellie Harrison.
- Mr. Kitchens reported that the Honors Day Convocation is scheduled for April 1. Dr. Tonya Flesher will be the speaker.

Concerns:

- Tony Seaman stated that although Staff Council is mentioned at new employee orientation, some employees may not understand how the Council works. Mr. Seaman suggested that information be sent to new employees once a year to publicize the services that are available to them through Staff Council. Rachel Bost also suggested that, since new employee orientations are now conducted through the internet, the Staff Council could send "welcome packets" to new employees on a monthly basis.
- Tony Seaman stated his concern that not all employees can attend Health Works programs at the time the programs are offered. This issue has been addressed with Human Resources.
- Ron Kitchens noted that some staff members do not feel comfortable with emailing or handing their concerns to Council members. He asked that a suggestion box be placed in a central location for those employees who wish to remain anonymous when voicing their concerns. Tony Seaman added that the Executive Committee had decided

that concerns would be addressed only if they were not anonymous and if they were legitimate concerns. However, the Council needs to find a way to make people feel comfortable with voicing issues. After discussion, the Council approved a motion to again utilize a suggestion box. The Physical Plant will be contacted about making a box with a lock, and Sparky Reardon will be contacted about space in the Union where the suggestion box may be placed.

Meeting adjourned, 3:35 pm.

/s/ Joni Camp, President

/s/ Mary Harrington, President-Elect

/s/ Shannon Beeman, Secretary

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