

Minutes of October 4, 2000 meeting

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



PRESENT:

Julie Andrews, Bettie Bey, Woodson Boyden, Betty Brown, Joni Camp, Mary Chrestman, Cherry Douglas, Shirley Fisher, Judy Fos, Earlene Foster, Melissa Hudson, Sam Johnson, Buddy Kahler, Anne Klingen, Denise Knighton, Shannon Lovejoy, Jonnie Manning, Janea McDonald, Mark Miller, Lynn Mills, Conny Parham, Tony Seaman, Michael Vanderlip, Sherry Wall

EXCUSED:

Buster Clark, Martha Deal, Shellie Harrison, Theresa Knight, Traci Mitchell, Jerry Moore, Donna Patton

UNEXCUSED:

Sandra Williams

GUESTS:

State Representative Jay Eads and State Senator Gray Tollison

President Sherry Wall called the meeting to order. Tony Seaman made a motion to accept the minutes of the September meeting. Mary Chrestman seconded the motion. The motion was carried with no opposition.

Guest Speakers:

President Wall then introduced our guest speakers: Jay Eads, State Representative, and Gray Tollison, State Senator. Mr. Eads is in his second year of his first 4-year term in office and Mr. Tollison is in his second 4-year term. Both are attorneys here in Oxford.

Mr. Eads and Mr. Tollison stated that they needed to hear from us about our concerns. Their e-mail addresses are:

Jay Eads jeads@mail.house.state.ms.us

Gray Tollison gtollison@mail.senate.state.ms.us

Mr. Eads explained that terms of office for both representatives and senators are four years. The legislative session starts the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. In the first year after an election, the legislative session is 125 days maximum. The other three years have a 90-day maximum session.

Schedules and deadlines for bill submissions have already been sent to each representative and senator. Agencies have been meeting with the Legislative Budget Committee (LBC) outlining their budgetary needs. The LBC will have an outline of the budget ready for the start of the session. Some items may be adjusted, but the majority of the budget will already be set.

Mr. Eads explained the current budget growth situation as just a slow-down in the growth. Businesses are still growing, but at a slower rate. Mr. Eads assured us that both he and Gray are greatly concerned about budgetary concerns that affect the University, the faculty and staff pay raises, and the Oxford area in general. However, he also recommended that we contact legislators in surrounding counties who may not be aware of the specific needs or concerns of the University community.

A discussion followed as to who legislators are actually referring to when they are quoted as saying "state employees". Both Mr. Eads and Mr. Tollison stated that when this term is used, they are referring to employees who are under the State Personnel Board. As University employees, we do not fall under this category. We are under the IHL Board. But we also are not included when they discuss education, because this term usually refers to only kindergarten through 12th grade facilities. Mr. Eads stated that he was not aware of this distinction.

Under the state budgetary process, money for higher education is given to the IHL. The IHL then portions out budgets to the 8 state universities and gives instructions on how the money can be used. Instructions for giving out raises are issued to each department head. The department head is told that the average raise for their department should not exceed a certain percentage. But as long as the department stays within that certain average amount, an individual employee may receive a lower percentage than the average, a higher percentage than the average, or a zero percent increase.

Mr. Tollison explained that the IHL has already submitted a request for 3% salary increases for both faculty and staff next year.

The state has a "Rainy Day Fund", which is required by law to be 7.5% of the state's budget. There is currently \$263 million in that fund. The legislature has the authority to change the percentage of this budget. If the percentage was reduced, the excess could be used to fund budgetary requests.

Mr. Tollison stated that the governor is proposing putting \$5 million in the state health insurance plan to help shore up the system. A suggestion was made to Mr. Tollison and Mr. Eads that the state health insurance plan cover "preventative care" costs, such as yearly exams and mammograms for people over a certain age. This could end up saving the system money because some diseases and illnesses could be caught in their early stages and cured with less cost to the system.

When asked for an update on the waiting period for the CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program), Mr. Tollison stated that children have to be without insurance for 6 months before being eligible for this program. No word has been received yet about the request to reduce this waiting period.

Committee Reports:

- **Membership Committee** -- Sam Johnson was welcomed as a new member of the council. Sam represents EEO category 7, and replaces Calvin Sellers who left the University. Also announced were the resignations of Sylvia Denton, representing EEO 7; Laura Gillom, representing EEO 4, and Lamar Pickens, representing EEO 6. Two members were removed from the council for excessive absences Etta Miller, EEO 7; and Martha Deal, EEO 5. Volunteers are needed to fill the following open positions on the council:
 - representative from EEO 7 whose term will end on 2/28/2003
 - representative from EEO 6 whose term will end on 2/28/2002Anyone who would like to volunteer for these positions is encouraged to contact Buddy Kahler at 7051 or jwkahler@olemiss.edu.
- **Day Care Center Committee** -- Vic Sullivan gave a report to the council. Clay Jones and Vic are the Staff Council's representatives to the Day Care Center Committee. Vic stated that a donor has been found to pay for the architect's plans for a day care center, and there is the possibility that the donor's sister may be interested in donating money for the building of a day care center. Vic stated that a sub-committee has been formed to form policies for the center. Sherry Wall stated that the University now has a Facilities Planning Division which will be involved in the plans for the center.
- **Staff Development** -- Janea McDonald reported that they are still working on the scholarship application which would help staff members who qualify buy necessary books for classes.
- **Orientation and Advisory Committee** -- Joni Camp reported that this committee is proposing an additional day for orientation in June.

Search Committee for the Vice Chancellor for Research -- Conny Parham reported that this committee has met twice, and they are currently in the process of writing the position advertisement.

- **Special Events Committee of the Staff Council** -- Joni Camp congratulated Julie Andrews on the job she did in coordinating the "Meet and Greet" sessions in August. Sherry Wall thanked everyone who worked on planning and organizing that event. Joni further stated that Aramark has set the date for the December Exam Breakfast. It will be Tuesday, December 12th.

MASCO (Mississippi Association of Staff Council Organizations):

Sherry Wall invited anyone who wishes to attend a MASCO meeting to go with her to the next meeting, which will be held on November 9th at Alcorn State. MASCO meets every other month, on the second Thursday of the month. In January, they will meet at Jackson State so they can meet with the legislature. At the September meeting, Senator Alice Harden and Dr. Tom Layzell were both there. They both encouraged all councils to go back to their campuses and talk to their legislators about pay raises and the insurance system. Each council was also asked to appoint someone to a MASCO Legislative Committee. This representative would need to make a couple of trips to Jackson during the legislative session. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Sherry Wall at swall@olemiss.edu.

Insurance Update:

Sherry Wall stated she has been informed that some people have had claims on lab work paid at the 80% rate the first time instead of having to appeal. If you have lab work or radiology work ordered by an in-network doctor, and the lab is out-of-network, you can appeal the claim by stating that you used an in-network doctor (or in-network hospital) and had no choice as to the lab or radiology office that was used by the doctor or hospital.

Executive Committee Meeting with Chancellor Khayat:

- Dr. Khayat stated that he has asked the IHL Board for flexibility in raising tuition and also flexibility for determining pay raises. He has asked for 4% raises for the next 3 years for all faculty and staff.
- The IHL, junior colleges, and the K-12 schools have asked that the earnings they get from the tobacco trust fund be used to help offset some of the insurance costs.
- Dr. Khayat stated that the cost of giving employees at Ole Miss a 1% pay increase is \$750,000.
- Dr. Khayat is working on a proposal to help offset some of the health care costs, but he does not want to discuss these plans until everything is finalized. Dr. Khayat is aware that the health insurance costs are a big problem, and is working to try to find a solution to help with the costs.
- Dr. Khayat asked if the staff had any requests for a one-time allocation of funds, similar to what was recently given to the faculty. This money could not be used for pay raises or for insurance purposes. Anyone having any suggestions is encouraged to send them to Sherry Wall as soon as possible.
- The University will provide flu shots to all faculty and staff again this year.
- The University and Dr. Khayat will again host a Thanksgiving luncheon for all faculty and staff. Please be considerate of their hospitality and do not bring guests. Only faculty and staff are invited.
- The fall campus-wide staff meeting that is usually scheduled for October each year has had to be rescheduled because of renovations in Fulton Chapel. This campus-wide meeting will probably be held in the spring when Fulton is re-opened.

The meeting was adjourned.

/s/Sherry Wall, President
/s/Buddy Kahler, President-Elect
/s/Jonnie Manning, 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.