

## The University of Mississippi

Minutes of the Meeting October 1, 2003

## Staff Council

Union 404 A&B

**PRESENT:** James Akey, Shannon Beeman, Rachel Bost, Joey Brent, Dennis Bullard, Joni Camp, Nina Cheshier, Tiffany Edwards, Shellie Harrison, Mary Harrington, Melissa Hudson, Regina Jordan, Buddy Kahler, Ron Kitchens, Cathy Laswell, Barbara Leeton, Shannon Lovejoy, Ardesa Minor, Jean Pinion, Randall Pinion, Hilarie Pryor, Bettie Puckett, Tony Seaman, John Sharpe, Gina Starnes, Doug Stuart, Karen Tuttle, Jeanette Wells

**EXCUSED:** Brenda Brannan, Joann Carothers, Judy Fos, Carra Hewitt, Renee Moore

2:35pm. President Joni Camp welcomed everyone and introduced the guest speaker, Clay Jones, Director of Human Resources. Mr. Jones began by explaining the state health insurance. He explained that the University is forced by legislative law to participate in the state health insurance. The University has been a strong voice in getting the Baptist Emergency Room Group and the Radiology Associates to participate in the state health insurance. Mr. Jones also explained that this past year the legislature has said that they would not allow changes to the state insurance with regards to premium increases, nor would they allow any changes to the benefits structure. However, if any major changes do occur, Human Resources will inform the University. The state health insurance plan is self funded, which means that the state employees pay into the plan, the medical bills are paid out of the plan money, and when that money is gone, the state has no other option but to raise the premiums or increase the deductible. The State plan also covers retirees and disabled workers, which have an impact on benefits paid versus premiums paid. Mr. Jones talked about other benefits such as the medical spending account, which allows an employee to save pre-tax rates and have it deducted from their paycheck per pay period. This lets the employee pay doctor or hospital bills and claim the amount from the flexible spending account. He also talked about a new electronic hiring system for staff and the possibility of a new policy, which would require criminal background checks on all new hires. A question was raised about employees paying into a plan that would help pay for their insurance when they retired. Mr. Jones explained that the legislature is looking into this but that it would be 2 to 4 years down the road. Another question was raised regarding donated leave. Mr. Jones explained that there are stricter definitions as to who can use donated leave and that employees can only donate up to 90 days of leave, also Human Resources cannot disclose if someone is in need of donated leave. Mr. Jones was thanked for his informative session and appreciation expressed for his efforts on our behalf

The minutes September meeting were approved with the following corrections, Barbara Leeton being an excused absence, Judy Fos was left off of the last two minutes as present and Nina Cheshier was an excused absence.

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

The treasurer's report was approved without correction.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- Staff of University satellite campuses will be eligible for the Textbook Scholarship as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff will have to purchase books from the Oxford Campus at Barnes and Noble Bookstore.
- Campus wide Fall Staff Meeting will be held November 6th at 10:30 a.m. at the Ford Center.
- Melissa Hudson stated that the Traffic and Parking Committee met and approved the proposal to yellow the curb the right side of Rebel Drive, eliminating three parking spaces.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- President Camp received an email from a member of staff who asked if a free membership to Turner Center

could be used in lieu of taking classes. This suggestion was brought to Chancellor Khayat at the Executive Committee meeting. Chancellor Khayat is looking into the possibility of a free trial membership to the Turner Center to be given in conjunction with the University Health Screenings.

- Recent news seemed to indicate that only faculty would be receiving salary increases. Chancellor Khayat stated at the Executive Committee meeting that current talks and proposals when referencing faculty increases, would also include staff in that package. However, the salary increase must be approved through IHL and the legislature.
- Bettie Puckett announced that October is Disability Awareness Month and that on October 21<sup>st</sup> the Equal Opportunity and Regulatory Compliance and Student Disability Services will be hosting an event at Johnson Commons at 4:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to spend a day in a wheelchair then share the experience.
- Ron Kitchens announced that the United Way goal has been set at \$105,000 this year. The United Way Committee is asking for 100% participation from the Staff Council.
- Mary Harrington stated that she and Rachel Bost had attended the MASCO meeting. The Tuition Exchange bill was killed and an explanation will be given at a later time. Also, staff are being asked to write letters to the legislature to leave health insurance premiums and deductibles as is. Mary Harrington has been elected Vice-Chair of MASCO.

Meeting adjourned, 3:35 p.m.

/s/Joni Camp, President

/s/Mary Harrington, President-Elect

/s/Cathy Laswell, Secretary

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