

# Minutes of October 7, 1999 meeting

2:30 p.m., Union Ballroom



## Attending:

Julie Andrews, Robert Bishop, Woodson Boyden, Betty Brown, Dennis Bullard, Joni Camp, Onice Carter, Mary Chrestman, Thelma Curry, Shirley Fisher, Judy Fos, Laura Gillom, Mary Harrington, Willie Hilliard, Clay Jones, Floyd Klepzig, Denise Knighton, Etta Miller, Lynn Mills, Traci Mitchell, Jerry Moore, Conny Parham, Donna Patton, Lamar Pickens, Lucienne Savell, Barbara Smith, Michael Vanderlip, Larry Weeden, Martha Woolfolk

## Excused:

Cherry Douglas, Buddy Kahler, Theresa Knight, Jonnie Manning, Cassandra Pinson, Kirk Purdom, Sherry Wall

## Unexcused:

## Guests:

Several guests also attended.

The meeting was called to order by President Traci Mitchell, who welcomed the guests and introduced the guest speaker.

## Guest Speaker

The guest speaker was Sharon Kavorik, Benefits Specialist from the state Insurance Office, who outlined upcoming changes in our health insurance coverage. Beginning January 1, 2000, the pharmacy co-payment for employees will increase from \$4 to \$8 for generic drugs and from \$12 to \$18 for single source drugs. Also, for multi-source drugs (brand names--those for which there is a generic available) the co-pay will change from \$25 to \$8 plus the difference between the price of the multi-source drug and the generic equivalent. Ms. Kavorik stated that the reason for these increases is that there have been major increases in the cost of drugs. Since 1997, there has been a 112% increase in the cost of the plan. Some new drugs are very expensive and there have to be changes to keep the plan solvent. The alternative would be to have large rate increases.

Another change will be the implementation of wellness/preventive coverage. For ages 18-44, there will be a \$150 allowance every two calendar years, with the time based on when the first preventive visit occurs. For ages 45 and above, there will be an annual \$150 allowance. This is strictly for wellness, and will not apply when there is a diagnosis as a result of the doctor visit. This allowance will count toward the deductible. In response to a question about doctors receiving a schedule of services to be covered under the wellness allowance, Ms. Kavorik advised that this would depend on how an insurance claim is filed. If filed as a routine exam, a claim would be considered wellness coverage. An actuary on the State Health Insurance Management Board helps determine what is covered.

A suggestion was made that the state consider stop loss coverage on the pharmacy co-pay plan.

On January 1, the insurance plan will pay for speech therapy which is needed as a result of Parkinson's disease, strokes, head injuries, etc., but will not cover maintenance speech therapy. There also will be benefits for outpatient cardiac rehabilitation. Coverage under mental health benefits will now include the use of licensed clinical social workers and licensed professional counselors.

A question was asked concerning why diabetic supplies and insulin are treated differently than other prescriptions, and Ms. Kavorik replied that perhaps the information about this was not worded correctly in the newsletter which was sent out previously, and she advised that another update will be mailed in November.

Discussions followed about the new network which will begin in January. Ms. Kavorik said that doctors will have the same fee schedule as currently paid under the Key Physician Network, and that discussions are on-going at this time with doctors around the state. The new network is Advanced Health Systems (AHS), a fully owned subsidiary of Blue Cross. The Insurance Board made the decision to go to a single network because (1) there would be better discounts and (2) there would be less employee confusion. New ID cards will be mailed in mid-late December. There will still be well baby care and emergency care will still be paid at the higher level if employees are out of area or out of state. Blue Cross will remain as the system administrator as they have a five-year contract.

### **Questions asked of Ms. Kavorik--and her replies:**

1. *Why is hospital care for newborns not covered?*--this is an item that could be presented to the Board as a suggestion/recommendation for future consideration.
2. *Does the state have any way to audit Blue Cross's response times/mistakes in paying claims?*--there are state auditors to monitor these things.
3. *Does AHS have any idea how many physicians will join the new plan?*--this is on-going, so there is no way to tell at this time.
4. *How much does Blue Cross get paid as our administrator?*--I don't know.
5. *What is the standard turnaround time for paying claims?*--14 working days.
6. *Who represents state employees to Blue Cross?*--contact the Office of Insurance at (601) 359-3411.
7. *Could a list of allowable charges be sent to us?*--no, but specific questions can be answered.
8. *What can we do to make sure our doctors join the network?*--call them and ask them to join.
9. *How many employees are covered in the state insurance plan?*--about 180-190,000.
10. *What can we do to get the attention of the Board to address our concerns?*--talk to IHL Commissioner Layzell, who represents us on the Insurance Board.
11. *Are there enough staff in the Insurance Office to handle questions about claims?*--yes, and Human Resources can also help with problems.
12. *How much do state and University employees pay in vs. how much is paid out in claims?*--last year, \$125 million paid in vs. \$135 million paid in claims.

Several Staff Council members and members of the audience expressed concern that local and Memphis doctors will not join the new network and that UM employees will have to change doctors, travel long distances for health care and/or pay the larger deductible and co-payment.

Traci Mitchell requested that employees send additional questions to her and she will forward them to Ms. Kavorik to get them answered.

Ms. Kavorik reiterated that changes in benefits coverage were explained in the newsletter previously mentioned, and that Human Resources has extra copies of that newsletter and it is available on their Website if some employees didn't receive their copy. All physicians currently in the networks have been invited to join AHS. They are working on a link between AHS and the Office of Insurance to show a list of providers. A new physicians directory will be published probably in late December.

The Web site of Insurance Office is [www.dfa.state.ms.us](http://www.dfa.state.ms.us) and AHS has a number (1-800-294-6307) which may be used to determine if a physician has signed up with the network.

Traci Mitchell thanked Ms. Kavorik and began the business part of the meeting by welcoming new members Lynn Mills, Mike Vanderlip and Larry Weeden.

### **Minutes**

There were no corrections to the September minutes and they were approved as published.

## Old Business

- **Project Discover and SAP Implementation.** Onice Carter provided an update on training. On November 1, the following modules (applications or areas) of SAP will go "Live": Accounting (FI, CO, FM), Purchasing (Material Management), Plant Maintenance (which includes Physical Plant and Telecommunications maintenance requests), Property (Asset Management) and Inventory (only for departments that maintain consumable items for departmental use or resale). Training for Specialist Offices started on September 13, including: Accounting Office, Budget Office, Bursar, Property, Physical Plant Department, Purchasing and Telecommunications.

On October 18 the end-user training begins for the seven departments that will begin using the system November 1. These departments include Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Physical Plant, Printing Services, Telecommunications and Housing. Note: Athletics will begin using Plant Maintenance on November 1 and will begin Material Management on December 1. Also on December 1, the following departments will be added: Athletics, Business School, Continuing Studies, Information Technology and National Center for Physical Acoustics.

On January 1, Human Resources/Payroll Module will go "Live". The roll out plan has not been determined.

Departments will be notified about training as more departments are added to the system.

All staff should have received an e-mail message stating that the Project Discover Homepage will be the primary means of communications on the project.

- Traci Mitchell announced that volunteers are needed for the Degree & Certification Committee. Current committee members have been serving for several years. This is the committee which reviews and certifies employees who earn degrees for pay raises.
- In a recent Daily Mississippian article, it was reported that the Chancellor spoke to students regarding the one-way traffic/pedestrian campus proposal. In an ASB survey students voted against this plan. Traci asked the staff to contact Keith Womer, Chair of the Traffic Safety Committee, to give our views regarding this proposal. Or staff may send their views to Traci who will copy the Traffic Safety Committee and send to the Chancellor. Lucienne Savell suggested that we should give specific reasons why we approve or disapprove of the plan.

Traci Mitchell suggested that Staff Council members contact their constituency and get information and ideas on the issue which can be brought back to the Council next month for further discussion. Perhaps we should ask for a presentation by the Traffic Safety Committee or a representative to explain their thinking about the plan.

## Announcements

- Next month's meeting will be November 3, 1999, at 2:30 p.m. in the regular room in the Union.
- MASCO will meet on the University campus on November 11 in the Rebel Club at the Stadium. Representatives from University of Southern Mississippi have given us copies of two resolutions which their Staff Council wants to vote on in November: (1) portability of tuition benefits to other IHL institutions and (2) restoration of 100% tuition benefit for employees' dependents. Staff Council reps were asked to discuss these proposals with other employees and report back in November. These proposals are also being sent to the Faculty Senate for their consideration.
- The Thanksgiving luncheon to be sponsored by the Chancellor will be on Wednesday, November 24, from 11-1.
- The United Way Campaign will begin this month. In answer to a previous question about why the University supports the United Way but does not allow payroll deductions for other charities, it was reported that this was basically a tradition from the very beginning of the campaign in this area. The initial campaign Lafayette County was begun as a partnership between the community and the University. Also, United Way provides a wide range of services within the community.
- Volunteers are needed for the December 8 exam breakfast for students. Please put this on your calendar.

## Committee Reports

- The **Executive Committee** did not meet with the Chancellor, who was out of town, but will meet with him next month.
- **Concerns:** A concern has been raised regarding lapsed salary dollars at the end of the last fiscal year (June 1999), when any balance left in the salary category went into the general fund. Can we find out how much money was involved, where it is going and how it is being used?

Onice Carter addressed a previous concern regarding the use of answering machines on campus. The University's policy (per Chancellor Khayat) is that answering machines are not to be used on departmental phone lines, but special exceptions have been made for very small departments with one or no secretary. Complaints should be sent to the departmental chair involved or to the Vice Chancellor.

- **Staff Development:** Two Customer Service Workshops will be held, on October 26 and October 27. An e-mail will be sent to all department heads with information and individual memos will be mailed to all employees. There are limited spaces available.

A summary of the Staff Development survey sent out by VC Johnny Williams is available and may be obtained by contacting Traci Mitchell.

- Vic Sullivan advised that the Staff Council proposal regarding Continuing Staff Education and Development has been submitted to Dr. Kellum, who suggested that we send it directly to the Chancellor for presentation to the University Planning Council.
- The **Daycare Committee** (Vic Sullivan, Johnnie Manning and Clay Jones) met with Tim and Jennifer Angle and Charles Clark from Continuing Studies and Public Service. They discussed what has taken place in the past, what is being provided now, and what is possible for the future. There is the possibility of expansion of current facilities, with the costs for employees based on a sliding salary scale. Currently there is no campus day care for children under 3 years of age, and the cost of that is not known. Traci mentioned that there had been a story in The Daily Mississippian regarding the Willie Price Nursery and that she had e-mailed Provost Staton regarding our committee and requested that we be included in all planning and proposals in this area.
- **Legislative Committee:** Letters were prepared and mailed to area legislators and administrators expressing our appreciation for the salary increases received this year and asking for future consideration of additional increases.
- **Other Committees:** Onice Carter reported that the Staff Council Annual Report is on the Web and that she has copies for anyone interested.

## Other Announcements

- The group photo for Staff Council has been moved to the December meeting.
- Lucienne Savell announced that on October 19-20 the students will be competing in the annual Transylvania Bowl, a competitive blood drive between Southern, State and Ole Miss. Blood Services will be on campus from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Union Lobby. Employees are requested to donate blood in this drive. Lucienne also announced that she had received a letter from Marti Ryan, Mississippi Blood Services, that as a result of the Staff Council drive during Staff Appreciation Week, all campus employees and their immediate families are covered. If a need for blood arises, employees should contact Mississippi Blood Services.
- Thelma Curry announced that the United Way Campaign kickoff will be held on October 25 in the Union. The main focus of the campaign this year is to increase the number of givers, since the University has lost many generous givers during the past few years. The University's goal is \$75,000, and we are asked to urge all employees to contribute.

Meeting was adjourned.

/s/Traci Mitchell, President

/s/Clay Jones, President-Elect

/s/Conny Parham, Secretary

Staff Council e-mail address: [staffcouncil@olemiss.edu](mailto:staffcouncil@olemiss.edu)

Staff Council Homepage: [http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/staff\\_council/](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](mailto:Majordomo@listserv.olemiss.edu) with the words "*subscribe staff*" in the body of the e-mail message.