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2007 June 11 - Staff Senate Agenda and Minutes

Staff Senate, East Tennessee State University

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AGENDA

**Staff Senate Meeting
June 11, 2007
DP Culp, Forum
2:30 p.m.**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. New Advisor**
- 3. Approval of Minutes – May 14, 2007**
- 4. Treasurer's Report**
- 5. Committee Reports**
 - Staff Development and Evaluations
 - Staff Concerns and Grievances
 - Committee on Committees
 - Committee on Elections
 - Thanksgiving Food Committee
 - Picnic Committee
- 6. Old Business**
 - Staff Ring (update) – Terry Nelson
 - College of Medicine Tour
- 7. New Business**
 - Pro-rated Longevity Pay for Part-time Employees – Robert Calkins, Val Lyle
- 8. Open Floor for New Agenda Items/Concerns**
- 9. Adjournment**

**Next Meeting – July 9, 2007
DP Culp Center Forum**

MINUTES
Staff Senate Meeting
DP Culp Center, Forum
June 11, 2007

PRESENT: Constance Alexander, Lisa Blackburn, Kim Blevins, Carolyn Bond, Amy Bower, Queen Brown, Robert Calkins, Cindy Canter, Sharon Chandler, Renee Couch, Tim Dills, Corintha Duncan, Charles Forrester, Dilwar Grewal, Betty Grice, Angela Haire, Donna Lee, Donna Murphy, Terry Nelson, Judy Oaks, Debbie Parks, Betty Ann Proffitt, David Robinson, Jamie Simmons, Kathy Smith, Debbie Starnes, Vanessa Stephens, Karen Sullivan, Carla Warner, John Sanders, and Pamela White.

ABSENT: Pat Barnett (excused), Jeanine Carroll (excused), Denise Dunn (excused), Linda Greenwell (excused), Linda Lett, Diana McClay (excused), Sherri Renfro (excused), Wanda Richardson (excused), Patricia Stafford (excused).

MINUTES: There were no changes to the minutes, except that all individuals listed under "Absent" should be reflected as an "excused" absence.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Senator Bower reported that the current balance for the Operational Account is (-\$306.84), and the Foundation Account stands at \$0.00.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- **Staff Development and Evaluations** – No report
- **Staff Concerns and Grievances** – No report
- **Committee on Committees** – Senator Warner announced that the Office of Human Resources has made a request for an individual from Staff Senate to serve on a new Retirement Committee, which is scheduled to meet on a monthly basis. Any Senator interested may contact Senator Warner for more information.
- **Committee on Elections** – Senator Dills advised that terms for college representatives will soon end and notification to those individuals will be forthcoming. On a related note, President Sullivan requested that an update date be added to the on-line roster that will indicate the latest revision(s) made to the Staff Senate website.
- **Picnic Committee** – Senator Bond, Chair of the Picnic Committee, reported that the 2007 Annual Staff Picnic was a success as evidenced from the positive feedback she received from staff and Senators. She advised that 459 RSVPs were received, but more staff actually attended the event. On June 5th, the committee met to discuss comments received concerning the picnic and the following ideas to improve next year's event:
 - Locate the entertainment closer to tents so music may be heard
 - Have an individual other than the entertainer/musician to announce door prize ticket numbers

- Group door prizes five or six at a time and announce those ticket numbers
- Submit a budget for next year's picnic so it may be built into the budget

President Sullivan stated that redundancies probably need to be built into the system to notify Staff Award recipients, as Ms. Alma S. Davis was not aware that she would be receiving an award, and therefore did not attend the event. It was suggested that the nominator be responsible to get the nominee to the event, and that the nominee's supervisor be contacted, as well. Ms. Davis later received her plaque and monetary award, and she was advised that she will be officially recognized at the next Staff Convocation.

As there were several door prizes left over from the picnic, Senator Warner made the motion that the remaining door prizes be distributed to those serving on the Picnic Committee. Senator Oaks seconded the motion. Motion approved.

President Sullivan stated she sent a formal thank you letter to ARA Dining Services for their hard work and efforts during the picnic. A round of applause was given to those who served on the Picnic Committee and to Senator Bond for a job well done.

- **Blood Drive** - Senator Grice reported that the Blood Drive is scheduled June 12th in the Culp Center Ballroom/Left. The drive will be held from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. She noted that, as of this date, 26 individuals have volunteered to help with the drive. She asked that Senators pass the word to their colleagues and encourage as many as possible to donate. As an incentive, she announced that blood donors will be eligible to win a \$750.00 gasoline card.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Staff Ring** – Senator Nelson reported that thus far twelve rings have been ordered at a cost of \$229.00 per ring. He reiterated that rings may not be paid through payroll deduction; however, there is a payment plan in place through Balfour that includes a \$75.00 down payment. The rings will be available at the above cost until the end of the month.
- **College of Medicine Tour** – President Sullivan announced that the Senate's tour of the College of Medicine was both entertaining and informative. She sent formal thank you letters to individuals at the College of Medicine who conducted the tour. She noted that the Senate may want to tour other areas on campus, and indicated the following suggestions for future tours have been submitted:

New Governor's Hall
Forensics Center
Gray Fossil Site

The following suggestions were mentioned for future Staff Senate meetings:

- an individual to present an overview of the new areas proposed on campus
- Mr. Max Bayard to address the Senate regarding the new Walk-in Clinic.

Senators were encouraged to submit other suggestions for future meetings to the Executive Board.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Prorated Longevity Pay for Long Term, Part-Time Employees** – Senator Bob Calkins indicated that Ms. Valarie Lyle requested he present the following requests to Staff Senate for their consideration and possible support:
 - Part-time employees to receive longevity on a pro-rated basis equal to employment percentage of full-time employees
 - Part-time employees be recognized for their many years of dedicated service to the university

Senator Calkins explained that he is nearing retirement and this issue is no longer of importance to him, but on behalf of his fellow colleagues would like for the Senate to consider the issue and possibly endorse his proposal to reward and recognize the value of long term, part-time employees. He distributed copies of the proposal to Senators for their review, support, and submission to Dr. Stanton for his consideration.

Ms. Lyle thanked the group for allowing her to present concerns that she and 38 other long term, part-time employees would have Staff Senate consider, and possibly provide them a voice. She explained that “employees at the 80% level work a total of 1560 hours, full time for insurance purposes, but not quite enough to qualify for longevity pay, and that most of these employees have worked at this level for an extended number of years.” Both she and Senator Calkins indicated they felt this is not fair, since “those part-time employees who have put in many years of dedicated service to the university receive no recognition” for their service. However, both acknowledged that part-time employees are pleased that bylaws have been changed to allow their participation in Staff Senate.

President Sullivan indicated that the issue was presented to Staff Senate a couple of years ago and then sent to the Concerns and Grievances Committee for their review and consideration. The committee recommended that an individual should take the issue before the Tennessee State Employees Association (TSEA), as this was a legislative issue and not one to be dealt by Staff Senate. Earlier this year, the issue was again brought

before the Senate when Senator Calkins submitted a question concerning longevity for part-time employees. His question, along with other questions from Senators, were given to the Executive Board for review and possible submission to Dr. Stanton to address at the November 13, 2006, Staff Senate meeting. President Sullivan stated that the Executive Board decided not to forward Senator Calkins' question to Dr. Stanton because the issue had already been dealt with by the Concerns and Grievances Committee, and the Board decided to abide by that committee's earlier recommendation. A lengthy discussion ensued as to the roll of the Executive Board, and as to what information is sent to ETSU administration.

Senator Grewal made the motion that the Senate not consider individual cases in this matter, and that pertinent information and complete facts be presented to the Senate before further discussion leading to possible action or inaction. Motion seconded by Senator Blevins. Discussion followed, a vote taken, and the motion carried.

President Sullivan charged Senator Renfro, Chair of the current Staff Concerns and Grievances Committee to meet with her committee members to begin the compilation of the pertinent facts and information, and to include Mr. John Sanders, Vice President for Human Resources, to meet with the committee as an informational/advisement resource in the matter.

OPEN FLOOR FOR NEW AGENDA ITEMS:

- Senator Bond advised that her term on Staff Senate will end September 2007 along with other college representatives, and since the Library is not connected to any college, it will need Staff Senate representation. Discussion followed. Senator Dills made the motion that bylaws be amended to include a representative from the Library, which will be voted on by university staff, and that the issue be remanded to the July Staff Senate meeting to give Senators time to review the matter. Motion seconded by Senator Duncan. Discussion followed. Motion approved.

The meeting adjourned as there were no other items to discuss.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela White
Secretary

The next meeting is scheduled July 9, 2007, in the Culp Center Forum.

Item: Longevity Pay

What is it? A longevity pay plan to reward State employees for extended service to the State.

Unfortunately this plan excludes a number of "dedicated employees with extended service", just because they do not hit that magical number of hours of 1600.

Employees at the 80% level work a total of 1560 hours, full time for insurance purposes, but not quite enough to qualify for longevity pay. Many of these employees have worked at this level for an extended number of years. A new employee with only 3 years full service does receive longevity pay, but an employee working at the 80% level for 15 or 20 years gets no recognition what so ever.

This policy just does not seem fair. Those employees who have put in many years of dedicated service, filling that nitch position that doesn't necessarily require full time, are never the less just as important to the goals of this University as many full time positions.

Considering the fact that these workers are working at a reduced salary, vacation, sick leave, retirement and social security credits, they should be commended for their dedication to the University.

Many have stuck with their jobs hoping to be elevated to 100% some day, but to no avail. These dedicated employees deserve some sort of special recognition for their extended service, especially when you take into account the reduced pay and benefits listed above.

PROPOSAL: Give some hope to those long-time dedicated employees in regard to longevity pay.

1. Realizing that the 1600 hours is a State or Board of Regents rule, possible the University President could request an Exception as allowed in the Handbook.

X. Exceptions

Exceptions to the provisions of these regulations may be recommended by the University President for the Chancellor's approval.

2. **Possibly the easiest alternative might be to set a certain number of years, at which time a part time employee could be automatically considered a long time career employee and at that time elevate the employee to the magical level of 82.1% / 1600 hours. This could easily be done within the University budget process.**

If you think about it, almost any job position on campus picks up more and more duties over the years, and raising any position by 2.1% after maybe 10 years should easily be justified.