

STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES NOVEMBER 4, 2009

The WKU Staff Council met on November 4, 2009 in MMTH 235B. Those present were Cassandra Bailey, Tammi Beach, Diane Carver, April Gaskey, Janet Hall, Wanda Johnson, Cheryl Lewis-Smith, James Kennedy, Paula Mattison, Darrel Saalwaechter, Retha Spinks, Tammy Spinks and Colby Westerfield. Members not present: Chester McNulty and Jennifer Ragan. Guests present: Christian Ryan Downing, Sharon Hartz and Pat Johnson.

James Kennedy, Staff Regent, reported on the previous W.K.U. Regent's meeting. He stated that the demolition and revamping of Colonial Court was approved for apartments for Housing. He stated that the final enrollment count for fall 2009 was 20,712. The situation concerning raises for Dr. Dean Kahler and Dr. Wood Selig was tabled to the next Regent meeting. He said he abstained from the vote concerning going into closed session. He felt that the discussion of salaries should be a private matter. More information will be requested from Dr. Barbara Burch concerning Dr. Dean Kahler's position.

Christian Ryan Downing, Chair of the Sustainability Committee, discussed numerous ways to advance sustainability. Employees should buy locally, conserve electricity, by turning off computers and lights when not in use, and buying energy efficient appliances. Buildings should be weatherized. Someone brought up the fact that improving their facility is normally not in the budget. She said that you can create a proposal to give to the Provost to request an Energy Conservation Grant. Employees should recycle aluminum cans, paper and cardboard. A Green Fund has been established by the WKU Foundation, which employees may contribute funds accordingly. Other sustainability collaborative efforts include carpooling and Leed Building Certifications. The Parking and Transportation Department web site has information concerning carpooling. The new College of Education Building will be LEED certified. Refer to <http://www.wku.edu/sustainability/> for additional information. Western Kentucky University Energy Policy may be found at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=sustain_pub.

The Staff Council voted to reinstate Pat Johnson as a staff representative on the Benefits Committee.

Benefit Committee staff members, Sharon Hartz and Pat Johnson attended the Staff Council meeting. They stated that in order to keep the reserve fund at 25%, it was necessary to raise the cost of the premiums and lower benefits for the health plan this year. The Insurance Benefits had minimal changes within the last 6 years. The reserve fund had been used to pay out several large policies as well as used for other university needs. The waiver was also reduced to employees who did not choose a policy. The Benefits Committee sent out an RFP for insurance coverage this year. Anthem was selected again to handle W.K.U. health insurance coverage. They requested that employees contact them with suggestions that the Benefits Committee should review. We asked the committee to look at increasing the tuition reimbursement hours to 21 versus the current total of 18 that is offered.

BSA workload was discussed. It was stated that in several buildings, there was not a Team Leader and BSA's have to work more due to absenteeism. Cheryl Lewis-Smith, Chairperson, suggested that we invite Judy Blankenship and Pam West to our next meeting.

Several suggestions were received from the Fall Break Brunch Suggestion Box and the Anonymous Suggestion Email. Several comments/suggestions received were in regard to the cost of health insurance. We feel that the Benefits Committee members addressed several of these concerns. It was stated that every benefits employee at W.K.U. is provided an option for no cost premiums.

One comment referred to the new large signs in Mass Media and Technology Hall concerning video surveillance. Cheryl Lewis-Smith talked with Dr. Robert Owen, Vice President for Information Technology, and he stated that a committee was formed to review video from the previous months. It was discovered that several inappropriate activities/actions were occurring which prompted the need to make signage larger. This is first phase of a new security system to be set up in MMTH.

Certain suggestions were not issues for the Staff Council.

No one was nominated for the Staff Council Part-Time Election. Part-time individuals who had previously expressed interest in running did not meet the requirements for the position. It is required that a staff member be employed for two years. The position will remain vacant this year. The By-laws may be changed to resolve this problem.

Cheryl Lewis-Smith received a recommendation that the Staff Satisfaction Survey be conducted every other year. This was agreed to by all, due to now having the anonymous suggestion box email as another outlet to receive comments. The past year's survey suggested that there is some concern about the Ombudsman position. We may have the Ombudsman come to a future meeting to discuss his role.

It was suggested that the Safety Fair not be at the same time as the Fall Break Brunch, due to the people working the fair could not attend the Brunch. It was suggested that it may be held during the Health Fair next year instead. Diane Carver, Secretary, reported that the Thank You Letters have been sent out to contributors.

James Kennedy, Staff Regent, requested approval on his providing a quarterly report of the Board of Regents Meeting for the staff to review. The report would be placed on the Staff Council web site.

April Gaskey, representative on the Master Planning Committee, stated that a mural is being painted on a wall near the Gatton Academy. The mural is being painted by a WKU student, Emily Wilcox who is working with a faculty member Kristina Arnold. The mural includes local fauna, foliage, slopes and plantings.

The December meeting will be held on December 2 at Potter Hall Fourth Floor Conference Room.

Respectively Submitted

Diane Carver, Secretary