

Staff Council Minutes  
Staff Council Annual Retreat  
June 6, 2007

Staff Council held its annual retreat in the Diddle Arena, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Concourse. Present were current and newly-elected staff council members: Sherry Nation, Trish Jagers, Jeff Jones, Mike Young, Darrell Saalwaechter, Mike Boehmer, James Kennedy, Cheryl Lewis-Smith, Shannon Ward, Jennifer Ragan, Tamela Smith, LySandra Bowles, Larry Hardin, Diane Carver, Heather Stubblefield, Patty Booth, Angela Robertson, Chester McNulty, Todd Misener, David Emerson, Ann Potter, and Stephanie Wimsatt.

After introductions of new, current, and retiring members, members reviewed and approved the 2006-07 list of Staff Council accomplishments (will be distributed via email and posted to the SC website).

Questions arose concerning the new Chief Diversity Officer position. While it was generally agreed that WKU needs a diversity officer, we need further information and clarification as to how this will be implemented.

Item one on the agenda was job title & rank vs. salary. It's been brought to the table that some staff with the same "title" are ranked in different pay categories (107 & 109, for instance) with widely-varying salaries. No committees were set up at this time to look further into this issue.

Staff council raised the issue that each department needs to reevaluate employee job descriptions. Staff council wants to make certain that those with the same duties receive the same pay. On the same note, those with increased responsibilities should have their pay increased (beyond annual raises) to adequately reflect those responsibilities.

Fairness issues (equal treatment of each employee by supervisors) were brought up. It was recognized that "bottoms-up" performance appraisals of supervisors can be completed by employees who wish to assess (anonymously) their managers. It was noted that Human Resources receives a surprisingly small number of these. The form for the "bottoms-up" assessment is available on the HR website, and the employee's name is kept anonymous. Members agreed that if an employee has concerns about hiring and compensation practices, that person should approach a staff council member. If management practices are in question, complete a "bottoms-up" evaluation.

Angela discussed how the Staff Council meetings are scheduled and clarified SC duties with the new members (orientation).

Break for lunch

A discussion was held concerning part-time employees not being able to pay for parking permits through payroll deduction. At this time, part-timers must pay for permits in full. It was decided

that since part-timers are employed “at-will,” with no guaranteed salary, payroll deduction cannot be used to pay for permits.

SC discussed the degree incentive policy and how it had not been reviewed. A committee was formed so that SC may look at other benchmark institutions ‘Degree Incentive Policy’. Members willing to serve on the Degree Incentive Committee: Shannon Ward, Sherry Nation, Lysandra Bowles, James Kennedy, David Emerson, & Todd Misener.

Committee assignments were revisited and the following agreed to:

Parking & Transportation Committee: Diane Carver

Ombudsperson Committee: Angela Robertson, Trish Jagers, Mike Young, and Cheryl Lewis-Smith. The Ombudsperson committee will look into such issues as whether this will be a salaried position or volunteer and whether one person or several will be needed. Goal: complete research and submit a proposal to the Administrative Council by this fall (2007).

Wellness Committee (promotes wellness activities for WKU Staff (and faculty) such as Healthy/Colorful Choices, Poker Walk, and the Health Fair: Todd Misener staying on. Darrell Saalwaechter new member.

Staff Mentoring Committee: It was discussed that the staff mentoring program is not really utilized and thus needs reevaluating. Jennifer Ragan volunteered to serve on this committee and to evaluate Staff Mentoring effectiveness.

Campus Master Planning Committee: Chester recommended we allow Sharon Hartz to continue to serve on this committee. All agreed.

SC raised the question of whether staff who are serving on campus committees (such as Benefits, Parking & Transportation, Budget) report to SC. Another question raised was whether the committee member should be on Staff Council or chosen by Staff Council. The decision was made to update SC policy with regard to committee assignment. SC should appoint/approve staff members of campus committees with staff representation.

Medical Leave Bank Committee: those who serve on this committee indicated that they wish to remain. (Persons requesting time from the MLBC remain anonymous to the committee members. For obvious reasons, the serving MLBC members wish to remain anonymous so as to insure no interference/favoritism in the decision-making process.)

Staff Leadership Committee: Jennifer Ragan, Stephanie Wimsatt, James Kennedy (chair).

Spirit of WKU Committee: Cheryl Lewis-Smith.

Staff Excellence Award Committee: Angela Robertson

Also discussed was the “passing of the torch” now that Patty Booth, SC’s key “Scooter Recruiter,” was leaving SC. (Scooter Davis is the radio personality who deejays for each SC Fall Break Brunch.) A unanimous decision was made to tag Angela Robertson the new “Scooter Recruiter.”

It was mentioned that WKU Staff Councils’ member’s official shirts are in a pretty sorry state, having been handed down again and again. Perhaps better quality shirts should be ordered; each SC member said that they’d be willing to contribute personal funds toward a more professional shirt—such as a polo or button-down. Jennifer Ragan will look into her shirt supplier and report at the next SC meeting.

Guest Gene Tice offered greetings to the new SC members.

Tony Glisson discussed the proposed Bereavement Policy and how bereavement is currently handled (utilization of vacation/sick time when an employee must miss due to a death in the family). Angela will draft a proposal of our ideas and forward to Tony.

The issue was brought up that smoking urns remain in non-smoking areas, thus encouraging smokers to congregate around the urns. Dr. Tice said that he would speak with Tom Riley about removing/moving those urns. Countless hours have gone into implementing the smoke-free zones and Staff Council wants each WKU staffer to know that we appreciate your support in keeping these areas smoke-free for the benefit of all (staff, faculty, and students).

Years of Service Awards: Jeff Jones asked Tony Glisson about plans for employee merit recognition (5-year, 10-year, and so on, awards). Tony assured SC that it is still on the agenda, but there’s always the issue of funding . . .

Concerns were raised about WKU Policy accessibility. It is available on the HR website but is notably difficult to find/navigate. A site-specific search engine was discussed. The new “Portal” may solve this problem when it is rolled out (soon).

The new buildings on campus will result in a checkerboard-style moving about of staff as they are migrated from Tate Page Hall to Grise Hall and into the new Tate Page Hall. Questioned was the cost of this multi-movement of persons. South Campus construction, it was noted, will be completed this fall with, thankfully, no loss in parking.

We’ve grown by 5,000 students and we need more support. Dr. Tice agreed that with this additional student growth we need to have further conversations about the replacement practices in Facilities Management—particularly Zone Techs and Shop Specialists.

Also noted was the absence of staffers at many programs and sessions offered on campus. Glisson and Tice both agreed that we need the support of directors and supervisors in encouraging employee attendance at these informational and training sessions. They proposed sending a letter/memo to supervisors to this effect. Also agreed upon is that we need better training programs and are open to suggestions from staffers and supers as to the type and length of classes from which employees might benefit by attending.

Pre-Virginia-Tech: The Emergency Crisis Management Committee has worked the last two years researching the crisis needs of this campus and gives Dr. Tice a letter of what is needed. Most needed? An expanded police department, but we need \$\$\$ to accomplish this—money that is not currently available

Staff Council appreciates the information made available by the WKU Police Department, Tony Glisson, and Dr. Gene Tice.

At the close of the retreat, elections were held to determine officers: Angela Robertson will remain Chair of SC; James Kennedy is our new Webmaster (many thanks to Jeff Jones for his past contributions); Todd Misener is Treasurer; Trish Jagers is Secretary.

Dates and hosts for the upcoming year's meetings were decided. These dates/locations will be posted on the SC website.

Finally, the issue of the "missing FM" representative: Several staffers expressed confusion to SC and didn't know that BSAs could run for this position. SC voted to hold a special election to fill this vacancy so that the skilled maintenance chair doesn't remain open for another year. The elected person will serve a two-year term. The election day was set for July 10<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers agreed to man the post at the loading dock to assist anyone needing help with online voting.

Minutes recorded by Trish Jagers