

The WKU Staff Council held its May meeting on Wednesday, May 3 in DUC 226. Members present were: Patty Booth, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, Pat Jordan, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Darrell Saalwaechter, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, and Lauri Warden. Members absent were: LySandra Bowles and Mike Thompson.

The Staff Council (SC) discussed changes in the Staff Regent Guidelines that have been made since last election. It was determined that no absentee ballots will be used as we are now using online voting, which allows voters access from any computer worldwide. Voting for Staff Regent will be held online on Tuesday June 13. **ALL STAFF EMPLOYEES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO VOTE FOR THIS IMPORTANT POSITION.** Computers will be available for voting purposes in Facilities Management to any employee without computer access, and will be manned by SC representatives to assist with any computer issues that may arise.

The forum for the staff to get information from the candidates for Staff Regent will be held on Monday, June 12 at 9:00 a.m. in MMTH Auditorium. **ALL STAFF EMPLOYEES ARE URGED TO ATEND.** The following guidelines will be used during the forum:

STAFF REGENT ELECTION FORUM GUIDELINES

- Introduction of candidates by the mediator.
- The candidates will each be given five minutes to introduce themselves and make an opening presentation. The order of these presentations will be determined by a number draw.
- After the opening presentations the floor will be opened for questions. Each candidate will have the opportunity to respond to each question. The order will continue sequentially in the order in which the presentations were made. Each candidate will have a maximum of one minute to answer the question, with a warning given at 45 seconds by a timekeeper.
- No rebuttals or interjections by candidates will be allowed.
- Each candidate will have three minutes to make his/her closing statement. The sequential order continues.
- NOTE: The mediator has authority over the conduct of the forum. Each candidate is expected to act in a professional manner.

The June SC retreat at the Glasgow campus was discussed. Dr. Betsy Shoenfelt will present the results of the Staff Survey at that time. Mr. Tony Glisson and Dr. Gene Tice will be attending a portion of the retreat also. Photos of the 2006-2007 Staff Council members will be taken at the retreat to be posted on the website, so staff will be able to recognize their representatives more easily.

Pat Jordan distributed information regarding the definition of an ombudsman, which include: receiving and investigating complaints, reports on findings and helps achieve just and equitable settlements; catalyst for institutional reform; institutional

troubleshooter working to prevent problems for arising; and confidential, neutral, conflict-resolver. She indicated that the University Senate is moving forward with a proposal to create a faculty ombudsman position and proposed that the Staff Council look into the possibility of having a staff ombudsman as well. The council decided to do some fact finding and discuss this proposal more fully at the retreat with the new council members.

Dr. Tice made a request of SC Chair, James McCaslin, that he be invited to more staff council meetings. James encouraged the incoming Staff Council to invite all the Vice Presidents to meetings throughout the year, as open communication between administration and staff is very valuable.

James McCaslin read a report from Elizabeth Paris, SC representative to the Budget Council, which states that the Part-Time Staff Employee Tuition Waiver has been reinstated in the upcoming budget.

Chester McNulty brought up the issue of staff who thought they were being hired on as full-time, permanent staff, who are in actuality being hired as temporary staff without benefits for several months. There is a great deal of confusion and possibly some misunderstanding of the current policy. Several SC members have been approached by staff who have been hired in this manner and have indicated that this practice is misleading, especially for jobs at the lower end of the pay scale. The SC requested that a clearly-defined policy be formed, so that incoming staff employees will know upfront what type of position they are being offered and if benefits are available immediately or at some predetermined future date.

Bursar Belinda Higginbotham spoke to the members regarding the Dependent Tuition Waiver Benefit. She indicated that it was possible in Banner for the Employee Dependent Tuition Waiver to be applied to the student's tuition bill first, with other WKU tuition scholarships being applied after that up to the amount of actual tuition. This would allow each employee to receive their benefit, but also disburse the limited amount of scholarship funds to the most eligible students as possible. Updating of this policy is in process and the policy will be released from Human Resources soon.

Tony Glisson offered a detailed explanation concerning the life insurance commission's refund issue as recently communicated to affected employees. After discussion of the facts and various factors that had to be considered, the Staff Council agreed that a fair and equitable solution was applied in implementing a one month "premium holiday" for optional life, spousal life, dependent life premium (May payrolls).

Tony Glisson asked the SC for their input regarding the Employee Recognition program at WKU, both at retirement and throughout the employee's term at WKU. Information about when a person would be come eligible for retirement was disbursed and discussed. Ann Potter questioned if part-time employees would be included in this recognition

program with the result that eligible part-time employees will be included. The SC members unanimously endorsed an employee recognition program at WKU.

Patty Booth gave a Parking and Transportation update. She reported that attendance was approximately 260 people at the forums. After considering input from the forums, a parking proposal was sent from the Parking and Transportation committee to the Administrative Council, but no decision had been made as of that day.

The Staff Council wants to hear from you. Do you have a question, concern, or comment? You can now e-mail the Staff Council: StaffCouncil@wku.edu

The Staff Council Minutes, Constitution, and By-Laws are posted on the Staff Council web page at: <http://www.wku.edu/staffcouncil>