

PRESENT: Terri Benton, S.G. Carthell, Laura Dziekonski, Orville Herndon, Wade Herndon, Lana Jennings, Margie Miller, Chuck Plummer, Debbie Plummer, Jordan Smith, Stephanie Totty, Becky Wilder, Shari Wilkins, Lisa Willis, Gina Winchester, Janeen Winters, and John Young. Guests: Jody Cofer, Safe Zone; Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources; Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff; and Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President for Student Affairs.

CALL TO ORDER: Staff Congress President Gina Winchester called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL GUESTS:

Jody Cofer spoke about the Safe Zone sticker program which is a collaboration between the university administration and the Gay Straight Alliance student group. Employees may voluntarily display Safe Zone stickers in their work areas to indicate students may approach them with concerns. In the future, a training program regarding resources for those displaying Safe Zone stickers may be offered. Dr. Dunn, Dr. Robinson, and Dr. Higginson support the program. Questions followed. Stickers can be requested by emailing Jody. Jody noted that public forums on diversity will be held on campus in February.

Dr. Don Robertson, Vice President for Student Affairs, expressed appreciation for the time and effort Staff Congress members contributed to the Children's Christmas party. He thanked Staff Congress for offering the event to the entire university community.

Dr. Robertson reported on current recruitment efforts and graduation rates. He told of the progress of MSU student Archana Gambiraopet who is recovering from a car accident which claimed the life of her twin sister. He thanked staff for the contributions made to her and her family. He conveyed appreciation from the students' father for the support received from the MSU community.

Dr. Robertson said students feel welcomed and valued because of staff members' efforts.

Josh Jacobs, Chief of Staff, expressed thanks from the President's Office to Staff Congress for representing staff. At its meeting on December 10, the Board of Regents will be discussing some changes to board policy and the Faculty Handbook. The intent is to synchronize the various employee policies and manuals.

Josh reported on the Hold thy Banner High campaign, which is well supported by faculty and staff, and student retention. Questions followed regarding policy changes to be addressed at the upcoming Board of Regents meeting.

Tom Hoffacker, Director of Human Resources, explained that loans will take the place of supplemental payroll for missed timesheet submissions. He explained the starting pay policy for persons being hired from outside the university. He said job description revisions are in progress and will be posted on the web. New medical plan cards will be issued for 2011. Questions followed.

Staff Congress member Margie Miller said Building Service Technicians have to sort through trash to facilitate recycling. The employees are not removing food for personal use. Laura Dziekonski and others commented that employees should not have to sort through trash. Separate bins should be provided. Josh Jacobs answered questions regarding recycling on campus. He recommended having someone speak to Staff Congress about campus recycling.

Staff Regent Report: On behalf of Phil Schooley, who was unable to attend today's meeting, Gina Winchester distributed the agenda for the December 10 Board of Regent meeting which is open to the public. It will be streamed live for viewing over the web. Gina suggested Staff Congress make a contribution to the student injured in the car wreck. She passed around cards for members to sign for Dr. Ronda Dunn, who will be having surgery next week, and for Phil.

Gina reported on the progress of the Staff Survey. The report will be presented to the Board of Regents and university administrators when compiled. She asked Staff Congress members to inform constituents that the survey information is passed on to the administrators. Some ideas from last year's survey have come to fruition. Staff can still make comments through the Staff Congress phone number or email. Phil Schooley has personally invited the Board of Regents members to attend the Staff Reception on December 9. University administrators have been invited as well.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES: Laura Dziekonski made a motion to approve the November minutes as presented. Jordan Smith seconded, and the motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Laura Dziekonski presented the November Treasurer's Report. Tom Denton's department will provide food for the Staff Reception. The Food Services Department provided refreshments for the Children's Christmas Party. Lana Jennings made a motion to approve the November Treasurer's Report as presented. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee: Gina Winchester thanked Janeen Winters, the Special Events Committee, and all Staff Congress members who helped with the Children's Christmas party. S.G. Carhell added that members of the support club for single parents enjoyed the event and look forward to the party each year. Children's Christmas party items will be sent to Breathitt for the party there.

Gina said the Executive Committee, along with Working Conditions Committee Chair Jerry O'Bryan and Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee Vice-Chair Debbie Plummer, met with Dr. Dunn and faculty representatives on December 2. She reported on the meeting.

The Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee will meet again in January. Regarding staff-wide drug testing, Gina said Dr. Dunn does not disapprove such a policy but notes the policy would require money to implement. Discussion and questions followed. The committee is discussing the possibility of shift differentials, educational incentives, and longevity incentives.

Gina noted that at the Executive Committee meeting, Phil Schooley introduced the topic of eligibility determination for the use of tuition waivers by employee dependents. A specific question involves allowing children of staff to use the waivers even if the staff member does not claim the children as dependents on his taxes. The committee is looking at information from Human Resources on this issue.

Gina said the Faculty Senate will be drafting a resolution regarding expectations for a pay raise this year. She suggested that Staff Congress may want to consider asking for a cost of living increase.

Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee: No Report.

Credentials and Elections Committee: At the January Staff Congress meeting, Orville Herndon will discuss online voting for Staff Congress elections.

Staff Recognition Committee: No report.

Staff Special Events Committee: Janeen Winters reported on the Children's Christmas party. She thanked the Special Events Committee and Staff Congress members who helped with the event. The party will be featured on the *Roundabout U* program. She will be sending thank you notes to the person who dressed as Santa and to the organizations who donated items for the party.

Communications Committee: Laura Dziekonski said the next newsletter will be published in the spring semester. She welcomes suggestions for the newsletter.

Working Conditions Committee: No report.

Staff Congress Foundation Book Scholarship Committee: Debbie Plummer said payroll deduction forms to contribute to the scholarship will be available at the December 9 Staff Reception. Scholarship applications and guidelines will also be available.

AD-HOC COMMITTEES

Staff Congress Handbook Review Committee: No report.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMMITTEES:

Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee: No report.

Intercollegiate Athletic Council: No report.

Naming Campus Facilities: No report.

Judicial Board: No report.

Sick Leave Appeals Committee: No report.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Lana Jennings said some staff have expressed concern with the Sick Leave Policy because sick leave days cannot be used for bed rest during pregnancy. Affected staff must either lose pay for those days or use personal days. Gina Winchester referred the topic to the Personnel Policies and Benefits Committee. Discussion and questions followed. Orville Herndon asked that these concerns be emailed to him so the Faculty and Staff Insurance and Benefits Committee can be informed of them.

ADJOURNMENT: Orville Herndon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Debbie Plummer seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.