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Staff Council Minutes

Staff Council

10-15-2009

The Minutes of the Marshall University Staff Council Meeting, October 2009

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Marshall University Classified Staff Council
October 15, 2009, John Spotts Room (MSC 2E37)

Members Present: Nina Barrett, Amber Bentley, Johnny Bradley, Tootie Carter, Betty Cook, Mike Dunn, Toni Ferguson, Ronnie Hicks, Carol Hurula, Diana Lewis, William Lewis, Leonard Lovely, Jan Parker, Kris Standifur, Joe Wortham

Members Absent: Barbara Black, Virgil Crockett, Brenda Flemings, Annalisha Johnson, Darrell Kendrick, Okey Napier, Lu Ann South, Mary Waller

Guests: Mr. Bill Bissett, Mr. Bill Burdette, Ms. Michelle Douglas, Dr. Stephen Kopp, Delegate Doug Reynolds, Mr. Jim Stephens

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Chair Nina Barrett.

Dr. Stephen Kopp:

The President discussed items from the day's Board of Governors meeting:

- An announcement will be made in the near future concerning naming the Henderson Center's renovated men's and women's basketball locker rooms. A donor pledged half a million dollars for the renovation; full cost of renovation is 1.5 million. The construction and renovation costs were underwritten by the MU Foundation. The President believes this improvement will be helpful in Marshall's recruitment of both male and female student athletes to play basketball.
- The Board asked the President to present a concept for an applied engineering complex. The proposed facility would house all of the College of Information Technology and several departments/divisions such as Mathematics, and the Research Corporation. In addition to Civil Engineering which is already in place, other areas of emphasis, such as Chemical and Mechanical Engineering may be added. The President asked the Board to consider adding Bio-Engineering to the program. Estimated cost of the facility: \$50 million. The University has a commitment from the state for a future bond issue and a federal grant is currently in place. The University will probably have to raise \$5-\$10 million to build this facility.
- The President was pleased with the Retention Plan presentation. He encouraged classified staff members to invite John Yaun (Residence Services) and Provost Ormiston to present the Retention Plan at a Staff Council meeting.

Dr. Kopp opened the floor to questions:

Ohio University had a booth at Rib Fest, does the University have booths at similar events? The University has had booths/tables at various fairs and local events in the past; it has not proven to be productive or cost efficient in the recruiting process.

Is the STEM Academy going to be an "in house" thing? Will it be moved to the new building? Will the students pay tuition? The administration has not worked out all the details for the STEM Academy; several models are being reviewed. The President would like it set up so students do not have to pay tuition. Support of the legislature is needed concerning funding. If this funding is not received, a strong endowment commitment is necessary. The President would like to see this project as a public and not a private academy. A tentative timeframe for the STEM Academy to be in place and operational is 2-3 years.

Doug Reynolds – WV House of Delegates

Delegate Reynolds introduced himself to Council. He represents the 16th district and serves on the House of Delegates Finance, Banking & Insurance, and Pensions and Retirement Committees. He opened the floor to questions:

Delegate Reynolds offered to answer the questions which were prepared for Speaker Thompson. A copy of those questions is on file in the Staff Council Office.

The Higher Education personnel system was formed in 1994 and has had little to no maintenance or updates. That is why higher education classified employees statewide have put a lot of time and hope into the 603 Studies and the current Select Committee on Personnel; could you give us your thoughts on this and your ideas on possible legislation that could come from it?

Delegate Reynolds expressed his frustrations concerning funding for the University and the failure to fund the 2001 salary schedule. He suggested a few “tweaks” to current policies/procedures including:

- Changing the Promise Scholarship – providing a cap. Marshall currently provides a 95% scholarship; WVU has 80%. The money from the cap could be used in other areas.
- The past session was his most difficult due to fewer dollars to work with. There was very little room to do things he/they wanted to do.
- He would like to see a Board of Governors that is more inclusive. He does not know the Governor’s position on this. He said if we knew the Governor’s position on this change, it would be easier to get the bill through the House.
- Every year there is a bill introduced to permit higher education employees to run for the Legislature. There does not seem to be a rush to get this bill through the Legislature. He believes it would require a Constitutional amendment that would go before the voters.
- The cost of insurance in light of no or small pay raises is a concern. True wages are lower once insurance costs have been taken out. The Legislature battles with this issue. Delegate Reynolds is open to any suggestions which will help with this issue.

Mr. Reynolds opened the floor to questions:

What body will be doing the review of SB 603? Delegate Reynolds said he believes both.

If we have concerns with this bill, we should address them to our local representatives? Delegate Reynolds said he believes it should be addressed not only to the body it is before but also to the department/division/area it represents (i.e. HEPC, Public Service Commission, etc.).

Do you think the cost of having a statewide election to change the Constitution would be one thing that holds back the legislation for higher education employees to serve in the Legislature? Delegate Reynolds said the issue could be put on an extra election ballot or a special election could be held.

Is there going to be a special session next month and is it having to do with the so-called Huntington Plan? Delegate Reynolds said right now there is not.

Concerning funding for the 2001 Salary Schedule; are you aware of how bad it is here? . . . Of the thousands of employees who are underfunded 600+ are on the Marshall campus. . . . We just learned that WVU is providing employees with a 5% raise and they are already fully funded . . . We are going downhill and no one is helping us. Delegate Reynolds acknowledged that he does not have the information before him that the questioner does. He expressed his frustrations and his dissatisfaction with the funding status quo. He also said the House is doing everything they can to change that but they

have to work with what they have: the Board of Governors, the Legislature, etc. He said there are only so many dollars going to higher education and then there is the division of those dollars.

How do state finances look this year? Although projections for next year were terrible, revenue seems to be coming in better than expected.

Delegate Reynolds expressed his willingness to meet with Council in the future. He told members to contact him anytime there is a question or concern on an issue.

Mr. Jim Stephens – Human Resources

Mr. Stephens discussed:

- The Board of Governors approved revisions to Policy G9 – Inclement Weather Closing Policy. The change indicates that if the University has inclement weather emergency closing, employees who are required to come to work (i.e. grounds crew), will receive an equivalent amount of time off at a later date. If there is a day the University is declared closed due to inclement weather, anyone working beyond a normal work day (7.5 hours) would receive what is declared for the institution.
- The HR Office is regularly contacted by benefits vendors. The office recently received information about long term care insurance (which is different from long term disability insurance). This type of insurance helps alleviate some of the cost of long-term care for one's self, a spouse, child, parent or other individual. This is an employee-paid product. If there is interest in this product Mr. Stephens will ask that the University run a request for proposal for this product.
- The Catastrophic Leave totals for the end of August were: 389.73 days in the General Bank. Contributions for June, July and August were 24.33 days.
- The question of a Staff Council representative on the Safety Committee was again raised. Ronnie Hicks agreed to fill the slot.

What can we do if we do not agree with the Board of Governors Inclement Weather Closing Policy? Council can make a recommendation for a change in the final product.

Is mandatory time (period of time during which annual leave cannot be taken) up to the supervisor? (This question refers to Residence Services) This can be done at the discretion of the director and with approval of Dr. Kirtley.

Does the Board of Governors still have their Policy Committee?

Is it possible to determine how many classified staff members are in each pay grade? Mr. Stephens said he could provide the information; he will get back to Council with the totals.

If someone has an application on file, can they call HR to have the application pulled for a specific position? Mr. Stephens said the individual should come in and fill out one of the blue tickets on the front counter or send an e-mail message instructing the office to do so.

Approval of Minutes:

The September 17th minutes were approved with a correction.

ACCE Report – Mike Dunn

- Mike sent out the ACCE report to Council members by e-mail
- He is meeting with consultants for the personnel study tomorrow. The consultants will meet with the Community and Technical College presidents next week.
- Mike was unable to attend the legislative interims

Board of Governors Report – Mike Dunn

- Michael Perry was named Emeritus Board Member
- Mike had a handout from the Retention Plan presentation. It will be copied and sent to all Council members. A copy of this plan is on file in the Staff Council Office.
- Deloitte & Touche's audit report was very favorable to the University. The report seemed to be complete.
- The Board passed a directive to remove all references of MCTC from Board policies, approved the Inclement Weather Closing Policy and the policy of tuition and fees which charges late fees.
- The Board hopes to have some in-house training on campus for new Board members in November.
- The next Board meeting is December 15, 2009.

Staff Council Committees

- **Election/Communications Committee** - Joe Wortham – No report
- **Legislative Committee** - Mike Dunn & Carol Hurula (Co-Chairs) – The committee met on October 1, 2009 and discussed:
 - personnel studies and a recommendation of support,
 - questions for Speaker Thompson's visit (questions are on file in the Staff Council Office),
 - faculty's Town Hall meeting on November 3,
 - possibility of a joint or "same as" recommendation concerning a PEIA premiums moratorium. (A copy of the recommendation is on file in the Staff Council Office.) Mike made a recommendation which was seconded by Leonard Lovely, that Council approve the recommendation requesting a 2-year moratorium on PEIA fees for faculty, staff and retirees. Bernice Bullock mentioned that the recommendation had been changed to remove the words "Board of Governors" because the President is unable to speak for the Board. Bernice made a motion to amend and Leonard seconded. The motion passed.
- **Personnel/Finance Committee** - Lu Ann South- No Report
- **Physical Environment Committee** –Bill Lewis- The committee met on October 7, 2009 and:
 - reviewed the snow removal recommendation (not sure if it has been approved by Council),
 - discussed meeting with Dale Osburn, Jim Terry and Brian Carrico,
 - invited Margie Phillips (Campus Recycling project) to the next committee meeting,
 - discussed security in Drinko Library and Student Center, especially since both facilities are open 24 hours/day. Committee members would like to see MUPD more visible in these areas,
 - discussed returning the Student Health Center to campus.
 - Charlene was asked to contact Dr. Karen Kirtley for a list of ongoing projects on campus. This list will be sent to members of the Physical Environment Committee.
- **Staff Development/Service Committee** - Amber Bentley – The committee met to discuss tuition waivers. Dr. Donna Spindel, Dean of the Graduate College, and Kathy Bialk, Director of Financial Aid attended. The current tuition waiver guidelines list various areas (i.e. Research Corporation, etc) where employees are eligible for waivers. The committee decided to change the wording to "Marshall University employees". In order to be eligible for a tuition waiver, an employee must be on the Marshall University payroll. E-course waivers will have a different designation and will be available for faculty and staff and for graduate and undergraduate courses at the direction of Dr. Jan Fox who provides these waivers. The guidelines concerning academic progress which are already in place in Financial Aid will be used by the Educational Benefits Committee when awarding waivers. The committee will also be able to publish application deadlines well in advance by using the deadlines available in Financial Aid.

Announcements – Nina Barrett

Speaker Thompson was unable to attend the October 8 special meeting. His visit has been rescheduled for Tuesday, December 1 at 1:30 p.m. in the Alumni Lounge (MSC 2W16).

New Business

After some discussion concerning speakers for the November meeting; Nina asked Mike Dunn to extend an invitation to Board of Governors member John Hess for Council's November meeting.

There being no more business, the meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Minutes taken & prepared by: _____
Charlene R. Hawkins, Program Assistant, Staff Council

Minutes approved by: _____
Nina Barrett, Chair, Staff Council

Minutes read by: _____
Stephen J. Kopp, University President