

**Mississippi State University  
Staff Council**

September 12, 2012

10:30 a.m.

**Present:** Amy Burchfield, Ann Carr, Allen Cooperwood, Mary Dikes, Sherry Fisackerly, Kenneth Graves, Lisa Hearn, Sharon Hewlett, Debbie Huffman, Jane Lewis, Sam Manning, Calvin Mosley, Jessica Northcutt, Natalie ray, Toni Roberson, Cade Smith, Faye Smith, Bekah Sparks, Lyle Tate, Angela Waller, Adrienne Washington, Casey Finch.

**Absent:** Patricia Cox, Penny French, Mandy Netadj, Linda Perry-Babcock.

**GUEST SPEAKER** – Chair C. Smith introduced Dr. Mark Keenum. Dr. Keenum began by discussing the difficult financial problems the University has faced because of the economic crisis and his commitment to the employees of MSU during those times. He talked about going through the recession in the mid 1980s and seeing the devastation to employees, and said he was going to try to be sure that didn't happen again during this crisis. He cautioned that we are still in tough times, and that the University still faces many financial challenges. He pointed out that we have taken a cut each year that he has been here. The cumulative cuts total 17%. This year the PERS contribution increased, but those expenses were not covered for the Universities. That is about a 2% for the University. Also, the state did not pass a bond bill for the Universities this year. We use that money for repairs and renovations to campus facilities, so we can't do many needed projects without that funding. The cuts have been absorbed because we have had enrollment grow and tuition has increased moderately. The plan for this year is to ask the state for a 12% increase for the IHL system from the State. Dr. Keenum does not expect to get that much because the state is still operating in a low revenue environment. He commented that the legislators tend to cut IHL instead of other education because they feel that we can raise tuition to cover it. We don't want to do that, but our tuition is still relatively low. Enrollment did not increase this year (still approx. 20,400). It is a little disappointing, but will help us catch up with faculty/student ratios. He will announce the 5 yr strategic plan for the University this afternoon. It will be available on the University website. Dr. Keenum also mentioned that a consultant (Hayes Associates) had come in to work with HR on staff compensation structure. As a result, we discovered about 5% of our employees were below the minimum recommended. Administration has worked to provide resources to fund the jobs, so they will be brought up to minimum.

Sam Manning asked if merit-based budgeting would change our budgeting opportunities, if adopted. Dr. Keeum said it would not, because IHL is budgeted together, and is allocated the same way every year. There is an initiative to make the allocation more fair, but there are no easy answers.

Dr. Keenum thanked the Council for the work it does, and said he appreciated the opportunity to come and speak.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the August 8, 2012 meeting were approved as submitted.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cade Smith presented the financial report and reminded the committee that the format has been changed in order to give the Committee better information. Sam Manning asked about whether the procard approval issue had been resolved. Cade indicated that a form was being processed that would take care of the problem. The report was approved as submitted.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Cade Smith reviewed the Executive Council minutes included in the agenda packet. He gave an overview of his meetings with the Master Planning, IT Council, Presidents of Student Association and Faculty Senate and Game Day Committees, as well as President Keenum. Questions were asked about the Southern Tradition Tailgating vendor that sets up tents for groups for a fee. Cade said the Committee has ensured that they follow University policies and get no preferential treatment. Cade introduced Julie Rester from Human Resources as Judy Spencer's representative.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Athletics Council – Bekah Sparks gave a report of the meeting on August 29. Discussions included explanation of the definition of a booster and how the Athletics Academic Progress Rate (APR) is figured.

President's Commission on the Status of Minorities – Antionette Roberson reported that the Commission is working to co-sponsor a project with the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

Information Security Committee – Amy Burchfield gave a report of the meeting on September 12. Topics of discussion included required VPN use for employees for remote access to Banner, Clean DNS (Domain Name System), Cybersecurity Awareness Week, updating the University's Disaster Recovery Plan, and updating the University's Information Security Program.

Financial Aid Appeals Committee – Lisa Hearn said the committee has reviewed 147 appeals. The Committee has met two times, on August 14 and August 17.

## **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Events – Natalie Ray reported that, after numerous issues, the committee had settled on a maroon and white jacket from Geiger for the homecoming jacket sale. The Council will buy the jackets for \$21 each. Larger sizes will be \$2 more. The jackets will be sold for \$25 each.

Policies & Procedures- Calvin Mosley gave a report of the committee's first meeting and reviewed the minutes in the agenda packet. The committee got a clear understanding of what they are responsible for, and compiled a list of possible issues to be considered in the coming year.

Communications –Bekah Sparks gave an update on the newsletter. Because of ITS concerns over storage space, the newsletter will contain a link to the Staff Council website instead of being a graphics enabled newsletter contained in an e-mail. The newsletter will go out the third Wednesday of each month. The first one will be issued on September 19.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- HRM Benefits Fair – one volunteer is still needed. HR representative Julie Rester thanked the Council for their help with this. She asked Council members to encourage people in their departments to come and take advantage of the fair.
- Dr. Bohach as potential guest on December 12, 2012

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- September 30, 2012 is Staff Appreciation Day for the Volleyball game against Florida. Game is at 12:30. There is no admission fee to volleyball, so the idea is just to draw a big crowd.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Burchfield, Recording Secretary  
September 12, 2012