

**Mississippi State University
Staff Council**

October 10, 2012

10:30 a.m.

Present: Amy Burchfield, Ann Carr, Patricia Cox, Mary Dikes, Penny French, Kenneth Graves, Lisa Hearn, Jane Lewis, Sam Manning, Marc Measells, Calvin Mosley, Linda Perry-Babcock, Natalie Ray, Cade Smith, Faye Smith, Rebekah Sparks, Lyle Tate, Casey Finch

Absent: Allen Cooperwood, Sherry Fisackerly, Sharon Hewlett, Debbie Huffman, Mandy Netadj, Jessica Northcutt, Toni Roberson, Angela Waller, Adrienne Washington

GUEST SPEAKERS –

Dr. Bill Kibler, Vice President for Student Affairs, addressed the Council on the proposed tobacco use policy. He began by stating that the original policy was adopted in mid '80s, and has been revised several times since. The last time was in 2006., when it was expanded to be a tobacco use policy, not just a smoking policy. The proposed policy still contains much of what that policy did, though it might have been expanded or changed somewhat. A committee of a dozen people representing groups across campus had input. Input was also sought through surveys of groups and other tools. This is Staff Council's opportunity to give feedback on the policy as an entity representing staff on campus. The committee would like to get the feedback before the fall semester ends. Dr. Kibler presented an overview of the proposed policy, which includes prohibition of all tobacco use. He pointed out that the policy is a result of consultation with other universities that have implemented policies. MSU has decided not to do smoking zones because they are not perceived effective. Instead, the idea is to use that period to focus communication and education of people that the policy is going to be implemented in the near future. The goal is a commitment for culture change.

Staff Council member Mary Dikes asked about enforcement of the policy outside the R & E Centers. Dr. Kibler said there will be a designated spot until August, after that, no tobacco use will be allowed.. Council member Natalie Ray asked about policing visitors on campus (at games and such). Dr. Kibler said it would be via communications through signage and friendly reminders. There is not much of a way to enforce if they willfully ignore the policy. Council president Cade Smith asked about the paternalistic tone of the policy, and how it could be seen as trying to force people to live a healthier lifestyle. Dr. Kibler said that had been discussed, and that several of our policies have those elements, but this policy is also driven by other things like litter issues and second hand smoke issues. Council member Faye Smith asked if attendance at University events would suffer because of the policy. Dr. Kibler said that has not happened at other universities.

Dr. Steve Taylor, Exec Director for Distance Education, addressed distance education fees for employees. Dr. Taylor began by saying that the model for distance education has changed dramatically over the last few months. The old model was self-funded. Under the new model, the department does not have any of the money. The fees do not benefit Distance Education at all. Fees have never been part of the tuition remission for employees. That is spelled out in the policy on the HRM website. The policy has not changed. Distance fees are disclosed on the Controller's website. They vary by class.

There may have been changes by certain colleges such as the college of business, but the fees policy has not changed over all. Pricing studies are conducted to determine fair pricing. Council president Cade Smith pointed out that the changes in some fees and the shift to more online classes has effectively changed the benefits package. Dr. Taylor said the policy is being looked at carefully, but it's an increase in cost, not a decrease in benefits. High demand will probably cause that to continue. The Provost does not want traditional classes to be offered exclusively online, and does not want departments to look at that as a way to make money. The Provost will investigate if cases are pointed out. The \$75 instructional support fee goes toward use for just distance education for things like software and training for instructors on how to teach classes online. Decreased state support has necessitated fees like this.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the September 12, 2012 meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Approved as submitted.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- **Master planning**
- **IT Council**
- **Meeting with Student Association and Faculty Senate President**
- **Game Day**
- **Miscellaneous**
- **Executive Council**

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Athletics Committee – Main issues are trash after games and ticket resellers. The Athletics department would like to create a zone for reselling tickets. There was discussion of a Game Day App. A report was given on drug testing on student athletes. Each athlete is tested at least once a year in addition to NCAA testing. The 2013 football schedule will be released soon.

Calendar Committee.. – Discussion of fall break flexibility so as to match up to Thursday night games.

Community Engagement – A new game plan for the committee was adopted that included five committee priorities.

Employee Benefits – Lots of changes to benefits will occur in January 213. Dental will be less expensive. The mediflex cap is reduced \$2500, and direct deposit will be required.. There is a new pharmacy for online orders. Human Resources desires a policy that would make insurance deductions automatically pre-tax. Employees would have to write a letter to change it.

Work-life- Information gathering about child care leave and domestic couples benefits.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Events – Natalie Ray reported that jacket sales are set for next week. The volunteer list has been sent out.

Policies and Procedures – Calvin Mosley reported that the committee had narrowed its focus to the four topics of (1) Supervisor Evaluations (2) Medical Leave Forms (3) Additional fees for Distance Learning, and (4) Tuition Remission. Council members were each assigned a topic to research and report back.

Communications – Bekah Sparks gave an update on the newsletter. She reported to the Council that we cannot use our current logo or the one that is on our shirts. We need to choose a new one.

OLD BUSINESS

Volunteer sign up list for jacket sales has been sent out. Casey will do another e-mail reminder. Casey will also send out an e-mail remind campus-wide about the sale.

NEW BUSINESS

Tobacco Use policy- Patricia Cox made a motion to approve, and Lisa Hearn seconded. Sam Manning commented about students in the dorms who would walk to other locations to smoke. Would the university be liable if there was an accident? Some on the Council think it might be a good idea to allow electronic cigarettes.

Council will approve the policy and ask for an allowance for electronic devices, and express concern about students walking to other locations to smoke.

Distance Fees – Policies and Procedures committee will draft a response to Dr. Gilbert and Dr Keenum expressing the concerns of the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Burchfield, Recording Secretary
October 10, 2012