

Staff Senate – November 18, 2009 EB 102

Present: Dona Baker, Veronica Belser, Michael Carter, Jamie Clay, Kim Fuller, Anthony Holden, Barbara Lucius, Vonda Maclin, Jan Perkins, Ray Pinner, Erin Reid, Dexter Satcher, Jackie Siniard, Libby Stanfield, Debbie Stowers, Lisa Strickland, Jan Williamson, Mary Beth Walker

Proxies: Erin Reid for Marty Green, Anthony Holden for Ravi Seth, Lisa Strickland for David Kyle

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 by President-Elect Anthony Holden.

The minutes of the October meeting had one correction: it should read that the ex-President of India will be on campus on October 28 rather than November 20.

Old Business: Dexter Satcher reported that the new smoking policy had been implemented but that signage had not been placed at all buildings due to lack of funds.

Drug Testing: no new information.

Business Administration Building back ramp flooding: Jan Perkins took photos and Anthony forwarded those to Delois Smith and Mike Finnegan. Mike said he would look into it. It was felt that the problem was due to the way the building was constructed. Automatic doors, new entrances, etc. are in the works to make the campus more accessible for students with disabilities. Mike also talked to Gail Seemann, the new Students with Disabilities Coordinator.

Lynn Bell had no staff response to the FISH seminar being offered through HR.

Ray Pinner reported that the new Barnes and Noble Bookstore on campus is now open. Open House is tomorrow and Friday. Today is faculty/staff appreciation day with 20% off on selected items. Barnes and Noble plan to expand their clothing and souvenir items. The question was raised if the new bookstore will be free standing. Ray reported that it is due to become part of the larger residence hall and food court area. Barnes and Noble will offer electronic textbooks at a lower cost to students than hard copy books. The new bookstore will provide individualized shirts with a specific logo for individual areas or as few as one person.

The new residence hall is on schedule.

Wilson Hall is due to reopen in January.

Expanded Executive Council Meeting: Anthony reported that sponsored meetings on campus must be educational in nature and of interest and open to the community.

April Harris is the new professional events coordinator. We are being more selective in our target audience for outside groups. University mailing lists are out of date and April's area is working to getting contacts at companies.

It was suggested that outside groups who meet on campus be encouraged to park in the intermodal facility and we provide shuttle service to the University Center. There is often no parking available at the UC for students visiting the Wellness Center or visitors to campus. It was reported that a shuttle was used on Monday when General Myles visited campus. It was suggested that April Harris be invited to the next Staff Senate meeting.

Committee Reports: Bylaws: Jamie Clay reported that there are two items in the bylaws that may need to be updated. She will send those to the rest of the committee and report at the next meeting.

Election: Jan Perkins reported that she needs the paper ballots for elections prior to the last election in order to fill positions on the Senate of members who have left the university.

Communications: Kim Fuller reported that the committee is working on a list of staff by zone so that certain staff members could email those in their zone in order to make communication more personal.

Last month's minutes will go to the IT staff showing that the Senate approved the web redesign proposal.

Benefits: Debbie Stowers said the committee is looking into the insurance plus one option for employee and spouse. Blue Cross/Blue Shield said it could possibly raise premiums for the individual and family plan options. Debbie hopes to have more information for the next meeting. However, the wellness options such as smoking cessation could decrease premiums.

Staff members who wish to take classes related to their jobs or to earn a degree which UAH doesn't offer have asked about tuition reimbursement if they take classes at other universities. Similarly, the question was raised about staff and dependent discounts at UA and UAB. These possibilities will be looked into.

Lisa Strickland reported that Continuing Education offers courses at half price for UAH faculty and staff. If classes don't fill, it may be possible to offer an even greater discount. We may need to do a better job of advertising and marketing these classes within the UAH community.

Louise O'Keefe is appreciative for any publicity and marketing of the Faculty/Staff clinic. More employees need to be aware and take advantage of the services Louise provides. The Student Wellness Center also needs to be promoted. Some students don't even know it is available.

Employment Development: No report.

Governmental Relations: Jan Williamson reported that the committee is working on the Zip + 4 for all employees so we know who our state representatives are. The committee will meet with SGA and the Faculty Senate in December.

The question was raised if it is okay to use the 824-number and UAH email to contact our representatives in Montgomery. It was suggested that we use home phone numbers and email addresses as individual citizens.

Policies and Procedures: Erin Reid reported that the name change alias for UAH email was being looked at.

A review of other universities and their job security policies as compared to actual practices have begun. It was suggested the committee also look at K-12 policies. The committee is also reviewing the Staff Handbook to see if there is information regarding employee layoff procedures.

Staff Picnic/Christmas Party: Vonda Maclin reported that the next Staff Senate meeting in December will be a Christmas party. Four venues were offered: the lounge in Shelby Center 301, Frank Franz lounge, VBRH M-50, and the Engineering Building Study Room. The Shelby Center lounge was the first choice, followed by the Frank Franz lounge if the SC was not available. The Senate was asked to bring donations for the Angel Tree and to wear Christmas colors. Ideas for Ice Breaker games were asked for, and a sign-up sheet for food was passed around.

Swap and Share: No report.

New Business: Anthony received an email asking if pay raises were planned. Ray Pinner reported that they were not at present. It was pointed out that K-12 gets a cost of living increase, but higher education stands alone and generates more of its own revenue. Ray also reported that the stimulus funding has disappeared. PEEHIP, retirement funds, and PACT are all in trouble.

Anthony reported that the Exponent was invited to today's meeting, but tomorrow is the last issue for fall semester. Someone will come to one of the spring meetings. Anthony reported that one of the writers may randomly contact some of us about what Staff Senate does.

Announcements: There are a lot of sporting events since winter sports are now under way as well.

Question was raised whom to contact after hours if we have problems with facilities. Facilities and operations have someone on call twenty-fours for emergencies.

Vanessa Ennis is the new energy person on campus.

Open enrollment for insurances, flexible spending, etc ends on November 30.

The question was raised if we could have an educational fund whereby employees could contribute and let money grow interest to use for tuition if a student wanted to take three classes a semester, lab fees, books, etc. It was suggested that since employees can take two classes per semester for a total of six per year and receive tuition assistance, it would not be a good idea. Taking more than two classes a semester could cause productivity to suffer.

The idea of scholarships for staff to pay for books, lab fees, etc. was suggested as a possibility.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00