

Staff Senate – February 24, 2010

SKH 301

Present: Dona Baker, Veronica Belser, Jamie Clay, Kim Fuller, Anthony Holden, David Kyle, Vonda Maclin, Erin Reed, Dexter Satcher, Ravi Seth, Libby Stanfield, Debbie Stowers

Proxies: Dona Baker for Angelia Heulett and Jackie Siniard, Anthony Holden for Michael Carter, David Kyle for Marty Green and Lisa Strickland

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

Proxies were announced. The minutes from the January meeting were approved with one addition. Anthony Holden served as proxy for Vonda Maclin.

Vanessa Ennis began her job as the new Energy Manager on campus in November. Vanessa reported that utility expenses at UAHuntsville last year were \$5.2 million, including \$3.8 million in electrical costs. Studies indicate that we can save ten percent by cutting off lights in restrooms and offices when they are unoccupied, turning computers and printers off at night, etc. Many offices are already stressing that the last person to leave a room should turn off the lights. Vanessa distributed her business cards, in addition to cards with phone number and email information to place work orders for temperature problems in buildings. Some offices will consistently be too hot or too cold, etc. Vanessa stated that the problem might be that equipment needs repair, or the building is being used in ways for which it was not designed, etc. Requests are logged, and repeat issues are attended to until the problem is fixed. Vanessa said not to feel that we are bothering them with repeated requests for the same problem. Vanessa said she is willing to come speak to individual areas to provide information on what their office does, answer questions, etc.

Vanessa said she may be contacted for “Green” questions. Some companies and governmental offices have a competition to earn a “Green Office” certificate. If everyone participates, offices can earn prizes and be awarded levels of “Green Office.” One senator said that some students ask if UAHuntsville has earned a “Green University” status. Bins for recycling cans are in campus buildings. However, the cost for recycling plastic was getting cost prohibitive. Vanessa said that buildings that want plastic recycling bins may request them.

Executive Committee Update:

Jackie Siniard received a card from the Staff Senate at the University of Louisville offering their condolences after the recent campus shootings. The card was passed around for Senators to read.

A Get Well card for Stephanie Monticciolo was passed around for Senators to sign. Senators who missed the meeting can contact Anthony and he will make arrangements to meet with them to sign the card.

The Expanded Executive Council meeting on January 27, 2010 as well as today’s meeting have both been cancelled.

A joint meeting with the Faculty Senate is still being planned. Anthony and Jackie are working with Dr. Letha Etzkorn, who is the Faculty Senate President.

Anthony reported that we recently lost two members of the Staff Senate. Barbara Lucius who represented Academic Affairs had to resign due to time constraints, and Jan Williamson who represented University Advancement/President’s Office is no longer with the university.

Committee Reports:

The Bylaws committee presented three bills which were written and read by Anthony Holden. Anthony asked for a motion that we dispense with the statement calling for “two official readings of a proposed change, during two consecutive meetings, preceding a vote to amend the bylaws” this one time only so that we may vote at next month’s meeting. Veronica Belser made the motion.

The first bill called for Establishing an Attendance Policy for Staff Senate. Currently there is no attendance policy in the bylaws. The bill defines an “**excused** absence as an absence in which a Staff Senator designates and sends a proxy to the Staff Senate meeting.” The bill defines an “**unexcused** absence as an absence in which a Senator fails to designate and send a proxy to the Staff Senate meeting.” The statement “No Staff Senator shall incur more than three (3) unexcused absences in a given calendar year” was added. The Senate felt that three absences was an appropriate number.

The second bill called for Clarifying and Resignation and Replacement of Staff Senators. The current bylaws allows different methods for filling vacancies based on the type of vacancy, and a uniform method for finding replacements is desired. Currently a **Divisional vacancy**, with six months or more remaining of the unexpired term, shall be replaced by an unsuccessful candidate from the most recent election based on the votes received. In the absence of such a person the division shall be required to conduct a special election to replace the representative to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. An **At-Large vacancy**, with six months or more remaining of the unexpired term, shall be replaced by an unsuccessful candidate from the most recent election based on the votes received. In the absence of such a person the Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next general election.

The proposed bill would read that for either a Divisional or an At-Large vacancy a representative shall be replaced by an unsuccessful candidate from the most recent election based on the votes received. In the absence of such a person the division shall be required to conduct a special election to replace the representative to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

The third bill called for Clarifying Who May Serve as a Proxy in Staff Senate. The current bylaws state that an elected representative of the Staff Senate who cannot attend a meeting of the Staff Senate may designate a proxy, with voting privileges, to attend the meeting. However, there are no stipulations as to who the proxy may be. The proposed bylaw would change the wording *may* designate to *shall* designate and add the sentence, “A proxy must be a voting member in the current Staff Senate.”

These three bills will be voted on at next month’s meeting.

Communications: Kim Fuller reported for Marty Green that the Staff Senate website has been updated. The staff email distribution list has been broken down geographically, but the distribution is not even. The committee is looking at getting a more equitable breakdown.

Election: The committee will meet soon to begin planning for elections in the spring.

Benefits: Ravi Seth reported that Sandra Parton plans to come to the next meeting. The Human Resource office has been busy over the last couple of weeks. Ravi also stated that their will be a letter going out to UAHuntsville employees asking for a revised list of dependents.

Employee Development: The committee plans to meet soon.

Governmental Relations: Jan Williamson has been serving as chair, and a new chair will need to be found. Kim Fuller agreed to serve as acting chair. Dona Baker is also on the committee. They will get with Ray Garner as soon as is appropriate. Higher Ed Day is on March 4.

Policies and Procedures: Erin Reed reported that the committee had not met recently, but that the committee members were contacting other colleges and universities in the state to see if they have severance for staff that are terminated for non-disciplinary reasons, such as budget cuts. Erin stated that UAB has severance based on seniority for staff.

Staff Picnic: Vonda Maclin reported that Cynthia Doubet is retiring as the events director. The committee will find out who is taking her place to begin working on day, place, and menu for the staff picnic in the spring.

New Business: The faculty met with President Williams last week. Anthony raised the question if we wanted to try to have a campus-wide staff meeting. The sheer numbers of staff involved might be prohibitive, but Anthony said he would meet with Delois Smith, the Vice President for Diversity and Student Support Services, and get her recommendations. (A campus-wide meeting for staff has been scheduled for Friday, February 26.) The question was raised if we could ask one of the professional counselors to give us a debriefing before he or she leaves campus as to what to expect as the university goes forward. The therapy dogs seen in several buildings on campus were a great idea, and students and staff alike found them to be a great comfort.

Perfume/Cologne Policy: Many individuals are sensitive to odors and strong scents can be a problem, especially in offices and classrooms. It was determined that it would be almost impossible to have a campus-wide policy that could be enforced. However, individual offices may offer suggestions to their employees that odors may cause sensitivity to those around them.

Staff Newsletter and Ideas for Building a Sense of Campus Community: The *Insight* had the intent of being the UAHuntsville staff newsletter. One Senator stated that the *Insight* should be available on line. Suggestions for building unity were a “meet and greet” similar to Club H, a brown bag lunch once a month open to all staff to meet and discuss issues or just to get to know other staff across campus, attending athletic events, and participating in the Just Move It activities were a few suggestions.

The question was raised if Staff Senate meetings had gotten too informal at times, and do we need to adhere more to *Robert’s Rules of Order*. Most Senators felt that formal structure was good.

Anthony asked committees to document what you do in your meetings in order to report to the Staff Senate meeting each month.

Announcement: Dexter Satcher has a new baby daughter born February 15, 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15.