



STAFF SENATE

Wednesday, February 3, 2016
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The Tech Staff Senate was called to order by President Collins on Wednesday, February, 3, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 202 of Baswell Techionery.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Sandra Anderson
Brandi Collins
Pam Cooper
Shawna Davis
Rhonda Fleming
Brittany Flippo
Lindelle Fraser
Tiffany Henry
James Higgs
Danny Jones

Margie Link
Annie McNeely
Jeff Mumert
Jeff Nichols
Julia Pope
Lindsey Riedmueller
Ryan Taylor
Roger Trusty
Bettye Williamson

Senators Absent:

Amanda Handley

Visitor(s):

Jennifer McIntare, ATU Ozark campus

The minutes from the January 6, 2016 meeting were distributed electronically and approved as written on February 3, 2016.

OLD BUSINESS

Health Insurance Feedback:

Senators shared constituent feedback on the proposed insurance changes discussed at the most recent campus staff meetings. According to multiple senators, many staff members are confused about the proposed changes. President Collins shared information concerning potential premium co-pays. To the best of her knowledge, the maximum amount for potential premium copays is 22.00 per month. Vice President Williamson confirmed this statement, adding that no amount has been set to date and a consultant should visit the University soon. In addition, Vice President Williamson reported that Arkansas Tech is the only university in the state that does not require employees to pay any amount for health insurance. At this time, a pay-based tier system is being researched alongside other options. Vice President



OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Williamson reiterated that the health insurance discussion is in the research phase at this time and no decisions have been made concerning premiums. President Collins will be attending the upcoming Budget Advisory Meetings and will communicate more information to the senate as it becomes available.

Potential Changes to TIAA-CREF retirement plans

Senators present at the Monday, January 25 meeting voted unanimously to allow employees to transfer and/or cash out retirement balances if they leave the University. The committee is reviewing options for loan and hardship withdrawals. State law requires exhaustion of all loan possibilities before a hardship withdrawal can be made. President Collins indicated that, to the best of her knowledge, hardship withdrawals have a tax penalty and loans do not. The senate will meet and to vote on recommendations concerning the changes once a full data set is available. Several senators expressed a desire to review information concerning tax implications. The senators agreed this information should be made available to employees considering loan and withdrawal options.

Grievance Policy:

Senator Pope shared the current grievance policy as outlined in the staff handbook. The current policy requires employees to first address a grievance with their immediate supervisor within three business days, except in cases based on alleged sexual harassment involving the employee's immediate supervisor. The senators agreed the current policy might discourage employees from initiating the process if the grievance involves an immediate supervisor. The senators will informally poll constituents and research potential solutions for the issue as they feel the current procedures do not provide an acceptable level of confidentiality for employees with grievances involving an immediate supervisor.

NEW BUSINESS

Custodial Parking Issues:

The issues of flood zone parking and a request to create red parking spaces for staff in the circle drive in front of the museum have been presented to Chief McMillian. He is currently looking for a solution. Senators voiced safety concerns for custodial staff arriving in the early morning hours. The distance between available parking and some of the residence halls is significant. Among potential solutions discussed were the possible creation of designated, staff parking spaces adjacent or near each building and the availability of a safe escort provided by Public Safety.

Extra Labor Benefits:

President Collins has received concerns and complaints in regard to the issuance of ATU ID cards for extra labor staff. The problems cited were inconvenience in checking out books and materials from the ATU library, discounts at community businesses, and access to Wonderbucks. Per the handbook, extra labor staff are not



NEW BUSINESS (continued)

entitled to the same benefits as full-time and part-time university employees. It was also noted that the community discounts were originally organized by the Student Government Association and intended for student use only, although some businesses extend discounts to employees as well. The senate voted unanimously against recommending a change in policy for extra labor staff at this time.

Comp Time for Holidays Worked:

Senators shared complaints about compensation for the hours worked during holidays in which the campus is closed. Per Senator Flippo, comp eligible employees receive comp time at a straight time rate if they work during a holiday in which the campus is closed and do not work more than 40 hours in one week. Senator Flippo noted compensation time is not equal to overtime. Staff members with questions are encouraged to contact Human Resources for clarification.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Baswell Techionery, Room 202.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m. by President Collins.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindelle Fraser, Secretary

