



STAFF SENATE

Wednesday, January 4, 2017
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

President Fraser called the Tech Staff Senate to order on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, at 10:05 a.m. in Baz Tech 204.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Sandra Anderson
Brandi Collins
Pam Cooper
Andrea Eubanks
Rhonda Fleming
Lindelle Fraser
Tammy Guarino
Tiffany Henry

Margie Link
Brittany Martin
Annie McNeely
Jeff Mumert
Julia Pope
Heather Taylor
Bettye Williamson

Senators Absent:

Rachel Alexander
Shawna Davis
Brittany Flippo

James Higgs
Jeff Nichols

Visitor(s):

Jennifer Thomas, Ozark Campus Representative

On January 4, 2017, the minutes from the December 7, 2016 meeting were distributed electronically and approved as corrected (changed area represented by Senator Anderson and a few spelling/grammar errors).

NEW BUSINESS

Senator Cooper indicated that she has received questions from several representatives about not having health insurance cards and HSA (health savings account) money not in accounts yet.

Senator Martin said that she had to reschedule an existing doctor's appointment because she did not have her new health insurance card and her provider indicated that she would have to pay the full amount and then submit the receipt for reimbursement. Senator Martin suggested that, if possible, employees might want to reschedule existing appointments until new health insurance cards are available.

Senator Martin also indicated upon contacting Human Resources, Ms. Southard, Interim Director of Human Resources, said they hoped to issue temporary health insurance cards by the end of the week and that HSA (health savings account) money should be in the employee's account in approximately two weeks.

Senator Eubanks tried to activate her HSA (health savings account) online in mid-December, 2016, and received an error. Senator Eubanks also indicated that another co-worker called Human Resources and was given the health insurance group number and instructed to present the health insurance group number to providers if there are any problems.

Senator Taylor indicated she received some complaints from representatives about the gravel sidewalk in between Caraway and the Brown Building and the difficulty in walking on the gravel, especially when it rains or there is inclement weather. Senator Collins indicated that the same issue was discussed previously with Mr. Lasey, Director of Physical Plant, and the gravel sidewalk can't be paved until the public safety building is torn down and repurposed, but that the entire parking lot will be paved after construction.

Senator Collins presented a question from a representative about the Tech cell phone policy and the request to be reimbursed for data used on personal cell phone when conducting work-related business after working hours. The existing cell phone policy will pay for a work cell phone, so it might be difficult to request reimbursement for personal data because the employee chooses to use their personal cell phone. Senator Collins indicated that she would research the Tech cell phone policy and similar policies at other 4-year, in-state colleges/universities.

In addition, any personal cell phone used for work-related business is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and anyone can submit an "FOI" request at any time, which would include all personal information. For this reason, some employees choose to use a work cell phone only for work-related business (use two separate cell phones).

Senator McNeely indicated that the Admissions Office supplies cell phones to all recruiters to conduct work-related business and the Admissions Office pays for the cell phone bill (no personal business allowed on work cell phone).



OLD BUSINESS

Early Holiday Dismissal

President Fraser indicated that she met with University President, Dr. Robin Bowen, and discussed the possibility to allow early dismissal for staff who do not work the 8 a.m.-5 pm. shift. Dr. Bowen said that she is not sure if the request is possible, but that she would discuss the issue with Ms. Hinkle, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and get back with President Fraser.

Health Insurance

President Fraser also discussed questions raised about the new health insurance policy, specifically selection of payment tiers and alleviating the burden for staff members who make under \$25,000 per year in hopes to have a more equitable division of payment amounts. Dr. Bowen indicated that the tiers were selected by the insurance committee and she will have to work with Blue Cross Blue Shield to see if further stratification can be done. Dr. Bowen will get back with President Fraser.

Senator Williamson indicated that she represented Staff Senate on the insurance committee and the current tier stratification was decided on as a compromise from the top-end and equally distributing the burden of payment.

Early Holiday Dismissal

Senator Martin and Senator Anderson provided results from their research regarding holiday pay standards at other in-state colleges/universities.

Senator Martin:

ASU – do not close early

UALR – close early/noon on day before holiday and require employees to use 4 hours of leave

UCA – no response

SAU – closed all day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving, but required to use 5 hours of holiday pay for Wednesday (based on 10 hour work day). If the employee takes off Monday and Tuesday of the Thanksgiving Holiday week, the employee is required to use 9 ½ hours of leave. For the Christmas holiday closed two days (one day before and one day after holiday, based on an 8 hour work day). The employee is required to use 8 hours of annual leave and 8 hours of birthday leave.



Senator Anderson:

UA – no policy for early dismissal

UAFS – no policy for early dismissal

UACCM – do not close early

ASU-Mountain Home – closes a few hours early on day before holiday and if the employee chooses to take the entire day off, must use 8 hours of leave.

Senator Anderson indicated that while for the Thanksgiving holiday, employees who did not work the 8 a.m.-5 pm. shift were not allowed to leave early, the decision was made by Ms. Hinkle, Vice President for Administration and Finance, for the Christmas holiday to allow early dismissal. Ms. Hinkle, Vice President for Administration and Finance, is aware of the discrepancy now.

Senator Pope asked that the holiday pay policy be listed in the Staff Handbook and/or clarified for all shifts in order to avoid a last minute decision and to make sure all employees know how to adjust their leave ahead of time.

Staff Handbook

Mr. Pennington, University Counsel, had to cancel his visit with Staff Senate, but hopes to attend the February 1, 2017, meeting with copies of the Staff Handbook.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in Baz Tech 204.

ADJOURNMENT

President Fraser adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pope, Secretary

