



STAFF SENATE

Wednesday, June 1, 2016
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

The Tech Staff Senate was called to order by President Collins on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 202 of Baswell Techionery.

ROLL CALL

Senators Present:

Brandi Collins
Pam Cooper
Shawna Davis
Rhonda Fleming
Brittany Flippo
Lindelle Fraser
Amanda Handley
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:

Sandra Anderson
Annie McNeely

Visitor(s):

Brooke Southard, Human Resources and Payroll

On June 1, 2016, the minutes from the May 4, 2016 meeting were distributed electronically and approved as corrected.

NEW BUSINESS

Grievance Procedures

President Collins brought information forward concerning the current grievance procedures in the staff handbook. At this time, the procedure applies to employees who are “non-probationary, full-time classified” staff who are “employed in a regular appropriated position and [work] a minimum of 1,000 hours per year.” In addition, there is no provision for an employee to bypass a supervisor, even if the grievance does not involve the supervisor. Senator Pope expressed a need for a clear set of definitions within the procedures. Senator Henry shared concern for the exclusion of any staff member. The senators agreed that any employee, regardless of full-time or probationary status, should be allowed to file a formal complaint. The



NEW BUSINESS (continued)

senators also agreed the time requirement for initial reporting (three business days) presents an issue. Senator Henry recommended all cases with evidence supporting the grievance be heard whether or not the initial report is made within three business days. It was also recommended that Human Resources serve as the first point of contact for grievances, allowing employees to file complaints without fear of retaliation if the grievance rests with their immediate supervisor. Brooke Southard, Director for Payroll and Special Services/Interim Director for Human Resources, visited with the group about current policy and agreed to look into the aforementioned issues.

Sick, Vacation, and Bereavement Leave

Per Ms. Southard, many of Arkansas Tech's leave policies mirror state policies. Ms. Southard also confirmed the State of Arkansas allows the institution to determine the cash out policy for sick leave (up to \$7,500) upon retirement. Presently, ATU only extends the cash out option to classified employees with 400 or more hours upon retirement. Ms. Southard also shared the current caps for sick and vacation leave for university employees (960 sick and 240 vacation). Per state regulation, catastrophic leave donation is optional and employees may not cash out leave in excess of these amounts. Senator Cooper asked about the possibility of leave threshold notices. Ms. Southard will look into this and report back. Senators had questions about the potential for leave sharing and/or donation. Ms. Southard will investigate options for shared leave code and report back to the group. In addition, senators asked about the possibility of three days annual bereavement leave. Currently, ATU employees may use sick leave in the event of the "death or serious illness of a member of the employee's immediate family." Per the staff handbook, "Immediate family is defined as the father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, child, grandparents, grandchild, in-laws or any individual acting as a parent or guardian of an individual." Ms. Southard was not sure on the state code governing bereavement leave and will report back at a later time.

Unclassified Performance Evaluations

Ms. Southard shared the performance module capability of the new software used for applicant tracking. The idea of supervisor evaluations was discussed. Senator Jones suggested the idea of random, peer evaluations. The senate asked Ms. Southard to look into options for supervisor evaluations as well.

Service Excellence and Professional Development

Ms. Southard shared information about the recent Service Excellence training for managers. Topics included coaching and mentoring, direction on expectations, and service obstacles and "wows" (small things, consistently done, that please students/customers). Information will be shared at the campus-wide staff meeting on June 16th.



NEW BUSINESS (continued)

Handbook Revisions

Revisions to the handbook should be available for review when the senate convenes for their July 6th meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

TIAACref

Ms. Southard provided information regarding the board approved loan options for TIAACref members. Members will soon be able to take loans from their mandatory contributions up to \$25,000 and loans from elective contributions up to \$50,000. The maximum aggregate loan amount is \$50,000 (Note: the IRS limit is \$50,000 and this is the aggregate cap for loans taken from mandatory and supplemental contributions). Hardship withdrawals may also be an option for members participating in elective plans. The board also voted for roll over and cash out options for members separating from the university.

Payroll Survey

President Collins plans to send out a survey for semi-monthly v. monthly payroll scheduling in the fall. All employees are encouraged to complete the survey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Campus-wide staff meetings will be held on Thursday, June 16th in Doc Bryan Lecture Hall at 1:00pm and 2:30pm. All staff members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Human Resources will send out an employee newsletter mid-June. This document will contain information on the recent board approved changes in the TIAACref loan options.

GOOD AND WELFARE

Our next regular meeting will be Wednesday, July 6, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in Baswell Techionery, Room 202.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m. by President Collins.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindelle Fraser, Secretary

