OSU STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

December 11, 2002  412 Student Union  1:15 PM

Present:  Beeler, Bergbower, Blackburn, Brooks, Cimino, Collins, Conner, Fedderson, Fulton, Gedon, Good, Hare, Hart, Hunt, Jacobs, King, Livsey, Magness, Miller, Mitchell, Peters, Richardson, Rogers, Sanmann, Shields, Tanner, Thomason, Welliver, Williams

Absent:  DeBock, Hays

Tonya Magness called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm. Diana Jacobs called roll. Tonya commented that she hoped everyone read in the O’Colly today that the retirement and fringe benefits committee of the Faculty Council also acknowledged the Staff Advisory Council’s recommendation to the university to allow staff to use sick leave for maternity, paternity and adoption leave. Tonya congratulated Dawn Good on her new promotion to Administrative Professional. Dawn would like to retain her current seat on the Council until the next regular election, according to the by-laws under VACANCIES, section VII.B. We appreciate her willingness to continue to serve on the Council.

There have been some issues raised regarding the SAC minutes which include the timely distribution of minutes and when the minutes should be posted to the listserv. Tonya recommended this phase of the discussion be moved to the Executive Group meeting on 12/18/02 and a report be given to the full Council in January. There were no objections to this.

There are also some corrections to the November minutes. Under the PB&B report, the Interim Long Term Disability Policy, instead of 3.09, it should be 3.19. Additional corrections fall under the Mandatory Leave and Sheryl will discuss this. Asked that the
word ‘resolved’ be removed and begin the sentence ‘The Staff Advisory …’ Also asked to remove the last sentence of the first paragraph that reads ‘The Council requests Administration consider the following:’ Discussion was held and the following six paragraphs will be removed as they were a council members opinions and not the Council. The following paragraph will replace the deleted ones: ‘The Staff Advisory Council decided to take a proactive role on items such as mandatory leave, furloughs and budget problems. Council realizes that certain actions must be taken to meet reductions in state allocations. A council member expressed several comments and concerns to the Council on his ideas that could help in the budget crisis. These topics were not the mindset of the Council as a whole. They were discussed and it was decided that staff should be given the opportunity to voice their comments/concerns and were able to email the Chair of the Council, who cut and pasted comments into one document, removing their names, and then forwarded that document to the Administration.’ The changes will be made to the November minutes and they will be reposted to the listserve. Motion was made to accept minutes with changes.

The agenda was amended by adding: Joe Weaver, Interim Associate Vice President for Business & Finance will replace Emily Elliott and will give the Executive Group Update. Add Faculty Council-Duane Hunt under #6. Add an overview of the meeting on 12/10/02 with the Retirement Subcommittee of the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee, and an update on the bomb threat reaction of staff. Both items to be placed on the agenda under new business, item #10, after discussion of meetings with Dr. Schmidly. Leslie Miller made motion to accept changes; it was seconded and approved by voice vote.

**Executive Group Update – Joe Weaver, Interim Associate Vice President for Business & Finance**

Joe is looking forward to the new president coming on board. One of his goals is to do some strategic planning. We are taking another 1.64% budget cut. They have directed the campus to reduce their budget by 1%. The remaining cut will come out of utility savings. He thanked the Council for the comments from the staff on budget saving ideas and encouraged them to continue sending in comments. At this point, furloughs are not an option. This would be a one-time savings and not a permanent savings.

Brad Henry has asked the University to prepare plans such as What if we have a 10, 15 or 20% budget cut – what would we do?

There is no mandatory leave during Spring Break being discussed at this time. This would not save utilities cost because the outside weather is milder at that time. Some ways that we are saving money is turning lights off, pricing on fuel for heating is lower and conservation on open positions.

**Report of University Committees**

**Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee – John Dalton and Greg Fox**

Greg Fox said this committee is making presentations to Faculty Council, SAC, Administration and others. They hope to remove the cap of 1600 sick leave hours. They want to remove the cap and track the hours. Employees who were here prior to 1992 in OTR can use 960 hrs. as a year of retirement. If an employee came up with a sickness that caused them to use their sick leave down to under 960 hrs, they could lose a year toward retirement. They want to add tax shelters so employees can contribute up
to 24,000/year, rather than the current $11,000. Greg thanked the SAC E-Group for meeting with this committee on Tuesday on such short notice. This committee and SAC are planning information sessions in January so all employees can attend. It is also hoped that two hours administrative leave will be approved so all staff can attend one of these sessions. Duane asked Greg to forward the two recommendations they want SAC to support to the PB&B Committee for their review and bring some recommendation back to Council in January.

Faculty Council – Duane Hunt
The Faculty Council subcommittee is looking at issues regarding hiring faculty’s spouses. The Faculty Council is asking for increasing the amount of DSA for faculty to include nine more distinguished research awards, which would be $1000/yr to their salaries. There was no mention of the budget situation. Anne Matoy said the Flexible Compensation Benefits committee has a sub-committee that is looking at all kinds of leave, how it works, what should happen to it.

Branch Campus Reports
OSU-Com – Toni Hart. The consolidation of OSU Com with OSU Tulsa is completed. They have the same budget woes. OSU Com chose not to close over Christmas because they have clinics. They met with Dr. Schmidly Tuesday for about 30 minutes. The number one thing he wants is to gain trust. Interim VP positions need searches; they should not just be given to someone. They had one concern and that was Schmidly’s lack of experience with medical schools.

OSU-Okmulgee - No report.

OSU-OKC – Laura Hare. Dr. Schmidly was having a general meeting with anyone who wanted to attend at OSU-OKC as the SAC meeting was taking place. Project management of budget for each department. Enrollment looks good. Friday, they are having their campus wide Christmas Dinner.

OSU-Tulsa – No report.

Report of Standing Committees

Awards & Recognition – Trisha Gedon
Her committee meets Thursday and will work on mailing service pins. They want to establish guidelines for service pins. They are gearing up for the spring luncheon. Tonya would like Human Resources to get involved with the brochure for awards day, thinking there might be less chance for mistakes and would add continuity to the brochure. Anne Matoy said they have a person in HR who oversees all their communication and she volunteered her to help.

Policies, Benefits and Budget – Sheryl Beeler
The PB&B Committee met December 9, 2002 in Rm. 302 S.U. The PB&B Committee has been studying the Interim Long Term Disability Policy. This Policy can be found in OSU Policy and Procedures #3-0750. We are recommending that a letter be drawn up from the council to administration expressing our concerns on the 3 issues listed below. We did send our concerns through Kay Ensign and were given answers to our questions. However, we were advised by Anne to recommend whatever we are comfortable with. The following are the concerns.
Policy reads as:
#2.02 – To be eligible for LTD and related benefits, and employee must be in a regular continuous position of at least .75 full time equivalent (FTE) with an assignment of six months or more and must be enrolled in the LTD insurance program. Provisions of this policy do not cover temporary or student employees or other employees who are ineligible or employees who do not elect LTD insurance coverage.

Concern: In the next to the last sentence, we do not understand the wording “other employees.” In what case that would be used? We would like an example of “other employees.” Their answer was - they did not see a problem with it “because it was to clarify there could be other employees that were not entitled to LTD benefits that were not named specifically.”

Policy reads as:
#3.16 – Excess Leave – If an employee has accumulated more than enough leave to cover the 180-day elimination period, the excess leave shall be handled as follows:

a. Excess annual leave shall be paid to the employee by special payment at the end of any leave of absence periods accordance with applicable University policies.

b. Excess sick leave shall be held for the employee and may be used for verification of Oklahoma Teachers’ Retirement, if applicable.

Concern: We would like the option to be in the policy that employees with excess leave (over 6 months) could use the sick leave after the 6-month period, instead of LTD, if preferred. This would allow the employee to receive full benefits until sick leave is used. We know this has been done, and is looked at on an individual basis, but is not stated in the interim policy.

Policy reads as:
#3.19  Failure of Notice for LTD Insurance Claim at End of Six Month Leave – if notification has not been received from the insurance vendor by the end of the six-month leave period, OSU will place the employee on leave without pay until notice is received for a maximum period not to exceed six months.

Concern: We feel like after the employee has complied with all requirements, at the end of the sixth month period, American Fidelity should have a deadline to make a decision, therefore not holding up the benefits process. We suggest no more than a 30-day period.

Sheryl made the motion to accept the recommendations of changes to the long-term disability policy that the PB&B made last month. Motion was seconded. The motion was passed. Sheryl will forward Tonya information needed and she will prepare letter for the Administration.

Next item discussed was the parking issue.

PB&B Committee Recommendation 12/11/02

Student Union Garage Parking For Seminars and Training
The PB&B Committee has been looking at the issue of Parking for O.S.U. employees while attending training classes or seminars held by HRS or CIS. These events are held
in the Student Union or Classroom Building. There are numerous employees who come from the outskirts of campus that find it very difficult to find parking to attend classes. We have looked into the shuttle bus schedule and found that they don’t run on a timely schedule, they make the same route every 15 to 20 minutes. Therefore, if you walk to the pick up point and you have just missed the bus, you will be waiting another 15 to 20 minutes until the bus comes back around. This would not work well trying to get to an event on time.

The Staff Advisory Council hereby recommends that CIS and Human resources work with the Student Union to provide a registration option allowing departments to pay for the employee’s parking in the SU Parking Garage during the time of the class. We recommend that the time billed by the SU Parking Garage be the normal hourly rate for the duration of the class plus 30 minutes before and after to allow for preparation and class delays. Thus, for a two-hour class, the department would pay for 3 hours of parking.

Bonnie made the motion to accept this recommendation. Motion was seconded. The motion was passed. Sheryl will forward Tonya information needed and she will prepare letter for the Administration.

**The third issue was the Martin Luther King Day Holiday.**

Oklahoma State University is the only Big 12 University that does not recognize Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday for faculty and staff.

Few people have had as much impact upon the American consciousness as the late civil-rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who believed in the freedom, equality, and dignity of all races and peoples. In light of recent events at OSU, we believe it is important for the university to visibly embrace those ideals for which Dr. King fought by allowing staff to celebrate his life as a paid holiday on Martin Luther King Day. This should be a day to remember Dr. King’s lifelong work for peace by reflecting upon the importance of cultural diversity and change through non-violence.

For these reasons, the Staff Advisory Council hereby recommends that OSU Administration make Martin Luther King Day an additional paid holiday for all faculty and staff.

NOTE: When this was proposed to Administration in past years, SAC was informed that Administration was unwilling to add another day of paid leave to OSU’s leave policy. Therefore, if Martin Luther King Day were to become a paid holiday, faculty and staff would lose a day of holiday pay from some other time (such as 5 paid days at Christmas rather than 6). It should be noted that OSU faculty and staff currently receive 13 days of paid holidays. Several other Big 12 schools provide more days than OSU: University of Texas, Texas Tech, and Texas A&M all provide 15 days of holiday pay, and the University of Nebraska provides 14.

A motion was made to accept this recommendation. There was some discussion. Motion was seconded. The motion was passed. Sheryl will forward Tonya information needed and she will prepare letter for the Administration.

Letters on these recommendations will be forwarded to Dr. Schmidly in January.
Sexual Orientation issue and the Family Medical Leave Act issue remain on the web site. The PB&B Committee believes both of these have been resolved; however, Leslie is looking a little further into this issue. Leslie has updated the website in reference to sexual orientation. Administration has said they will not add the sexual orientation to the policy. PB&B Committee will look at the Sexual Orientation issue again.

Day Care Survey – Leslie Miller said a student (Stephanie Graham) took on a project for a day care facility on campus as a class project. She gave a complete copy to the PB&B committee and she will make a presentation at the SAC meeting in January.

Priority Enrollment for Staff – her committee touched on this issue and chose to gather some information and put this on the January agenda.

Public Relations – Hank Welliver
Hank thanked Hannah for presenting at NEO and also thanked the greeters, Duane Hunt and Diana Jacobs. Sandy Barth complimented Hannah for doing a fine job presenting to NEO. Hank thanked Leslie Miller for working on the web site.

Rules & Procedures – Bonnie Richardson. No report

Old Business
Review of Comments from staff regarding budget – All postings were sent out on the listserv on Monday, December 02, 2002. The email was copied to key administrators for their review. Anne Matoy acknowledged the posting via email, which was shared with the Council. The listserv served its purpose and provided an opportunity for staff to give input on the budget situation. Tonya believes there were several good suggestions made and hopes that staff who received the posting will also pick up on some of the suggestions. While the mandatory leave issue was one of the big complaints Tonya still believes the majority of staff support the administrations decision in taking the three additional days during the holiday so that the University can save on utility costs. The administration won’t always make decisions that staff will be happy about but she does believe they are reviewing and taking every opportunity to look for ways to reduce cost. Anne Matoy sent an email to Tonya that said:
“Thanks for the compilation of suggestions. Personally I think it contains some valuable information. I have read it through and plan to spend some more time looking at it in greater detail. I know this must have taken a great deal of time -- I really appreciate you asking and sharing.”

Sheryl and Tonya had the opportunity to meet with staff from Human Resources and The Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board on 11-15-02. Members of the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee were also in attendance and Faculty Council representatives. The meeting was a follow up after OU’s health insurance group came to campus to discuss their insurance plan. OU is self-insured. Discussion focused on the benefits of a larger group insurance plan, future premiums, how to address the rising cost of both medical and dental coverage, and how to keep employees healthy. Anne stated Mr. Crane said they are working on something new – a plan for next year. She hopes we will know about it in January or February.

The OSU Bomb threat concerns of staff were also shared with the administration via email on 12-3-02. The administration is currently working with Chief Eaton and other key security advisors and campus leaders about the OSU policy regarding bomb threats.
and revisions will be forthcoming. The administration acknowledges that we live in different times and that changes need to be made. The SAC will provide additional information as the administration develops the policy changes.

**New Business**

Members of the Council met with Dr. David and Janet Schmidly on Monday, November 25th. At 9:00 a.m. in the Regency room. Dr. Schmidly, was then being introduced to campus leaders and was to be later in the day announced as the 17th President and CEO of the OSU system. Discussion centered on the moral of staff, the mandatory leave at Christmas, the possibility of employee furloughs, the concerns of a recent bomb threat to campus and the lack of dissemination of information or how information and communication could be better for all staff. Dr. Schmidly questioned if we had a staff award or appreciation for staff recognition. He was given an overview of the Staff Awards day held November 7th, and was informed of the Council’s recent recommendation to increase the amount of the award. The Council Chair forwarded that recommendation to President Halligan on December 2, 2002. Dr. Schmidly was also interested in a Day Care facility for staff and faculty. Council members told him that OU had such a facility and that our branch campus in Oklahoma City also had a day care facility. We told him that we had done a survey last year regarding the need for a day care facility but that the data had not been analyzed at this point do to a change in the leadership of the committee and the Council.

Dr. Schmidly again met with the SAC executive officers and standing committee chairs on Thursday, December 5th. Those present: Dr. Schmidly, Tonya Magness, Duane Hunt, Diana Jacobs, Bea Peters, Trisha Gedon, Hank Welliver, Sheryl Beeler, and Bonnie Richardson

Dr. Schmidly stressed that he wants to improve morale, build trust and be honest with everyone. He wants to immediately begin a strategic planning process and someone will be responsible for maintaining a website so employees can be kept informed as to what is going on. There is an event’s calendar on PIO’s home page.

He said his first two weeks here he will be busy visiting with the new chancellor, regents and the other OSU campuses.

Dr. Schmidly wants SAC to come up with the Top 10 Issues that aggravate staff and the Top 10 Issues that staff feel good about.

He also wants the staff Council to develop a list with 10 each of the following:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

He would like for staff to list 10 Successes and 10 Failures of the Staff Advisory Council. Bonnie said we might want to go back to the Strategic Planning Report that was developed last year and get some ideas to present to Dr. Schmidly. Tonya asked each chair to get a copy of the strategic planning report and discuss the plan with their committees.
Dr. Schmidly asked for a report card on awards that are given at the college/department level. He would like for SAC to research this and make recommendations to him.

He would like to meet with SAC twice a year. He plans to have ‘Town Hall’ meetings where all staff can come and voice their concerns/opinions and ask questions. There will be ‘Town Hall’ meetings to address faculty concerns as well as the general community.

He asked for a copy of the staff comments that were received on the budget situation and for a copy of the day care survey that a student had submitted. The student report on the need for a day care facility at OSU had included some of the SAC survey questions. The PB&B committee is currently reviewing that report and waiting on the analysis of our survey.

Dr. Schmidly said that the staff has a direct impact on the student experience. Faculty will teach, students will learn but the experiences they have at OSU will be those things best remembered. He wants the student experience to be a positive one and staff will need to do their part.

Members of the PB&B committee and the Council Executive Officers were given an overview of the recommendation regarding the OTRS program, 7-11 Program and the future of OSU’s retirement situation on 12/10/02 in room 204 Whitehurst. The Retirement Subcommittee of the Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee members that were present are: Dr. Barfield, Camille Deyong, Shelia Harp, Greg Fox, and Brad Barnes. The committee has asked the Council to inform staff of this committee’s work and future recommendations and how it will impact the future retirement of the OSU systems. The Council is currently working on scheduling meetings for all staff participation on January 8th, 9th, & 10th. Once confirmation has been established staff will receive a flyer announcing these meeting locations and times. We encourage staff to attend one of these presentations and take an active roll in the future retirement of the OSU system. Branch Campus’ should also take note and plan to attend one of these meetings or ask one of the committee members as listed above for a presentation to be made on your campus. We will be happy to facilitate this process. This committee has been working on the Rule of 26(which is an OSU policy) for over a year. SAC gave them some recommendations to better their presentation for staff. Sheryl said it is very important for us to let all staff know about this and that they should plan to attend a session. A member of the PB&B committee will sit in on the sessions and take notes of questions asked.

Motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:45pm

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!