STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

OSU STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

March 12, 2003 416 Student Union 1:15 PM

Present: Beeler, Brooks, Collins, Conner, Gedon, Hunt, Jacobs, King, Leeper, Livsey, Magness, Miller, Mitchell, Peters, Phelan, Richardson, Sanmann, Shields, Thomason, Welliver, Williams

Absent: Bergbower, Blackburn, Cimino, DeBock, Fulton, Good, Hare, Hays, Rogers, Tanner

Tonya Magness called the meeting to order at 1:15 pm. Diana Jacobs called roll. Tonya welcomed Juanita Phelan to the council. Tonya asked if there were any corrections to the February 12th minutes. There being no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Tonya asked if there were any changes/additions to the agenda. Duane asked to be added under new business to talk about the Wheelchair Basketball Bash. Tonya made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. It was approved by voice vote.

Executive Group Update – Dr. David Bosserman, Interim Vice President, Business and Finance and Comptroller

The E-team forwarded a recommendation about Martin Luther King Day. E-Team is supportive of it. The recommendation will be sent back to SAC for review and additional comments prior to a decision.

There are four top-level position searches going on at the present time.

Provost & Sr. Vice President – they received 12 nominations and 26 applications. Committee will narrow this down to a group for reference checks.
VP for Enrollment, Management and Marketing – received 1 nomination and 32 applications. The committee has met and narrowed down to a group for reference checks. They meet again Thursday and will recommend to the President who they would like to bring in for interviews.

VP for Information Technology and Distance Learning – received 0 nominations and 74 applications. The committee met yesterday and narrowed down to a small group. Will meet after Spring Break to narrow down more and decide who to recommend to President to bring in.

VP for Health Affairs and Dean of Osteopathic Medicine – received 22 nominations and 9 applications. This committee will meet in the near future.

At the Board meeting on Friday, they approved the position announcements for VP for Business/Finance, and the VP for Research. The VP for Diversity was pulled. The President wants to rework the job description/announcement.

The E-Team met Monday and went through the Strategic Planning Exercise. They are trying to get the President’s team in and keep things rolling.

With the next round of budget cuts, they will go back to deans and department heads for ideas.

Report of University Committees

Faculty Council - March – LaDawn Conner
They heard a brief report on Strategic Planning. Peg Vitek presented a report on the Student Conduct Office. Standing committee reports: Budget – requested input from faculty on budget decisions. The faculty committee sent a recommendation on the Harassment Policy, Long Range Planning & Technology – concerned about web space. There was a recommendation for guidelines on disbursement of university startup funds and this passed. They made amendments to the bus policy and will have a two-month trial period. Students should be given priority for riding the bus.

There was a recommendation for graduate in state tuition plan and this was withdrawn.

Flexible Benefits Compensation – Cafeteria Plan Recommendations – Robin Purdie
She had handouts for the group. She said they have made progress and they are in the process of pressing forward with these recommendations. They would like to have a recommendation from SAC that this should go forward to the Administration.

The Cafeteria Plan Proposal (employee can chose which benefits they want)
- Comprehensive increase in benefits available to full-time employees
- Provide flexibility with meaningful choices among benefits
- Menu of benefits presented in two lists: Tax Sheltered Benefits & Taxable Benefits
Employees would have the option to take cash or credit: amounts paid by the university for certain benefits may be taken in cash or credits. Credits may be used to purchase other benefits (taxable or non-taxable).

Health care insurance – default insurance plan (University paid for employee), if cost of plan selected by employee is less than the default plan, 100% of unused premium can be used to purchase other benefits. If health insurance is waived, 50% of Default Plan cost is available to employee as credits to purchase other benefits or in cash. Employee may choose to purchase health insurance for spouse and dependents with pre-tax dollars through Flexible Benefits Account. If employee waives health insurance coverage, family health insurance is not available for family members.

Changes: Permit employees to elect out of plan and convert unused premium to credits to purchase other benefits or take cash, no evidence of other medical coverage required to elect out of plan, once participation is terminated, the ability to re-enter the program is subject to limitations and restrictions. Dental and vision insurance is available for employees, spouse, and children. Employee may purchase with pretax dollars through Flex Benefits Account.

Two supplemental health care insurance programs available to employee at a cost: Cancer Indemnity Insurance and GAP Insurance. The employee may purchase with pretax dollars. This committee is asking the annual limit that can be flexed be increased from $5,000 to $10,000. The IRS has a limit of $5,000 for dependent care expenses.

The Employee Assistance Program – provides programs that improve the workplace environment and enhance productivity. The university pays the cost of programs. They want to provide programs that promote general wellness and fitness (cost of programs shared by university and employee).

Group-Term Life – insurance coverage provided by the university to protect the family from financial loss due to employee’s death. Employee may elect to waive group-term life insurance coverage in excess of $50,000. Coverage in excess of $50,000 results in an increase in the employee’s taxable income. 100% of premium on insurance waived may be used to buy other benefits or taken in cash. Employee would have option to purchase additional insurance in excess of the amount provided by the University. Living Needs Benefit would provide an opportunity for a terminally ill employee to obtain life insurance benefits before death to pay medical and related expenses.

We currently have option for long-term disability. Employee pays premiums and employee will receive disability income tax-free. Group-Term Life Insurance for spouse and children – provide employee sufficient life insurance to protect family in the event of death of spouse or child. Coverage limits: maximum for spouse is 75% of employee coverage; child is 40% of employee coverage; the minimum for spouse is $10,000 and for child is $5,000.

May elect a salary reduction to tax shelter cost of parking on campus. This would be a slight savings to employees. Education Incentive program would provide an opportunity for the employee, spouse and children to attend OSU at a reduced cost to the employee. Employee would have 75% of graduate/undergraduate resident tuition waived; 100% of fees waived. Waiver will not apply to repeated courses. Spouse would
receive 50% of undergraduate resident tuition waived for up to 123 hours, no waiver of fees, qualifies for benefit on same date as employee. Qualifying child would receive 50% undergraduate resident tuition fee waived for up to 123 hours, and no waiver of fees.

Contributions to the Oklahoma College Savings Plan with after-tax dollars grow tax-free and are not subject to income tax on qualified withdrawal. Oklahoma allows up to $2,500 to be deducted in computing state income tax.

Long-Term Care Insurance: opportunity for employee to purchase long-term care insurance at group rates with after tax dollars; coverage available for employee, spouse, parents, in-laws, coverage for nursing home and community based care in the event of illness or disability, coverage may continue if employee leaves university.

The committee seeks feedback concerning: the desirability of the recommendations, the priority or preference that should be given the implementation of the recommendations, given reductions in administrative and financial resources, any other information the committee should consider regarding the proposed plan. SAC PB&B committee will review and bring recommendations to next month’s meeting.

Branch Campus Reports

OSU-Com – Bavette Leeper

Bavette Leeper is the new chair. Toni Hart had to resign due to job duties. They awarded six scholarships. They had their chili/jeans day on February 21st and raised $600 for the American Heart Association. They are planning their staff picnic for May 24th. They are opening a new clinic and have 26 new staff for clinic. She introduced Cathy Ramsey, Secretary of OSU-Com SAC.

OSU-Okmulgee - Devin DeBock sent report to Tonya

The council is preparing for elections to fill the seats that will become open from retiring members.

The council has selected chairs for the sub committees to select this years’ outstanding faculty and staff award recipients. The committees are currently accepting nominations for each award.

We are working with our president, Dr. Robert Klabenes, and have formed a committee that is looking at what we are calling the "Worst case scenario" of this years budget challenges. The committee is made up of 14 employees (faculty and staff) from the council and non-council members. The committee is looking at positive and inventive ways to over come the budget challenges while encouraging all employees to stay educated on the current situation.

OSU-OKC – No report

OSU-Tulsa – No report

Report of Standing Committees

Awards & Recognition – Trisha Gedon
Klein's Catering is providing the food for Staff Appreciation Day. We are working on gathering door prizes and have a lot of vendors. Faculty Council will serve on the food lines. Be sure and wear your SAC shirt on 4/4/03. The activities begin at 11:30am. A&R Committee meets next week.

**Policies, Benefits and Budget** – Sheryl Beeler

The PB&B committee is currently looking at the issue of employee performance evaluations. So far, we have identified the following areas of concern that may need to be addressed in forthcoming recommendation(s):

**Lack of supervisor accountability** – as far as we can tell, there isn’t any formal system in place to ensure supervisor accountability; there is no audit system or process to make sure supervisors are conducting evaluations appropriately, correctly, and uniformly even within the same units, much less across campus. There appear to be WIDE discrepancies on how they are conducted and how employees are evaluated, even within the same units. For example, one supervisor with a strict management style might never give marks above a 3, whereas another supervisor, wanting higher raises for his/her employees, will inflate ratings, giving numerous 4s and 5s.

**Supervisor training** – again, as far as we can tell, there is no system in place to ensure that supervisors who conduct employee evaluations are receiving adequate training on how to do so. Judging from the widespread dissatisfaction and discrepancies regarding how evaluations are performed, it appears that this is probably something that needs to be addressed.

**Problems with the form** – we think the form may be too ambiguous. Many performance evaluations being used by other universities (and companies) require the supervisor to provide a written explanation for their ratings (in some cases, only if an extremely low or extremely high rating is given). This prevents the supervisor from choosing numbers more or less randomly (or in haste) and forces them to justify their responses. There may be other issues with the form; for example, we’re not entirely certain that all departments are using the same evaluation form, and there seems to be non-standard application of the ratings across the campus (such as the supervisory discrepancies already mentioned above).

**No formal appeal process** – while employees are allowed to write a written response/rebuttal to their evaluation, there isn’t any process in place to ensure that a higher, impartial authority hears and evaluates that response. If an employee’s supervisor simply doesn’t like them for some reason, regardless of their job performance, the employee is left with little recourse of action because there is no oversight of units to make sure that responses/rebuttals are actually formally addressed. (What’s to stop a supervisor or dean/department head from simply filing the written rebuttal away without consideration?). Being able to write a response is not the same thing as a formal appeal process with impartial mediation.

**Discrepancies in how raises are awarded and tied to performance** - we know that raises are **ostensibly** tied to performance evaluations. There is considerable doubt if this is always the case, and if it is done fairly and uniformly across campus (i.e. does an overall evaluation score of 3.5 result in the same raise all across campus? Probably not.)
Should evaluation results be entered into the Budget Development System? - this might be a starting point to solving some problems in uniformity.

Please feel free to provide PB&B committee with any input you have on this issue or on Robin Purdie’s presentation. Discussion was held on the presentation by Robin Purdie.

Public Relations – Hank Welliver

PR Committee has tickets to Staff Appreciation Day at the Printers and should distribute the week of the 24th of March. They will tear off the lunch ticket and bring to Staff Appreciation Day and send the other half to UMS to enter for door prizes. (They may also bring the ticket with them to Staff Appreciation Day to enter).

Vendors are lining up for Staff Appreciation Day. They have 9 or 10 committed to participating and expect more soon. His committee will send a flyer out the week of 17 March to advertise the changes in Staff Appreciation Day. The menu for SAD consists of BBQ sandwich, baked beans, cole slaw, cookies, punch/tea. They are developing a survey instrument (form) to poll how people feel about their experience at Staff Appreciation Day so we will know if and what changes we need to make for next year.

His committee is getting ready to send out the SAC scholarship fundraising letter to staff. He asked if SAC had received theirs. There are several options staff can use to donate to the scholarship fund.

Rules & Procedures – Bonnie Richardson

Her committee is on schedule. She passed out copies of the nomination form. Let Bonnie know if you have any changes. They hope to print these on Thursday and then will have a campus drop. PR committee will help in promotion activities. They will advertise this on the SAC list serve, OSU Headline news, campus roundup, payroll advice, and other ways they think of. Deadline is April 4th. They will put the new SAC logo on the nomination form. The logo should be on anything that goes out.

Old Business

On February 17th, a letter was sent to President Schmidly and copied to Dr. Bosserman for the administration to consider and/or review the recommendations that were voted on at the February meeting. Those recommendations were: Recommendation requesting priority enrollment for staff (Rec. #030108PBB-0), and Recommendation requesting a child care facility (Rec. #030108PBB-10).

Also on February 17th, the PB&B committee’s comments regarding the Racial and Ethnic Harassment Policy Final Draft 1/24/03 were sent to President Schmidly and copied to Dr. Mitchell.

On February 19th, a letter was sent to President Schmidly and copied to Greg Fox regarding the status of the two recommendations that the Flexible Benefits Compensation committee asked the Council to review. The letter noted that the tax shelter (457b plan) passed. However, the PB&B committee was researching the recommendation regarding the 1600 cap removed from sick leave. A vote of the Council would be taken at the March meeting.
On February 20th, two names were submitted for consideration to serve out the term for the classified vacancy ending in August 2005 on the University Diversity Advisory Board. Tyanna Bateson, Sr. Unit Assistant, Office of Greek Life will serve on this committee.

Staff representations on the VP search committees were assigned on February 24th. They are: Barbara Swiggart – VP for Enrollment Mgmt & Marketing, Brad Barnes – VP Info Tech & Distance Learning, and Greg Fox – Provost and Sr. VP. No staff appointment has been announced for the VP for Administration and Finance.

The Council received a memo from Dr. Bossman on February 28th regarding the 457b recommendation. The recommendation was presented and approved at the March 7th Board of Regents meeting. Expected implementation will be no later than July 1, 2003.

The OSU Staff and Faculty Blood drive scheduled on March 4th and 5th was a success. 47 units of blood were collected.

**New Business**

The President’s Transition Team met for the first time on February 18th. The chair of SAC will serve as a team member. The charge to the Transition Team is: assist with coordination and communication in transition of leadership, provide strategic advice to President regarding transition issues, and evaluate progress of administrative transition.

On Thursday, March 6th, OSU received the largest donation in school history. As chair of SAC, Tonya was honored to represent staff at the news conference. What a wonderful boost for upgrading the athletic facilities and to promote academic scholarships.

On Thursday, March 6th, the SAC Officers were invited to have dinner with the President and the OSU A&M Board of Regents, along with other distinguished guests at Karsten Creek Clubhouse. President Schmidly and guests toasted the gift of T. Boone Pickens as being a “Difference Maker at OSU.” The evening ceremony recognized Brian McLaughlin, OSU’s latest Marshall and Truman scholar and noted his accomplishments as a student achiever. McLaughlin, a senior in OSU’s School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, became the first student at a public university in Oklahoma to be named to the All-USA College Academic Team by USA TODAY. Dr. Schmidly recognized other student leaders and announced that OSU will have a 100% graduation rate for OSU athletes this year. He also recognized Faculty Council and Staff leaders on campus.

On Friday, March 7th, President & Mrs. Schmidly invited SAC Officers to attend the Varsity Review.

SAC scholarship applications will be accepted through May 16th. Application forms can be obtained at [http://www2.okstate.edu/sac](http://www2.okstate.edu/sac). For more details you can contact Duane Hunt, Vice Chair for SAC at 744-5371.

A SAC member brought up a recommendation via email concerning chalking on sidewalks. This member considers it as vandalism. Discussion followed in that all
chalking has to be approved. If anything is offensive, it needs to be reported and Physical Plant will wash it off. The recommendation was not seconded.

Lisa Collins made announcement about the Wheelchair Basketball game on April 8th at 7:00pm. Tickets are $5.00. Proceeds go to the Wheelchair Basketball team. She will be selling them in her office, 469 SU. If interested in working in the concession, notify Duane.

Motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:55pm