OSU STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

October 8, 2003    416 Student Union    1:15 PM

Present: Barber, Beeler, Blackburn, Brooks, Carpenter, Collins, Condit, Dark, DeBock, Estus, Gedon, Garner, Livsey, Miller, Peters, Phelan, Rogers, Sanmann, Shields, Thomason, Welliver, West, Williams, Wyant

Absent: Bunney, Ford, Hoffman, Hunt, King, Phelan, Tanner

Sheryl called the meeting to order and Lisa Collins called roll.

Sheryl asked for the approval of the September 10 minutes. Sheryl asked that under the PB & B committee report, the vote and approval of the recommendation be shown in the minutes. The report from OSU-Tulsa will be added as well. There were no more corrections to the minutes and they were approved by a voice vote.

Agenda was approved.

E-Team Update – Dr. Bosserman-Vice President – Administrative & Finance Controller

Dr. Bosserman started off by discussing the approval by the Board of Regents for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday. More than a year ago, the board had questioned the number of holidays that OSU had. OSU was told at that time to look at paring down the holiday schedule. If the board and administration approves, a holiday schedule will be published and every fall leadership from the Faculty Council, Staff Advisory Council, and
Dr. Bosserman will meet to affirm the next year’s holiday schedule so as to get into all the publications, etc. Dr. Bosserman understands the concerns of those who have voiced their opinions regarding the closing of the university. Some departments may not be able to let all of their employees off. Dr. Bosserman will meet with Dr. Wiggins – VP Information Technology, to formulate a telephone plan. If the university were closed, callers would get a message that the university is closed and their calls would get diverted to the proper place. A designated person may be used to return phone calls if necessary. Closing the university is not a utility issue. If any money were saved it would be a benefit. Closing the university would be an opportunity, at a time when raises have not been given, to add three days to the holiday schedule which will give staff 2 weeks off. Certain buildings and services must remain open. The university would function at a minimum. Dr. Bosserman understands that if individuals do not have the annual leave built up, supervisors should be able to work those things out.

Dr. Bosserman requested that if anyone on SAC hears of a situation that is not working, that they can go to him personally and he would help directly.

This recommendation would also affect the branch campuses. The issue will be resolved in a week to 10 days.

Dr. Bosserman also responded to various rumors. Regarding the staff bonus, an announcement will be made in a week to 10 days. The University Extension budget was cut 2 million this FY. As for the state budget, it is doing well. It will not be known until February, March or April if any more budget cuts will be needed. The plan for next year is for the president to go to the legislation and ask for specific funding for pay raises for faculty and staff. There would need to be a 1% or $900,000 increase for raises.

Dr. Bosserman requested that any rumors be addressed to administration to give them the opportunity to confirm or quell any rumors that employees may have.

**Report of University Committees**

**OSU Transit System – Jan Cook, Michael Robinson**

Michael Robinson is the Assistant Director of Public Safety. Jan Cook is the Assistant Manager of Parking and Transit. Jan handed out the current schedule for the bus transit system here on campus.

Currently there are 17 buses running. 10 routes altogether, 4 of which are off campus and 6 on campus. There are 18 full time drivers, 15 part time drivers and 2 supervisors. The routes run 6:30am-10:30 pm on campus and until 7pm off campus.

After working out a few kinks in the schedule, the OSU Transit System believes they have a good schedule of routes. They are currently looking into better ways to service the OSU community.

Questions about the funding of the transit system were raised. One of the first questions was regarding the rumor of a fee being charged to staff and faculty to ride the bus. It was mentioned that Geary Robinson, former Parking Manager, had assured SAC that there was no intention to charge fees to staff and faculty to ride the bus system.

The funding of the transit system comes primarily from a student fee, approximately $27 per student, per semester. This fee still does not completely cover the costs to run this system. Michael Robinson said that although he cannot speak to what Geary may have said, it was his understanding that in the design of the current transit system, it was never planned that staff and faculty could ride the buses for free. The visions for how the system might be funded would be through fares from the community, faculty and staff.
The students were asked if they would agree to pay the fee for a new transit system. They agreed and with that approval, OSU purchased new buses. All the buses are handicap accessible; they have wheelchair lifts, and are designed to accommodate all types of disabilities.

The balance of the funding comes from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) through various grants; the rest would come from fares from the community, faculty and staff. Members of the Stillwater community can ride the bus for a fee if they want to ride to campus or wherever the routes run. Ideas for creating routes to other places such as shopping centers have been brought up. It is anticipated that in the future the system will expand but more federal funding would be needed in order to build a multi-mobile facility to act as a hub for buses and other parking, approximately 1200 spaces.

Michael did say the administration is aware of the desire on the part of staff and faculty to not have any money come out of their pockets to pay for riding the buses. The university is looking at other options for funding the system.

A SAC member mentioned that in the past it was assured that with the possibility of an increase in parking permit fees, staff and faculty could purchase an inexpensive permit, park in a remote lot and ride the bus to work for free. The rumored fee would then not be feasible for many of the staff and faculty working on the OSU campus.

Currently there is one “Park and Ride” location set up at the library annex on Boomer Rd. Michael did say that Dr. Schmidly is pushing for the “Park and Ride” concept. Basically it would be in order to alleviate the congestion and parking problems on campus.

A SAC member asked if there were any plans to provide transportation for staff and faculty who must go to other parts of campus to do business so they would not have to use their own vehicle and how that would be paid for.

The transit system has always had the ability to bill the departments if an employee is using the buses for university business.

The buses will be equipped with a card swipe unit attached to the fare box. The hope is that employees and students can use their id’s so that an extra card will not be needed. The problem right now is the software compatibility. The transit system is trying to develop a system to work with existing card information. Whereas a card has been developed to work with the system in mind, it would have the capabilities to determine if the rider was a current student, staff or faculty and other important information. How the rider would be charged has yet to be determined.

A SAC member asked how they could justify running the buses if there are no riders. Jan did say that there are up to 1369 riders per day. Michael said that students have paid for the system so they are going to run it. It was expected to have low ridership at first, but it is believed it will grow once people become more familiar with the buses and the routes.

An additional parking garage has been discussed but the problem is the cost. It is still in the long-range plans of the university.

Currently the buses do not run when classes are not in session. They are reviewing this for the upcoming season. If there is a need for the buses they may run a limited service for faculty and staff.

A SAC member asked for a history of the transit system and why the need for new buses.

First Capital Trolley in Guthrie owned the old buses and services were contracted with them. Although the university purchased the buses, it was First Capital Trolley who were on the title, so when the contract terminated, OSU could not keep the buses. Negotiations are currently in process in order to get all or some of those buses back.
The old buses were being paid by federal funds. OSU is receiving some funds because the system has been made accessible to the community. Currently the City of Stillwater is aware of what the university is doing and has some input and suggestions. As the system expands, the City of Stillwater may become more involved.

Currently, staff and faculty are not being charged to ride the bus. Regarding the staff and faculty being responsible to pay to ride the bus, Dr. Bosserman did say at that the general university fund would foot the bill for the faculty and staff to use the buses.

Maps and schedules are available on the public safety website.

Can OU – Brenda Solomon

Brenda met with Sheryl, Duane, and Hank to brainstorm some ideas for collecting food for Harvest II. It was brought up to challenge the OSU community among 3 different groups, Academic, Non-academic, and students. In the past there has been a traveling trophy and it was decided to maybe add another level of participation and add a traveling football signed by Coach Miles going to the overall winner. Fliers have been made to post at various departments with information about the Can OU Food Drive. Information will also go out on the SAC list serve and an advertisement will go out in the O’Colly as well as OSU Headlines. Non-perishable food items will be collected on October 31 at the Chi O clock from 10a-1p. A sign up sheet went around to help staff the table to count and weigh the items.

Items donated will be given a dollar value so it is encouraged to donate items that a family can really use such as Hamburger Helper or peanut butter which score higher than maybe ramen soup. The weight of the item is also a determining factor in the competition for the traveling trophy.

Several SAC members volunteered to be in charge of cans that are used to deposit donated food into, in their building or department, for one week.

Jane Carpenter, who organized the food drive last year, stressed the personal touch when encouraging others to donate. Maybe one could call others in their department or college or other colleges and challenge them to donate. Or get together with another colleague and donate more than you normally would if you donated by yourself.

Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee – Billie Blackburn

Members Present: Blackburn, Fox, Harrison, Hunt, Lehenbauer, Morris, Poole, Raff, Reed, Shull, and Stromberg

Members Absent: Cooper, and Hare

Ex Officio, Ad Hoc Members and Guest: Oehrtman, Payne, Purdie, and Wells

Guests - Walt Cross and Debbie Love

Terry Lehenbauer called the meeting to order.

The agenda was approved.

A draft of the August minutes was distributed. A motion to approve the minutes with a slight correction was made and seconded. Motion passed.
Update from HR - Wells reported that HR sent 64 letters out and received 27 requests for packets on the Life Insurance RFP. The bids are due on 9/23 and the recommendation goes to the Board on 10/24.

October News You Can Use will have information on Long Term Disability and the Flex Benefits enrollment. There is the possibility of doing Benefits enrollment on-line, but it isn’t ready as of yet.

Purdie asked if times had been scheduled for employees to ask questions. Wells distributed a list of Important Dates that covers deadlines for Benefits, which includes a schedule of Informational Sessions for employees.

Walt Cross came to the meeting to ask why a conversion rate of 50% was decided on for declining Health Insurance. He doesn’t feel that this is fair. He also asked the committee to review this decision with the possibility of increasing the rate in the future. Lehenbauer asked Wells if HR would gather us more background information on conversion of premiums to pay within the Big 12. Purdie suggested that this might be something that can be adjusted at a later time, also that we might be able to offer part cash, part credits. Wells suggested that this is a beginning point and a trial year to gather information.

Task Force Update: Retirement Task Force - The Task Force met with Tommy Beavers earlier today to discuss seven items from the Task Force recommendations. Some of his comments were that he would not support the adoption of anything that would harm OTR and that he would potentially support recommendations that are appropriately funded. Lehenbauer said that all changes to OTR regulations and formulas must have legislative approval. Beavers did state that he would fully support item 6, as it was truly a mistake. Oehrtman said that item 2 is comparable to item 6, as it was also a mistake. On item 7 Beavers seemed to finally understand that OSU employees want the buy-back option to be available.

The Task Force is still working to complete their final report.

Lehenbauer reported that Dr. Schmidly stated at the last Faculty Council meeting that his legislative priorities for the next year are: 1) addressing faculty & staff compensation issues; 2) OTR – correcting retirement benefit formulas for higher education employees and making OTR an optional rather than a mandated retirement program for eligible employees.

Task Force Update: Cafeteria Plan Task Force - Oehrtman distributed a calendar report that was developed and worked on at the last Cafeteria Task Force meeting. The committee also set priorities on the remaining recommendations, as follows:

1) Wellness and Employee Assistance Program
2) Education Incentive Program for Employee, Spouse and Children
3) Long Term Care Insurance – try to put out an RFP next July, paid with after tax dollars
4) Supplemental Health Insurance – this would also require an RFP (Cancer Insurance and Gap Insurance), paid with pre-tax dollars
5) Flex Account – increase to $10,000
6) Parking – pay with pre-tax dollars
7) Group Term Insurance – (Life Insurance) waive coverage and take premium as cash
Old Business -
Copies of the Shared Leave Plan from Panhandle State University were distributed. The Board of Regents approved this policy earlier this year. This is just information for the Cafeteria Task Force. Poole remarked that NEO could donate Annual Leave but not Sick Leave.

Purdie distributed three items of information and a booklet, “Best Bites & Hikes.” There is a need for continued support from the committee to assist with keeping Wellness a priority at OSU campuses.

New Business -
Alternate dental providers - Is it possible for OSU to have more than one dental provider? Wells said that we would have to investigate if another dental provider could be added or if the state plan (OSEEGIB) would have to remain as the exclusive dental health insurance provider if the state health plan was in force.

Alternate options for retirement investment - beyond TIAA-CREF - We were told earlier that the SEC Required electronic transfer of funds. Others have told us that it isn’t a specific SEC requirement but rather that funds be handled in an expeditious manner. Barbara will contact TIAA-CREF to find out the basis of their statement. Lehenbauer also asked that HR check out the feasibility of having other vendors available for our Employer Contributions. Fox asked how TIAA-CREF originated as our choice and why there are no others.

Meeting adjourned.
Future meeting dates - October 15th; November 19th; December 17th.

ERIP (Early Retirement Incentive Program) – Donna Whitmore

There is no timeline as to when the program will go into effect. Things are moving very slowly. There has been an effort to limit the information coming out of this committee to avoid any rumors that may get started.

Branch Campus Reports

OSU-COM – Jan Barber
Jan introduced herself; this was the first meeting she was able to attend. She is the president of the Staff Advisory Council at OSU-COM.

OSU-Okmulgee - Devin DeBock
Starting to look into candidates for the Vice President Student Affairs position. Elections for Faculty Staff Council chair were held and that went to Kevin Jeffers.
Student Life sponsored a lunch for the new and returning students at the beginning of the semester and invited local merchants to set up booths. The United Way campaign is about halfway over for their campus. This fall also kicks off the brand new NIRA rodeo team.

OSU-OKC – Kristi Garner
A new satisfactory survey for students is being developed and should be ready by this spring. Their foundation fundraiser, Family Fund, is scheduled for October 30, with a Halloween theme. They have a community project that they organize at Halloween called Halloween Blast. For a canned food donation kids and their families from the community can play games and eat candy, etc.

**OSU-Tulsa – Terry Dark**

OSU-Tulsa hosted the seventh annual, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure on Saturday, September 13, 2003. The 5K race serves as a fund-raiser for local and area breast cancer education, screening, and treatment projects. This year’s fund-raising goal was $325,000, with approximately 9,000 participants.

OSU-Tulsa is in the midst of the system-wide strategic planning process. While the strategic planning process is iterative in nature, the OSU administration has released an initial set of 14 strategic goals, all for completion within the next 5 years. Some of these goals include: 1) growth to 5,000-6,000 students at a projected ratio of 70% undergraduate level / 30% graduate level students, 2) 100 academic degree programs that are fully integrated and aligned with the Stillwater campus, 3) 80 Tulsa resident faculty and 150 commuting (Stillwater) faculty, 4) 1000 companies recruiting OSU-Tulsa graduates, and 5) close academic partnerships with the OSU Center for Health Sciences.

**Report of Standing Committees**

**Awards & Recognition – Trisha Gedon**

We have ordered the years of service pins. They are due in the week of Oct. 13. The gifts for those w/ 25 or more years of service, and our retirees, have come in. In addition to the years of service pin, they will also receive a Pistol Pete clock. Pres. Schmidly and Joe Weaver will be on hand to help distribute the Distinguished Service Awards.

Refreshments have been ordered.

A signup sheet was passed around asking SAC members to help with various parts of Staff Awards Day.

We have received approval to pay for food out of the AA account.

Brenda Wyant is doing a great job preparing the programs for Staff Awards Day.

**Policies, Benefits and Budget – Leslie Miller**

The PB&B committee met twice this month to continue working on performance evaluations. We had hoped to have a final draft finished this month, but we didn’t quite get it done. Hopefully it will be ready for comment by the Nov. SAC meeting.

Juanita Phelan and Leslie Miller met with John Houck of the Physical Plant to discuss employees’ concerns. The meeting was very positive, and Phelan, Miller, and Dave Ford will be meeting with Mr. Houck again in December to discuss progress as well as any other issues that may come up in the meantime.
Public Relations – Hank Welliver

Hank thanked everyone that participated in the last NEO in October. Hank discussed the plans for raising staff scholarship funds through selling hot chocolate and home baked goods at Homecoming Walkaround. Hank asked for everyone’s help with a few items such as a small tent canopy, coffee urns, and Gott coolers. The challenge would be to get hot water and keep it hot.

All items donated should organize getting them to Hank by Wednesday Oct. 15. The booth will be located near University and Monroe.

Rules & Procedures – Donna Whitmore

Donna passed out the current roster with everyone’s contact information. The committee is looking into whether SAC appropriately represents staff since many departments and colleges are reorganizing.

Old Business – Sheryl Beeler

Sheryl introduced new members to SAC. Jane Carpenter is Manager of Information Technology in the College of Education. Jane has been at OSU for 5 years. Sheryl also welcomed Jan Barber who represents OSU-COM.

Stacy Estus was also acknowledged.

SAC officers met with President Schmidly on October 3 regarding the holiday recommendation. SAC has been assured that as soon as any decision is made, it will be known immediately. It was asked whom President Schmidly would prefer to be a direct contact between him and SAC, he responded with Dr. Bosserman, Sheila Harp or General Goodbary. Sheryl also discussed the need for more efficient communication between staff and administration and a monthly meeting with Dr. Bosserman and or Joe Weaver will be set up.

Sheryl appreciates the opportunity that she and Leslie had to meet with Dr. Bosserman regarding the MLK Jr. holiday issue.

New Business - Sheryl Beeler

It is our duty to bring things before the council when asked by our constituents. Dan Carlile submitted a letter regarding the “At Will” policy at OSU. Sheryl read the letter and responded to the employee with her own letter which she read. The issue was discussed briefly by SAC members, Sheryl did say that because Oklahoma is an “At Will” state, there may not be much we as a council could do.

A motion to table the issue until more information regarding the termination policies for staff and administration at OSU could be reviewed, was made, voted on and approved.

Announcements:

President Schmidly will be visiting with the E group on November 25 from 1:30-2:30 in 412 SU and the council is invited.
Staff Awards Day has been posted to the OSU calendar. Service pin recipients are on the SAC website, fp.okstate.edu/sac. Sheryl will be emceeing the ceremony and President Schmidly will address the staff at the end.

As soon as Sheryl gets more information regarding the holiday and MLK jr. holiday, she will post them SAC News and the SAC List serve. Sheryl asked that council members post this information for those colleagues who do not have e-mail.

If anyone has not subscribed to OSU Headline news, it was suggested that you do so; there is a lot of information posted. Contact Nestor Gonzales to do so.

Sheryl read an e-mail from John Dalton regarding expanding the additional life insurance program for employees and dependents. A request for proposal process is underway.

Barbara Wells attended the meeting representing Human Resources with information about option enrollment. Human Resources have been very busy with option enrollment forms. She did mention that Human Resources would be tracking those whose coverage ends Dec. 31 and send them reminder cards so that they are not left without coverage.

More information is available regarding the coverage options on the Human Resources web page.

The Wellness Center will once again be providing flu shots for OSU employees for free. They are scheduled to be in the Physical Plant on November 10th, Whitehurst November 11th, Wellness Center November 12th, and the NRC (Noble Research Center) on the 17th. Times will be given at a later date. Robin Purdie believes the hospital will be giving shots on November 6th.

Meeting was adjourned.