OSU STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

September 10, 2003     416 Student Union     1:15 PM

Present:   Beeler, Brooks, Collins, Condit, Dark, Ford, Gedon, Hunt, Livsey, Miller, Peters, Phelan, Rogers, Sanmann, Shields, Tanner, Thomason, Welliver, West, Williams, Wyant

Absent:   Barber, Blackburn, Bunney, DeBock, Estus, Garner, King, Whitmore

Sheryl Beeler called the meeting to order at 1:15. Lisa Collins called roll. Sheryl asked if there were any corrections to the August 6 minutes. There were no objections and the minutes were approved.

Sheryl amended the agenda: There would be no reports from the Flex. Benefits Committee, and no report from the Early Retirement Incentive Program Committee (ERIP). Sheryl added to New Business a meeting with President Schmidley and a vacancy on the Council.

E-Team Update – Dr. Gary Wiggins-VP Information Technology & Distance Learning

Dr. Wiggins stated that it is a top priority of Oklahoma State University to address the issue of faculty and staff salaries at the next session of the Regents.
Dr. Bosserman has announced that there will be no mandatory leave scheduled during the Christmas holiday.
Some of the more relevant things to happen within IT are the Microsoft campus agreement for employees (OSU owned machines) have been extended to students for free. This would include upgrades to software that can be downloaded or purchased, for a nominal fee, and charged to a students bursar account. This should be in effect by the end of September.

A transition from Lotus Notes to an exchange environment such as Microsoft Outlook and other applications is in the near future. OSU will own the current version of Lotus Notes when the contract is up in February 2004 but users will not be able to upgrade.

IT is developing a campus calendar that will be an internet based link to all events on campus. Letters to Deans, Directors, and Department Heads will ask them to appoint an individual who will be responsible for adding their departments’ events to the site. The “Top 30” events on campus will be scrolled on monitors in high traffic areas.

Portal services will be provided to students free of charge. Dr. Wiggins asked SAC to provide any suggestions they may have as to what portal services would be beneficial to staff and faculty. By definition a portal is a site featuring a suite of commonly used services, serving as a starting point and frequent gateway to the Web (Web portal) or a niche topic (vertical portal).

A task force will be formed in order to study the home pages for the OSU system. The goal is to seek a commonality between OSU and its branch campuses.

IT is also developing a document imaging system that is of interest to administration, and to be able to provide it campus wide. Imaging converts paper forms to electronic media.

There have been numerous complaints about cell phone service. OSU will be researching other vendors. Any thoughts on needs and preferences are welcome.

New changes in the Help Desk are in process. IT will be adding new student staff to cover the high volume of requests, but first they need the space to house them. The Help Desk may offer extended service hours in the future.

One of the most important tasks of Information Technology is security. A committee will be organized that will include different members of the OSU system to cover a spectrum of areas. The three main areas of interest are 1. Physical security and business continuity, 2. Security of servers, 3. Network security. A final report is expected late February 2004. SAC is welcome to offer any input.

**Report of University Committees**

**Diversity Advisory Board – Dr. Earl Mitchell**

The Affirmative Action Board originally created the Diversity Advisory Board in 1992. Although the board meets only twice a year, its subcommittees meet more often. The purpose of the board is to advise the Director of Affirmative Action, the Associate Vice President for Multicultural Affairs and/or the President in issues regarding diversity, affirmative action, and equal opportunity for all persons on campus. Membership of the board consists of every facet of campus that includes faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students.

**Can OU – Brenda Solomon**
The “Can OU” food drive has become a major contributor of donations from the Stillwater area to the Harvest II food drive. Brenda attended the SAC meeting to ask SAC members to help the food drive kickoff, in association with student efforts. SAC would help volunteer, disseminate information and basically cheerlead the drive. SAC agreed to help and will be getting more information on how.

Michael Bartley, Director of the United Methodist Wesley Foundation of OSU, spoke about the efforts of Southern Heights United Methodist Church in Stillwater, in association with the Wesley Foundation, to supply food to those in the Stillwater area as well as the OSU community. Their storehouse is located on Washington and is open to all in need.

**Flexible Compensation Benefits Committee – Billie Blackburn**

Billie could not attend the meeting but sent this report.

**Members Present:** Blackburn, Cooper, Fox, Harrison, Hunt, Lehenbauer, Raff, Reed, Shull, and Stromberg

**Members Absent:** Hare, Morris, and Poole

**Ex Officio, Ad Hoc Members and Guest:** Barfield, Matoy, Oehrtman, Payne, and Purdie

Terry Lehenbauer called the meeting to order.

New staff representative, Jon Hunt, was introduced.

The **agenda** was approved.

A draft of the **July minutes** was distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved as distributed.

Raff said he was asked how a person could get a fund added as an option for 457B other than those now offered. Matoy said that a request sent to her office from 25 employees that intend to contribute is all that is needed. She said that normally a sales person drives that process from the fund/company that is being requested. It was suggested by Raff that we should let employees know that this process is in place so it can be utilized. Matoy will write an article for **News You Can Use** for October. Hunt suggested that we start with a list of current vendors.

**Update from HR**  - Matoy distributed a News Release as well as a new rates table for Health Insurance for 2004. Matoy, Lehenbauer, and Cooper attended a meeting at OSEEGIB (Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board) in Oklahoma City on August 8 prior to OSEEGIB’s finalizing premium rates for 2004. When asked for input, OSU representatives expressed a preference for maintaining our benefits rather than reducing benefits to save premiums. The final decisions from those meetings are in the handouts. The increase in premiums is slightly less than anticipated, with a few changes in benefits but not all were detrimental. Major changes are removal of the $1 million cap for each insured person, co-pay increased by $5 to $25, but the deductible remains at $300/per person. Benefit election packets should be mailed to all employees in September.
Matoy heard from OU that they may go forward with an RFP for a different medical plan. She asked that they keep us informed.

**LTD Changes** - Matoy distributed a handout with 2 options for Long Term Disability. Option 1 - eliminated the 70% option and increase the rate on 60% option. Option 2 - increase the rate for 60% and 70% options. A motion to vote on the two options was made and seconded. The vote was to accept Option 2.

Matoy also distributed an **Update of Benefit Changes** that summarizes all of the changes that have gone into effect or will be going into effect this fall.

**Status Update on Maternity/Family Leave Recommendation** - No significant progress has been made on this item since the last meeting.

**Status Update on Change to the Employee Sick Leave Cap** - As indicated in the **Update of Benefit Changes** document provided by Matoy, accrued sick leave in excess of the 1,600-hour cap is being tracked and placed in an Extended Sick Leave Account beginning July 1, 2003. Employee records will be reviewed and sick leave amounts forfeited during the past ten years will be estimated and added to the Extended Account. At the present time, the Extended Account only applies to additional year of service credit for retirement benefit use by employees who joined OTRS prior to July 1, 1992.

**Task Force Update: Retirement Task Force** -

The task force has completed most of their work and the final report should be out by the middle of September. Barfield and others will meet with Tommy Beavers, OTR Executive Secretary, in September to go over our concerns with him and talk about where we are and what our next move will be.

Raff asked about our impressions regarding Tommy Beavers’ views on various OTR issues affecting OSU. Matoy said that is a good question - - he has not moved on some items we have requested, but Beavers has generally shown concern for the welfare of OTR members when considering changes.

**Task Force Update: Cafeteria Plan Task Force.**

Robin Purdie gave an overview of health promotion and wellness at OSU. One of the long-term goals of the Wellness Center is to help OSU become one of the healthiest campuses in America. Purdie provided a document comparing wellness programs across Big XII universities and other selected institutions. Additional information was provided about major health concerns in the U.S., such as obesity and lack of physical activity. The Wellness Center has formed a faculty/staff advisory board which has met three times.

Robert Oehrtman and Louisa Payne have been approved for appointment to the Cafeteria Plan Task Force. (They will also serve as non-voting ex officio members of FCBC.) Oehrtman will chair the task force, replacing John Wil guess who resigned earlier this year from this committee. The task force will continue work on the cafeteria plan and will prioritize items for implementation.
Information has been provided to recently appointed FCBC members about previous activity and accomplishments of the Cafeteria Plan Task Force.

Announcements/Additional Items - Lehenbauer announced the recent approval by the Regents of Martin Luther King Day as an OSU holiday.

A life insurance RFP (Request for Proposals) review committee has been established to work with Human Resources and the Segal Company in providing recommendations for selecting a new vendor for life insurance beginning in 2004. Shull, Fox, and Reed are serving on the committee. Their work is to be completed in time for a recommendation to be considered by the Regents at their October 24, 2003, meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Future meeting dates -  
  September 17th  
  October 15th  
  November 19th  
  December 17th

**ERIP (Early Retirement Incentive Program) – Donna Whitmore**

The committee has no report at this time.

**Faculty Council Update – Kathie Tanner**

**STATUS OF FACULTY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:**  
Faculty Council has a salary increase recommendation being reviewed and studied by the administration. Dr Bosserman spoke to this issue by advising the council that a Salary Expert is being hired by the University to review all salaries. The study is expected to be complete by the end of the fall semester.

The council’s Maternity/Family Leave recommendation is pending by the administration. Administration is currently awaiting the results of a Big XII survey coordinated by Human Resources before taking any further action.

Tulsa Bus Policy: the E-group has asked for additional thoughts on this issue. Dr. Schmidy would like to have one-two members of Faculty Council work with Jim Hess and Dr. Bosserman. No mention was made of staff representation.

**SPECIAL REPORTS:**  
**Dean Edward Johnson, Library:** explained to the Council how the Library Annex is being used and what types of items are being moved/stored in that location. The library is developing a website link that will describe those items to be moved and those items that have been moved.

**Dr Bosserman:**  
1) Updated the council on the retirement plan that took effect on 7/1/03. Anyone who believes that they qualify for pre 1993 benefits package should
check the web for employees link that tells if you do or not. If you have doubts even then, contact Ann Matoy’s office.

2) Early Retirement Incentives Program: There is NONE. The Dean of Agriculture brought forward a plan that was approved for Ag (agencies 2 & 3) only. The committee as well as plans that were implemented in the past is studying this plan. At present there is nothing in writing. Human Resources is looking at phased retirement.

3) Sick Leave: currently as has been presented, from July 1 forward any sick leave that would be counted as lost would be accounted for in a different “bucket”. HR is capable of going back 10 years and putting leave into the new “bucket.” Several members asked questions and Dr Bosserman responded that he will take these issues back to the committee for further review.

Dr David Schmidly:
Dr. Schmidly reviewed the duties of the Chief of Staff and the new Vice Presidents. An organizational chart was handed out for further explanation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Budget: Raises in history department? The raises in the history department were the result of “spousal accommodation” for new faculty or administrative personnel. The position is a non-tenured track position offered at market level pay. Other faculty making less were given appropriate raises as a result. There may be others on campus and these are being reviewed.
Campus Facilities: Dr. Gasem suggested that there be no charge for riding the on-campus buses. Discussion brought out several options at present: 1) Park Free and walk (remote parking areas) 2) park free and pay 75 cents (currently in place). Dr Bosserman will form a “parking committee”; Dr Gasem will chair this group that has been tasked with looking into providing no cost transportation (park and ride) to all on campus.
Faculty: “Story of Appendix D” video will be complete soon. Racial/ethnic policy review is in 3rd draft.
Rules & Procedures: review of bylaws is being pursued. Need to elect a new secretary.

OLD BUSINESS
NOC Update: Memorandum of Understanding stated NOC as alternative admission for students not eligible for OSU. Need Grad student impact and funding issues. These issues are not resolved and faculty disagrees with “alternative admission” instead of “remedial”.

Retirement Update: Dr Raff addressed the Newsletter #11 (hard copy being mailed) and thanked the administration for going ahead with the straight 11% retirement package.

NEW BUSINESS
2003 Christmas Holiday Mandatory Leave Recommendation: Carol Moder read the recommendation, faculty approved. Dr Schmidly accepted the recommendation and Dr Bosserman then stated that the university would remain open.

Branch Campus Reports
OSU-Com – No report
OSU-Okmulgee - No report

OSU-OKC – Kristi Garner

Kristi was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following report.

Our campus is kicking off the fall semester with a bang, on census day we have a 13% FTE increase! YEA! We are preparing for our annual Foundation fundraiser, Family Fund. The event will be held on October 30th. Also, for our annual community event the Halloween Blast will be held on Oct. 31st. That is about it at this time for the OKC campus.

OSU-Tulsa – Terry Dark

OSU-Tulsa recently announced plans to double enrollment to 5,000 students within the next 5 years.

In spite of a 10 percent budget reduction and layoffs to streamline administrative overhead, preliminary figures show OSU headcount has increased year to date to 2,305 students compared to 2,059 at the same time last fall. Credit hours, the number of course hours taken, have risen 13 percent year to date. The credit hour increase indicates students are taking more classes.

Undergraduate OSU programs, including mechanical engineering, American studies and business, have experienced significant growth. Preliminary figures show undergraduate headcount is spurring OSU-Tulsa’s growth with an 18 percent increase, and undergraduate credit hours are up 21 percent. More than 90 OSU undergraduate and graduate degree options are now available in Tulsa.

Report of Standing Committees

Awards & Recognition – Trisha Gedon

The Awards and Recognition Committee is gearing up for Staff Awards Day on Nov. 6. The list of pin recipients has been listed on the SAC web page. We also submitted a blurb about SAD for an upcoming payroll advice. It will be either the Sept. or Oct. one. They are unsure of space availability due to all of the benefits information that must be put on the payroll advice.

The years of service pins have been ordered. Employees with 25, 30, 35+ years of service, along with retirees who meet the pin-recipient requirements, will receive a years of service pin along with a Pistol Pete clock.

Policies, Benefits and Budget – Leslie Miller
Performance evaluations – we’re making good progress on the performance evaluations, and, with an extra meeting to be scheduled later this month, we hope to have samples available for comment next month.

Whistleblower protection policy – PB&B committee was approached by an OSU employee who was recently involved in a whistleblower incident here on campus. She discussed her negative experiences about the process, the lack of information available, and her concerns about retaliation, asking that SAC work with Administration to get an official “whistleblower” policy put in place. While OSU does not fall under the federal “Whistleblower Act,” we are not necessarily prohibited from developing our own policy. Other universities (such as the University of California) do have such policies. PB&B believes that such a policy would provide important guidance in the event of future incidents, so we would like to submit a “Whistleblower” policy recommendation to the council.

Affirmative Action Policy Amendment – In March 2001, SAC passed a recommendation to Administration asking that “sexual orientation” be included in OSU’s Affirmative Action/non-discrimination policy 1-0101. The Administration at that time replied that OSU legal council had advised against it, and referenced a “Reaffirmation Statement” issued in 1992 from the Office of the President that does include sexual orientation. However, it’s been two years, and we have a new president. The rest of the world continues to add sexual orientation to their non-discrimination clauses, including the University of Colorado and Wal-Mart. Therefore, PB&B would like to submit this recommendation again, with updated background information.

Bus Policy – It has been brought to PB&B’s attention that our new transit buses are now charging faculty and staff $.75 to ride from point A to point B on campus. We have several concerns about this, particularly:

In past meetings on parking issues, we have repeatedly been assured that affordable parking options would be provided. One of the options discussed was allowing employees to park at remote parking lots (for a reduced price parking permit) and ride the bus to main campus - for free. If employees will be charged $1.50 a day for getting to and from their job on top of a parking permit for the remote lot, it hardly seems like an affordable parking solution.

Retirement schedule feedback – PB&B committee members have been asked to provide feedback on the proposed retirement schedule. As of this date, we have not discussed this or looked into it as a group.
Affirmative Action Policy Amendment Recommendation

The Staff Advisory Council hereby recommends that Oklahoma State University Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy 1-0101 be amended to include “sexual orientation” in sections 1.02, 1.04, and 1.06 as follows:

1.02 to provide equal employment and/or educational opportunity on the basis of merit and without discrimination because of age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, veterans’ status, or qualified handicap.

1.04 to apply equal opportunity in the recruitment, hiring, placement, training, promotion, and termination of all employees; and to all personnel actions such as compensation, education, tuition assistance, and social and recreational programs. The University shall consistently and aggressively monitor these areas to ensure that any differences which may exist are the results of bona fide qualification factors other than age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, veterans’ status, or qualified handicap.

1.06 to provide and to promote equal educational opportunity to students in all phases of the academic program and in all phases of the student life program; and shall consistently and aggressively monitor these areas to ensure that any differences which may exist are the results of bona fide factors other than age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, veterans’ status, or qualified handicap.

Furthermore, we recommend that all university documents and policies addressing discrimination shall be reviewed, and, where categories are listed, “sexual orientation” shall be included.

Background for this recommendation:
As of the end 2002, it was legal to fire an employee because of their sexual orientation in 37 states, including Oklahoma. Since the last time SAC made this recommendation, OSU has changed presidents, and it is hoped that the new president will take a different stance on this issue. Additionally, another Big 12 University (Colorado) has added sexual orientation to their official policy. The University of Missouri has included it by executive order at their campuses in Columbia, Kansas City, St. Louis and Rolla. This leaves OSU, Baylor (a non-public school) and Texas Tech as the only Big 12 schools that do not include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies. Sexual orientation has already been added to clauses in OSU’s Student Handbook, and OSU colleges such as the College of Education include it in their own non-discrimination policies. Furthermore, at the end of 2002 over 61% of all Fortune 500 companies included sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies. In 2003, Wal-Mart added it. SAC asks, if Wal-Mart and the University of Oklahoma can add it, why can’t OSU?
“Whistleblower” Policy Recommendation

Staff Advisory Council, on behalf of all OSU employees, requests that Administration develop and implement an official “whistleblower” policy to protect and provide guidance to any OSU employee who discloses, threatens to disclose, or is about to disclose any activity, policy, or practice that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, OSU policy, or public health or safety requirement.

Background for this recommendation:
Earlier an OSU employee who had been involved in a whistle blowing incident on campus approached this summer the PB&B committee. She cited the need for such a policy based on her own (negative) experiences about the process. SAC believes that OSU employees need to know what to do in the event they find themselves in such a situation. They need to know what their rights are, and they need to feel safe that they will not be retaliated against. OSU needs to create an atmosphere where employees feel like they can and should come forward if they know someone is doing something illegal. A whistleblower policy would provide them (as well as their supervisors and fellow co-workers) with direction and guidance on how to handle these situations. One statement that particularly concerned the PB&B committee was when the employee said, “if I had to do it all over again, I wouldn’t.”

Council voted on this recommendation, it passed and will be sent to administration.

Public Relations – Hank Welliver

The Public Relations committee met on Monday September 8, 2003.

MLK Jr. Holiday

Hank would like the committee to come up with ideas for the upcoming MLK jr. holiday. We would like these ideas to encourage diversity and promote the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. and what he stood for. A few of the ideas from the meeting were to sponsor a speaker, sponsor a student organization such as Native American Student Assoc., and perhaps promote the showing of a documentary on Dr. King that would be open to the OSU community. Time is limited so the committee must come up with something by the end of November. Denise offered to speak with Dr. Mitchell to help us come up with more ideas.

Homecoming/Mum Sales

The committee brainstormed a new avenue for fundraising rather than selling mums. In the past, mums seemed to be a lot of work for little return. As a committee we agreed that Walkaround, during Homecoming, could become a big generator of funds. We thought selling hot chocolate could be very profitable. The overhead cost could be minimal and the demand very high if the weather is chilly. Lisa will check into the application process for Walkaround. If SAC approves of the new fundraising idea, Denise will be in charge of the sign up sheet for SAC volunteers to “person” the booth on that evening.
New Employee Orientation

In order to stop any confusion or miscommunication, Lisa will contact Sandy Barth in Human Resources and recommend HR have a copy of the SAC Brochure so they can make copies for the NEO as needed.

DSA Flyers

Hank will be working diligently on the flyer to promote the Distinguished Service Awards. This year the award was increased to $750.

The next meeting will be held on October 6, Room 302 Student Union from 2p-4p.

Rules & Procedures – Donna Whitmore

The Rules & Procedures committee did not meet this month.

Old Business – Sheryl Beeler

Sheryl took a moment to introduce SAC’s newest member, Christy Bunney who is a Development Assistant in the Posse Office. Christy was unable to attend the meeting. All of the positions for the Diversity Advisory Board have been filled. Carol Hackerott, A&P representative has been reappointed. Jan Barber, OSU/Com is a classified representative, and Sharmila Suhaib is a new A&P representative. Sheryl thanked them for their willingness to serve.

Sheryl attended a meeting with Carol Moder, Anne Matoy, and Dr. Bosserman regarding the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. At the meeting, Dr. Bosserman suggested a committee be formed to discuss this issue. Sheryl and Leslie Miller will be representing staff on this committee. Dates for those meetings have not been determined.

Regarding the Long-term disability policy, the policy is complete and Sheryl received a letter from administrating thanking SAC for our work on the policy and our response to the issues we addressed.

New Business - Sheryl Beeler

Sheryl addressed the vote for the recommendation from SAC to the administration regarding mandatory leave. The vote passed 19 in favor, 1 not in favor, and 1 abstain. Sheryl sent these results to Dr. Bosserman and President Schmidley on September 5, 2003. Sheryl received an overwhelming response from 350 staff members. Most of the staff was in favor of the shut down, however some staff did have concerns.

President Schmidley has tried to set up a time to visit with the council but his calendar will not permit it. The second option was to meet with the E-Team on November 25 and invite council members to be present. The meeting will be held in 412
Student Union from 1:30-2:30. The E-Team would then have their regular meeting afterwards. Mark your calendars.

Sheryl announced an A&P vacancy on SAC. Greg Hulett’s seat is now vacant. Jane Capenter was the next candidate in line during the voting process and is still interested in serving on the council. Sheryl asked if anyone knew of anybody else that was interested, there was none. Sheryl asked for a motion to accept Jane, one was made and seconded.

**Announcements:**

As SAC Chair, Sheryl attended the Leadership reception on September 4, 2003, this was an event open to all to come by and meet the OSU Leadership Team and members of the Board of Regents. The reception was followed by a banquet Friday evening. On September 5, Sheryl attended the Board of Regents meeting and Orange Peel that evening.

Meeting was adjourned.