

Marshall University Classified Staff Council June 18, 2009, MSC BE5

Members Present: Nina Barrett, Amber Bentley, Barbara Black, Teresa Bolt, Bernice Bullock, Mike Dunn, Toni Ferguson, Carol Hurula, Darrell Kendrick, Kimberly Lawson-Murphy, Leonard Lovely, Okey Napier, Cynthia Obregon, Kris Standifur, Patsy Stephenson

Members Absent: Darlene Colegrove, Betty Cook, Virgil Crockett, Jennifer Jimison, Sherri Noble, Shirley Oden, Jan Parker, Joe Wortham

Guests: Mr. Bill Bissett, Mr. Bill Burdette, Dr. Stephen Kopp, Mr. Bill Lewis, Senator Robert Plymale, Mr. Robert Shell, Ms. Lu Ann South, Mr. Jim Stephens, Ms. Amy Williams

The meeting was called to order at 1:40 p.m. by Chair Mike Dunn.

Senator Robert Plymale – WV Legislature

Senator Plymale discussed the following:

- Legislative Session – Senator Plymale believes the session, though long, was productive. He said the legislature has their work cut out for them with a six-month window for interim studies.
- Personnel Study - Senator Plymale believes there is about a 90% agreement on the personnel study in the Legislature. He proposes that the legislature hire a professional to do the interim study in order to meet the December deadline. The House, Senate and President have agreed; it is now in the hands of the Speaker.
- Bond Issue - The Bond issue passed twice in the Senate under two separate bill numbers. Neither bill was taken up in the House. EAST (Education, Arts, Science, and Tourism) Bonds will be coming out soon with monies going to higher education, state parks and repairs to the capitol building. Senator Plymale indicated that about 60% of the money from the bonds would go to higher education; he expects that MU will receive about 25 million for an engineering building. The University will be responsible for raising the matching 25 million.
- Promise Scholarship -The original cost of the Promise Scholarship was about 27 million; the current cost is 43 million. Senator Plymale sees this as a good investment. He also believes raising the standards of this merit-based scholarship is a good thing; students have continued to meet the higher standards. Four year funding for the program is also now in place.
- Budget – The Senator feels the budget turned out favorable to the University. The budget situation could, however, be bad in the near future if some of the legislative actions (tax on coal) continue in DC. Since cuts were not needed in the 2008-09 fiscal year, extra money was put into one-time projects so as not to incur long-term debts. Half of the money that goes into stimulus is being held back for next year to soften the expected financial blow.
- Research Bill – Senator Plymale sees the Research Bill, which passed this year, as a great first step. It looks at the two research universities in the state (WVU and MU) in a co-equal manner. The split was 70/30 with WVU receiving more. This is fair, according to the Senator, because WVU, as the land-grant institution, has greater resources. If, however, MU raises the amount the next time the funding is awarded, he would like to change the percentage to get the two institutions a little more equal.

Senator Plymale opened the floor to questions:

I'm very concerned about PEIA increases. Do you think the Finance Board will vote on it? Any thoughts on the matter? The Board will vote on an increase sometime this fall. Because of the manner in which it has been managed, we have had fewer increases than other states. We also can pull down on the reserve funds. Long-term issues include inflation rate on health care and OPEB (other post

employment benefits) debt. The Legislature will probably take up this issue. Every current employee is currently paying 26%-30% of the premium of retirees.

Are you aware of how far down the funding for staff salaries is at MU compared to the rest of higher ed? That is relief we have to give from the capitol bonds. Senator Plymale's thoughts: a third of bonds should apply to faculty and staff salaries, one third, to a reduction in fees for students, and a third to institutional mission. Not all of the money to fund the salary schedule can come from Marshall; it has to come from the state.

What can we do to help? Talk to your representatives about the issues that concern you and encourage them to move in the right direction and do the right thing.

Can you elaborate on hiring a professional to study the (personnel) study? To make precise future decisions in personnel, someone with a base knowledge, ideas and experience in the area is needed. At present, there is no one at the HEPC to take on this task. To hire in this manner, frees the Commission from an RFP; the individual can begin right away with an established deadline. This will enable the project to be completed in a timely manner. Senator Plymale will be talking with the President on this topic. He feels it will be money well spent.

Senator Plymale indicated willingness to meet with Council at any time. He is also willing to come to campus during the middle of the legislative session, perhaps for a later afternoon meeting so he can update staff on the session.

Dr. Stephen Kopp – University President

Dr. Kopp discussed the following:

- The IBOG met earlier today. Although a possible 5-10% budget reduction was anticipated (worst case scenario), the University stayed even with state appropriations. A tuition and fee increase was put into place which adds \$169/semester to the cost of tuition and fees. There will be no increases in salaries for personnel. Funding for promotions, reclassifications, and equity issues, has been included in the budget. Structural changes in the budget largely on the academic side are needed.
- Admissions applications remain up 11.4%. FASFA forms are up by about the same amount. Orientation registration has also increased. The President is cautiously optimistic that there will be a 4-4.5% increase in freshmen this fall. The Admissions and Recruiting staffs are maintaining contact with students who express an interest in Marshall. The President stressed his goal to not only grow enrollment but to increase student retention.
- The President is committed to finding a way to fully fund the salary schedule. He asked Council for ideas/suggestions to do so.
- Dr. Kopp discussed budget concerns at length and stressed that we are all in this together and together we have to find a solution. He expressed his commitment and that of the BOG to find workable solutions to the issues the University faces.

The President opened the floor to questions:

Are we in danger of having furloughs this year? Dr. Kopp does not think this is an issue unless there is a call back of state funds at some point in the new fiscal year. If that should happen, the administration would have to do what they could to restructure the budget. At present, no plans are in place to furlough employees.

Where do we stand on the discussion at last month's meeting concerning maximizing building use during the summer? All information concerning summer building use (academic and other) is being logged into a database which will be analyzed and utilized for next summer's scheduling.

Is the Career Services Center moving? At present, the administration is looking into all options.

Is the MCTC moving to Fifth Avenue and 20th Street? No. The University is buying all property MCTC purchased under the MU BOG. They (MCTC) will locate elsewhere.

Why are the stadium lights on in the middle of the day? Isn't that expensive? The President will have Bill Bissett check into the matter. He believes the type of lights used at the stadium deteriorate if they are not on periodically; it is expensive to have them replaced.

Since there is no money for staff raises, could staff have free parking for the summer? The President will take this under consideration.

Why does landscaping plant so many annuals during the year? The annuals bloom all summer so the landscaping has color all season; perennials bloom only at a certain time. Also, perennials are more expensive to purchase and maintain than annuals. The suggestion was made to have folks donate perennials from their gardens rather than purchase them. This idea was taken under advisement.

Mr. Jim Stephens – Human Resources

Catastrophic Leave Bank:

- The balance in the General Leave Bank for the month ending April 2009: 2740.54 hours (365.40 days). No donations were received or used during the month of May.
- There were three active catastrophic leave Applications in the month of May. These applications are using leave donated specifically in the employee's behalf by others, not drawn down from the General Leave Bank.
- The balance ending May 2009 is 2740.54 hours (365.40 days).

Emeritus Status:

- Copies of the Request for Emeritus Status form were distributed. A copy of this form is on file in the Staff Council Office. The intention is to work with Academic Affairs and have one form which would serve all three areas of employees; faculty, non-classified and classified.
- The application would be submitted by a vice-president to the HR Office for review of eligibility. If the HR Office deems the employee has met the criteria, the form would be forwarded to the Office of the President for approval.
- Upon approval of the President, the HR Office would notify the ID and Parking Offices with a copy of the signed form.
- Mr. Stephens asked for verification of the Council recommendation regarding the Emeritus Policy. He also asked Council members to review the form and forward any suggestions/corrections/changes to his attention.
- Mr. Stephens raised the following question: The Request for Emeritus Status form references the Board of Governors policy from the Academic Affairs side and the Staff Council recommendation. The BOG policies are available on line. Would it be all right for HR Services to post the Council recommendation on this subject until an HR Services procedure can be approved and posted? Mike gave Mr. Stephens permission to scan the recommendation and include it on the HR policy page web site. Mr. Stephens also hopes to provide the Council with a proposed HR Services procedure that would reflect the essentials of the Council recommendation and also include instructions for the use of the form.

Mr. Stephens opened the floor to questions:

Could this information be forwarded to the Service Awards Committee? Mr. Stephens agreed to send approved applications to the Council Office. The Council Office will send them to the appropriate persons.

Who makes the final decision as to whether an individual receives Emeritus Status? HR Services runs an audit to make sure the applicant has 20 years of service and is in Retiree status. The President, however, is the final decision maker.

Approval of Minutes:

The May 21st minutes were approved as written.

ACCE Report – Mike Dunn

Mike will prepare and distribute written reports for the ACCE and IBOG meetings. He announced that Verna Gibson will serve as IBOG Chair. Vice Chair is John Hess and Mike Sellards is Secretary.

Committee Reports:

Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett (in Joe Wortham’s absence) – The Election Committee recently met and recommends to Council that the vacancy created by the untimely death of Janis Winkfield be filled by the next person in line according to number of votes received. Another vacancy has been created in the same EEO group by the resignation of Kimberly Lawson-Murphy. Nina made a motion which was seconded by Leonard Lovely, that Council approve awarding Janis Winkfield's position to Jan Parker and provisionally approve awarding Kimberly Lawson-Murphy's position to Annalisha Johnson, the next candidate in line (pending Annalisha's acceptance). Motion passed.

Announcements – Mike Dunn

Mike reminded committee chairs that their end-of year reports are due. Reports have been submitted by Betty Cook and Joe Wortham.

Mike recognized and presented certificates of appreciation to the following out-going Staff Council members: Teresa Bolt, Darlene Colegrove, Cynthia Obregon, Shirley Oden and Patsy Stephenson.

Mike presented the gavel to incoming Chair, Nina Barrett.

There being no more business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Minutes taken & prepared by: _____
Charlene R. Hawkins, Program Assistant, Staff Council

Minutes approved by: _____
Michael Dunn, Chair, Staff Council

Minutes read by: _____
Stephen J. Kopp, University President