

SHSU STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES

January 14, 2004

Meetings of the Staff Council are open to all SHSU staff employees but certain issues may be discussed by the Staff Council in closed session at the discretion of the Council Chair. Please feel free to contact any member of the Staff Council with concerns you feel need to be addressed at our meetings. We request that agenda items be submitted at least one week prior to a scheduled meeting.

The Sam Houston State University Staff Council met on Wednesday, January 14, 2004 in the Lowman Student Center, Room 315 with twenty one (21) regular members and four (4) alternates present. Keith Jenkins, Chair, opened the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

There was one noted change to the minutes from the November 12, 2003 Staff Council Meeting—there was an extra “the” in the second paragraph that needed to be deleted. Cathi Gillette made a motion to accept the minutes and Janis Lawrence seconded. The Council unanimously approved the minutes with the indicated change. (After the meeting, I noticed that one person had been mistakenly listed as the Chair of the Public Relations Committee instead of the Staff Development Committee and I made that change as well.)

Under Old Business were reports from the various committee chairs.

- 1) Debbie Birdwell, Chair of the Public Relations Committee, reminded us that the Walker County Fair is coming up and we will be looking into some type of participation in that event. There will be more discussion on this issue at our next meeting.
- 2) Lucrecia Neff, Chair of the Communications Committee, had no report.
- 3) Suzette Kohers, Chair of the Administrative Issues Committee, reported on several issues assigned to that committee.
 - (a) The issue of the parking stickers versus parking tags is still being explored. We decided that we should approach the Faculty Senate with this issue since both the staff and the faculty would be affected by any decisions made concerning this issue. We will mention it to members of the Faculty Senate and we hope it is on their agenda for discussion at their Faculty Senate meeting Thursday of this week. More investigation will be done with additional reports coming at our next meeting.
 - (b) We are still checking into having University vehicles, currently parked in regular faculty/staff parking lots, moved over to Bowers Stadium or over to Sam South so they will not be taking up parking spaces for working faculty/staff. With all the current construction in progress on campus, parking spaces in the faculty/staff parking lots are at a premium and University vehicles take up valuable space every day when they could be parked elsewhere. This committee will be contacting the appropriate departments to see what can be done with these vehicles.
 - (c) A written proposal was brought to the Staff Council concerning the request to have a day off for full-time, benefits eligible staff on their birthdays. Suzette Kohers made a motion to accept the proposal and forward it to the President for his consideration and Dorothy Roberson seconded the motion. The Staff Council voted and unanimously agreed to forward that proposal.
 - (d) The issue of losing holiday time that falls on weekends has become a major issue and it was proposed that a survey be developed to poll the staff concerning holiday time. Dorothy Roberson made a motion to proceed with the development of the survey and Debbie Birdwell seconded that motion. The Staff Council unanimously agreed to continue investigating this issue, developing the survey, distributing the survey to all staff and bringing a recommendation back to the

Council at a future meeting.

- (e) The issue of physical fitness flex-time during the business week was mentioned again. Some information has been gathered and presented about how this issue is handled at other colleges/universities. There will be additional exploration into this issue and additional information brought back to the Council for consideration.
4. Sue Knight, Chair of the Staff Development Committee, reported that her committee is still investigating what other schools are doing in the area of Staff Development.
5. Larry Brown, Chair of the Campus Enhancement Committee, reported that his committee has not met yet because of the holidays and registration but they will meet before the next scheduled meeting of the Staff Council.

It was brought to our attention that the installation of the Rainbow Rock sidewalks was a decision made by the Chancellor of the Board of Regents. The University Safety Committee will be approaching the President's Cabinet about the possibility of applying a textured coating to the top of the gravel to help alleviate hazardous walking conditions. This would be a clear topping and would not block or distort the appearance of the stones. The Safety Committee felt that if they approached them with only the inclines at this time that maybe in the future they could expand approval to the other surfaces across campus. Since this issue does not only affect staff but also the faculty, it was suggested that this issue be mentioned to the Faculty Senate for possible discussion so we could possibly have support from both groups in what we feel is a safety hazard on campus.

The Alumni Bell Tower will be installed in the current location of the large Christmas Tree and will be dedicated in October.

The location of the new Visitor Center will be on the west-side of the Estill Building.

The ad hoc committee concerning a staff survey, is still working on this project and will bring it to the Council when completed.

We had several items brought to the attention of the Staff Council under New Business and, if needed, they will be sent to committees for further investigation.

1. Faculty/Staff Terminology – References to events/programs/etc. involving both faculty and staff should be referred to as such (i.e. Faculty/Student Mentoring Program– promotional items, public articles, etc.– should be referred to as Faculty/Staff/Student Mentoring Program). This is just one example. This is simply a reminder to some about being “politically correct” and not to exclude references to the staff when staff are involved.
2. We would like to have articles on staff accomplishments and honors to be included in the Staff Council Newsletter and possibly on the SHSU web site and will be asking staff to submit information for publication.
3. Information was brought to the Council concerning Life Insurance for TRS Retirees. Additional information can be obtained in Sue Knight's office if anyone is interested in examining what the state is considering for these retirees.
4. It was decided by the Council that the issues of incentives for advanced education and/or training and the waiving of fees for children of full-time faculty/staff would be sent to the Administrative Issues Committee for further investigation. It was also decided that we would approach the Faculty Senate with the waiving of fees for children issue because this affects them as well.
5. The list of local vendors distributed to the Staff Council members at the October 8, 2003 meeting was not an updated list. Some of the vendors appearing on that list do not accept purchase orders or spot purchases and needed to be deleted from the list. Purchasing will be investigating this further and will get back with us.
6. We also had a lengthy discussion concerning the TIBH requirements for purchasing–

being forced to order from TIBH organizations, having to order in larger quantities than needed, and in some cases paying higher prices. A lack of choice of vendors when ordering, possibly not having sufficient storage space for the larger quantities that must be ordered, and limited and/or tight budgets were some of the concerns mentioned. We had no answers and no suggestions at this time and don't know if anything can be done, but further investigation may be warranted.

7. A suggestion was made that the Staff Council may want to establish a Staff Grievance Committee similar to the Faculty Grievance Committee; also, we may want to ensure staff representation on other committees that affect staff where we may currently not have representation.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 11, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowman Student Center, Room 315.

Suzette Kohers moved to adjourn the meeting and Sue Knight seconded. All members present agreed and the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Terri Harvey, Secretary
SHSU Staff Council