

SHSU STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES

October 8, 2003

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, October 8, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowman Student Center, Room 315 with nineteen (19) regular members and four (4) alternates present.

Cindy Allbright, Chair-Elect, opened the meeting in Keith Jenkins absence.

The first order of business was the reading of the minutes of the last meeting by Council members. There were no changes and/or corrections to the minutes. Debbie Birdwell moved to accept the minutes as written and Dorothy Roberson seconded. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the Council.

The first speaker for this meeting was Mr. Ted Michael, Director of Human Resources. He addressed several questions we had given him prior to this meeting then asked for additional questions. Some of the topics he addressed were:

1. Question – Who decides what staff holidays are awarded? Answer – The State Legislature decides how many days we will be able to take for holidays. Human Resources decides what holidays we will be taking according to the academic calendar. Holidays that fall on weekends are still counted toward the maximum number of days that can be taken off, therefore, the number of actual days off for holidays may vary from one year to another. Staff members are allowed to “swap” one holiday for another and approval would come from the department level. Holiday schedules are set once every year. To change a holiday schedule would take Board of Regents approval. Mr. Michael suggested a survey to all staff asking what holidays they want off if we are unhappy with the current schedule. This will be taken to the Administrative Committee for further consideration. Dorothy Roberson will also be checking on the ability to have Staff Council representation on the Calendar Committee.
2. Question – Who decides who can pull time from the sick leave pool? Can the staff designate who they want their relinquished sick leave to go to? Can the policy be changed? Answer – We cannot designate who sick leave is awarded to. Mr. Michael evaluates the request forms and decides who qualifies for additional leave from the sick leave pool. The maximum number of days that one person can pull from the sick leave pool is 180 days. If a staff member wants to give some of their sick leave to the sick leave pool they must fill out a form and return it to Human Resources. Emergency Sick Leave requests are evaluated and decided by President Gaertner. Mr. Michael suggested that anyone wanting additional information on any policies from Human Resources to check them out on the HR website.
3. Question – Who decides what the maximum limit is for vacation time accrued? Answer – Vacation limits are set by the State Legislature.
4. Question – Why are step-parents not included under the bereavement leave approval list of family members? Answer – This is another case where the State Legislature makes the decision on who is considered as “immediate family members.”
5. Question – Can staff members who work overtime be paid instead of having to take comp time? Answer – If the staff member is a non-exempt staff employee, the employee’s department has the option of paying the employee for overtime versus taking time off. This

will depend mostly on whether or not the department has the funds to pay for overtime and/or what their departmental policy is concerning overtime.

Mr. Michael also addressed the fact that local policies concerning the staff may be changed through the President's Office but state policies would have to be changed by contacting the State Auditor's Office and must be changed through the State Legislature.

Our next speaker for the meeting was Mr. John Hitzeman, Director of Purchasing. He addressed several questions as well:

1. Question – Why won't some local vendors accept purchase orders, spot purchase orders, etc.?
Answer – Some SHSU departments were not submitting their receipts in a timely manner, paperwork was not done, payments to the local vendors were not being made. Mr. Hitzeman passed out a list of local vendors that do accept SHSU purchase orders, etc. Wal-Mart has gone started accepting company credit cards for purchases. SHSU does not have "company credit cards" for purchasing purposes and, therefore, cannot buy from Wal-Mart. It was mentioned that the University had started looking into a "company credit card" for purchasing purposes. There were several comments concerning this possibility both pros and cons. The result of this inquiry will be decided by the administration.

Debbie Birdwell, Chair of the Public Relations Committee, reported that the President's Halloween Party was asking if the Staff Council would volunteer to organize the costume parade during the festivities. If anyone is interested in helping with this event please contact Debbie.

Under New Business new questions mentioned were: Can we have a policy about a minimum distance from building entry doors for smoking? Can we move ashtrays away from the doors? Is there any interest or knowledge of changing to 4-day work weeks? It was suggested that the staff have a survey similar to the Faculty Senate survey concerning administration. This will be taken under consideration but would not be done until the Spring semester.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 12, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowman Student Center, Room 315.

Jacob Spradlin moved to adjourn the meeting and Sue Knight seconded. All members present agreed and the meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Terri Harvey, Secretary
SHSU Staff Council