

SHSU STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES

November 12, 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, November 12, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowman Student Center, Room 304 with twenty (20) regular members, three (3) alternates, and one (1) visitor present. Keith Jenkins, Chair, opened the meeting at 1:34 p.m. We did not have a set agenda for this meeting so Keith began the meeting with Old Business.

Dorothy Roberson indicated there were two changes and/or corrections that needed to be made to the minutes from the October 8, 2003 meeting. References to how often the holiday schedule was set was changed from “once every two years” to “once every year” and the to change a holiday schedule would take “Board of Regents” approval not “Coordinating Board” approval. Dorothy Roberson made a motion to accept the minutes with the two changes and the motion was seconded by Debbie Birdwell. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote of the Council.

Keith asked for reports from the various committees with the following results:

1. Lucrecia Neff, Chair of the Communications Committee – no report.
2. Debbie Birdwell, Chair of the Public Relations Committee – reported that both the President’s Halloween Carnival and the American Heart Walk were great successes with much help and support from the SHSU Staff Council. Sam Houston State University was rated number 1 in fund raising for the American Heart Walk (held on Saturday, November 1, 2003) and the Staff Council walkers for this event numbered 26.
3. Sue Knight, Chair of the Public Relations Committee – no report.
4. Suzette Kohers, Chair of the Administrative Issues Committee – reported that, in reference to the question concerning across-the-board or merit raises on campus, a final decision has not been made. Keith noted that he had discussed this with the President and the President said that we should have a more definite answer after the upcoming Board of Regents meeting. Mike Yarborough reported that several colleges/universities had been contacted about parking permits for staff. Some of the other schools do an automatic payroll deduction for paying for the parking stickers and several of them have hanging tags rather than actual stickers. There was no recommendation from that committee at this time for action to be taken. More investigation will be done with additional reports coming at our next meeting.
5. Campus Enhancement Committee – no report.

The Staff Council held a “Meet and Greet” function on Wednesday, October 22, 2003 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. It was a good time for university personnel to meet their representatives on the Staff Council, eat lunch, and discuss any issues they felt needed to be discussed at Staff Council meetings. Discussion was had on ways to get a better showing for the next one we may have. Some suggestions were to have refreshments and/or a map showing staff where the gathering would be held (some staff members did not know where the Farrington Annex was on campus). We will continue to consider new ideas about future gatherings.

It was important to bring to everyone’s attention that the Accounting Department on campus was not responsible for SHSU not being allowed to use Wal-Mart for purchases. There were departments on campus that did not submit their receipts from purchases at Wal-Mart and bills were not being paid in a timely manner. This was one reason we are no longer allowed to purchase from Wal-Mart. Maybe sometime in the future we will be able to purchase items from them again. We will be looking into this in the future.

Keith mentioned that several staff members had requested a staff satisfaction survey, similar to the faculty survey done on campus, be developed. The Council agreed that this would be a good idea and would do more investigation into the possibility of doing one in the Spring. It was also suggested that we form an ad hoc committee to develop the survey and bring it to the Council for approval.

Under New Business several questions and/or suggestions were mentioned:

1. Can something be done about the pebble sidewalks? This is considered a safety hazard and many people have fallen in the past. What can we do?

2. It was suggested that we investigate the possibility of developing on-going, in-house training workshops for staff concerning rules, regulations, procedures, etc. There would be required attendance for representatives from each office area. We felt it important that these training sessions be mandatory and the supervisors be very supportive of their employees attending these sessions.

3. It was proposed that the Staff Council sponsor a holiday reception. The holiday reception was set for Monday, December 15, 2003 in the Lowman Student Center, Room 320 from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served and the reception will be open to all staff of SHSU. Debbie Birdwell is chairing this endeavor.

4. Keith mentioned to the Council an idea that other colleges/universities recognize, and some term a "Heritage Day", where staff members are allowed to have their birthday off without having it counted as a vacation day. This little "perk" would go a long way toward staff morale. Further review is needed and additional information will be brought back to the Staff Council.

5. It was also presented that some colleges/universities allow time off during the week for physical fitness—i.e. 3 hours per week for physical fitness. The Council agreed that preventive medicine makes for a healthier employee and that we should contact other schools to discover how many take advantage of this type of "preventive medicine."

6. A discussion ensued concerning the Faculty/Staff General Meeting held at the beginning of the Fall semester. The 2003 Faculty/Staff General Meeting was held on Tuesday, August 19th during registration. Because this is a very busy time for offices and departments on campus many faculty and staff members could not attend the meeting. Several suggestions were made on how the date of this meeting may be changed to allow for greater attendance at what the Council considers an important meeting. One solution would be to hold the General Meeting the Friday before registration begins (next year this would be August 13, 2004). This date would allow more faculty and staff to attend because classes will not have begun yet and registration would not be keeping faculty and/or staff members from attending. The only item keeping personnel from attending this General Meeting would be their personal decision not to attend or a supervisor's decision not to allow them to attend. Another suggestion would be to have the Meeting within the next few weeks after classes have begun—preferably on a Friday. There are several departments that do not hold classes on Fridays and there are not many Friday afternoon classes. This would restrict some attendance but would still be considered a viable option (Friday – August 20th or 27th). This issue will be investigated further and information brought back to the Council.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 17, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lowman Student Center, Room 315. (Our regularly scheduled meeting would have been on Wednesday, December 10, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. but this fell during final exams and would have affected many Staff Council members and their ability to attend the meeting. Therefore, we pushed our next meeting back one week and will meet the week after finals.)

Jacob Spradlin moved to adjourn the meeting and Mike Yarborough seconded. All members present agreed and the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Terri Harvey, Secretary
SHSU Staff Council