2004-2005 Staff Council Officers
President: Deborah Rupp
Vice President: B J Yergens
Secretary: San Miller
Parliamentarian: Charlotte Petrek

STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES
Wednesday, October 20, 2004

SC Members Present: Carolyn Alexander, Renee Bazemore, David Bledsoe, Heather Blevins, Karlease Bradford, Shelia Bradley, Kyle Bruner, Melissa Buchheit, Vernessia Callahan, Kevin Chappell, Corey Cook, Natasha Davenport, Dawn Davis, Patricia Early, Sue Fagan, Sally Fowler, Sandra Garber, Mary Anne Gaunt, Tazar Gissentanner, Frank Hall, Melody Harris, June Houston, Johnathan Keith, Thomas Kersey, Steven Lester, Katie Lowry, Gwendolyn Maddox, Yvonne Mangiarancina, Tammy Merck, Jean Miller, Sandra Miller, Michelle Pettway-Lavender, Wandra Ponder, Debbie Rupp, Preeti Sagar, Ellen Semple, Michelle Swain, Tracy Van Voris, Anita Webb, and B.J. Yergens.


SC Members Absent: Regina Bryant, Cliveita Caesar, Ronda Christian, Carolyn Codamo, Danny Darby, Tiffany Franklin, Kim Harris, Jerry Knox, Bonte Mitchell, Larry Pankey, Maria Trejo, and Henry Winston.

Staff Senators: Kyle Bruner, Carolyn Codamo, Sally Fowler, Sandra Garber, Mary Anne Gaunt, John Medlock, Jean Miller, Sandra Miller, Charlotte Petrek, Debbie Rupp; Leslie and B. J. Yergens.

Guests: Monica Nance, Beth Flannigan, Sherene Collis, Alice Rollins, Corrin Sorteberg, and Beth Jones.

Call to Order and Minutes:
The meeting was called to order by SC President, Debbie Rupp, who thanked everyone for their attendance and reminded the group that they should bring a friend or buddy to the next Staff Council meeting. The Staff Council September 15, 2004 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Dr. Patton:
Dr. Carl Patton updated the Staff Council membership as to the University. The good news included discussions as to: the University's highest quality of the students enrolled this year; the approving and finalizing of the Piedmont Ellis property for a Spring 2005 Semester groundbreaking with construction to begin in August and an anticipated Fall 2007 Semester opening; the Comprehensive Campaign breaking a record at the 125 Million Dollars mark will be a November 5, 2004 celebration event to observe the benchmark and the kick off for the upcoming Campaign; and, the University’s entrance into the Colonial Athletic Association, which would impact Georgia State University’s reputation since the Association’s groups were also ranked higher academically than those schools in the previous conference.

Dr. Patton addressed the group as to the budget noting that the facts were not bright. Thirty percent of the operating budget comes from the State with the balance from tuition, and donations and/or contributions from friends of the University. The University has grown by 5,000 students even with budget cuts. It has raised private dollars; eliminated costs, such as the course catalog no longer being printed, but available online; and reduced support for staff with some jobs not filled or to part-time faculty. With the Board of Regents (BOR) not increasing tuition midyear, the BOR, however, took a one-time adjustment for the current budget year resulting in a University budget cut of $3.5 Million Dollars, but a returning for the upcoming budget year to a $7.3 Million Dollars. With the Senate Budge Committee and FACP looking at the revenues and the budget, Dr. Patton requested that if anyone had any budget suggestions that they contact Debbie Rupp. Dr. Patton suggested that the SC Representatives contact their friends, neighbors,
and others to express their concerns about the general status of higher education in Georgia during this budget crisis. He also reiterated that college graduates earn more than high school graduates, and that higher education should be a priority in the State. During the question and answer period, Dr. Patton encouraged the group to also attend the upcoming Town Hall meeting on October 26, 2004 regarding any budget updates.

**Other Speakers:**
Corrin Sorteberg, Human Resources, updated the group as to the changes in Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), formerly known as Tuition Remission. The process has been streamlined with BOR approval to use a website which become a generic on-line application. Applications cannot be faxed and the deadlines cannot be adjusted. All employees must have worked for the University for a minimum of six months. November 15 is the application deadline for the Spring 2005 Semester. She suggested that is someone is awaiting acceptance to a college, and has not received that acceptance prior to the application deadline, that an application can be applied for with the caveat that the individual must meet the application criteria. If you have any questions regarding TAP, please contact HR (404/651-1348) or visit the website http://www.usg.edu/admin/humres/benefits/tuition/.

Beth Jones, Finance and Administration, continued the budget update discussion and reiterated that the current year requested budget cut was due to the adjustment in the Health Reserve which was taken down to a 30 day reserve. The University’s share of the budget cut (approximately 7.3M) is a permanent cut. When asked about the new childcare facility, she clarified that the University does operate the facility and the employees were also now University employees.

**Ad Hock Staff Council Identity Committee**
BJ Yergens discussed that Committee had identified some changes, including a name change, and requested volunteers to work on the Committee as well as to share ideas. She is researching the cost and design of lapel pins to identify Staff Council Representatives. Debbie thanked BJ for the new logo.

Mary Nell Stone has ordered a drape using the new Staff Council logo. Thank you, Mary Nell.

**USGSC Regional Meeting**
BJ reported that at the recent meeting in Columbus that there was a seminar on the adoption of alternatives to dispute resolution procedures. She noted that Dr. Henry has felt that there has been a need to sort out and reorganize the information as to how to file grievances if one is a faculty, staff, or student. Karlease Bradford stated that UGA and Clayton have information on their websites as to shared leave policy. Shelia Bradley told the group that the USGSC sent a letter to the Chancellor regarding the budget cuts.

**Staff Senator and Staff Council Committee Reports:**
Due to time constraints, no oral reports, with the exception of the Benefits Committee which note it is working on a donated or shared leave policy, were presented to the Staff Council.

**New Business:**
The group was updated to the election of Debbie Rupp to the University Senate Executive Committee after being nominated by Jean Miller.

Welcome to our new University Senator Mary Anne Gaunt.

Remember to check the updates on the SC website, and thanks to Mary Nell for all the updates including the Senator listing.

Commendations to the Communications Committee for today’s Benefits Employee Information Day.

FASA has an upcoming Open House and remember to participate in the Fall Lunch and Learn series.

The meeting was adjourned.

Please contact San Miller, sanmiller@gsu.edu, if there are any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes. Thank you.

Meeting notes respectively submitted by: San Miller