STAFF COUNCIL MINUTES
August 17, 2005
Room 465 University Center

Members Present: Carolyn Alexander, Amber Amari, Angela Arnold, Renee Bazemore, Victor Bolet, Shelia Bradley, Melissa Brenneman, Olveita Caesar, Vernessia Callahan, Natasha Davenport, Dawn Davis, Deborah Dunbar, Patricia Early, Sandra Garber, MaryAnne Gaunt, Frank Hall, June Houston, Katie Lowry, Jan McCord, Jean Miller, Sandra Miller, Debbie Rupp, Preeti Sagar, Kenee Stephens, Jeffrey Stockwell, Michelle Swain, Randy Trammell, Angela Turk, Anita Webb and Rhonda Williams.


Members Absent: Ruby Hopkins, Carol Miller, Larry Pankey, Charlotte Petrek, and Maria Trejo.

Guest: Wendy Bigham, Dethra Giles and Veronica Trammell

The meeting was called to order by Staff Council President Debbie Rupp at 3:05 p.m. Debbie welcomed and thanked everyone for coming.

Approval of the Minutes: Debbie asked for a motion to accept the July 20, 2005 Staff Council minutes. A motion was made; it was seconded and passed. The minutes were approved.

Debbie advised everyone of a new program at the recreation center for new moms and moms-to-be; “Fit for 2”. The program teaches moms how to safely engage in exercise pre and post baby. Dethra Giles completed the program and will be one of the instructors.

Grievance procedure: Dethra Giles, Director of Employee Relations
The grievance procedure was in need of major changes and the revisions are completed. The 1st level of appeal is to the supervisor and then the grievance panel. The panel is made up of five people; two chosen by the grievant/employee; two chosen by the department and one chair chosen by the Office of Employee Relations.

In the past the entire Staff Council was asked to be a part of the selection pool for the panel. Each time there was a grievance panel they would have to be trained. Many people felt they were not
properly trained to serve on the committee. Now the idea is to have a select group of people already trained and ready to serve on the panel. Panelists will have adequate information on the role and responsibilities of the grievance procedure. The grievance process happens quickly, the turn around time to review information is very short. There is an average of seven to ten grievances per year that goes before the panel but an average of 10 grievances filed per month.

Please give Dethra any suggestions on how Staff Council would like to put together the selection pool.

Questions from the floor:
How long will someone serve on the panel?  *The length of time is not yet determined; it would be nice to establish a rotating term to coincide with Staff Council term.*

How long is training? *The training can take place at the Annual Staff Council Retreat and it would take no more than two hours. It would explain how the process works, walk through the grievance process and do a mock panel session to help alleviate any fears. Everyone will be given the needed tools to be successful.*

What is current size of pool now and how are biases handled? *The pool can be as large as possible to have a better selection of panelists and they are randomly selected. The grievant is allowed to choose two panelists and an alternate. All involved parties will have the opportunity to review the panelists selected.*

Committee Reports:

- **Benefits** – the committee has been working on how to take the paper prepared by the Women's Leadership Academy and put it into action. There are two issues presented in the paper, teleworking and flexible work schedules and the issues should be addressed separately. The first step will be to conduct a survey to get a clear picture of what is happening now on campus and get a feel from managers. The committee has also discussed conducting some focus groups.

- **Professional development** is working on a training advancement action plan for employees as well as succession planning. They will review current training offerings and issues on campus. Employees do not know where to get information about training. The committee is working on a document “Where to go From Here”. More information forthcoming.

- **Staff Scholarship** brochures are out and the deadline to apply is August 22, 2005.

- **Events** – the Benefits/Employee Information Fair has been changed to October 17. The fair will focus on benefits; outside vendors will not be invited. The vendors will be clustered according to areas such as health & wellness, retirement, education etc. The committee is working on getting signage that will hang from the ceiling in the student center to identify the various areas. It has been discussed to begin charging vendors (next year) a small fee to help create a working budget.

- **Elections** – put together some interesting ideas to promote the 2006 elections that will take place in February. Signs will be posted around campus and on kiosks such as Student/University Center and Robinson College of Business. Also, postcards will be distributed. Election committee will help man the Staff Council table at Benefits Fair and use the opportunity to market the elections.

- **Communications** - the simplified template for the minutes will first get tested on the Executive Committee and Staff Council.

- **Bylaws** – had their introductory meeting and the committee will focus on adjusting the changes that were made last year.
Senate Reports:

- **Planning & Development** – The perception of crime on campus is an issue as there have been several robberies and other events over last six months. A sub-committee is brainstorming to come up with suggestions for improvements.

- **FACP** – 4700 students were dropped from classes for lack of payment, however late fees will be waived during open registration. This was a result of a state audit. In the past students were waiting to the end of the semester to make final payment. On August 29, 2005 if a student even owes $1 he or she will be dropped from classes. Students need to understand they have to adhere to the payment deadline and accept the culture change.

Updates/Announcements:

- Staff Council welcomes new members; Jeff Stockwell, educational policy studies; Deborah Dunbar, and Rhonda Williams from facilities.

- USGSC meeting will be held October 13 & 14 at the University of Georgia. Members should try to go for at least one day; it would be nice to have a Georgia State presence at the conference.

- Deb is heading up a GSU team to participate in the Kaiser 3.1 mile walk-a-thon on September 15 at 7 p.m. It will be a great opportunity to promote a sense of community at Georgia State. The entry fee is $15 and everyone will receive a t-shirt. Deb is working on detail sheet.

- All members should wear their Staff Council lapel pins, show-up at meetings and communicate with constituents.

- The Campus Club will not be completed before the first day of classes. The Panther Corner in Kell Hall is now open.

- Communicate with Deb or Mary Nell if you can not attend a Staff Council or committee meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

*Minutes prepared by: Renee Bazemore, please send any additions or corrections to rbazemore@gsu.edu or call 404/651-3979.*