

Arkansas State University
Staff Senate Meeting
February 21, 2007

The Arkansas State University Staff Senate met on Wednesday, February 21, 2007, in the Dean B. Ellis Library Board Room on the ASU-Jonesboro campus. President Laura Cremeens called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. In attendance:

Lesley Bauders – present
Margaret Brewer – present
Steve Brown – present
Carol Byrd – present
Joycelyn Coleman – absent
Laura Cremeens – present
Patrick Dixon – present
Tami Freeman – present
Vanita Harvey – present
Toni Holt – present
Jennifer Jasinski – proxy Carolyn Douglas
Debbie Jernigan – present
Rhonda Keith – present
L. C. Kennedy – present

Donna Kirksey – present
Jerrod Lockhart – present
Randy Martin – present
Dena May – present
Terry Merriweather – present
Don Neldon – proxy Randy West
Jerry Sailor – present
Mia Sheppard-Taylor – present
Brandi Thompson – present
Natalie Turney – present
Vicki Walker – present
Evelyn Weatherford – proxy Deidra Dotter

Past President:
Victor Hill – present

Minutes:

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

Treasury Report:

Senator Rhonda Keith, Treasurer, distributed a one-page report of Staff Senate account balances as of January 30, 2007. The treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Old Business:

Jennus Burton, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, addressed the staff about the proposed holiday schedule. He said that ITS has capability to override departmental phone messages during the holiday break and inclement weather to notify callers that the university is

closed. He also said the university will be open the week after fall graduation and close for Christmas break the following Monday. A motion to accept this proposal was made by Senator Sailor and seconded by Senator Merriweather. The motion was approved.

Mr. Burton also stated that a new set-off policy pertaining to employees had been approved by the Board of Trustees. The policy allows the University to withhold money from employees' checks for payment of overdue expenses. The University will work with employees to arrange payment plans for significant amounts owed.

Old Business:

Dr. J.W. Mason, Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration, stated that the new Banner system allowed Payroll to streamline the payroll process by combining career service recognition payments (bonus checks) with regular payroll checks. He indicated his concern for how bonus checks were now being submitted with the normal payroll and how this affected the dollars being held out for taxes (examples were provided). He mentioned that he and Mr. Burton would look at this situation at the next budget meeting and recommend that the checks be run separately to avoid the higher tax rate currently applied to the combined amounts for one pay period.

Dr. Mason also mentioned that Governor Beebe had a bill before the Legislature that would increase the career service recognition amount and if passed would go into effect on July 1, 2007.

Tiffany Frazier, Student Government Association President, and Lacey Hawkins, Student Government Association Vice-President, gave a brief presentation on the proposal of a new student recreation center. They said the current recreation center located in the student union would be turned into a Multicultural Welcome Center if the new student recreation center is built.

Rick Stripling, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, added that a new housing proposal was being considered to build more apartments north of the North Park Quad.

Other Business:

Chris Enger, Wellness Program Coordinator, reported that 460 employees have signed up for the cardiovascular health screenings, and 152 have been through the screening process. He also stated that 240 employees have signed up for the Arkansas Fitness Challenge. The last day to sign up to participate is February 28. The American Heart Walk will be held on March 31 and a 5k walk/run event will be held on March 10 at ASU. More information on the two events will be on the ASU Daily Digest.

Margaret Watson, Banner Project Director, reported that the human resources module went live January 1 with no major problems. Each module has met the go-live target date, with University Advancement module scheduled to go live July 1. She also mentioned that a calendar is now available on the human resources website containing dates for payroll items to be submitted. There also will be a helpline set up for payroll questions in ITS (972-2012). Tracy Perrin will be conducting training sessions on different topics with Banner.

President Cremeens passed out proposals for changes to Staff Senate officer positions. The proposal is to combine the secretary and treasurer positions into one, and to create a new position as a communications officer to help streamline and simplify all outgoing and incoming questions, to place all documents on Access groups and update the website as needed. She asked each senator to e-mail her with pros, cons and concerns on these proposals which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Other Announcements:

Senator Keith announced that the A-State Update will be held April 3 from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Student Union. Scheduled guest speakers are Dr. Potts, Chancellor of ASU Jonesboro campus, Dr. Susan Allen, Vice Chancellor for Research and Student Affairs, Jennus Burton, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and Jo Ann Nalley, Director of

Child Care Center. Human Resources will have two sessions and cover topics such as catastrophic leave, sick leave and other programs that the staff may be unaware of. Publicity for the event will be placed in the Herald, ASU Digest and fliers to all offices.

Senator Freeman announced that the Distinguished Performance Awards ceremony will be held May 4 at 2:00 p.m. Nomination forms will be placed in the ASU Digest and on the Staff Senate website.

Terrie Rolland, Chair of the Staff Senate Picnic Committee announced that the picnic will be May 16 and the committee's first meeting will be March 29.

Vice President Bauders announced that paper ballots for the election of new senators will go out in campus mail next week.

Senator Lockhart announced that Black History month will feature the authentic African dance troop *Umdabu* at the ASU Convocation Center Auditorium at 6:30 p.m. on February 21. Admission is free to the public. Also, the play *Fences* will run through Saturday February 24. Tickets can be purchased from the ASU Central Box Office and/or ASU Fowler Center.

Senator Harvey announced that Disability Awareness Week will be held March 5 – 8 and that the musical group *The Miracles* will perform at the Student Union Center Court on March 12 at noon. She also handed out fliers to each senator to post in their work areas.

President Cremeens reminded senators that the next Staff Senate meeting will be held Wednesday, March 21 during spring break. Senators unable to make the meeting should e-mail the name of their proxy to her and Secretary Walker.

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.