STAFF SENATE MEETING
MINUTES
March 10, 2014

Note to Senators: Please share the senate agenda, minutes, and any other enclosures with your colleagues prior to the scheduled meeting. Senate meetings are open to all staff. Agendas, minutes, and attendance rosters are available on the Staff Senate website at http://www.etsu.edu/stsenate/default.asp


EXCUSED: Lisa Belcher, Lisa Bell, Brian Bennett, Kristy Buchanan, Christy Buckles, David Collins, Tim Dills, Katie Jeter, Joe Miller, Sandra Ritchie, and Carla Warner.

UNEXCUSED: Freddie Hill.

FRIENDS OF THE SENATE: Kim Eaton and Vanessa Canter.

I. Call to Order – In the absence of President Belcher, President-Elect Josh Whitlock called the meeting to order at 2:35pm.

II. Approval of Minutes – President-Elect Whitlock called for corrections to the minutes of February 10, 2014. There were no corrections to the minutes; the minutes were approved as distributed.

III. PRESENTATION BY SPECIAL GUEST – Ms. Lisa Hogue-Moffett, Field Representative, District I, Tennessee State Employees Association (TSEA) – Ms. Lisa Hogue-Moffett, TSEA, after a brief overview of the association, its purpose, vision and goals, shared an update on the recent activities of TSEA. Detailed information about TSEA can be found at www.tseaonline.org. Ms. Moffett currently serves as the field representative for District I. Ms. Moffett shared that ETSU is one of the two TBR schools who are not currently outsourcing custodial services. She shared that TSEA played a big part in the decision making process to continue custodial services at the status quo. She noted that the moment TSEA received information of possible outsourcing, the association began working with legislators, the ETSU community, and Dr. Noland in an effort to keep the current custodial workforce and received a favorable outcome. Ms. Moffett also shared information on bills currently receiving some attention. Bill HB1748 (M. Hill)/SB1997 (Yager) concerns prohibiting layoffs in excess of 10 employees if not approved in the state budget unless the general assembly approves the layoffs. Even though the bill received a lot of recognition, it did not pass. A bill closely aligned to Matthew Hill’s – HB2161(Matheny)/SWB2022 (Bell) concerns requiring a committee (Fiscal Review Committee) to review contracts that result in a layoff of state employees. The committee is tasked to review the vendor’s work history, acceptable services, and cost in relation to the contract. According to Ms. Moffett, every contract that TBR approves includes an escalation clause meaning that every employee who works for the contract will receive a pay increase. Ms. Moffett asked Senators to reach out to legislators in an effort to inform them of state employees’ awareness of the bill, and that Matheny and Bell are representing the interests of state and higher education employees by a thorough review of contracts in relation to layoffs if outsourcing occurs. In reference to paying for parking – Ms. Moffett shared that higher education employees are the only state employees who pay to park. She noted that revenue generated from parking fees is tied to many things, but everyone paying the same fees to park should be stopped, and in its place should be tiered parking fees with the eventual end being no fees for employee parking.
The pilot plan for tiered parking at Memphis State was not successful due to the pilot not being carried out in the manner the bill was written. Therefore, the bill will be brought back to the General Assembly to ensure the pilot program is conducted the way it was intended. Putting it into law would force the pilot to be conducted correctly. Ms. Moffett shared that a local legislative breakfast for Appalachian, ETSU, and Northeast Chapters is scheduled for March 22, 2014 at 7:30am. The breakfast will be held at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology. Ms. Moffett encouraged TSEA and non-TSEA members to attend the breakfast and help persuade legislators regarding the need for at least a 1% salary increase across the board. Ms. Moffett shared that TSEA will pursue a 2% increase for higher education employees, but before they can push for a 2%, a 1% has to be available in the state budget. Ms. Moffett also strongly encouraged Senators who are TSEA members to attend Lobby Day as an opportunity to interact with legislators while they are in session. Typically, turnout for the breakfast is very good.

Ms. Moffett provided TSEA applications, a guide to membership, and detailed information regarding the upcoming legislative breakfast. Ms. Moffett shared that there are several reasons why employees join TSEA. Being part of the legislative process is one part of it, but other reasons include employee issues that arise, such as the custodial outsourcing issue. Several meetings took place around this issue, and Ms. Moffett shared that Dr. Noland was very concerned regarding how the issue was handled. In addition, Ms. Moffett shared that TSEA played a major part in the reconfiguring of the retirement plan, and current employees were not impacted by the changes. However, new hires, beginning July 1, will have to pay 5% for pension benefits. In addition, as a member of TSEA, a representative will work with an employee through a disciplinary process by helping to provide the necessary resources needed. Another benefit from being a participating member of TSEA is an opportunity to participate in the various discount programs offered such as movie tickets; amusement park tickets; group insurance programs; rental cars; Sam’s Club; and much more. Dues are $14.77 per month and can be payroll deducted. Anyone joining in the month of March will be given a $10 Walmart Giftcard and t-shirt for any new member, or current member who recruits another. She asked that applications be forwarded to Carolyn Bond, TSEA-ETSU President, or Ms. Moffett by calling 423-571-0094, or via email at lisa@tseaonline.org.

IV. President’s Report – President-Elect Josh Whitlock

A. Report on Senior Staff, February 17th and March 3rd – President-Elect Whitlock reported that there are a number of bills being considered in Nashville which could affect the university. One of which is the Tennessee Promise, a program that Governor Haslam hopes to put into place that will make community college education free for all Tennessee high school graduates. If passed, some changes may occur in financial aid such as a reduction in the Hope Scholarship amount. An additional bill that seeks to compel university colleges of medicine to collaborate with local health departments in an effort to help folks who currently do not have health insurance because the state of Tennessee has chosen not to participate in the Medicaid expansion. There is a bill to create a “Come Back for Your Future” Scholarship Program which will aid students who return to school in an attempt to complete their degree. There is a current bill to allow undocumented students who are Tennessee residents and who meet the academic requirements of the Hope Scholarship, and have attended Tennessee schools for five years prior to graduating from high school, to pay in-state tuition at public institutions in Tennessee. Other bills being considered are a bill to prohibit TBR and UT Board of Trustees from adopting policies that substantially burden students free exercise of religion; permitting students to be charged in-state tuition if the student is a U.S. citizen and has resided in Tennessee at least one year and has graduated from a Tennessee public school or approved Tennessee private school; expansion of the duties of the director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to ensure that institutions develop and use electronic and instructional methods in a way that could be accessible to students with disabilities; and making certain discriminations against a student or student organization by a higher education institution a discriminatory practice under the human rights statute. Lastly, there were two bills in the East Tennessean a while back that would require fees for student organization speakers to be distributed proportionately based on the membership of those organizations, and the second bill would prohibit the use of institutional revenues for paying guest speakers. President-Elect Whitlock commented that anyone interested in details about any of the bills may contact him.
President-Elect Whitlock commented that no funds were cut from universities. At this point, there is a possibility of a 1% standard of living salary increase, but the increase will depend on state revenue. No capital projects have been approved for any of the universities. There is still a lot of planning to take place on the new Arts Center, and plans will continue in hopes of funds becoming available. Civility Week is planned for April 5-12th. The Old Crowe Medicine Show is the main student concert for 2014 and will be held on April 27th in the dome. President-Elect Whitlock announced that there have been a number of open records requests regarding coach salaries, parking garage, etc. President-Elect Whitlock cautioned everyone that emails are discoverable and all ETSU emails belong to the university and as stated in the OIT policy, users should have no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of any electronic submission – they belong to the university. It has been noted that the parking garage may be open after spring break. Food services will find their home in the parking garage sometime in the fall, and the walkway between the dome and the garage will most likely be completed near the end of March. There is a strategic planning committee charged with beginning to build the Greek Community and possibly moving it back to campus. At this point, there are no definite details. President-Elect Whitlock shared that Dr. Foley mentioned Faculty Senate’s interest in combining the faculty and staff convocations; however, to date, there are no details available. At the March 3rd meeting of senior staff, there was a presentation on Degree Works. This system is a very helpful tool for students. Invitations were forwarded to the two budgeting process committees who are charged to perform analyses on academic programs and administrative services and they plan to meet mid-March. President-Elect Whitlock shared that our institution’s football program was on SportsIllustrated.com – he was not sure if it made the magazine, but it is certainly considered an accomplishment to be recognized on such an elite platform.

V. **Treasurer Report** – Senator C. Massey reported the general account balance as $6,905.22; the Holiday Drive account balance is $172.48; and the balance of the Community Benevolence account holds a balance of $4,481.25.

VI. **Report on Standing Committees**

A. **Committee and Website** – Senator Chamberlain, chair, reported that at the committee is working on making website navigation more user-friendly and there are plans to include Present, Past and Future navigational buttons. Approval is required from the university web team prior to making navigational changes due to associated links. Senator Chamberlain plans to work closely with standing committee chairs in an effort to keep the various links current. The current “contact us” information will remain, but it is imperative that information relating to Senators be forwarded to Senator Chamberlain. A short bio is all that is needed. Senator Chamberlain suggested that Senators call Mr. Sledge, Photo Lab, to have a photograph taken for the website.

VII. **Report on Project Committees**

A. **Staff Picnic** – Senator Hill, reported for Senator Ritchie, chair, and shared that the Staff Appreciation Picnic is scheduled for May 23, 2014, 1-3:00pm. The main events will be held at the Amphitheatre, and food will be housed in the Cave and the Cave Patio will be utilized in the event of inclement weather. Senator Roberson shared that Chris Dula and his band will be performing at the picnic – free of charge.

B. **Bylaws/Constitution (Adhoc)** – President-Elect Whitlock, chair, reported that the committee has met and even though progress has been slow, the committee plans to have documents updated and forwarded to the staff body for a vote during the next election period. Approval of changes to the constitution requires a vote by all staff members.

VIII. **Old Business** – There was no old business to discuss.
IX. New Business

A. Combined Staff/Faculty Convocation – President-Elect Whitlock requested feedback from the Senate regarding conducting a combined staff/faculty convocation. Some drawbacks discussed were: time factor; different emphases of both entities; identifying a location; office coverage; and amount of information covered. Senator Bishop commented that the two convocations would need to be reviewed in an effort to combine them, and program changes to accommodate both entities would be in order to make it a successful university-wide recognition event. Some Senators believe that blending the two convocations may help with unity of staff and faculty. President-Elect Whitlock commented that he plans to reach out to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to determine if this initiative would be feasible and will report his findings at the next meeting.

X. Announcements

A. Founder’s Day Celebration, Quillen College of Medicine – March 12, 2014 at 10:00am, VA Campus/ lawn of Carl A. Jones Hall. Rain location – Stanton-Gerber. Refreshments will be served after a brief ceremony. The event will commemorate 40 years of the Quillen College of Medicine.

B. 2014 ETSU Staff Woman of the Year Award – Ceremony and reception is planned for April 16, 2014, 4:00pm, East Tennessee Room. President-Elect Whitlock encouraged all Senators to support this event.

C. Staff Senate Office Move – The Staff Senate office will be moving from room 226A, Campus Center Building to room 206, Campus Center Building, effective July 2014. The Faculty Senate has graciously offered use of their conference room. To reserve the Faculty Senate Conference Room, please contact Dr. Randy Byington, President, Faculty Senate.

D. Visibility Committee – Senator Murphy reminded Senators to inform the Visibility Committee of events that are being engaged so that the committee can help with the promotional aspect.

There were no other announcements.

Adjournment – There being no other business to discuss, a motion was made to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:40pm.

Submitted by Senator J. Ann Eargle

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Secretary