Staff Senate Minutes November 3, 2004

· Welcome

· Pledge of Allegiance

· Roll Call

Senators present: Louisa Arriaga, Jana Atkins, Gene Bals, Estella Barron, Eric Burrell, Jaclyn Byrd, Bryan Carson, Maria Fernandez, Sandy Gellner, Brent Guinn, Scott Hall, Patrick Hancock, Lori Hefley, Carolyn Kennedy, Evelyn Lemer, Rick Loper, Amy Martindale, Barbara McArthur, Libby Moreland, Teresa Neal, Rebecca Owens, Donna Perry, Larry Phillippe, Valli Ramanathan, Jake Syma, Barbara White, Everne Williams, Tim Wolf

Senators absent: Evelyn Armstrong, Ann Bell, Nick Chavez, Robin Cooper, Doug Crockett, Gerald Cunningham, Chance Dragich, Sandy Ellis, Travis Findley, Rocky Gauna, Virginia Holder, Mike Hurlow, Gary A. Johnson, Sheri Lewis, Guadalupe Luna, Dawn Moreno, Eddie Ramirez, Don Roulain, Carol Ann Stanley, Richard Verrone

· Minutes

o Motion made by Gene Bals to accept the minutes

o Seconded by Valli Ramanathan

o Motion passed

· Treasurer's Report

o Carol Ann Stanley has resigned as treasurer but will remain on the Staff Senate. The Executive Committee is currently working on filling the position. More information will be available later.

· Personnel Issues – Kay Whyburn, Assistant Vice President for Information Services, and Jim Brown, Managing Director of Personnel

Amy Martindale is the Issues Committee Chair. One of the issues the committee is looking into is the use of Social Security Numbers on campus in this age of identity theft. Rebecca Owens is the lead researcher on this issue. A Staff Senate member asked the Staff Senate to investigate this issue. We are all more

sensitive and aware of our Social Security Numbers being "flashed" around. The Staff Senate would like the campus to substitute the TechID number. Tech ID cards don't show the Social Security Number, just the TechID number. Texas Tech University is currently in the process of converting its computer and database systems from using the Social Security Number to using the Tech ID. Kay Whyburn is here to address the Staff Senate on this issue. The Issues Committee wanted more information and a time frame on how this conversion will occur. There was also a question about what forms require the Social Security Number and which forms can use the Tech ID, as well as whether it is it necessary that Social Security Numbers be on documents such as the Months of Service Verification list that goes to all departments each year. Kay is the Assistant Vice President for Information Services. She is going to talk about the infrastructure portion of this issue. Jim Brown, Managing Director of Personnel is also here to address this issue from the viewpoint of his department.

§ Kay Whyburn

Federal and State agencies have requirement that we provide Social Security Numbers on employees. Social Security Numbers will never go away, so we need to look at how to restrict the use in this environment. Because of privacy concerns and because colleges and universities use Social Security Numbers more than businesses do, many institutions have been planning for how to deal with this issue. A couple of Texas Senate Bills exist dealing with what we can and can't do with Social Security Numbers, and Texas Tech University must be in compliance by Sept. 1 2007. TTU took steps a few years ago by adding the TechID to make sure Social Security Numbers are not on reports that go out. Tech has been looking into how to implement this change, starting with investing in new software systems (ERP Solutions). This new system has an alternate identification mechanism, but it initially was not set up to use the alternate ID. The last upgrade of TechSIS in February provided the ability to set up a unique identifier, which hasn't been used yet. Most systems are now set up to do what we need to do. System administrators must now retroactively set up unique ID numbers for all staff, faculty, and students within these systems. There also is the question of what else uses Social Security Numbers besides the administrative systems. Because there are other systems that use Social Security Numbers, this conversion will not happen all at once. A migration system will be put into place and then the conversion will take place in parts over a period of time. The next step is a major initiative to replace the Social Security Number as a primary identifier.

A committee has been appointed from among TTU and HSC employees. The first meeting probably will be in December. The issue for this committee is the scope of the Social Security Number issue – defining it, deciding on a commitment of resources, creating Operating Policies (OPs)and procedures. Resources are necessary to change both the systems and our way of thinking. It is a 2-3 year project to completely migrate away from Social Security Numbers. This issues does not belong entirely to Information Technology. All systems that Tech has (administrative applications, local systems in a college or school) will get a new ID to access individuals. There are various entry points, and it is necessary to determine

how to identify somebody new and when to give them a new number. The idea is that there should be one unique number per individual no matter how many roles that individual has within the university (staff, student, faculty) There needs to be a process to avoid duplicate numbers, or multiple numbers per person.

There is also a need to change the university-wide mindset of asking for Social Security Numbers. It will be necessary to research and analyze the scope of the use of Social Security Numbers. There is a good chance, however, that there will be more areas where the Social Security Number is used than will be found during this research. The goal is to start with centralized administrative systems and then branch out to other departments on campus to discover where various departments are using Social Security Numbers and decide if they have a real need to continue to use them. Guidelines will be created to govern when you Social Security Numbers can and cannot be used. Big issues will be dealt with first, followed by smaller issues as they arise. Also, it will be necessary to address the issue of former employees and students to determine if the new ID numbers should be assigned. The Health Sciences Center has a different type of ID card, and it is possible that TTU will need to move away from the paper ID cards.

A website will be posted with information about this project as it progresses. The committee will discuss how to keep the website up to date as this conversion process progresses. Other universities that have done moved away from using Social Security Numbers or are in the process of conversion have also set up websites detailing their progress. There will be marketing and training issues with the conversion to really work on changing the current mindset on campus. Other issues are with the new ID number are loss of an employee ID card, TechID number theft. Non-essential uses of Social Security Numbers should be reported to Jim Brown for Personnel issues or to Kay Whyburn for computer system issues.

Specific issues:

· The system has not yet been modified to accept TechIDs for supervisors on the PAF form. July is goal to fix this.

· The TecHRIS system generates TechIDs. An employee must be entered in TecHRIS before an ID is generated. New employee forms may need to be modified to use either the Social Security Number or the TechID number to accommodate this until a new system is developed for dealing with new employees. The e-raider name will do the same as a TechID for internal information, so don't share it. However, since the e-raider does not use numbers only, it cannot be used as the TechID number.

§ Jim Brown

Working at a public institution is like going to work in a fishbowl. The public has laws in place that require the university to release any and all pieces of information upon formal request. This is communicated to new employees as the opportunity arises. The level of privacy in the private sector is not available in the public sector. Under the state open records act, anyone can request any and all information maintained on an employee. There are only four pieces of data state agencies can restrict under open records: spouse's name, home address, home phone number, and Social Security Number. Employees have the opportunity to restrict access to that information, but it must be requested by the individual from the university. It is not automatic and many people haven't thought of it. Work addresses and phone numbers cannot be restricted. If a request for documents from a personnel file is received, the Social Security Number and other restricted information is removed from the documents, unless there is no request from the individual employee to have this information withheld. This information also is withheld from the TTU phone directory. Peace Officers have other information that is restricted.

Texas Tech University is in the process of migrating to a more secure system, but this will not be a sudden change. When there is a wide distribution of forms or documents, such as the W-2 verification, the TechID can be used on the form. The TechID number is on the Tech ID card. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is beginning to mask Social Security Numbers on the insurance cards for state employees. They started with public school employees and will get to state agencies and universities between now and next September. The card will now have a unique identifier on it rather than a Social Security Number. Texas Tech University still has an obligation to report to the Federal government through the Social Security Number, however, so SSNs must be kept on file. In the meantime, the TechID number will be replaced on reports such as the Months of State Service Report. Personnel has been trying to identify all such forms and reports as they come up. Notify Jim Brown about Personnel forms reports that still use Social Security Numbers. There needs to be greater awareness among people working with Social Security Numbers about not leaving them out to be seen by passers-by. Turning paper face-down and adding a screen-saver password are two ways to restrict such easy access to information.

Personnel regularly sends out TechAnnounce items reminding employees to update personal information. These announcements are sent quarterly, or more frequently at the end of the fiscal year and phone book publication time. Personal information and preferences on restricted information can be updated online through the Personnel website. The phone book is currently at the publisher will be available soon. Next year's phone book will be done earlier.

There is a move for the state to use a unique identifier rather than Social Security Numbers as well.

Personnel gets a number of requests throughout the year asking for mailing lists, new faculty address, and other information, and under the law, TTU must provide this information if it is not restricted by the individual employee. Personnel did not process a specific request for employee e-mail addresses from any political candidates, but this information is easily available through the online personnel directory.

Another issue from the Issues Committee is part-time staff not being eligible for benefits such as longevity pay, employer-paid insurance premiums, and not receiving raises to match what graduate student employees received, or the raise full-time employees received upon completion of an advanced degree.

§ Jim Brown

As required by state law, no longevity pay is offered to part-time employees. However, part-time staff members working 50% (fte) or more for 4½ months or more will accrue months of state service as long as that employee works in a benefits-eligible category. When the employee begins working full-time, longevity pay will be paid based on the same schedule as full-time employees.

Again, state law requires part-time employees to pay half of their insurance premiums. Two years ago, in the last state legislative session, the state had a $740 million shortfall in the insurance plan. The state insurance plan is self-funded. The state pays a fee to Blue Cross/Blue Shield, then is reimbursed for claims. Legislators began to wonder why part-time employees received full-time benefits. Employees must now be .5 FTE (half-time) to be benefits-eligible and to receive 50% of the insurance premium. The deductible on medication was raised, as well as the co-pays and deductibles for medical care. These were the measures employed to save money. Rebecca Owens mentioned that this also affected graduate students, and Tech gave this back to graduate students in the form of a pay raise – a pay raise part-time employees did not also receive. Jim Brown replied that he has heard from the Tech Administration how underpaid graduate students are and how difficult it is to recruit grad students to come here. Tech does not have the money that UT and Ivy League schools have to attract graduate students. Graduate students are valuable to Tech no only for the money from Tech receives through state formula funding, but also for manning research which draws more money as well. Graduate students support the educational process here at TTU. Tech has trouble attracting graduate students because of finances, and location, etc. The cutbacks made in the legislative session would have a detrimental impact on graduate students Tech works very hard to recruit. The pay raise graduate students received is a benefit that Tech administrators deemed critical to the long-term success of the university. The state could decide to reinstate these benefits, but for now Tech must still compete with flagship institutions for top-quality graduate students. The cutbacks provided an opportunity to raise graduate student pay. Pay raises were not necessarily given just to offset the insurance benefit

cut. There are very few part-time staff on campus, and there may be even fewer who actually use these benefits.

Jim Brown is still researching information on pay raises for advanced degrees earned. He says that that he helped write this policy and has notes on the reason for this, but needs additional time to find the information.

· Committees

Issues Committee – Amy Martindale

§ Arts patron parking problems – The College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) has 3 units which host many public events on campus as an essential function of the department and for the students. Patrons not affiliated with Tech object to paying to attend these events because nowhere else in Lubbock charges for parking at similar events. These patrons do not understand that music, art, and theater and dance staff do not have authority to fix this problem. In researching the scope of this issue, the committee discovered that non-Tech affiliates generate about $3,200 per year in parking fees at CVPA events. Moving the end of the pay parking period from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 will help resolve this issue, and it will also avoid having to issue dash passes to patrons who might not be able to return to their vehicles easily. Eric Crouch will attend the next Executive Committee meeting to discuss possible solutions.

§ Non-exempt employee overtime – There is a concern that some managers on campus do not realize that non-exempt employees receive comp time through Personnel at "time and a half" for any overtime worked. Some managers are trying to keep employee overtime hours within the department and award comp time internally. This is an educational issue for managers on campus about these rules. An ad hoc committee is forming to look into this issue further.

§ Tuition and class time for TTU employees: Staff members would like to receive free tuition for one 3-hour course every semester. The University of Texas currently allows this. Tech currently offers a $300 scholarship for staff members, and a $600 scholarship for staff dependents. Also, UT employees do not have to make up the time missed, but must get permission from the supervisor to miss those hours. TTU requires employees make up time missed for class. The Dean of Graduate Studies supports this issue. There is a question of how many people would take advantage of this, and how much tuition would this actually involve. Local and state accounts will also be an issue if this program is built into a benefits package. At UT, this is a university pool, not a departmental obligation. An ad hoc committee will address this issue.

§ Borrowing privileges for TTU staff at the Health Sciences Center library. TTU faculty have borrowing privileges at HSC but TTU staff do not. Gene Bals has done some preliminary work on this issue and will address it at a later date.

§ The Issues Committee will meet after today's Staff Senate meeting to discuss ad hoc committees.

o Bylaws and Constitution Committee – Jaclyn Byrd

§ First reading of Article 1 Section D – Membership and Attendance. The second reading will be held and a vote will be taken on this change during the December meeting.

· Current wording: A Senator has a commitment to attend all meetings. Senators should contact the President, President-Elect, or Executive Secretary prior to an expected absence and follow up in writing within five working days after the meeting explaining the absence. After three absences in a Senate term year, the Secretary will notify the Executive Board concerning the excessive absences of the Senator. The Executive Board will notify the Senator in writing of his/her absences and advise the Senator to note the policy regarding absences. After five absences in a Senate term year, the Staff Senate Secretary will give a report regarding the Senator to the Executive Board for consideration and recommendation of expulsion from the Senate. After review and acceptance by the Executive Board, the matter will be presented to the Staff Senate for vote at the next scheduled Staff Senate meeting.

· Proposed wording: A Senator has a commitment to attend all meetings. However, when absence cannot be avoided, Senators should contact in writing the President, President-Elect, or Executive Secretary prior to an expected absence or follow up in writing within five working days after the meeting, explaining the absence. After a member has three absences in a Senate term year, the Secretary will notify the Executive Board concerning the excessive absences. The Executive Board will notify the Senator in writing of his/her absences and advise the Senator to note the policy regarding absences. After a member has five absences in a Senate term year, the Staff Senate Secretary will give a report regarding the Senator to the Executive Board. The Executive Board will review the report and make a recommendation for or against expulsion to be presented to the Staff Senate for vote at the next scheduled Staff Senate meeting. Each successive absence by the Senator in question, in the same term year, will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and another recommendation could be presented to the Senate.

§ There are 53 senators on the Staff Senate – one per every 50 employees, or better part thereof. This number is evaluated every five years The next evaluation will be in 2006. It is based on number of employees TTU had in 2001.

§ The Bylaws Committee has made a commitment to bring a change to the bylaws to each Staff Senate meeting. Please notify the committee if there is something that needs clarification. The committee is charged with making sure the bylaws follow constitution, and that both follow what is actually happening on the Staff Senate.

o Nominations Committee – Sandy Gellner

§ The Bylaws Committee needs two more members.

o Elections Committee – Sandy Ellis

§ Special elections will be held in the Service, Professional, and Crafts and Trades EEO categories

o Grievance Committee – Larry Phillippe

§ Nothing to report

o Web page – Eric Burrell

§ The current and reworded bylaw change is up on the website

o Scholarship Committee – Robin Cooper

§ The committee has already begun receiving applications for spring..

o COPS – Patrick Hancock

§ The letters went out and some responses have already been returned. Some of the offers are very good. Brent Guinn has received phone calls from vendors asking if this program is part of a coupon book we are selling. This program is not part of a fund-raiser; it is free to all TTU staff.

o Communications/Public Relations Committee – Valli Ramanathan

§ The first Meet and Greet was a success. Over 50 staff members and 22 senators attended. Door prizes were awarded and staff members did not have to be immediately present to win. There were a large number of prizes available, so some prizes were given to senators who attended the event.

o External committees:

§ Academic Council – Rebecca Owens

· There is a strong move out of Student Affairs for a fall break for students. It has been discussed that Labor Day and Dead Day are two possible dates that may be used to make up classes missed during fall break. Staff would receive an extra day at Christmas to make up for the Labor Day Holiday. This issue needs to come before the Staff Senate before a final decision is made since this affects the staff. Staff and faculty members should be allowed to vote on this issue.

· Announcements

o Remember to notify Brent Guinn or Richard Verrone about any committee meetings scheduled.

o Executive Committee meeting was moved to November 17 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

o The next Staff Senate meeting will be held December 1 at 3:00 p.m. in Escondido Theater (in the Student Union basement)

· Adjourn

o Motion by Carolyn Kennedy to adjourn

o seconded by Jaclyn Byrd

o Motion passed