

Staff Senate Minutes

March 1, 2006

Escondido Theater, Student Union Basement

www.depts.ttu.edu/staffsenate

A quorum was not present for this meeting.

- **Minutes** – stand as approved
- **Treasurer's Report** – no report
- **Speaker**

Michael Shonrock, Vice President for Student Affairs

The purpose of Student Affairs is to enhance the learning experience. The division manages areas of interest to students which is outlined in their annual report. There are about 500 full time employees and 2500 student employees with the Student Affairs division. The division works with a \$75 million budget, with only about 1% of that coming from state appropriations. The rest comes from auxiliary or local funds. The organization and employees are proud of the fact that students are very involved in the business of student affairs. There are student advisory boards for all fees. There are 20 departments in the Student Affairs division. The purpose of Student Affairs is to enhance the learning experience and support the academic mission of the university. Students are here to get an education. The staff in Student Affairs want to enhance this experience with activities, programs, and services.

Dr. Shonrock and Student Affairs staff make an effort to look “outside the box” for new ideas. With six nieces and nephews in college and four graduated, he receives plenty of feedback based on what happens in College Station, Austin, and Waco. He talks to counterparts at those institutions about how things can be better there as well as here at Tech. For example, he wants to figure out how to hook up to students' iPods. The Student Affairs staff are not allowed to give too much information to parents because of privacy issues, but they can answer some questions. He welcomes phone calls, whether or not they are related to Student Affairs functions. Parents are more involved than in the past. The university has developed more assessment and research recently, not just for accreditation purposes, but for institutional knowledge.

A senator asked how Student Affairs fits into the fall break decision, and how will the fall break affect staff members in Student Affairs? The fall break issue has gone through two SGA presidents. Dr. Shonrock states that TTU will be the first Texas school to really implement a fall break. It is not known at this point what the impact will be. Whether staff will be allowed a holiday during the fall break is up to President Whitmore. There is a lot of negativity about how the break will affect staff. The issue is not about getting the time off but what it does to operations such as housing, registrar, and the colleges just before the Christmas break. According to research conducted by a Staff Senate committee, most colleges that have a fall break start the semester earlier. Staff should not be required to work during established holidays, such as the Christmas break. Dr. Shonrock stated, “I believe the students have worked diligently over the past 2 years, I believe it's going to work, but it's going to mean compromises on either end.”

Richard Verrone asked how the Staff Senate can support Student Affairs. Dr. Shonrock responded by requesting the staff refer students to the services they need and be familiar with services on campus. If it is uncertain what a student needs, send the student to the Student Affairs office and office personnel will get the student to the right place. Be supportive, smile, give the guns-up, and be friendly. Send any suggestions to the Student Affairs office.

A senator asked when the Student Union construction will be complete. It is hoped construction will be complete by this summer. In the old UC, on a busy day 5000-6000 people would use the building. Now, utilization is around 18,000. The goal is that the building serves as a “living room” for

the campus community. The original courtyard and Allen Theater are being completely renovated. Wiring is being installed in the Senate Room in order to allow wireless/electronic voting.

A senator asked what is the most utilized service among students. The division has seen increases in counseling, student health, and student disability. The Student Union and the Rec Center are heavily used. Last fall, there were 400 intramural football teams.

- **Committee Reports**

- Nominations (Kathy Nordstrom) – There is one slot to be filled on the Elections committee in the Professional classification.
- Communications and Public Relations (Randy Smith) – Nothing new to report. The newsletters are being finished up and should come out around April 1.
- Issues (Donna Perry/Theresa Neal) – The committee has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow.
 - One issue has been resolved. A staff member requested improved paid leave. Employees must use their sick leave and vacation for leave unless they file for short term disability (at 60% salary). Dave Gruver with the Personnel office responded that this policy is set by the state. The legislature must enact any changes. Employees must have at least one year or 1250 hours of service to be eligible for family medical leave. This follows the rules of eligibility for insurance in order to keep people from abusing the system.
 - Rebecca Owens will present a resolution on Fall Break later in the meeting.
 - New issues include:
 - The committee plans to investigate whether ERS has had complaints about Medco.
 - A staff member asked if new employees can utilize Thompson Hall for medical services before their insurance benefits become available.
 - A staff member suggests implementing an employee vacation savings fund.
 - A staff member asked if summer hours are going to be implemented this year, and if so, how will it be executed?
 - The executive board discussed adding a cover sheet to resolutions to make sure any necessary follow-up happens.
- Elections committee – The committee will begin its work on spring elections soon.

- **External Committees**

- Academic Council (Rebecca Owens) – Academic Council meets next week. There was nothing of interest to report from last month's meeting.
- SSN Committee (Jaclyn Byrd) – Kay Whyburn Rhodes has indicated she will be happy to attend a Staff Senate meeting to provide a detailed update. Any concerns regarding the use of Social Security numbers on campus should be reported to Kay. Also, the Banner system has been purchased.
- Parking Advisory Committee (Patti Perkins) – At the first meeting, the committee was given the initiatives for 2005-2006 as well as upcoming initiatives. There are not many that impact staff – most deal with student issues. The committee is just getting started and there is not a mission statement or a clear purpose. There are students, staff, faculty, and University Parking Services members on this committee. New director Eric Crouch formed this committee and asked the Staff Senate to provide a couple of names from the senate in order to get feedback on how parking is working for staff.

- **President's Report**

Lori Dudley asked Richard Verrone to let everyone know that twenty scholarships will be awarded, and the names should be released next week in a TechAnnounce. They should appear in the local and campus newspapers. The application has been reworked for next fall.

The Web Page Committee was originally set up as an ad hoc committee. By suggestion of the Executive Board, this committee was folded into the Communications and Public Relations committee

since it is part of the Staff Senate's public face. Jaclyn Byrd has done some redesign to our website to meet the new university guidelines.

President Whitmore, Faculty Senate President John Howe, SGA President Nathan Nash, and Richard Verrone will give a state of the university address. The Staff Senate will promote this and will add the information to the website. This is a difficult time of day for staff to attend an event, however, a real staff presence is needed at this meeting. It will be held at 5:15 p.m. on March 23.

Parking fee issue and raise issue – Verrone attended the Thursday committee meetings, specifically the Facilities Committee which is responsible for the permit fee decision, among other things. Max Hinojosa's presentation was basically the same as when he presented to the Staff Senate last November. SGA president Nathan Nash spoke to the committee, as did Verrone. Verrone restated the Staff Senate arguments that this much increase in parking fees is not appropriate, it is unfair, this is a huge cost to dump on staff all at once, this is not the right way to go. He restated the resolution asking for a 10% cap. The Regents seemed to listen to this, and some of them asked some good questions. The incremental increase idea caught their attention because the Staff and Faculty Senates both supported this. However, one Regent moved to accept the increases and the new fee structure was passed. It will most likely go into effect September 1.

Raises – President Whitmore is committed to employees receiving a raise every year. This year, his initiative was a 2% raise, which will not cover the permit fee increase for many employees. Tom Anderes, Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, made the budget presentation to the Budget Advisory Council which included a flat-rate tuition plan, part of the "graduate-on-time" program. This was the big issue for this session, and Regents were against raising tuition again. A 4% increase was acceptable, but another 4% was added to cover scholarships and employee raises. The Regents decided to table this issue due to the confusion. Anderes later presented the Regents with two options: cut the raise down some or cut the tuition increase down to 4%. The second option passed and the employee raise was not included. It is hoped these raises will be reallocated.

- **Other Business**

There is a new resolution to be presented, but a vote will not be taken because a quorum is not currently present. In the fall, an ad hoc committee was established to study the effects of a fall break on staff. The way the proposal is written now, grade submission will be due later in December. Classes will be held through the entire final week and exams will not begin until Monday. Since grades are not due until Friday and graduation is the next day, there could be some trouble with verifying that students are eligible to graduate in such a short period of time. In order to get all reports from the Registrar disseminated to all colleges, it will be impossible to do all the work necessary without staff having to work during the holiday break. Also, having students remain longer in the residence halls affects the amount of time maintenance crews have to make necessary repairs before students return for the spring semester. The Issues committee identified five major concerns and put forth some recommendations to SGA President Nathan Nash rather than dismiss the fall break outright. One suggestion was to have grades due for graduating students by the Thursday prior to graduation, even though regular exams would continue for other students with grades still due by Monday at 2 p.m. This is necessary in order to get all reports and other tasks done before the holidays. Another concern was with the survey method used to poll students regarding a fall break. Also a concern is how important it is for students to receive a diploma on the day of graduation. A vote on the fall break resolution will be taken next month. *See Appendix A for full text of this resolution.*

- **Announcements**

- The next Executive Board meeting will be Wednesday, March 29, at 3 p.m. in the Formby Room of the Southwest Collection.
- The next Staff Senate meeting will be Wednesday, April 5, at 3 p.m. in the Escondido Theater in the Student Union basement.

- **Adjourn**
 - Motion made by Jaclyn Byrd to adjourn
 - Seconded by Travis Findley
 - Motion carries

Appendix A

Texas Tech University Staff Senate 2005-2006 Resolution 5 March 1, 2006

Stating the recommendation of the Staff Senate regarding the current written proposal for a Fall Break

WHEREAS, an Ad-Hoc Committee within the Staff Senate Issues Committee was formed to analyze the impact on staff of the written proposal for a student Fall Break; and

WHEREAS, the committee's research revealed ways in which a Fall Break as currently written would negatively impact staff; and

WHEREAS, these findings, along with suggested alternative solutions, were presented to Nathan Nash, President of the Texas Tech Student Government Association; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Tech University Staff Senate has not seen an amendment to the currently written proposal for a student Fall Break;

THEREFORE, be it resolved on this day, March 1, 2006, that the Texas Tech University Staff Senate, while it supports the idea of a student Fall Break, will not support the proposal as it currently stands for students to receive a Fall Break.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Texas Tech University Staff Senate has expressed its willingness to continue to work with the Texas Tech University Student Government Association on ways that the Staff Senate would accept the implementation of a Fall Break. These include, but are not limited to, a draft response from the SGA which contains an alternative proposal which addresses the specific issues of the TTU Staff, and the use of a more scientific mode of gathering student input regarding a Fall Break.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be submitted to Texas Tech President Jon Whitmore, Provost William Marcy, Faculty Senate President John Howe, and to the Texas Tech Student Government Association President.