

Subject: January Staff Council Minutes

From: lynne swetmon <lynne.swetmon@wku.edu>

Date: Thu, 13 Jan 2005 07:59:10 -0600

To: Staff-All <Staff-All@wku.edu>

The Staff Council held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2005 in MMTH 279. Members present were Patty Booth, Teresa Dunning, Timmy Givens, Jeff Jones, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Elizabeth Paris, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, Lynne Swetmon, Brian Ward, Lauri Warden, and ex-officio Pat Jordan. Bob Deane was absent.

Two new Staff Council members were introduced. Timmy Givens will be completing the term of Bob Zoellner who resigned from the Staff Council and Brian Ward will complete the term of Joy Gramling who has retired from WKU. These vacancies were filled according to SC bylaws.

Dr. Kirchmeyer, Vice President of Information Technology, came to the meeting to inform us of the technological advances that our campus will soon enjoy. We have already received faster Internet access and we can look forward to all buildings being equipped for wireless hookup in the near future.

Elizabeth Paris brought forth the discussion of the retire/rehire policy. According to the current policy, the decision whether an employee can retire/rehire is at the supervisors discretion; however, it is required that the position be advertised. The Staff Council feels that in order to be fair to employees and to avoid confusion, the policy should be amended to state that "no employee shall be allowed to retire and remain in the same position". After much discussion Patty Booth made a motion that the Staff Council recommend that an employee cannot be rehired into the same position from which they retire. Chester McNulty seconded the motion and a vote was taken and passed unanimously. Elizabeth Paris will forward this recommendation to Tony Glisson, Gene Tice, and President Ransdell.

Elizabeth Paris presented a report from Shelia Houchins, who is serving as the Staff representative on the Centennial Committee. This committee has been working hard in the planning of the yearlong celebration in 2006. The first event in the celebration will take place on November 16, 2005.

Elizabeth Paris reported on various e-mails received concerning overtime compensation for staff employees. In an email sent by Tony Glisson to Staff-All on December 14, the terms "exempt" and "non-exempt" were used to describe those employees who should report overtime and those who should not. There was concern in the Staff Council that some staff employees may not know if they are considered "exempt" or "non-exempt". For this reason, the following explanation is being offered so that there will be no question as to who should be reporting overtime and who should not.

- * If you are paid on the 15th and the last working day of the month, then you are a NON-EXEMPT employee and */should report overtime/*
- * If you are paid every other Friday, then you are a NON-EXEM PT employee and */should report overtime/*
- * If you are paid once a month, you are EXEMPT and should NOT report overtime.

If non-exempt employees work over 37.5 hours up to 40 hours, those hours will be paid at your regular rate. If you work over 40 hours, those hours will be paid a one and half times your regular rate.

Time worked over 37.5 hours should be pre-approved by your supervisor. The policy which addresses this subject can be found on the HR website.

Teresa Dunning wanted to know why the December overtime can't be paid earlier than late January. Patty Booth explained that this is a timing issue and because we have the time off at Christmas, it isn't possible to cut the checks sooner.

The Staff Council received an e-mail from a staff member concerning the current bereavement policy. As the policy states, the employee would first use 3 sick days and then any other time off could be charged to either sick or vacation time. All employees agree that being off work for the death of a family member is no vacation. However, the Staff Council believes that we should not attempt to ask for additional paid time off work because we are fortunate to receive what we get now. Therefore, we will not be pursuing this issue.

Lauri Warden gave an update from the Designated Smoking Committee. The committee is currently e-mailing building coordinators to determine how many signs will be needed at each building. The signs, smoker's friends, and installation expenses still have to be funded. More information on this will be forthcoming.

James McCaslin reported that the Winter Term Committee finished their job and will be forwarding their recommendations to Dr. Burch.

Several employees who are concerned that not all staff members are given the chance to take classes approached Tina Sneed. As the University policy states, Western will pay for up to six hours each semester. However, it is up to the supervisor as to whether the class can be taken during working hours. Anyone can take a class outside of working hours.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45. The next Staff Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 2.

The Staff Council wants to hear from you. Do you have a question, concern or comment? You can now e-mail the Staff Council: staffcouncil@wku.edu <<mailto:staffcouncil@wku.edu>>

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The Staff Council held its annual retreat on Wednesday, June 15. Members present were Patty Booth, Lysandra Bowles, Bob Deane, David Emerson, Timmy Givens, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Elizabeth Paris, Angela Robertson, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, Lynne Swetmon, Lauri Warden, and ex-officio Pat Jordan. Members absent were Teresa Dunning, Brian Ward, and Mike Thompson.

The retreat was held at the Ag Expo. The purpose of the retreat is to look over accomplishments for the past year and set goals for the new year. At the same time it is to welcome the new members (LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, and Mike Thompson) and say farewell to those leaving (Bob Deane, Teresa Dunning, Elizabeth Paris, Lynne Swetmon and Brian Ward).

Elizabeth Paris gave the new members an overview of the Staff Council. The Staff Council is a body of 15 elected members representing each EEO category. The role of the Staff Council is to represent the staff to the administration. The Staff Council deals with policies rather than addressing individual concerns. The Staff Council is represented on every major committee at Western. More information about the Staff Council can be found on their website.

Elizabeth Paris reported that President Ransdell has approved the funds for designated smoking areas signage. The signage should be in place by the fall 2005 semester.

James McCaslin brought up the issue of benefits for part-time employees. The Staff Council is requesting some data from Human Resources in order to identify these part-time employees. More information on this matter will be forthcoming.

Dr. Betsy Shoенfelt, Joe Dunn, and Paula Gill from the Psychology Department came to present the results of the Staff Satisfaction Survey. A report of what the data indicated was presented. This information will be presented to the administration. The one item on the survey that was agreed on by everyone is that the Christmas Break is the most important benefit we have.

Tony Glisson informed the Staff Council that employees will be offered options to purchase both term life and whole life that employees can take with them when they leave Western. More information about this is available on the Human Resources website. This program would begin January 2006.

Elizabeth Paris and Pat Jordan brought up the discussion of staff replacement computers. This still hasn't been funded in the University budget. Patty Booth informed Dr. Gene Tice that with the implementation of Banner 7 in October, 2005, there would be an abundance of staff computers that would not adequately run such a program and therefore, slow down production. Dr. Tice suggested that he meet with Dr. Kirchmeyer to see how big of a problem this was going to be and how much it would cost to replace computers for heavy Banner users. More information on this matter will be forth coming.

The next order of business was to elect new officers for the 05-06 year. Patty Booth nominated James McCaslin for Chair. Heather Stubblefield seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for the position of Chair. A vote was taken and James McCaslin was voted in unanimously as Chair. Tina Sneed nominated Lauri Warden for the Secretary/Treasurer position. James McCaslin seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for the position of Secretary/Treasurer. A vote was taken and Lauri Warden was voted in unanimously as Secretary/Treasurer. Patty Booth nominated Jeff Jones as Web Master. Tina Sneed seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations for the position of Web Master. A vote was taken and Jeff Jones will remain the Web Master by a unanimous vote.

Several accomplishments for 2004-2005 were listed. Each member was asked to review their notes and e-mail additional accomplishments to Lauri Warden by Friday, June 17. Once all the accomplishments are compiled, they will be sent to Jeff Jones for publishing on the website.

The goals of the Staff Council for 2005-2006 will be determined at the July meeting.

The monthly meeting dates will remain on the first Wednesday of each month. The July meeting will be held in Glasgow at the extended campus facility. Future meeting dates/locations will be determined at the July meeting.

Two committee assignments were made as follows:

Benefits Committee - Sharon Hartz and James McCaslin will continue to serve.

Budget Committee - Elizabeth Paris will continue to serve on this committee and make reports to the Council periodically.

Pat Jordan reminded the Council that the last time Dr. Barbara Burch attended a Staff Council meeting, she had asked the Council to collect hard data regarding staff salaries and upgrade of positions at WKU. Some of this information is available through Human Resources, such as job descriptions, but not all is available there. The Salary Equity Committee is still meeting and is scheduled to make a final recommendation on July 1. However, the report may not be finished by that deadline. In order to get current, accurate information, the Council members were asked to research our job counterparts at benchmark universities, to get data on the number of students and faculty that we currently support versus what we supported five years ago, and to collect any other pertinent data on salaries and upgrades. We would like to invite Dr. Burch to a meeting within the next two or three months to discuss this and other staff issues.

A staff member inquired about getting more dining choices open on campus during the summer months. The council suggested this person contact the appropriate food service and administration authorities regarding this request as this is not within the Staff Council's purview.

Pat Jordan reported that after researching the last three years of WKU salary books, it appears that support staff in certain areas received mid-year raises in addition to the

regular yearly raises. Other support staff did not receive these type of raises. Ms. Jordan has contacted President Ransdell by e-mail regarding this issue and will keep us informed of any additional information she obtains.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 6 at 9:00 a.m. at the Glasgow Extended Campus facility.

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The WKU Staff Council held its July meeting on Wednesday, July 6, 2005 at the Glasgow Campus. Members present were: Patty Booth, LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Heather Stubblefield, Mike Thompson, and Lauri Warden. Members absent were: Timmy Givens, Pat Jordan, and Tina Sneed.

Jeff Jones asked each member to look at the Staff Council website and give him any updates and corrections that need to be made. Several council members gave information to Jeff at the meeting.

Committee memberships were discussed and new assignments were made as follows: LySandra Bowles will take the vacant spot on the Spirit of Western Committee. Sharon Hartz, Bill Basham, and James McCaslin will continue to represent the staff on the Benefits Committee. The Parking and Transportation Committee is being changed as a result of the formation of the Parking and Transportation department. If the committee continues to exist and needs a staff representative, Patty Booth will continue on this committee. Elizabeth Paris will represent the staff on the Budget Committee. A complete list of committee memberships can be found on the staff council website: <http://www.wku.edu/staffcouncil>

Sharon Hartz met with the Staff Council via ITV connection to update the council on two matters of importance to all staff at WKU.

The first was in regard to a presentation made to the benefits committee by Artemetrx. This company helps businesses to control and cut healthcare spending and offers several different levels of services. Level One services would include reviewing bills from service providers to make sure the charges to employees were accurate. Level Two services would include having an Artemetrx on-staff pharmacist review employee prescription drug usage information, and then allowing the pharmacist to contact the employee directly by phone at work or at home with information and/or suggestions for less expensive alternatives. It has been proposed that WKU enter into a contract with Artemetrx for Level One and Level Two services and a contract has been presented for these levels. However, the benefits committee was not satisfied with the contract as it was presented and will be asking for changes before it will be approved and signed. Staff council members asked many questions regarding confidentiality of patient information and prescription drug coverage, but many of the questions could not be answered at the current time. The Staff Council is asking for written input from staff employees regarding concerns with this plan and the level at which they would like to participate. You may e-mail the Staff Council at: StaffCouncil@wku.edu with your comments. These comments need to be received by July 29, 2005. Due to the anticipated volume of correspondence, it will not be possible for a reply to be sent in response to individual comments.

The second matter of importance presented by representatives from the Benefits Committee was an unofficial request by the faculty senate to the benefits committee asking the committee to consider offering domestic partner benefits to WKU employees and their partners. This request is for benefits in general--no one specific benefit has been identified at this time. Two position papers, one pro and one con, have been presented to the benefits committee, but further input from the Faculty Senate and Staff Council has been requested. The Staff Council discussed this issue and would like input from staff employees. Please e-mail comments to: StaffCouncil@wku.edu or to mail written comments to James McCaslin, Chair of the Staff Council, via campus mail (send to James McCaslin, Glasgow Campus). These comments need to be received by July 29, 2005. Due to the anticipated volume of correspondence, it will not be possible for a reply to be sent in response to individual comments.

The dates of the Staff Council monthly meetings were scheduled. All meetings will be held on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. President Ransdell and Provost Burch will be invited to be guests at a regularly-scheduled monthly meeting in the fall to discuss staff concerns and issues. Mr. Tom Riley of Facilities Management, and Ms. Shelia Houchins of the Centennial Committee will also be invited to meet with the Staff Council.

The 2005-2006 Staff Council Goals and budget priorities were determined to be (listed in priority order):

1. Reinstating centralized funding for tuition waiver benefits for those employees who are not considered full-time;
2. Eligible dependent children of faculty/staff receive the 50% tuition waiver regardless of other scholarships they may receive
3. Staff Computer Replacement Pool funding;
4. Centralized funding for Staff Leadership Institute participants; and,
5. Improving staff salaries and benefits

Patty Booth presented a report showing employees that have a status of "other than full-time". The report illustrates the challenge in classifying Part-Time employees as regular, temporary or occasional. A committee was appointed to determine the definitions of the Part-Time classifications and to explore the feasibility of offering benefits to employees determined to be "Part-Time Regular". Members are: Patty Booth-chair, David Emerson, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, and Angela Robertson.

Patty Booth reported that the Salary Equity committee is on target to complete its work in July and will present a recommendation based on its research to the President shortly thereafter.

The results of the Staff Survey will be presented to the Administrative Council by Dr. Betsy Shoenfelt at an upcoming meeting to be determined. James McCaslin and some of the staff survey committee will also attend that meeting. The results will be reviewed more fully by the Staff Council for future action.

Lauri Warden reported from the Designated Smoking Area committee that she had been contacted by Tom Riley of Facilities Management to determine who would order and install signage to implement the Designated Smoking Area policy approved by President Ransdell and the Administrative Council. This implementation will be in place in the near future.

Fall Break Brunch was discussed. A list of door prize donors was reviewed and updated and other administrative tasks were assigned. Fall Break Brunch will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2005.

Discussion of the staff computer replacement pool was held. Many computers that staff use will not work well with the new version of Banner that will be introduced to campus this fall. This problem was discussed with Dr. Tice at the June meeting, and he has already contacted Dr. Kirchmeyer regarding this issue. Heather Stubblefield will get information on the number of staff who are banner users and report back to the Staff Council at the August meeting.

Ann Potter discussed the problem of faculty/staff sharing parking with students and asked if there was a solution to this problem. Patty Booth tried to get some information on future plans from Jennifer Tougas, Parking and Transportation Director, but had not been able to do so at this time. She will try to get information on this topic for the August meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 3.

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The WKU Staff Council held its July meeting on Wednesday, August 3, 2005. Members present were: Patty Booth, LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, Pat Jordan, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, Mike Thompson, and Lauri Warden. Member absent was: Timmy Givens.

David Appleby attended the meeting to talk to the members about the affordability of insurance co-pays at WKU. He distributed and explained an insurance survey he had come across. The survey pertained to the high cost of services and pharmaceuticals and the employees' ability to pay for and use these services. David asked about the possibility of having a similar survey on the WKU campus. The Council questioned the purpose of the survey and what would be gained by having this information. David felt that if we could make medical services more affordable/available to employees, then the campus community would be healthier, and, therefore, would save WKU money on insurance claims. It was noted by Council members that the benefits committee is dedicated to getting the best insurance coverage for the most reasonable price and a survey of this type might undermine that effort. A discussion of insurance co-pays and how insurance premiums are structured followed. Raising salaries in an effort to combat this issue was discussed, and it was decided that this might be the best way help assure that all full-time employees are more able to afford the insurance co-pays.

The Salary Equity Committee is nearing completion of its work which began last spring. Recommendations will be made to the President and departments soon. Salary increase recommendations resulting from the work of this committee will take effect January 1, 2006.

A staff member had inquired about the group nursing home insurance that had been listed on a survey of possible new benefits by the benefits committee. The benefits committee chose several benefits based on the results of their survey, and group nursing home insurance was not chosen for this year. Disability policies and long-term care policies will be the first offered.

The issue of "parking down" was brought before the Council. Patty Booth, parking and transportation committee representative, explained that "parking down" means that Reserved Parking pass holders are allowed to park in Premium and Non-Premium spaces and Premium pass holders are allowed to park in Non-Premium spaces. The problem arises when Reserved Parking pass holders choose to park in Premium or Non-Premium spaces even though Reserved Parking spaces are still available. Such a scenario effectively occupies two spaces at one time. The Council recommended that Patty present this problem to the Parking and Transportation committee so that perhaps a solution could be defined which would allow the Reserved Parking pass holder a guaranteed space but would prevent the inconsiderate practice of occupying two spaces simultaneously. The new parking structure located between Smith Stadium and Diddle Arena is designated for commuter Students ONLY. This means that no "parking down" privileges are allowed in the new parking structure. "Parking down" is also prohibited in any parking designated for Housing Permits. Anyone with questions regarding parking

should visit the parking and transportation website, <http://www.wku.edu/transportation> for current, accurate information.

The matter of students using dependent tuition discounts first was discussed. James McCaslin contacted President Ransdell regarding the status of this proposal, and he learned that the President is waiting for some additional information from financial affairs before a final decision is made.

A suggestion has been made by a staff member that all Staff Council members should have a picture of themselves posted on the Staff Council website to help staff recognize their elected representatives. These pictures will be taken at the September meeting and posted on the website.

A discussion was held on asking for the President's Day holiday for staff, since classes will not be in session this year, but the university will be open that day. Since employees get 16 paid holidays already in addition to vacation days, the staff council declined pursuit of the issue.

James McCaslin had checked on various locations to hold the 2006 Staff Council retreat, but the cost for these locations was prohibitive, so the Council voted to hold the retreat at the Glasgow campus.

Cross reference of tuition waivers for WKU employees' dependents was discussed. This proposal has been made numerous times to the administration and has been rejected repeatedly, so the Council declined to take any action on this issue.

The proposed contract with Artemetrx was discussed. The results of the informal staff survey taken during the month of July indicated that staff members at WKU had many concerns about entering a contract with Artemetrx. Based on the feedback received from the staff at large, the Staff Council opposes the utilization of Level II services from Artemetrx.

The results of the informal staff survey taken during the month of July regarding offering domestic partner benefits at WKU was discussed. Based on the feedback received from the staff at large, the Staff Council opposes the offering of any University benefits to domestic partners not employed by Western Kentucky University.

A committee to discuss the establishment of a benefits package for PT employees was established. Committee chair Patty Booth reported on their progress. Although there are many "occasional" employees who work part time hours on a sporadic basis, there are currently only 33 employees who regularly work a 20 hour or more workweek. Results of research on WKU's benchmark universities revealed that 88% of benchmarks provide at least some benefits for regular PT employees. In every case, the benefits were prorated according to the percentage of time actually worked by the PT employee. Commonly offered benefits were vacation and medical leave accrual, discounts on university services and tuition waivers. Infrequently offered benefits include health and life

insurance. James McCaslin, Staff Council Chair, asked the PT Benefits Committee to draft a formal recommendation concerning a PT Employee Benefit package and present it at the September Staff Council meeting.

Pat Jordan gave an update on actions taken by the Board of Regents. The Centennial celebration will be a good thing for WKU, and she encouraged all staff members to attend events and participate in this celebration. Fall enrollment is up, but there is some concern involving enrollment of students from Tennessee. The Tennessee lottery is helping to pay for education benefits, which is causing a loss of students from this state. There is a new regent coming on board, Yvette Haskins, who will replace Kristen Bale on the Board. The Snell Hall demolition was discussed. The statues formerly standing near Snell Hall are being cleaned and repaired and will stand in the Centennial Plaza just below the Van Meter outlook.

Fall Break Brunch committees reported the following:

Brochure:

Heather Stubblefield will get the previous year's brochure, update it and copy the new brochure. Pat Jordan will get the brochure folded and attach labels. The brochure will go out on September 21-23. Each staff member will need to fill out the door prize section and bring it to the Fall Break Brunch to be eligible for door prizes.

Decoration:

Heather Stubblefield and her committee will be working on decorations and report next month.

Entertainment:

Scooter Davis will be providing the music for the Fall Break Brunch again this year.

Food:

David Emerson is working with Aramark. He will get a menu and pricing information as soon as possible and advise the chair so that funding can be secured. Tina Sneed will check on water and drinks for this event and coordinate with David.

Location:

Due to some damaged ceiling tiles, the Garrett Ballroom is not usable until further notice. Therefore, the Staff Council voted to explore using DUC this year to avoid possible problems. David Emerson will check on using DUC and getting a stage and PA system.

Prizes:

All Staff Council members should be getting their prizes secured and getting the information and prizes to Lauri Warden.

The September meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 7 at 8:00 a.m. in MMTH Room 219. Guests for this meeting will be: Dr. Gary Ransdell, Mr. Tom Riley, and Ms. Sheila Houchens.

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The WKU Staff Council held its July meeting on Wednesday, September 7, 2005. Members present were: Patty Booth, LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, Mike Thompson, and Lauri Warden. Timmy Givens and Pat Jordan were absent.

James McCaslin reminded the Council of the history of the proposal for the Tuition Waiver for Employee Dependents. Patty Booth has met with Belinda Higginbotham regarding funding issues. It was determined that there were no problems procedurally to prevent the waiver from being applied first, so this information was sent to Ann Mead. During a conference call with President Ransdell during the Staff Council Meeting, he stated that he thought this proposal had been approved and was ready for implementation, but we would need to clarify that with Ann Mead.

On August 29, Betsy Schoenfelt and James McCaslin met with the Administrative Council and presented the results of the Staff Satisfaction Survey. During the conference call, Dr. Ransdell said he was pleased and encouraged by the results and will share this information with the University Senate, as he would like to see that body prepare and administer a similar survey.

Tom Riley, Director of Facilities Management, was introduced to the Staff Council. Mr. Riley gave the Council a short biography of his qualifications. The following proposals and issues were discussed with Mr. Riley:

- ❖ Designated smoking areas: Mr. Riley has reviewed the information on signage and receptacles that the Staff Council had gathered and presented a funding request to the administration in the approximate amount of \$12,000. He is waiting on funding information before he can move ahead with the purchase of the signs and materials needed to implement this initiative. During the conference call, President Ransdell requested that the updated funding information be sent to him, so he can authorize university funds and Mr. Riley may proceed.
- ❖ The Staff Council has been contacted to see if recycling bins similar to the ones in DUC could be placed in all academic buildings. It was explained that the recycling bins in DUC were put in place and were sponsored by the Student Government Association. The issue of people abusing the bins and the types of waste products that are placed in the bins was discussed. One of the main problems in having recycling bins out in a general public area is that they often times get used as a general trash can rather than just for recyclable materials, which causes all materials in the bin to become trash. Other recycling efforts on campus was reviewed, and further information on these efforts will be forthcoming.
- ❖ Energy management at WKU was discussed. WKU set a new peak electrical usage in August, and there is a proposed 7.1% increase in electrical charges from TVA that is set to begin in October. There is a utility master survey being conducted right now with an outside consultant. Once the results are in, this will give WKU the information to put several money-saving policies in place to keep

energy costs in check. Mr. Riley explained the age and condition of the current HVAC and heating systems and told the Staff Council that energy management is facing some tough infrastructure issues. The issue of some buildings not receiving enough air conditioning while other buildings are extremely cold was discussed. Mr. Riley explained that the typical temperature range for buildings should be 68 to 78 degrees. If work environments are repeatedly outside this range, then he asked that employees let Facilities Management know, so those specific issues can be addressed.

The Staff Leadership Institute applications will be sent to the campus in the near future. All staff members are encouraged to consider applying for this group. LySandra Bowles, Barbara Johnston, and Angela Robertson will represent the Staff Council on this committee.

A note of appreciation from a WKU staff employee for the Staff Council's hard work and representation of the staff was read.

During the conference call with President Ransdell, the question of employee tuition benefits being available to employees for the Winter term was discussed. The President stated that while the employee would need to check with their supervisor before signing up for a class, that the tuition benefit would apply for the Winter term.

The President approved the week of October 10 --homecoming week-- as "Wear WKU Gear" week.

The President was invited to participate in the Fall Break Brunch festivities and responded that he looked forward to this gathering.

James McCaslin talked with Human Resources and made a clarification of making up missed work time for classes. The official policy states:

"With the approval of the department head, an employee may take one course during normal working hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. without being required to use vacation time or lunch time to make up for time spent in class. Although supervisors/department heads are encouraged to approve an employee's request to take a class during regular working hours unless the taking of a class would adversely affect the work unit, it is expressly provided herein that divisions/departments of the University may implement additional and/or more specific provisions relating to taking a course during normal working hours."

The Council was reminded that if the work unit would be adversely affected, the supervisor/department head could disallow the taking of courses during the work day.

Staff Excellence Awards nominations for the 2005 Staff Excellence Awards are due in Human Resources by the close of business on Tuesday, September 13, 2005. There is a new selection committee this year. Any staff person, including part-time employees, may nominate any other staff person for this award.

The Staff Council was asked for 7 staff members to serve on the Parking and Transportation Appeals committee for a one-year term. The 7 chosen were: Chris Rhynerson, Debbie Carroll, Regina Allen, Ann Potter, Mike Thompson, Wendy Wren and Tina Sneed. There are other WKU faculty representatives on this committee also.

An update from the Parking & Transportation Appeals Committee was given by Patty Booth. The parking and transportation policy allowing gated pass holders to park down in premium parking spaces was discussed. James McCaslin presented the opposing side of the gated park-down issues as requested by a staff employee. Based on the number of email and verbal communications received by the Staff Council, it was recommended that a formal request be made to the Parking and Transportation Committee at the next meeting to revisit that policy. The Staff Council recommends the following:

- Gated pass holders may be allowed to park down in non-premium parking.
- Employees whose job responsibilities require more availability with parking will be addressed on an individual basis with Dr. Tougas and the committee.
- If changes are made to the policy governing use of gated lots such that a gated pass holder no longer desires to own a gated pass, that person may exercise a one time option to change to a premium or non premium pass within in a specified time frame.

A benefits committee update was given by James McCaslin. The benefits committee is currently in the process of selecting a third party administrator for 2006. Utilizing the bid process has produced very competitive rates. The selection is to be made soon, and then the insurance premiums for 2006 can be set.

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Patty Booth reported that a recommendation from the Part Time Benefits Committee has been made to develop a Benefits Package for any regular part time employee. Such an employee is defined as one who regularly works an average of 20 hours per week. There are currently 33 such employees at WKU. Benefits would include accrual of vacation and medical leave on a prorated basis, Tuition Waiver Discount Program, and use of the Preston Center.

The Fall Break Brunch decorating committee would like for WKU staff/faculty members to look through any photo memorabilia that they have from over the years and send an electronic copy to Heather Stubblefield by e-mail no later than Friday, September 23. The committee asks that you please identify the people in the photos and the event with date and/or year, if possible. These photos will be used in a display during the brunch. Fall Break Brunch donations for door prizes were discussed. The theme for the brunch will be the same as for homecoming: Celebrate Traditions--Build Memories. The Council will meet on Monday October 3 to finish Fall Break Brunch planning.

Next regular meeting of the Staff Council will be on Wednesday, November 2, 2005 at 9:00 in the HR Conference Room. Guests will be Brandon Higgins (workers comp) at 9:00 and Barbara Burch at 10:00.

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The WKU Staff Council held its July meeting on Wednesday, November 2, 2005. Members present were: Patty Booth, LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Pat Jordan, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Tina Sneed, Heather Stubblefield, Mike Thompson, and Lauri Warden. Members absent were: Timmy Givens and Jeff Jones.

Brandon Higgins, the new Workers' Compensation Specialist in HR attended the meeting to distribute the new Workers' Compensation policy and answer any questions regarding that policy. A new modified work duty program to assist injured workers returning to work safely and in a timely manner is a part of the new policy and will reduce lost work time and help manage absenteeism. Council members asked questions about what constituted light duty work and what would happen if the designated work area did not have anything considered "light duty" work. Mr. Higgins explained that if a worker cannot be accommodated in their own department, they can be moved to another work area on campus. Job Task Bank forms were distributed. These forms will be used to determine where and why type of "light duty" work is available. The home department would pay the injured employee's salary. Employees that are injured somewhere other than on the job are not eligible for this program. It is for employees injured on the job only. It is important for all employees to report injuries, no matter how small, to their supervisors and/or Mr. Higgins in Human Resources. This will help identify any injury that later turns into a Worker's Compensation related injury. Supervisors across campus are being trained on this program right now. Hazard assessments are currently being conducted on BSA positions. BSA positions account for the majority of Worker's Compensation claims at WKU. Other areas indicated by injury statistics might be investigated in the future to help minimize worker injury and cost to the university.

Doug Newton, WKU Wellness Coordinator, requested two Staff Council members to sit on the new Wellness Advisory committee. David Emerson and Tina Sneed will represent the Staff Council on this committee.

The Staff Council has been asked to have a representative on the Campus Master Planning Committee. This committee plans future buildings and lay-out of the campus and requires a good deal of time. The Council discussed various representatives, and James McCaslin will contact the top choice to see if that person would be willing to represent the staff on this important committee.

Thank you letters have been sent out by James McCaslin to all donors for the Fall Break Brunch donations.

Life insurance and short term disability insurance questions were raised and discussed. It was noted that employees who have been at WKU less than 5 years or those with few sick days would benefit from the short term disability insurance the most. It was also noted that FEBCO funds contributed by employees, if not used in the designated time period, are lost.

The WKU Bereavement policy and the issue of having to use sick or vacation time for bereavement occurrences was discussed. Information on the WKU policy and various other universities' policies were reviewed. It was determined that WKU has a very liberal leave policy, which allows for more time off in general than the other universities investigated.

Several Facilities Management department issues were discussed. The grievance policy was explained as follows: An employee with a grievance issue must proceed through the proper management chain of command to report the grievance, but can continue up to the top, if they do not get satisfaction at any lower management level. It was also explained that outside vendors supplying perks to WKU employees could be regulated by each department administrator and that this type of incentive could affect state funding for the university in some instances.

The Staff Regent's term of office will end in June, 2006. The Staff Council will be holding an election in the Spring of 2006. All eligible candidates are encouraged to run for this important office. More information will be forthcoming on this election.

A part-time benefits proposal has been compiled by a subcommittee of the Staff Council. This proposal will be forwarded by James McCaslin to President Ransdell.

Dr. Barbara Burch was another guest of the Staff Council. Two important issues were discussed in length. The first involved a proposed policy change in the Academic Affairs Division that would formally require employees taking a class during regular work hours to make up the missed time or use vacation time. After some very productive discussion regarding the existing HR policy, Dr. Burch agreed to address the issue with the department heads rather than create a new formal policy.

The Council also questioned Dr. Burch about the decision to allow university employees to take a Winter Term course, but only at the expense of losing a course in the Summer. Most employees have chosen not to take a Winter Term course because of this. Dr. Burch agreed that this was not the intent of the policy, and that she would look into making changes to clarify the policy. Dr. Burch also said that Winter, May, and Summer terms had to be self-funded, which is one reason that 18 hour limit for employee Tuition Waivers was implemented. She challenged the Council to come up with creative ways to help employees be able to take classes.

Dr. Burch also said the Staff Council representative on the Budget Committee should work toward getting the part-time staff tuition waivers back in place. She said she is supportive of getting this benefit back. It was pointed out to her that a part-time benefits proposal would be sent to President Ransdell soon. Dr. Burch requested that she be invited back to discuss issues further with the Council, and that date will be set in the near future.

A Council member asked about the problem of the Parking and Transportation office not issuing one-day, temporary parking passes until 8:30 a.m. It was also mentioned that

trying to get to the office is out-of-the-way for most employees. Patty Booth stated that the Parking and Transportation department was aware of these issues and was working on a solution.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7 in the Journalism conference room, second floor of MMTH.

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The WKU Staff Council held its December meeting on Wednesday, December 7, 2005. Members present were: Patty Booth, LySandra Bowles, David Emerson, Barbara Johnston, Jeff Jones, Pat Jordan, James McCaslin, Charles McCoy, Chester McNulty, Ann Potter, Angela Robertson, Heather Stubblefield, and Lauri Warden. Those absent were: Timmy Givens, Tina Sneed, and Mike Thompson.

Lauri Warden clarified the rules pertaining to outside vendors supplying incentives to WKU employees. As a result of the publication of the November minutes, Ken Baushke, Director of Purchasing, contacted the Staff Council and indicated a concern regarding this issue. He pointed out that Western employees were to "decline personal gifts or gratuities" from outside vendors as stated in the WKU Supply Services Quick Guide, which can be found at:
<http://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/FinAdmin/Policies%202005.doc>

Jeff Jones brought to the attention of the Staff Council the fact that KERS retirement rules set to expire December 31, 2007, will most likely have an effect on upcoming retirements. Current law provides that for KERS participants who retire prior to December 31, 2007, their retirement benefit multiplier is 2.20% (2.20% times the years of service). After December 31, 2007, the multiplier will be reduced to 1.97%. The effect of this change will be that an employee retiring on or after January 1, 2008, would have to work an additional three years in order to receive the same retirement benefit as he would have received had he retired prior to December 31, 2007. This change applies only to the KERS system

As a result of additional questions from staff employees regarding the Leave for Death in Immediate Family policy (HR Policy #60-140), the Staff Council revisited the issue. This policy states in part:

"Regular full-time employees will be excused from duty for up to three (3) days per occurrence due to a death in the immediate family. Such absences are charged against accumulated medical leave."

After discussion of the pertinent policies, it was decided that this policy would not be reviewed by the Staff Council for action at this time.

James McCaslin indicated that the WKU Budget Council will begin meeting early in the Spring semester to determine items to be funded in the upcoming budget, and the Staff Council held a discussion on what goals were important to staff employees. The following goals were proposed to be presented by Elizabeth Paris, the Staff Council representative on the Budget Council:

Centralized Funding for Part-Time Staff Tuition. This benefit would allow part-time staff to receive a tuition waiver for classes at WKU and would be based on the criteria established by the proposal currently submitted to the President. A motion to make this the number one priority of all items presented to the Budget Council from the Staff Council was made by Ann Potter and seconded by Patty Booth.

Staff Employee Computer Replacement Pool. This budget item has the potential to benefit staff employees who are using equipment that is old and not capable of running current software efficiently or at all. A subcommittee consisting of Heather Stubblefield, Jeff Jones, and Patty Booth was formed to research the number of staff computer users who would benefit and to determine just what kind of equipment and the age of the equipment that is being used. They will report their findings to the Staff Council in January.

Centralized Funding for Staff Leadership Institute. The Staff Council feels that the skills and experiences gained through the Staff Leadership Institute are beneficial to the individual, but also helps to make the staff person a better employee for WKU. Centralized funding for the Staff Leadership Institute would allow any employee to apply and be considered for inclusion in the Institute regardless of department funding ability.

Concerns about rising parking costs were raised by Barbara Johnston. Patty Booth, Parking and Transportation Committee representative, addressed the issues raised. She shared with the group that while changes were indeed coming to parking on several fronts, that the new Parking and Transportation Director, Jennifer Tougas, was taking into consideration recommendations made by the Parking and Transportation Committee on behalf of all employees as she makes policy.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the next meeting of the Staff Council will be held on Tuesday, January 10, 2006, rather than the regular Wednesday meeting date.

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