

STAFF EMPLOYEES' COUNCIL
March 21, 2006
JOURNALISM BLDG., ROOM 304
2:00-4:00 PM

Executive Officers Present: Debbie Keck (Chair); Bill Oberding (Vice-Chair); Pat McDonnell (Co-Public Relations); Valerie Pedroza (Treasurer); and Lisa Taylor Reza (Interim Secretary)

Representatives Present: Donnie Andrews; Bill Borges; Peter Brown; Scott Brown; Melanie England; Catherine Fischer; Marti Fricano, Iris Hochschild; Darley Jeppson; Michael Leonhard; Pam Moore; Theresa Moser; Sherry Olson; Betty Osborne; Valerie Pedroza; Phillip Pert; Jeanie Pratt; Michelle Rachal; Jewell Radcliffe; Erica Summerfelt; Beth Wood

Executive Officers and Representatives Absent: Nicole Aiazzi; Christine Arritt; Anette Christensen (Valerie Pedroza-proxy); Erin McGarvey; Vicki Paul; Joanne Tully; Renee Warren (Lisa Taylor Reza – proxy)

I. Call to order. Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

II. Minutes from February 2006.

The February 2006 minutes were approved with corrections.

III. Committee Reports

A. Administrative Action Manual Review

This committee met in January and discussed charitable lotteries and raffles. The topic of tax was reviewed. There will be a 25% tax on any prize that exceeds \$500. The language of lottery or raffle should be called a “drawing” in order to avoid taxes. The committee discussed whether or not the winner will pay the taxes or if the cost of the taxes should be incorporated into the prize. There are specific legalities associated with the university that must be followed. The committee discussed that the classified section of the manual will remain the same. The topic of the drug/alcohol policy is still pending. The topic of employee files and confidentiality was discussed. It was determined that records will not be released and all records will be sent to archives.

B. Arboretum Board

This committee met February 28, 2006. The topic of discussion was the Arbor Day Celebration. Arbor Day is the last day of April. The tree planting day is scheduled for April 28th. There is a tree give-a-way scheduled for May 4th. There will be a table set up with information and free seed packets from Comstock. Approximately 100-150 trees will be available. Bill Mize will be distributing general information. The Arboretum Board will also have a table at the SEC Open House on April 5th.

C. ASUN

There was an ASUN Meeting on March 8th. Pat McDonnell re-capped the topic of public forum areas. Two public forum areas have been recommended: One will be the lawn area by Lombardi Recreation, and the other will be the Joe Crowley Center (when completed). Pat also discussed the move of KPEB to the JTSU, allocation of money for the Davison Academy, the square footage needed for the Davison Academy (25,000 sq ft), what the academy will bring, such as study skills workshop, social skills workshop, and escort services. Pat reported that the youngest applicant is nine years old and the oldest applicant is fourteen years old. These students had an average score of 95% on the SAT Test.

D. Balloon Race Committee

This year marks the 20th anniversary for the Balloon Races. This committee met and discussed getting a list of applicants for scholarships. They are looking for students who have a GPA of 3.0 to 4.0. They have experienced difficulty in getting a list of students who meet the criteria to be eligible for the scholarship. The award was recently raised from a \$1000 scholarship to a \$1500 scholarship. The committee discussed pin designs and t-shirt designs for the 2006 Balloon Races. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2006.

E. Classified Staff Employee of the Month and Year

This committee met on March 1, 2006 and selected two employees for the April recognition. The committee discussed that there are currently 3 submissions/ nominations for employee of the year but they would like to see more come in. Bill Oberding will send out another campus-wide announcement to generate more interest.

F. Classified Staff Development Fund / Educational Leave Stipend

This committee met on February 26, 2006. There were a total of 9 employees who were reimbursed for money spent on their books totaling \$1,605.98. The committee generated letters to the recipients to let them know that they would be getting a reimbursement. Currently there is \$3,259.59 in the account to cover expenses leaving \$1,801.93 after reimbursements for Spring 2006. One topic of discussion was the varied start times of web classes as opposed to traditional class start times. The policy has been changed to accommodate the students who are taking web classes so that they still fall within the required time-lines for submitting a request for reimbursement.

G. Committee on the Status of Women

This committee met with Joe Crowley and John Frederick to discuss previous issues and to determine what the functionality of this committee should be. The committee is working on a proposal that will be delivered to Joe Crowley requesting that the Women's Center is brought back to campus.

H. Elections Committee

This committee did not meet.

Note: There are two vacancies due to the withdrawal of Kathie Stanfield and Chris Sladek. Debbie Keck recommended conducting an election with a new process of asking possible candidates if they are interested in serving on the SEC before officially taking a vote and contacting them.

I. Facilities Resources Committee

This committee met on March 14, 2006. The topics of discussion included: the renovation model (make the alcove part of a classroom) of room 100 in Lombardi Recreation Center was approved. LEND Program (Nevada Leadership in Neurodevelopment Education) requested 2,000 square feet of space so they may apply for a \$500,000 grant proposal. They will visit the facility housing Job Corp in Stead and see if the space is acceptable. SOM MSAN's request for use of Nelson Building Room 25B was met with using a storage cargo container as an alternative. Center for Research Design and Analysis was put on a waiting list for additional space they had requested to meet estimated needs in two years. The bids have opened on the new student union facility. The building is on schedule to be completed in the 2007 fall semester—JTSU is expected to be vacated by 7/1/08. The top floor of JTSU will house the Davidson Academy and Student Services will occupy the lower portion.

J. Faculty Senate

This committee was scheduled for March 13, 2006 but the meeting time changed. The minutes to the meeting will be available on line at:
<http://www.unr.edu/facultysenate/Meetings/Index.htm>

K. Parking and Traffic Board

This committee is scheduled to meet on March 27, 2006.

L. Police Services Board of Professional Standards

This committee did not meet.

M. SEC Bylaws

This committee did not meet.

N. SEC Luncheon Committee

This committee met on March 2, 2006. The SEC Employee Recognition Luncheon is scheduled for June 21, 2006. It will be held at Lawlor Events Center in the Blue and Silver Room. The committee discussed many topics including who will emcee the event. Currently, the candidates that are being solicited to emcee are David Hansen, Eric Herzik, Mike Reed, and Pat Miltenberger. The cost of the luncheon will be determined by the price of the catering but the committee still anticipates that the cost of the luncheon will be approximately \$14.00 per ticket. The theme for the luncheon is "It's Magic". The committee is looking to get magicians for entertainment. The committee also discussed

changing the traditional “clock” award to something else this year, changing how the tables are sold, and looking for agencies to sponsor the event. To help with time, the committee discussed that only the retirees would be introduced on stage. Employees with 20+ years may be recognized on stage as well.

The committee currently has only 8 committee members. The SEC Luncheon represents acknowledgement of the Classified Employees and it is imperative that the event runs smoothly. More committee members are needed to make sure that logistics such as the spelling of names, years of service, who will honor individual employees, and other intricate details are given the attention they deserve. This is an SEC event and the committee needs more volunteers to help make the luncheon a success. Please contact Pam Moore at moorep@unr.nevada.edu to sign up to help even if you cannot be on the committee on a regular basis.

O. SEC Open House

This committee meets every Thursday at 11:30 am in the JTSU Manzanita Room. The committee will meet until the event which is scheduled for April 5, 2006 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in the JTSU Auditorium. The theme for the Open House is “University of Nevada, Undiscovered Treasures”. The logistics such as inviting vendors, locating helium for the balloons, catering, décor, and donations for drawings is all underway. The event will be posted on the university events calendar. The committee welcomes volunteers to help set up and break down.

P. SEC Web Page

There are currently some difficulties with the website. A new photo of the SEC Committee will be published on the website as well as a photo of Interim President Crowley to announce that he will be speaking at the SEC Meeting in April 2006.

Q. Special Interests Committee

Jeanie Pratt noted that the faculty employees have a presidential award for outstanding committee service and would like to see the same opportunity for classified employees. It was suggested that this may be a topic for future agendas. Jeanie will follow-up with research. Jeanie posed a question concerning which classified positions require an FBI check and confirmed that Robin Freestone from BCN Human Resources is scheduled to speak at the SEC Meeting in May 2006 to discuss this subject.

R. Student Services Food/Retail Dining & Catering Committee

The committee met at the Down Under Café and discussed that the cost of energy has increased which has a direct impact on the price of food. They are working on keeping the price down as much as possible but a 5% increase is anticipated. A program is under way to help feed needy students. The next meeting has been scheduled for March 31, 2006.

S. Student Union Advisory Board

No report was given.

T. Wolf Pack Advisory

The committee is under new leadership and will re-convene in July 2006.

U. Work and Family Taskforce

The committee met on February 22, 2006. The committee reviewed the Work and Family Task Force flyer that went out to campus. The committee discussed the new child care facility. It is still under review due to intensive regulations.

V. University Disabilities Resource Coalition

No report was given.

Guest Speaker: Lisa Oliveto, International Admissions Coordinator/Recruiter – Graduate School

Lisa Oliveto spoke to the SEC committee about the topic of continuing education, why it is important for employees of an educational institution to embrace continuing education, and practical steps for making a transition back into the classroom successful. Steps for working and going to school at the same time include:

- Communication with Supervisor
- Time Management
- Determining School/Work Schedule
- Communication with Family Members
- Attending Class
- Making Time to Study

Lisa pointed out that continuing education at all levels including pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees will not only be personally gratifying but it provides an opportunity for professional advancement.

Classified employees have a great educational benefit which includes utilization of the Request for University of Nevada, Reno Fee Benefit for Classified Employees. (Under the fee benefit program, the University pays the total cost of the class(es), including the technology and lab fees from a state funded account. The Student Health Fee is the only fee that is waived.)

Classified employees who are employed at a minimum of .53 FTE and have been employed for 6 (six) months or more on the date the semester starts are eligible for the Classified Tuition Fee Benefit Program. There are some rules and regulations that apply:

- ✓ A request to take a class using the Fee Benefit must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor and appropriate appointing authority.
- ✓ Employees are allowed 12 credits per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)
- ✓ No more than 3 credits may be taken during work hours
- ✓ Credit courses must be job related, improve or update employee skills in current position, or apply toward the completion of a degree

- ✓ Undergraduate courses must be passed with a “C” or better
- ✓ Graduate courses must be passed with a “B” or better

Q: If an employee is interested in taking a class and it is not job related, what is the process?

A: Approval is needed from the employee’s supervisor and appropriate appointing authority to take a class using the fee benefit. All information relating to the regulations is available on the back of the classified fee benefit form.

Q: I already have a Bachelor’s degree but I want to take work related classes. How do I manage the school schedule that is required for graduate level classes?

A: It is necessary to speak with your supervisor to determine if there is a time during the work week that would allow you to be able to take graduate level classes. Communication is key. It was mentioned by someone in the audience that with the current hiring freeze, some departments are short staffed and a request to take a class during the day could be denied.

Q: What if an employee is interested in taking a class and it is not job related? What is the process?

A: An employee can always take a class that they are interested in taking. However, a supervisor’s approval is necessary in order for an employee to utilize the Classified Fee Benefit Form. Other factors must be taken into consideration, such as when the class will be attended and whether or not the class is an accredited class that will apply toward the completion of a degree or if it will improve or update an employee’s skills in their current job.

Q: Is there a place on the Classified Fee Benefit Form that asks how an employee will make up time spent in class?

A: Yes.

Q: If I already have a Bachelor’s degree and I want to take work-related classes, how would that class time be accounted for?

A: Communication with your supervisor is important. The Classified Fee Benefit Form can be used for accredited classes that improve or update an employee’s skills in a current position.

Q: What would we sign up as if we already have a BA and an MA degree and want to take a class for personal enrichment?

A: Sign up as a graduate special.

Note: Some courses taken for audit, recreational and non-credit are not eligible for the fee benefit. If the graduate level course(s) qualifies for the fee benefit, the value of the tuition is considered income and is subject to federal tax withholding.

Q: What grade level is required for a graduate special?

- A: Graduate level courses require that the student maintain a “B” average if they are utilizing the Classified Fee Benefit.
- Q: Who makes the determination as to what classes are allowed on a Classified Fee Benefit?
- A: Courses taken by classified employees are subject to the provisions of NRS 284.343 and NAC 284.482 through 284.522. The Department of Human Resources reviews the Request for Fee Benefit and makes a determination at the time of the request according to the rules set forth.
- Q: What is the application fee for graduate level classes?
- A: The fee is \$60.00 for new graduate students and \$40.00 for returning graduate students.
- Q: What about on-line courses? Is cost an issue?
- A: The cost of the class is not the determining factor. The selected class must meet the requirements of the Classified Fee Benefit rules and regulations in order to be covered. The Fee Benefit only covers classes/courses that are for credit and will apply toward the completion of a degree or if it will improve or update an employee’s skills in the current position. Courses taken for audit, recreational and non-credit are not eligible for the fee benefit.
- Q: What if an employee signs up for a class and then withdraws?
- A: There is a timeline on the Classified Fee Benefit Form that addresses withdrawal from a class. If a course is not passed at the appropriate grade level or if the class was not dropped within the 100% refund period, the employee must reimburse the full amount for the course. Human Resources runs a report at the end of each semester which identifies those employees. The report is forwarded to Payroll and the price of the class is deducted from the employee’s paycheck. Students who get a grade of “incomplete” have until the following semester to complete the course with the appropriate grade level. The Fee Benefit cannot be used for any class previously taken to improve a grade or for any class previously dropped.
- Q: If someone transfers from another institution, how long before they will be eligible for fee waivers?
- A: Classified employees who are employed at a minimum of .53 FTE and have been employed for 6 (six) months or more on the date the semester starts are eligible for the Classified Tuition Fee Benefit Program.
- Q: If I am a graduate special now, would I need to pay an application fee to get into the graduate program?
- A: Yes. There is a \$40.00 fee. Keep in mind that only 9 credits are transferable from a graduate special to a Master’s program.
- Q: How do I get into a PhD program?
- A: Apply to the desired program and graduate school. Twenty-four credits will be transferred from your Master’s Degree. A GRE will be necessary unless the requirement was already met

for the Master's degree. Additionally, department papers and letters of recommendation will be needed. For further information, contact Mele Pasina in Admissions and Records at 784-4700 ext. 2018.

- Lisa Oliveto recommends choosing an area of study that you currently have a relation to or an interest in. Another factor to consider is whether or not the degree program will require a GRE.
- The SEC has a fund that helps classified employees pay for their books. The account is funded from donations and other SEC activities.
- Classified employees are allowed 12 credits per fiscal year with the fee benefit.

A full description of the fee benefit requirements with the rules and regulations and the application form are located on the Human Resources website at:

http://www.unr.edu/vpaf/hr/forms/documents/RequestforUNRFeeBenefitforClassifiedEmployees_002.pdf

IV. Open Discussion

American Cancer Society: Relay for Life

Ashley from Relay for Life introduced herself to the committee and provided information on the American Cancer Society event which takes place April 21~22, 2006. This is a 13-hour event that is set up at Mackay Stadium. Mackay is set up like a campground with live entertainment and vendors. Ashley stated that the goal this year is to raise \$40,000. Bill Borges volunteered to be a team captain. For those who want to join the team, Bill can help set up times that members should be at the stadium. Ashley pointed out that onsite fundraisers would have to be approved by the fund-raiser group. Vendors will be there with free food. Flipside donated \$1000.00 toward food. There are raffles and luminary bags that can be purchased to honor those suffering with cancer and for those who did not survive the fight against cancer. Ashley asked that we keep in mind that this is a non-alcoholic and smoke free event. All proceeds go to the American Cancer Society in the form of donations. Donations can be made in cash, via personal check made payable to the American Cancer Society or on-line with a credit card or debit card.

New SEC Secretary

The committee took a vote on the new secretary for the SEC Committee. Christine Arritt volunteered to serve as secretary and received a unanimous vote. Lisa Taylor (Reza) will serve as the substitute secretary in the event that Christine is not able to attend a meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 03:55 p.m.