

STAFF COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 10, 2009  
10:00 AM

Present: Debbie Allen  
Kathy Baker  
Robert Castleberry  
Stephanie Cooper  
Todd Essary  
B.J. Thompson

Absent: Blaine Rose  
Lisa Sheffield  
Betty Smith

Guests: President John Hargrave; Dr. Steve Turner, Vice President Administration and Finance;  
Jerry Studebaker

I. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Stephanie Cooper, President. Stephanie welcomed President Hargrave, Dr. Turner and other guests.

II. Approval of Previous Minutes and Budget Report

The motion was made and seconded to approve the September 3, 2009 minutes and budget as distributed. Betty Smith had already requested approval via email and the minutes are already posted on the Staff Council Web Page.

III. Comments from President Hargrave

President Hargrave thanked everyone for attending this meeting. He wanted to particularly thank everyone that was involved with Homecoming week. He stated that he had received numerous cards, emails, and letters from alumni that had attended homecoming. All of the responses were positive and he reminded the Council that when we all work together professionally the public does notice. President Hargrave was shocked by the response to the Trunk or Treat event. It was suggested that approximately 400-500 kids participated in this event. He was impressed with the number of creative people on this campus and the number of staff that participated. He suggested that we might want to make this a tradition every year and for the Council to think about this.

President Hargrave attended the Regent's meeting last week. The primary funding sources for Oklahoma are three things: (1) Sales tax, (2) Income tax, and (3) Gross production tax. He stated that the State Legislature (both Senate and House) was taken over by the Republican Party two years ago and one of the top legislative agendas was to cut personal income taxes in the state of Oklahoma (which they did two years in a row). This was done when oil was \$150 a barrel and gas was \$13 a cubic foot. The state receives 7% (gross production) of gas and crude oil. This year the budget was made up on the assumption that the average price of gas in Oklahoma would be \$5.63 per gallon. The price dipped under \$3.00 per gallon early in the summer. The income tax generated in the state is way down because of the tax cuts. The tax was 7% and then went to 6.3%. Once the state has made the cuts they cannot raise the tax without a vote of the people, which is difficult to pass. The state is running about 26% behind what they thought they would have to spend this year. We were told we would get a 5% cut for

the month of July but not to worry, this would be made up as soon as the economy got better or with rainy day funds or stimulus funds. We agreed to freeze tuition. Last week we were told they are extending the 5% budget cut through the end of the fiscal year. Due to this we will be receiving about \$900,000 less this year than what we expected. Our budget started flat and has just gotten worse. We are looking at every possible way to cut costs without cutting salaries. Some campuses are already furloughing people including Chickasha which is furloughing one day per month. President Hargrave stated that we want everyone to have stability in their work and stability in their pay. ECU has money put in savings to weather this. We are in good shape compared to some of the other institutions. President Hargrave stated that he could not promise us but he believes we can make it until next June. In the meantime, we are going to look at our electricity usage. We all could be better and wiser with the use of electricity.

President Hargrave stated the staff will have free access to the walking trail effective January 1, 2010. He stressed that the Wellness Center does not receive funding from East Central; they are a stand alone profit center. If there is a great drop in membership this will have to be looked at again.

President Hargrave stated that the Longevity Pay Committee has not had a meeting. Betty Smith and Stephanie Cooper represent the Staff Council on that committee. Stephanie will schedule a meeting for the Longevity Pay Committee.

President Hargrave appreciated the work that Stephanie and her group had done for her "This Is It" event. Stephanie stated that the event went well.

President Hargrave opened the floor for any questions. A question was raised as to the status of stimulus money. President Hargrave stated that we did receive half of our stimulus money for this year but there are no promises that we will receive the next half next year. We are looking at every way possible to make us more efficient. The last thing we want to do is cut programs or lay off people. The suggestion was made that we can save a lot by just turning off computer screens when not in use or at night. It was suggested to turn off bathroom lights when you leave; turning on and off the lights does not use more electricity. If you walk past an empty room turn off the lights.

The question was raised has any money been received from the state lottery. Steve Turner stated that in 2005 the state passed a \$475 million bond program. ECU received \$10,812,000 of that. The lottery revenues pay that bond payment. Last year was the first year we did not have to supplement that payment. Those funds have been used for capital improvement projects such as the Fine Arts Center.

Dr. Turner was asked the status on the longevity issue. He stated that this year the state cannot cut us below our funding level due to the stimulus money but the stimulus money is only for two years. By 2012 we are looking at a big deficit. The money we receive is generated by increasing enrollment, increasing tuition and state appropriations. The cost would be between \$56-63,000 the first year to pay longevity and benefits. When longevity is fully funded it will be about \$165,000 in additional costs to ECU per year. When implemented, everyone with two years of service will receive \$250 for the first year. Dr. Turner stated that nothing would be retroactive. President Hargrave stated that he did want to have a committee meeting. Everyone is in agreement that longevity pay for staff should be implemented. The bottom line is the money and at what funding level do we begin this. The Council thanked Dr. Turner for his attendance at the meeting.

President Hargrave asked the Council if they have a written mission statement. Stephanie

Cooper informed him that she would send him another copy. President Hargrave asked if a committee had been formed to come up with ideas for staff incentives. Stephanie informed him that no committee had been formed but Todd Essary had come up with several ideas including: (1) monthly brown bag lunch recognizing an employee or department of the month with certificates, goody bags, or survival kits; (2) free month access to Wellness Center; (3) employee of the year chosen from employee of the month group; (4) pot luck dinner in Cafeteria (similar to Christmas dinner held in Administration Building in the past); (5) Five, Ten, Etc. Year Pins; (6) Trading work spaces – this would have to be done when classes are not in session; (7) Staff movie nights – free tickets to movie theater for family; (8) McSwain Theater tickets; (9) Flex time during school breaks – not just summer; (9) \$50.00 WalMart card. Todd Essary agreed to check on prices for pins, talk to Bruce Cowart at WalMart, and check on movie costs. He will provide these costs to the Council and President Hargrave before the next meeting. President Hargrave had suggested having an employee of the month designated parking space but was informed this would be a geographical issue. This would be great for employees in the Administration Building but not so for those in Horace Mann or the Science buildings.

The comment was raised as to how to help everyone keep a positive attitude when no raises were available. It was suggested that maybe everyone could be given a turkey, ham or WalMart gift card. An ECU day at WalMart with a specific percentage off could be an option. Todd Essary will discuss this concept with Bruce Cowart to see if WalMart would be interested.

Stephanie Cooper thanked President Hargrave and other guests for attending the Council Meeting.

#### IV. Miscellaneous Comments, Announcements, etc.

B.J. Thompson asked Stephanie to send Staff Council information to his home email account. She agreed to do this. Stephanie will send a message to all staff requesting staff incentive ideas that will cost little or no money. She stressed that if we are able to provide incentives then it must be something that the staff member will use. Todd Essary stated that he would try to meet with Bruce Cowart this week and also visit with the movie theater.

#### VIII. Adjournment

Stephanie Cooper will notify the Council of the next meeting time. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:32 am.