

STAFF COUNCIL
MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2009
2:00 PM

Present: Debbie Allen
Robert Castleberry
Karen Cochran
Stephanie Cooper
Todd Essary
Blaine Rose
Betty Smith

Absent: Bert Miller
Bob Vavricka

Guests: Dr. Duane Anderson, Interim President; Dr. Steve Turner, Vice President
Administration and Finance; Dr. Diane Berty, Vice President Student
Development

I. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm by Stephanie Cooper, President. Stephanie welcomed the guests attending.

II. Approval of Minutes and Budget

Motion was made and seconded to approve the February 5, 2009 Minutes as distributed. Betty Smith had already requested approval via email and the minutes are already posted on the Staff Council web page. Budget was approved as distributed.

III. Comments from Dr. Duane Anderson, Interim President

Dr. Anderson thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting today to start discussions about staff evaluations and merit pay. Dr. Anderson stated that he is looking for ways to separate the normal, routine, annual evaluation system from merit pay. ECU is not going to do away with the evaluation process. Although there is wide-spread thinking across campus that ECU employees are underpaid, that concept is not true. If national averages are used then all employees are underpaid, but when using other state institutions for comparison then ECU is in line with those institutions.

According to Dr. Anderson, if it was his choice, he would do away with the merit system and go with a cost of living increase along with longevity or merit. Dr. Anderson stated, from a very practical stand point, to jettison merit pay is impossible. We must find a way to do across the board increases and merit pay.

Dr. Anderson stated that we are going to use the evaluation document that was constructed last year, since we do not have the time or opportunity to change it at this time. Dr. Turner stated that when Alice was here last year, the evaluation went through several drafts in a 36 hour time frame. Most supervisors were there when the document was discussed. There was some communication break down in the process. Two changes have been made in the document this year to enhance the process. Supervisors

are required to discuss the document with the appropriate Vice President prior to the employee signing the document. Also the employee's signature will only affirm that they have read the appraisal, not that they agree with it.

Dr. Berty stated that the evaluation document has some positive aspects. It is important to make the document relevant to a particular employee by pulling information from specific job duties or a particular job description. She felt it would level the playing field by having the Vice Presidents involved.

The Council asked if the Vice Presidents questioned if a supervisor gives only "meets" expectations on all their employees evaluations? Dr. Anderson stated the Executive Committee looked at all the evaluations including the "not meet" and "exceeds" expectations. He had stressed to his supervisors that if an employee is doing their job then they were meeting expectations. If the supervisors gave low or high marks then they would have to be able to explain those marks. Dr. Anderson stated that some evaluations were turned in with all "exceed" expectations. He stated that no one can have all "exceeds" expectations, there is always room for improvement.

It was suggested by the Council that it might be better if all employees received the same amount of compensation. This would have prevented the hurt and anger some staff members felt. Dr. Berty stressed that the administration wanted to honor those employees who came to work from 8 to 5 every day and who do their jobs. Unfortunately a good thing got turned into a bad thing.

The Council asked if it was realistic, with the state of the budget, to discuss implementing longevity pay? Dr. Anderson stated that the budget situation is much direr than what was thought in February. The budget reduction for ECU from the state will be approximately \$970,000. The state institutions have been forbidden to raise tuition and there will be approximately \$300-350,000 mandatory cost increases in insurance premiums and utility costs for the next year. It will be April before we will know what may happen. Dr. Anderson stated that we are not prepared to deal with numbers at this time in regards to longevity. It could be that the decision becomes do we want to move to a guaranteed cost of living increase plus some kind of merit or longevity pay. Dr. Berty stated that we needed to develop a policy regardless so that it would be in place once the new President came. Dr. Anderson suggested that we possibly could change the evaluation document to include only "meets" or "not meets" expectations and develop a separate document for "exceeds" expectations. Maybe by removing "exceeds" expectations from the document will take away the hurt and anger felt by some employees.

It was agreed that the "exceeds" expectations box would be removed from this year's evaluation document. The question was raised by the Council as to what happens if you have a supervisor that does not want to do the additional paperwork that will be required if an employee wants to be considered for "exceeds" expectations. It was agreed that there must be more discussion between the Vice Presidents and supervisors. The Council agreed to solicit suggestions from the staff on what they felt warranted "exceeds" expectations. The document must be specific enough to document how an employee "exceeds" expectations but general enough to cover everyone. The Council will provide Dr. Anderson with their findings.

Dr. Anderson reminded the Council that ECU would not have a Good Friday vacation day this year. He will be sending out an email shortly to inform all employees of this. He also stated that the orange boxes are still there. Martha collected 5 comments yesterday.

The Council thanked Drs. Anderson, Turner, and Berty for attending the Council meeting.

The Council agreed that Stephanie Cooper would send an email to all staff members requesting suggestions for the “exceeds” expectation document. The deadline for these suggestions would be next Wednesday. A special Council meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12, at 2:00 pm to discuss this document.

IV. Unfinished Business and New Business

All unfinished business and new business was tabled until the next meeting.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.