

STAFF COUNCIL
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 11, 2008
1:30 PM

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

Guests: Dr. Richard Rafes, Dr. Steve Turner, Ms. Gina Smith

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Stephanie Cooper, President.
2. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made and seconded to approve the October 9, 2008 Minutes as distributed. Betty Smith had already requested approval via email and the minutes are already posted on the Staff Council web page.

3. Comments from President Rafes

Stephanie Cooper welcomed Dr. Rafes.

A Veterans' Day ceremony will be held today at 2:00 pm outside of the Memorial Student Union Building. This ceremony is to recognize all who have fought in war not just those who died. Veterans' Day has always been on November 11th (11th hour of 11th day of 11th month of 1918 when World War I Armistice was signed).

Plans for the centennial are underway. First Night Ada looks great for this coming year. Admission will be free. Performing groups will be varied this year including magicians, artists, Shawna Russell, McSwain singers, etc. This is a community event but ECU takes the leadership role. Progress is being made on the Fine Arts Center. Hope to be open in a couple of months. The plaza area is starting to take shape. Contracts were awarded for the fountain, gazebo, and entrance sign. Groundbreaking took place for the Pat O'Neal Strength and Conditioning Center today. This will be a \$500,000 facility. New bleachers will be added at the stadium, baseball field, tennis courts, and soccer fields.

ECU is in good shape with fund raising continuing. With the layoffs at Valley View Hospital and Flex-N-Gate, we have continued to hold our own. The Ardmore Higher Education Center will remain the same for the next couple of years and not become a part of any one particular university. Politically we had a steep hill to climb but we held our own and will continue to do so. It is important that we do not lose the Ardmore Higher Education students.

There will be a tuition and fees freeze for next year. Approximately \$84 million has been mandated for all state universities for next year. 25-30% of ECU students bought into the Tuition Lock Program. This program guarantees students a set tuition price for 4 years (to participate in this program, students must have continuous enrollment and are not allowed to drop out).

Dr. Rafes wanted to thank the ECU Police Department for providing a police escort for the Pike fraternity as they ran a football from Ada to Durant the night before the ECU/SOSU football game.

Dr. Rafes reminded the Council that his suggestion boxes were available for any comments and he welcomed emails from staff members. There were no questions at this time for Dr. Rafes. Stephanie Cooper thanked Dr. Rafes for attending the Council meeting.

4. Comments from Dr. Steve Turner

Stephanie Cooper welcomed Dr. Steve Turner for coming to discuss the job classification/pay scale. Stephanie stated that Dr. Rafes had told the Council at the last Council meeting that he didn't see a reason why the Staff Council could not be provided a copy of the classification/pay scale. Dr. Turner stated that there were 5 pages of information that include 14 or 15 job families that include current job titles. He stated that Dr. Anderson and Dr. Berty had some thoughts that a couple of positions should be moved to a different job family. Dr. Turner stressed that the staff needs to understand that this plan has not been completed and that changing the classification/pay scale isn't going to change anyone's salary.

Dr. Turner stated that, as of this month, there were 8 staff positions that were found to be below acceptable range. One position was in grants and that was not changed. Two positions were secretarial, of which one position was combined with other duties and the rest were custodial. Adjustments in salary went into effect November 1st, with \$5100 applied to custodians. Custodians will be hired in at \$16600 instead of \$16000. These adjustments placed them in compliance. Pay scales from SOSU, SWOSU, the Chickasaw Nation, Valley View Regional Hospital, and local banks were used as comparisons to develop the pay ranges. Dr. Turner stated again that salaries are not where we would like them to be but only 8 salaries did not fit the salary comparison. He stated that secretarial ranges still need to be reviewed for a potential increase.

Dr. Turner stated that he was under the impression that Alice (consultant that developed classification/pay scale) was to come back to ECU to discuss this plan with the staff. He will contact Leslie Martin either today or late tomorrow to obtain a copy of the plan for the Staff Council and also have Leslie Martin call Alice and arrange a time for her to return to ECU for a meeting with the staff to answer any questions about the pay plan.

Dr. Turner stated that there will be a new contract for health insurance in 2010 (enrollment date will be in October 2009). This change will affect the 6 regional universities plus 8 others. Different insurance companies will be looked at with Blue Cross/Blue Shield being one of those companies. The Board is very concerned with the increase in insurance rates (both employee and dependent rates) and so is ECU. Dr. Turner stated at the current time when an employee retires their health insurance is paid

until they are Medicare eligible (age 65). It is approximately a \$30 million cost to pay health insurance for retirees. Dr. Turner stated that the Board is reviewing discontinuing this benefit of paying health insurance for retired employees if their date of hire is July 1, 2009 or after.

Dr. Turner assured the Council that ECU is not at the point of cutting jobs. Some of our sister institutions are cutting jobs at this time. ECU does cost savings by not filling positions. Our reserve is not where it has been in the past but ECU is resilient.

Stephanie Cooper thanked Dr. Turner for attending the Council meeting.

4. Unfinished Business

- Changes in the Staff Council Bylaws/Constitution. Article 7: Officers, Section C. Election was discussed. Changing the date of the election of officers from the September meeting of the Council to the May meeting of the Council was discussed. It was agreed to table this change until the next Council meeting. Stephanie Cooper will look more closely at the Constitution to see if this change must go to a vote of the entire staff body.
- Centennial Pins – Placing a new pin order was tabled until the next Council meeting.

5. New Business

No new business at this time.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.