

Ball State University Staff Council
Meeting #7
Thursday, May 21, 2009
Worthen Arena Lounge

Present:

Jennifer Lawson, <i>President</i>	
Terry Burgess	Julie Moody
Mandy Collins	Elaine Orr
Cathy Cunningham	Melissa Schafstall
Sandy Duncan	Lee Anne Shore
Marilyn Folkerth	Loretta Smith
Vickie Hahn	Carol Terry
Kim Hiatt	Connie Tyner
Janet Johns	Marilyn Waldo
Joyce Lewis	Eric Warner

Excused Absences:

Maria Bumbalough	Lori Siefker
Marilyn Davis	Vicki Tucker
Debra Sheller	Debra Worster
Lynn Shipley	

Unexcused Absences:

Betty Welch	Ted Workman
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Alternates Present:

Brenda Ayers	Kate Murray
Mary Graham	Angela Zahner
David Kaufman	

Guests Present:

Judy Burke	Jo Ann Gora
Vicki Collard	Chris Munchel

- I. **Call to Order** – President J. Lawson called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.
- II. **Welcoming of Guests** – C. Young welcomed President Jo Ann Gora.
- III. **Guest Speaker** – Dr. Gora thanked the council for inviting her to speak to the group and began with discussions of our freshman class. She said it was a banner year with the university welcoming 3,798 freshman and occupancy at 102 percent. The university is focusing on emerging media. We hope to help entrepreneurs start new businesses with the help of faculty and staff.

Senator Richard Lugar was on campus as the commencement speaker and the groundbreaking of the geothermal heating and cooling system project. The project will be

the country's largest. The university will drill 4,000 boreholes and expects to heat and cool more than 40 buildings on our 600+ acre campus. Dr. Gora said the university would eliminate over 80,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Dr. Gora said money is always a topic of conversation on campus. The Ball State BOLD capital campaign is underway and 67 percent of employees have participated. The campaign is at 85 percent of the stated \$200 million goal. Dr. Gora shared information on some of the major objectives of the campaign, including immersive learning, the Ball Honors House, the Museum of Art, student scholarships, the new state-of-the-art Recreation and Wellness Facility, Honors College, Greenhouses, and the Planetarium.

As of April 29, the university did not have the budget and was waiting on the Indiana General Assembly. Dr. Gora said she spends a lot of time raising money and visiting with legislators and donors. The budget has to pass by June 30 and the issues involved are not easy as there are a lot of competing priorities. Depending upon the budget, Dr. Gora would like to give a very small, perhaps one percent, across the board increase. But this would only happen if our budget is not cut. She said the Governor asked that state employees not take increases in their salaries. Both Indiana University and Purdue University announced they would not give raises this year. Ball State did not announce they would not give increases. Dr. Gora said that \$1.8 million was cut from the university's budget. We have a hiring freeze and slow down and filling necessary positions. The university looks at cost-saving measures and tries to save when possible. A small increase would help cover the increase in the cost of health care for employees.

Dr. Gora discussed a few of the construction projects taking place on campus, and the Roll Out the Red customer service training modules. She feels the training will help us in finding out what works for us and what does not work. It's an opportunity to be helpful and take a look at how we do things.

The summer family picnic will take place on Thursday, June 18 from 4-7 p.m. on the Quad. Dr. Gora said employees are welcome to bring their family and enjoy food, games, music, and activities for kids of all ages.

- IV. **Roll Call** – C. Terry called the roll of representatives and alternates. Roll call showed 19 representatives present, 7 excused absences, and 2 unexcused absence.
- V. **Approval of Minutes from April 16, 2009 Meeting** – The minutes of the April 16, 2009 meeting were approved on a motion by Hiatt and seconded by Hahn. The vote was unanimous.
- VI. **Committee Reports**
 - a. **Employee Relations** – K. Hiatt – no report.
 - b. **Public Relations** – M. Waldo received a letter expressing sincere gratitude from Christy Falls with the Salvation Army in response to the Staff Council food drive. Employees gave over 1,000 items for the drive.

SCAN – M. Waldo said the newsletter should be e-mailed next week.
 - c. **Elections** – S. Duncan said elections are complete.

- d. **Hospitality** –C. Young said that L. Shipley would email the committee regarding plans for the July picnic.
- e. **Research** – M. Folkerth – no report.
- f. **Salary & Employee Benefits** – L. Smith – no report.
- g. **Special Committees**
 - i. **A. Jane Morton Award** – C. Young – no report.
 - ii. **Employee Activities Committee** – J. Lawson said there were no new announcements to report.
 - iii. **Angels for Life** – K. Hiatt said the blood drive was underway and has received a good turnout. She thanked those who volunteered at the registration desk.

VII. Old Business

34-2008/2009: I am a staff employee of the university and I applied for admission to take undergraduate classes. I was ultimately denied admission to the university. I was told by Admissions that I was denied because I do not have the curricular requirements for acceptance. Specifically I did not take Algebra II and did not have enough English credits. I graduated from high school in the 1970's. How is it that an employee of the university can be denied from obtaining a higher education? Part of our benefits package is fee remission, but you cannot use it if you are not accepted. Now I have to pay for classes at Ivy Tech and then try to transfer to the institution that I work for. How is this fair?

L. Smith asked Mr. Chris Munchel to respond the this RFI, he was also invited to the meeting to answer questions. Both responses are below.

E-mail response: “In order to maintain high academic standards and to ensure that students are successful in receiving the best education possible at Ball State, the university limits enrollment to students meeting specific admissions requirements. Both the quality and the content of secondary school academic programs are important in admission decisions no matter when the applicant completed these programs. For non-traditional students (23 years of age or older) to be considered for admission to Ball State University they have to apply, send in official high school transcripts and transcripts from any post-high school programs (colleges or universities they may have attended). Applications for non-traditional students will be reviewed based on their curriculum, grades in their academic core classes, and extra-curricular activities/experiences.”

Personal response: Munchel said that credentials for being hired and taking classes are two separate issues. A high school diploma is a “general” requirement used for hiring. Munchel said the university doesn’t have open enrollment and that academic standards are a top priority of the President. He said the Admissions Office tries different ways of working with a student who may only be missing one class. At this time, staff (students) cannot audit a class without being admitted. Munchel suggested the “Connect” Program, which enables students who were initially denied by Ball State to attend Ivy Tech and take 24 credits with a minimum of 2.0 GPA in all classes, resulting in automatic acceptance to Ball State.

After many questions and answers, representatives from the council decided to pursue the issue further. A motion was made by C. Terry to forward the issue back to committee for

further research regarding employee admission to Ball State. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

36-2008/2009: The smoking area adjacent to Emens has expanded to both sides of the cement concourse, the grassy island to the north of Emens garage, and all levels of the garage. It's not quite the first impression I would expect of BSU for our visitors using the Emens garage. It's disgusting that you have to walk through all the "butts" just to get to work. It is even more disgusting and tragic that employees have to walk through the smoke-laden air to and from their cars. What's with this being a safe, green campus? Either make it a "no-smoking campus" or reduce the congestion of smoke and butts by allowing smokers to smoke across campus.

Response to #36-2008/2009

M. Folkerth asked Kay Bales, the vice president for Student Affairs for information and she offered the following statistics:

43 tickets have been issued

43 tickets have been paid

Several warning tickets have been issued

\$2,150 collected in fines

The money was then used for smoking cessation information.

38-2008/2009: While waiting one Friday morning for the Bursar's Office to open to pick up paychecks, a staff person saw someone get ticketed while parked in front of the building, with flashers on, to run in for paychecks. Many people do not have the option of walking to pick up checks at Lucina because their office is a considerable distance away. If paychecks cannot be delivered by courier or campus police to departments, shouldn't there be a provision made to allow for parking without paying the meter or getting a ticket? Would it be possible for the Bursar's Office to open 15 minutes earlier on pay days? Could there be no ticketing at that location in the morning on pay days?

Response to #38-2008/2009:

L. Smith asked Nancy Wray, Manager, Parking Services, and the Bursar and Loan Administration office.

Response from Nancy Wray:

"We have established departmental parking permits that allow parking at meters for just this exact purpose."

VIII. Request for Information/Policy Change

40-2008/2009: First, let me preface this by saying that I am "married with kids" and very thankful to have health insurance as an employee benefit; however, I do have the following questions/concerns. 1) I've heard rumors that Ball State actually profits from the health insurance premiums collected from their employees. Is this correct? If so, why is this happening? Ball State should not be in the insurance business. 2) Is there an annual report published for employees to see the dollar amount paid into the program in relation to the amount paid out for claims? If so, where do we find that? 3) I realize healthcare costs are high. In all my years working at other places and in current comparison to other companies,

our premiums are much higher at \$405.46 a month for a family. With the out-of-pocket expenses we have to pay as well, this is extremely expensive! Why is health insurance so high here? 4) This is the only place I've worked where there is no employee/child(ren) option for insurance coverage...you have to go with employee only or employee/family. My family would benefit (save money) on an employee/child(ren) option. Why is the employee/child(ren) option not offered? Could we possibly see this option available in the near future?

Response to #40-2008/2009:

L. Smith asked Mr. Bill McCune, Associate Vice President, Office of the Controller and Business Affairs, and he offered the following response:

“First of all, Ball State does not profit from the health insurance plan. We do have reserves, just as any insurance company is required to have, and we consult with outside actuaries who recommend those balances. Any other sums available after all claims and costs are accounted for are used either to help fund retiree health care or to calculate future year’s premiums. In short, money for health care stays in health care.

While I prepare summaries of the health care program for internal use, no one has ever asked for an annual report just of health care. Health care is part of our annual audited financial statements, audited by the State Board of Accounts. And recently we’ve begun preparing audited financial statements for the retiree health and life insurance programs. So, we do have a lot of people looking over our shoulders.

As far as premiums are concerned, employees pay 25% of the total premium, while the University pays 75%. So, the University is just as motivated as you are to make sure that the premiums are as low as they can be for the coverage. You are in the most expensive of our plans, and I’m surprised that you are finding high out-of-pocket expenses, since that plan covers a lot of claims without even satisfying the low \$200 per person, \$400 family maximum deductible first, provided you are seeing in-network providers. If the providers are endorsed, the plan covers 80% of the cost, after adjusting the cost downward per the network agreement. You might want to make an appointment with the employee benefits people to make sure you are making the best use of the plan. On the other hand, you may want to consider one of the less expensive plan options, such as the high deductible wellness plan.

In setting premiums, we start with claims and consult with outside experts for guidance on what costs are expected to be in the new year. Claims account for more than 97% of the costs of our Plan, so the premiums are determined by the claims. Ball State’s claims are somewhat high, due in large part to the fact that our average age as a group is somewhat higher than average. We also know that, even for our age, we have a lot of chronic diseases that, if not treated properly, can result in more serious and expensive claims. This is why you see us emphasizing health and wellness and taking care of ourselves. We see this as good for our employees and good for the health care plan.

We have looked at the possibility of more “tiers” for our premiums. We’ve even brought in consultants to look at this with us. The most recent examination concluded that changing

the tiers would not favorably impact very many of our employees, while unfavorably impacting more of them. However, this is something that we will continue to look at in the future.”

41-2008/2009: Can a policy be put into place that requires a notification to all BSU employees and the BSU community when there are to be road closures surrounding campus? Not only do students use McKinley, Riverside, etc. – but so do people that live and work in the community. If an organization is going to hold an event that will shut down the roads for several hours, why not inform the BSU employees and BSU community? The Muncie Endurathon, for example, sends out notices to all the people in the area as well as in the Muncie newspaper. This way, people can plan and prepare accordingly.

Response to #41-2008/2009

J. Lawson responded that there actually is a notification process in place that functions as well as it can. The Executive Committee believes the university does a good job about notifications regarding important information, including road, driveway, and parking lot closures. Obviously, there is no way to predict all inconveniences and emergencies. We appreciate your concern, but feel there are larger issues to manage.

42-2008/2009: Can Human Resources please explain why the Staff Recognition Dinner is at 6:30 when, clearly, it should start at 5:30 or 6:00? Even if employees are meeting up with other family members, many do not go home. With gas being so expensive, everyone is trying to save on multiple trips. I know many who did not go because it was not immediately after work. No one wants to wait around one and a half hours after work or go all the way home when many of us live in New Castle, etc. and come back. I would just like a good reason why the 1-1/2 hour lapse.

Response to #42-2008/2009

Judy Burke responded by saying that people who are being honored want to go home and change their clothes to dress up; in addition, we're allowing time for other family members to get off work and be able to attend. This is a real event to be celebrated for the honorees. Not something to “just get over” for others who might be attending. Burke also said that the dinner is scheduled later in order to give consideration to University Catering and their busy schedule.

43-2008/2009: We used to be able to post just about anything on the employee bulletin board. On the old system it was routine to see ads for Avon, handy-man businesses, landscaping businesses, excavating businesses, babysitting businesses, dog walking businesses, etc. The new system rejected my recent ad for dog grooming, and I was very disappointed. If the privilege of posting our personals has been taken away, please educate me as to why our employee bulletin board is no longer there for the employees to share their personals. In this economic time a lot of BSU employees depend on more than their BSU salary to survive and the networking the employee bulletin board used to offer was a wonderful thing and the policy should be revisited.

Response to #43-2008/2009

After submitting this RFI the employee received a response from Gail Werner, Media Relations Manager, University Marketing and Communications indicating that ads such as these were published in the past because there was not a dedicated staff person to monitor the Employee Bulletin Board. With the university's migration to the Communications Center, these methods of delivery are now being monitored and staff follow up on e-mails that violate the university's commercial use policy. Gail provided examples of postings which would be considered acceptable as individual, personal posts vs. commercial posts. Gail also referred the employee to Tony Proudfoot, associate vice president for marketing and communications, if she would like to discuss the matter further. The Executive Committee felt that the employee had been given a clear explanation of the policy as well as a person to speak to for additional information and, therefore, responded that the employee should pursue the issue herself as recommended.

IX. New Business

No new business was presented to the council.

X. Announcements

The June 18, 2009 meeting will take place in Arena Lounge with Jackie Johnstone from the Back-to-School-Teacher's Store.

J. Burke reminded staff to wear their "Roll Out the Red" lapel pin. She is handing out reward certificate once you've "been caught" wearing your pin.

S. Duncan reminded members that Election of Officers will take place soon. If you are interested in serving, please make her or a committee member aware of your desire to run for office.

XI. Adjournment

With no further business being presented, a motion to adjourn was made at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Terry
Secretary, Staff Council