

USC Staff Assembly General Assembly Meeting Minutes

Date: May 3, 2007

Location: ZHS 252

Present: Evelyn Alva, Steven Barnhart, Latreace Cox, Ingrid DeCook, Lisa Escobar, Valerie Fitzgerald, Gloria Gamboa, Rita Gonzales, Claudia Gonzalez, Michael Grabarsky, Stanley Henderson, Josie Herrera, Shannon Hinojosa, Ba Shai Lagarde, Linda Lewis, Jackie Mardirossian, Kathleen Neal, Lou Nieto, Ardell Nolan, Georgina Nutall, Bryan Ortiz, Joyce Perez, Veronica Pete, Janet Prince, Gloria Reyes, Marty Ruggles, Joshua Schmidt, Rick Scott, Ruth Scott-Williams, Cristi Shinn, Rosie Tellez, Wade Thompson-Harper, Mary Trujillo, Lydia Vazquez, Veronica Villa, Tina Walsh, Annie Willis

Absent: Josie Amescua, Jane Bartlett, Tim Boston, Denise Campbell, Delfina Candelaria, Roshonda Harrison, Erika Jimenez, Michelle Jones, Dawn Kita, James Lynn, Tony Mazza, Yolanda Mora, Dolores Morales-Medina, Richard Pinder, Marian Purcell, Lillian Rivera, Anthony Rodriguez, Chris Schweska, Lorna Tureaud, Yvonne Unger, Pamela Wallace-Thompson, Carolyn Ward, Amy Yung

Call to Order: President Rick Scott called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Staff Monthly Recognition Award: The Monthly Staff Recognition Award was presented to George Martinez, Computer Systems Administrator, Division of Biostatistics, Department of Preventive Medicine. George was introduced by Dr. Wendy Mack, Co-Director of the Biostatistics and Epidemiology Programs in the Department of Preventive Medicine. For the last 15 years, George has served as computer support for Biostatistics in the teaching program. George has supported various programs, including USC's Alzheimer Disease Research Center, NIH funded grants, and the unit for cardiovascular disease in women. Dr. Mack said everybody knows George around the campus and he is always available to help out in the department. Rick presented George with a plaque, Wade Thompson-Harper presented a check for \$150 on behalf of the Staff Club, and Mary Trujillo presented a gift to George on behalf of their department.

Approval of March 2007 General Assembly Minutes: On a motion by Steven Barnhart, and seconded by Marty Ruggles, the minutes of the April 5, 2007 meeting of the Staff Assembly were approved with minor corrections.

Personnel Council Report, Awilda Bregand:

Awilda reported that the retirement plan enrollment kits have been distributed and most employees are signing up for the 5% maximum. May 7th will be the first retirement enrollment fair. Vendors will be giving a 15 minute presentation about their product. The Benefits staff and Debbie Fabanish will be present to help fill out forms.

40 Q&A sessions were held in early April and unfortunately they were poorly attended sessions. Very few showed up all day. Hopefully there will be better results at the enrollment fairs.

Six out of the seven vendors are receiving electronic enrollment information. The one outstanding vendor is the USC Network Plan because it requires more programming.

The Transitions Retirement Fair will be held on Monday, May 23. 110 people are expected to attend at the Davidson Conference Center. There will be another fair during the summer at both campuses.

President's Report:

Rick communicated with Janis McEldowney regarding setting up a meeting with Todd Dickey to go over the retirement benefits plan proposed by the assembly. Todd is going over the final numbers before a meeting will be set up.

The Executive Committee asked Rick to speak about assembly attendance. For the most part, attendance is good but some people are taking advantage, i.e. coming in early to sign in and then leaving or coming in at the end of the meeting to sign in and then leaving. It is important that assembly members attend both general assembly and assigned committee meetings.

Committee Reports:

Communications - Amy Yung:

Rita Gonzalez reported for Amy. Everyone should have received the *Assembled Voice* in color. The assembly website is being updated. They are updating the minutes first before doing other updates, i.e. photos. The next issue of the *Assembled Voice* is due out in September. Please start working now on any articles to be submitted for the next issue. Articles and reports are due in August.

There is no meeting this month. The next meeting will be on June 11 in the F&M Trailer Conference Room.

Compensation and Benefits – Veronica Pete:

The committee met on Friday, April 13. Pam was the hostess. The committee has received emails from staff regarding various issues and concerns:

1. What is the staff assembly planning to do with reclassification regarding non-exempt staff, in effect since last December, which lowered employee morale? Some suggestions to the writer are: contact her supervisor / SBO to discuss her job description, get a questionnaire to do a reassessment, or meet with the Director of Personnel Services. The reclassification change is in compliance with

- state labor laws and state wages. The writer also says she is having problems with Otis. The suggestion is to contact her supervisor, SBO, and the Otis helpline.
2. Will USC give free flu shots and why has this not been done in the past couple of years? There is a nationwide shortage of the flu vaccine. Some departments did pay for their employees to have shots. Some shots were given out at a reduced fee on HSC and UPC for network plan members. If there is no shortage this year, hopefully USC will resume giving free flu shots at the Benefits Fair.
 3. Is there priority seating for faculty and staff at basketball games for season ticket holders? The committee decided that this was a personal matter and not something for the committee to take on. However, Veronica did call the ticket office to get background information. Yes, there is priority given to faculty. The criteria for faculty and staff are the same, but their position in the department and their years of service affect their seating position.

In preparation for a meeting with Todd Dickey regarding the proposal for healthcare coverage for retirees under the age of 65, a brainstorming session was conducted. The session resulted in numerous ideas in support of the proposal as well as compromises to the proposal. The next meeting will be on Friday, May 18 at noon in PSC 701. Chris is the host.

Environment - Jane Bartlett:

Joshua Schmidt reported for Jane. Last week was the Environment Fair. There were originally 35 groups intending to come, but 26 were present. It was a great success. The biodiesel fuel vehicles and electric vehicles were popular. For the E-waste collection, there were over 10,000 pounds of electric waste dumped off. The 45 staff and faculty who participated made this year's E-waste collection very successful.

The issue that they are considering now is sustainability. Undergraduate student groups are working on a sustainability proposal for the Provost's Office. There is a group in place representing the faculty but staff is not yet represented. The assembly agreed that staff should be represented and so the committee will now move ahead in making it happen.

Rights and Responsibilities – Ingrid DeCook:

The committee met on April 10 at UGB 110. Their main focus is to check on severance policies at peer and peer-aspirant universities. Two questions were published in the *Assembled Voice* and they received two responses; one favored courses outside of work hours and the other favored informing supervisors to allow their employees to take classes during business hours. The next meeting is at 11:45 am on May 8 in UGB 110.

Rules and Elections – Linda Lewis:

The committee met on April 18. It was a “reunion meeting” because the previous meetings were held via conference call. The committee has received several completed nomination forms. The committee is also in the process of replacing staff for employees that have resigned. Linda re-introduced two new members, Veronica Villa and Valerie Fitzgerald. The next meeting will be on May 16 in ADM 360.

Transportation – Marty Ruggles:

The committee met on April 12 at UGB 110. Georgina hosted the meeting. The committee discussed the same issues: there is still no resolution to the diagonal crossing issue at Jefferson, Hoover and McClintock. Georgina approached DPS again and they said they cannot do anything about it. Evelyn contacted the *Daily Trojan* to get an ad published regarding this issue, but ads cost money. If it is still an issue next fall, the committee may think of publishing an article then. Marty spoke to Brian League, Capital Construction liaison with the city, so that Brian can bring this issue up to the city.

Parking structure updates: the guard shack is now open in the Exposition parking structure. Lou experienced a problem with the gate not opening when it should have and the response from transportation is that there are sometimes glitches. There are access changes to the PS2 structure. The Flower and Exposition Street entrances are only accessible to people with electronic badge access. The new gate entrance for everyone else is on Figueroa.

Tram updates: the committee is getting feedback from people taking the tram to see if there is still an issue with morning trams being overcrowded coming from Union Station; not all trams have electronic signage. It depends on how the trams are set up and if there is an actual place to put the signs.

Other updates: MTA is in negotiations regarding upping the bus pass rate which USC subsidizes. If an employee signs up for a special MTA bus pass called TAP (Transit Access Pass), they are committed to it for one year, and upping the bus rate could be problematic for these employees; the bicycle racks issue at the residence halls has been tabled until next month; the problem with pedestrians walking along the construction fence has been resolved. A fence was built to take away the sidewalk completely, funneling all pedestrian traffic to the north side; there is pothole in front of the Biggy structure on HSC that has not been fixed. The issue was discussed with the people at HSC. They commented that the pothole is an ongoing problem. Once it is fixed by resurfacing the street it becomes damaged again because of a pipe leak under the street that causes it to erode. This is probably a City of Los Angeles issue.

Rita asked about whether or not the tram stops at the CAL building on 3434 S Grand because the Union Station tram passes by the building in the afternoon. The tram currently does not stop at 3434 S Grand. There are negotiations with Transportation to see if this could happen.

An informal poll was taken at the meeting to see how many assembly members have used the intercampus tram and a majority of the members have. Another poll was taken about the tram drivers subjecting the passengers to the drivers' radio station. The assembly members did not think the driver's radio station was an issue.

Guest Speaker: Susan Heitman, Associate VP for University Public Relations

Susan came to USC in 1982 and was appointed Associate VP in 2001. She is responsible for: University-wide media relations for the management of division-wide publications, web services, campus filming, the USC Graphics Identity System, and for the overall content and design of the USC web. Current priorities are: 1) Media Relations – concentrating on national newspapers and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2) USC Web – there are requests for more resources on the Web since it is the motherboard, and 3) Emergency communications / crisis management – after 911, Hurricane Katrina and Virginia Tech, there has been more emphasis on how emergency information is disseminated to faculty, staff, students and parents during a crisis. It is important that there is a link to the outside world and there exists a constant stream of communication with faculty, staff, students and parents.

There is a centralized University Crisis Management Team headed by Todd Dickey and Martha Harris. Departments such as DPS, Facilities, Trojan Services and student affairs are all members of this team that meet with both UPC and HSC staff to discuss what issues may arise during an emergency and how those issues can be handled. In addition, emergency procedures are being set up so that emergency training is building specific with select emergency teams trained and on site to handle crisis.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 7, 2007, 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m., location TBA.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Barnhart and was seconded by Wade Thompson-Harper. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Josie Herrera

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