

COSA MINUTES

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Presiding Chair Debi Britt

Members present: Alan Bernstein, Debi Britt, Holly Decker, Sam Dees, Scott Doner, Pearl Everett, Ann Farmer, Lisa Hayes, Ann Lacey, Shannon McGee, Tommye Miller, Ruth Salter, Beverly Sharpe, Nina Windham, Tim Yorkey, and Inman Grimsley.

Members excused: Pat Rozier, Kae Sinkule.

Guests Rob Kellner, Charlie Fleetwood, Tommy Carter, Becky Murphy, Josie Stone

The Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) met in the Dogwood Room of the University Center at 8:30 a.m. Immediate Past Chair Debi Britt led the meeting in the absence of the chair, Pat Rozier, who was absent due to illness.

Members Present: Alan Bernstein, Debi Britt, Holly Decker, Sam Dees, Scott Doner, Pearl Everett, Ann Farmer, Lisa Hayes, Ann Lacey, Shannon McGee, Tommye Miller, Ruth Salter, Beverly Sharpe, Nina Windham, Tim Yorkey, and Inman Grimsley.

Members Excused: Pat Rozier, Kae Sinkule.

Guests & Visitors: .

Special Order of the Day: Rob Kellner, Director of Auxiliary Services, accepted an invitation from COSA to discuss the use of mandatory annual leave in Food Services. This topic was brought up at two separate **◆COSA ON THE MOVE◆** sessions in The Palms Dining Center. The following questions were asked, and Mr. Kellner's responses follow:

1. Why do Food Service employees have to take mandatory annual leave or leave without pay during **◆down◆** periods when this does not occur with other VSU employees?

2. Why does the semester system seem to require Food Service employees to take more mandatory leave than the old quarter system?
3. Why can't Food Service employees be paid across a twelve-month period (the way the slots are budgeted) rather than hourly?
4. Food Service employees used to be able to work during break periods by doing maintenance work in the Palms Dining Center. Why has this stopped?
5. Food Service employees used to be eligible for unemployment benefits. Why has this stopped?

}Acknowledged that the use of mandatory annual leave with Food Service employees is an ongoing concern with both employees and management in Auxiliary Services and that every attempt is made by management to avoid the use of mandatory leave.

}Noted that every employee hired in Food Services is told that work schedules are based upon occupancy in the Residence Halls, not the schedule of classes or the campus work schedule. If the Residence Halls are closed, for any reason, The Palms Dining Center and/or other Food Service units have no compelling customer reason to be open, except on a limited basis (and then usually in cash sales only). Employees are urged to budget their finances accordingly, including the accumulation of annual leave.

}Reminded COSA that prior to the presence of the Governor's Honors Program (GHP) at VSU (21 years) there was even more down time than is now experienced. The GHP program has enabled Food Service to keep more employees on the payroll for a longer period of time during the summer.

}Reviewed the amount of down time on the quarter system versus the semester system and notes that preliminary review shows there is more mandatory leave time with the semester system. Mr. Kellner plans more review of this topic.

}Plans to schedule fulltime employees in the Food Court during breaks rather than student assistants.

}Plan to utilize the Summer I (May Mester) period for the Partners in Campus Excellence training session in addition to other special projects. However, it may not be possible to keep all employees on the payroll for the entire period.

}Working to find employment for Food Service employees in other areas of Auxiliary Service during spring break, May Mester, and other break periods. While some employees are willing to work in any area in order to stay on the payroll, Mr. Kellner noted that some employees are reluctant to do any work other than what they were

hired to do. In this case, mandatory annual leave or leave without pay is the only option.

↳ Unlike other campus areas, Food Service employees are eligible to take leave without pay as an option since there are so many mandatory down periods for them. By taking leave without pay, employees can accrue annual leave for periods of their own determination.

↳ Attempting to move more Food Service areas to ♦branded concepts♦ rather than traditional meal plans so that units have a menu selection with broader customer appeal (more than Residence Hall meal plans) and thus can stay open longer periods without losing money. This year students on the meal plan can eat 3 meals per week on an ♦equivalency♦ system, and more activity has been seen in cash sales areas. The equivalency meal choice will increase next fiscal year. As more sales occur in other areas, employees will be shifted out of The Palms Dining Center to accommodate customers. This shift in eating pattern will help alleviate, somewhat, the number of employees affected by mandatory leave.

↳ Reminded COSA that the budget is a funding document, not a salary document. Federal wage guidelines prohibit not making payment for hours worked, and there is no authorized way to spread a yearly salary over a 12-month period to compensate for down time. Even VSU faculty are hired on a ten-month contract and cannot have their salary spread over 12 months under current Board of Regents policy.

↳ Georgia law determines eligibility for unemployment. If an employee has leave available to cover an absence they would not be considered ♦unemployed♦. Employees who work portions of a year (including faculty), and who are expected to return to their regular jobs when the facility reopens, are not actively seeking employment and thus are not on what one would usually consider ♦laid off♦ status, thus technically they are not unemployed. Normally, unemployment claims would be declined for this reason. An example outside of VSU might be the bus drivers for the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County Boards of Education. Those who do not drive buses during the summer or during break periods are not paid and are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

↳ Suggested that employees consider payroll deduction to fund an account in the Valdosta Educators Credit Union to cover those periods when mandatory leave or leave without pay is required.

Minutes: On a Grimsley/Decker motion, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted by intercampus mail.

Treasurer's Report: Nina Windham, Treasurer, reported that the only expenditure from the Fund 10 account in February was \$115.05 for printing. There was no activity in either Foundation account, although she has an inquiry with the Foundation as to why payroll activity for February was not posted to the Employee Walkway/Employee Recognition Account.

Fund 10 Balance 2/28/01	\$906.83
Discretionary Fund	\$835.51
Employee Walkway/Recognition	\$1582.50

Committee Reports:

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Employee Recognition: Chair, Scott Doner, submitted the written quarterly report from the committee to Pat Rozier. There will be no further activity from this committee until the fall selection of Employee of the Semester.

Elections: Chair, Holly Decker, reported that the committee has met with Ruth Salter, Policy Committee Chair, to discuss the policies and procedures followed for COSA elections. The process is in place for the next set of elections, with plans to send ballots to all VSU staff members in early April. Nine seats are open for election. With the resignation of Richard Fiffie, his slot will be filled for a two- year term. Deborah Holley has resigned, but since her seat is up for election this spring a replacement will not be appointed or elected. LaRona McClain has resigned from VSU that vacates her COSA seat. The Elections Committee will determine if the next highest candidate is willing to serve the remaining two years of Mrs. McClain's position. If not, this position will also be up for election.

Policy: Chair, Ruth Salter, led a discussion about the proposed changes to the COSA by-laws that were distributed at the February meeting. A Lacey/Decker motion proposed that the by-laws be approved as submitted. A Windham/Bernstein motion to amend the motion on the floor proposed that the title of **vice chair** in the by-laws be changed in all places to that of **chair-elect** and that the chair-elect position automatically move into the position of chair the next year after election to chair elect. This motion to amend was approved unanimously. The original motion to amend the

by-laws as submitted at the previous meeting was approved unanimously. COSA now operates under the revised by-laws of March 13, 2001.

Additional business from the Policy Committee included the presentation of the draft of the new COSA Policies and Procedure Manual. Ms. Salter reviewed some of the pertinent items that moved from by-laws to policies or procedures. Extensive discussion followed on the process of who is eligible to hold office with COSA and when that election will occur. A Decker/Dees motion proposed that the chair-elect for FY 2002 be held in May, 2001, rather than June (as usual) and that all other officers be elected at the July meeting when new COSA members are eligible to vote. A Grimsley/Sharpe motion to table was approved. The matter was sent back to the Policy Committee for further review.

Welfare: Debi Britt reported that work continues on the Employee Walkway/Recognition program. The fund-raising proposal is ready for presentation to the VSU Foundation. A new brochure is being developed and will be printed after the Foundation presentation. Inman Grimsley reported that a review of active retiree files shows 297 active people with an additional 85 who qualify from those years where complete records were not required to be kept. A written report was submitted to the secretary.

Other Committee Reports:

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Recycling: Holly Decker reported that rumors are circulating about demolishing the old warehouse that is used for recycling purposes (among other things). If this takes place, there is no location to handle the recycling program that continues to grow annually at VSU.

Academic Scheduling: Ruth Salter attended this meeting for the COSA Chair and reports that the committee approved a final examination scheduled for FY 2002 that includes 3 days for final examinations and 1 exam preparation day.

Advisory Committee: Holly Decker reported on the work of the advisory committee to the ♦Partners in Campus Excellence Program♦ being developed by Becky Murphy

and staff for the university. While Holly will continue to work with the group she noted that she doesn't have the time to attend any more of the committee meetings.

Presidential Search Committee: Ann Lacey reported that a search firm has been hired to screen candidates for the job of VSU president. Applications are coming in, and the committee plans to interview candidates, off campus, in late April, if possible. Updated information about the process can be found on the home page of the VSU web pages.

Old Business: Representatives from Wild Adventures Theme Park will be in the rotunda of Ashley Hall on Friday, April 6th, to sell discounted passes. More information will follow via campus email from Inman Grimsley.

New Business: _____ None

Other Business: Inman Grimsley reported that Senate Bill 163 involves the way TRS monies can be invested on behalf of the program. House Bill 211 eliminates early retirement penalties. The annual meeting of state human resource directors was held last week at Jekyll Island. Among items discussed was the desire to see vesting in the TRS lowered from ten to five years. This discussion included participants from the TRS and the Board of Regents and was totally supported by the system H.R. directors. There was continued discussion about the new insurance program, and the prescription program, in particular. The Department of Community Health and Express Scripts personnel at this meeting heard many complaints and suggestions for improvement to the services offered.

The meeting adjourned on a Windham/Bernstein motion at 10:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be held at 8:30 a.m. in the Dogwood Room of the University Center on April 10, 2001.

Respectfully submitted:

Tommye H. Miller, COSA Secretary

The COSA meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Special Order of the Day:

Approval of Minutes:

Treasurer's Report -

Committee Reports

Elections-

Employee Recognition-

Policies/By-Laws-

Welfare-

Recycling-

Salary Study-

Old Business

New Business

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