

Operating Staff Council Meeting Minutes March 8, 2006

Members in Attendance: April Damon, Jennifer Dube, Julie Johnson Dubois, Charlene Hill, Jeff Jones, Matty Leighton, Doreen Palmer, Geri Sanders, Lori Parent, Lisa Wilder, Jason Brodeur (Chair)

Members Not in Attendance: Steve Hunter, Toni Searles

Guests: Sharon Demers, Human Resources, Shirley Sceggeel, Hospitality Services (potential council member)

Agenda Items

Opening Remarks – Jason Brodeur, Chair

Jason noted that the recommended revisions to December's minutes have been made. He also pointed out that some small revisions had already been made to the February minutes and asked for additional feedback. Lori Parent pointed out that the MUB will be providing a free drink coupon for AOP participants on the first day of the conference, not an entire meal. Charlene Hill raised a question about whether the policy information distributed with the previous minutes was appropriate for distribution to constituents. The council concurred that all materials included with the minutes could be distributed to constituents, as long as it was clear that some of the policy statements were drafts and not final copies.

PAT Communications Subcommittee Update – Jeff Jones

As part of the OS Council's effort to work cooperatively with the PAT Council where possible, Jeff attended the PAT Council's Communications Subcommittee meeting. He reported that there were four members present, and Michael Wood was re-elected as chair. The subcommittee is currently in organizational mode, with two foci:

- ▶ Creating a brochure for the AOP conference information table and the next benefits fair (they will ask for HR's input)
- ▶ Determining how best to work with the OS Council

The subcommittee agreed that a joint web site could be beneficial. In order to do so, both sides will need to commit to the change and determine the next steps. The PAT contact for web site development related to this project will be Brian Bailey.

The OS Council discussed two concerns regarding an integrated web site:

1. Lori Parent expressed the concern that OS constituents might go to the PAT web site and complain about benefits that OS employees do not get, or that our constituents might become confused and mistakenly believe that PAT benefits apply to them. Sharen Demers replied that HR already answers these types of questions and we should not let this concern hold us back. Julie Johnson Dubois suggested that one way to address concerns about benefit mix-ups and questions might be to create a FAQ page that addresses the most commonly asked questions. Sharon suggested that the council wait and see if there are questions or confusion around particular benefits or other areas of the site.
2. Lori also raised the concern that PAT's message may be fundamentally different from ours, so an integrated web site might not be appropriate. She suggested that the OS Council review the PAT Council's site and come back next time with comments. Charlene Hill moved that all OS Council

members review both councils' sites and come back to the next meeting with questions and concerns. The motion was passed by acclamation.

Jeff also circulated some sample pieces of literature from the PAT Council – their brochure and a newsletter called *Commons*. The newsletter is moving to electronic publication only. Charlene raised a concern about this approach, since many of her constituents in dining and housekeeping do not have Internet access.

During Jeff's update, a question was raised about whether the OS Council has a brochure for the AOP Conference. Lori Parent explained that we do have a brochure, but it needs to be updated and only she can do it because it's in PrintShop on her computer, so it will not be ready for the conference. After some discussion, Lori and Jeff agreed that she will forward him the usable data from the brochure and he will make a very simple overview card that can be left on the literature table at the conference. He will e-mail the finished card to Lori by Monday, March 13, and she will make sure it is displayed.

PAT Compensation and Benefits Subcommittee Update – Julie Johnson Dubois

Julie Johnson Dubois attended the PAT Compensation and Benefits Subcommittee meeting because of her interest in withholding for employees who pay out-of-state income taxes. She reported that although the committee has been looking at this benefit for some time, they have tabled it for the next two years because they are focusing on other, more pressing issues. Some of the OS Council members were not aware that employees who live out of state must pay income taxes in the state where they live, so there was a brief discussion of why withholding for these taxes is an issue and how it would work. Sharon Demers told the council that the problem is that there are three states surrounding NH that have income taxes, and each of them requires that the university withhold and report withholdings in a different way, making it impossible for USNH to standardize a withholding system. Jennifer Dube explained that she addresses the issue by creating what amounts to a personal escrow account where she saves the approximate amount of taxes that are due and uses those funds to pay her taxes quarterly. Matty Leighton suggested that HR might include a reminder in the new employee orientation packet that includes solutions such as the one Jennifer has adopted. Julie will follow up on this.

Julie also reported that the PAT subcommittee discussed the solicitation policy and improving the IDEA program turn-around time. Julie is unsure whether she will continue to attend this committee's meetings, as they are lengthy and she is not sure that the issues discussed touch upon OS concerns. If there is another OS Council member who would like to attend, they should arrange this through the chair.

AOP Conference Update – Lori Parent

Lori gave the council a brief update on the AOP conference scheduled for March 15 and 16, 2006. Registration is closed, and 360 administrative office professionals are scheduled to attend over the two half days. Breakfast will be provided the first day, and attendees will receive a coupon for a free drink if they choose to purchase lunch in the MUB Food Court; lunch is provided on the second day. Packets and free gift may be picked up either day; if registration is closed, attendees should go to Room 207, where assistance will be available throughout the conference. So far Lori has rounded up 32 donations for the raffle, and the bookstore is offering a 20% discount to attendees on both days. Julie Johnson Dubois mentioned that she recalled a workshop in the past on joining the OS and PAT Councils, and suggested that we might do this again next year. Matty Leighton expressed an interest in presenting.

Survey Brainstorm – Jason Brodeur

Jason asked the council members to suggest ideas for ways to conduct constituent surveys that aren't too cumbersome, with the following responses:

- ▶ Use the Top Ten list from the retreat as a starting point/source of questions

- ▶ Conduct in-person surveys (like the ones at the mall) or focus groups
- ▶ Give prizes for completion (Charlene mentioned that Dining uses candy with students)
- ▶ Use surveys as tool to educate constituents as well as tool for getting information from them
- ▶ Be very specific in questions – **guide** the responses
- ▶ Clarify that the OS Council is not going to “change the world” for constituents
- ▶ Conduct surveys at Benefits Fair/AOP/other venues
- ▶ Use the surveys as an excuse to meet with constituents
- ▶ Use surveys to solicit people to join short-term task forces (“Would you be willing to work on a committee for 2-3 months to address this issue?”)
- ▶ Set up surveys so as not to solicit complaints
- ▶ Use anonymous survey function in Blackboard
- ▶ Use survey function in Blackboard to ID respondents with certain types of concerns or to ID a pattern of issues in a certain area.
- ▶ Leave space for open-ended responses
- ▶ Put survey on OS Council web site so it is always available to site visitors – maybe have the questions change from time to time

Jason asked the council if there was a consensus that we should proceed, and the council indicated that there was. He will check with HR to see if they have any sample surveys or suggestions. Council members should also send him proposed questions.

Wrap-Up – Jason Brodeur

Jeff Jones asked who was handling the current web site update, and Jason replied that he was working on it with Web Solutions.

Jason agreed to a request to send the links for both the OS and PAT councils with every set of minutes. He also agreed to a request that the date for the following meeting be stated on each meeting’s agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM.

OS Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/os-council/>

PAT Council web site: <http://www.unh.edu/pat-council/>