

Staff Senate Fall Clerical Roundtable
October 14, 2014, 9 a.m. LSC 127
In attendance: 18 Clerical Staff, 3 Clerical Senators

Discussion topics were submitted in advance and raised from the floor.

How can one progress from Clerical Staff to Professional classification at the U of S?

- Although this is not really a topic for Staff Senate to address we allowed and participated in the discussion sharing experiences and knowledge.
- An issue was raised regarding some paraprofessionals who have no college credits, while some clerical employees possess bachelors and masters degrees.
- A question was raised regarding the fact that not all position openings are posted, but instead filled at the discretion of the supervisor or Vice President of the division.
- A discussion took place regarding the classification and grade level system and it was noted that these issues will be addressed in a Compensation and Classification review which the University plans to undertake in the near future.
- Some clarification of the classification and grade level system was provided and it was widely acknowledged to be helpful.

Question was raised as how to better ourselves and raise our level, what criteria makes the difference?

- Concern was expressed for equality and fairness for all clerical staff, noting that secretaries are currently handling much more work and responsibility than ever before in ways that are not reflected in job descriptions.
- Uneven distribution of workload due to the varying number of faculty members per department was discussed among faculty secretaries within the group. In some situations, this can become difficult to manage due to the volume of work and the expectations from each member of the department.
- Concern was raised regarding secretaries proctoring exams and being a witness to alleged cheating. Faculty secretaries are put in a difficult position when they are asked to proctor exams and this practice is not part of their job description.

A discussion took place regarding the Student Government initiative to have faculty office hours posted on-line for students. Many adjunct faculty have office hours by appointment only and that is not an option on the form. Faculty can only enter their own hours while all faculty secretaries can access any faculty member's hours and make changes raising security concerns that need to be addressed. There are also IT issues relative to this form. It was recommended that since this was a Student Government initiative, issues should be addressed to the Student Government President. *Ms. Palko forwarded the concerns to Student Government via e-mail on October 15, 2014.*

The question of Staff Emeritus was raised, noting that this was brought to the attention of HR in the past. No one was aware if there had ever been something done about this. Faculty Emeriti receive or retain several benefits including email and use of facilities when they retire. Staff retirement benefits were reviewed, but it was agreed that equality and a designation or classification of SE-1 would be another way of saying “your service is worth something”.

Another suggestion of honoring long-time service to the University was by granting one additional vacation day (possibly employees’ birthday) above the four-week cap which occurs after twenty years of service.

A question was raised as to where the Staff Complaint Resolution Procedure form initiated by the Human Resources Department is located. A Staff Senator offered to locate this form and forward to all clerical staff. *Upon investigation by Senators, it was learned that Human Resources no longer uses the form and advises staff to follow the Complaint Resolution Procedures as described on Page 19 of the Staff Handbook.*

Staff asked for updates on the one-way emergency notification to Public Safety (a.k.a. panic button) to use in cases of threats by a student if you are working alone. Notes from past senate meetings were read regarding costs, questions, and follow-up regarding such a system. A suggestion was made that a phone app be created that would serve as a “panic button.”

Concern was raised that some supervisors won’t approve vacation carry over. Could staff elect to either be paid for that time or move it over to sick time in order not to lose it? It was noted that Supervisor’s Discretion applies but in a case of unusual circumstances it prevented an individual from using allotted vacation time. It was decided that it would be best to discuss specific circumstances with Human Resources and the individual Supervisor to resolve this, if possible.

Some faculty secretaries raised a concern regarding the process of scanning and printing of tests.

- The Scantron equipment used by several departments was moved from Printing Services to the Help Desk but the shrink wrap machine was not, therefore student workers are allowed to take tests over to be scanned, but can’t pick up the printed exams. Clerical Staff or the Faculty member must pick them up themselves which is often difficult.
- Attendees questioned the rationale of that regulation noting that any alterations to the test would be easier to make to the original than the stack of printed exams.
- Suggestions to remedy the situation include:
 - Moving the shrink wrap equipment to the Help Desk so that student workers could pick up completed exams.
 - Help Desk personnel pick-up and deliver exams as called for.
 - Purchase Scantron equipment for each faculty department.
 - Person picking up and delivering must sign a log and tests/scantrons must always be placed in a sealed, “confidential” envelope.
- It was also noted that Help Desk employees are not all trained properly in scanning tests.
- A suggestion was made to ask faculty to create an initiative to remedy the situation.

One final topic was raised but then retracted by the initiator after the meeting.

Meeting closed at 10 a.m.