

**Vanderbilt University  
University Staff Advisory Council  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Tuesday, October 8, 1996  
8:30 a.m.  
Rand Hall Faculty Dining Room**

Representatives, alternates, ex officio members, and guests present: Linda Arthur, Burton Augst, Ronda Blackman, Karen Cunningham, Tracy (Crouch) Cunningham, Susan (Sue) W. Davis, Anne Dawes,, Timothy Dempsey, Virginia Featherston, Christine Germino, Jessica Guenther, Robert Halliburton, Karen Hambrick, Gloria Hodges, Fran Hoogestraat, Jennifer Keen, Robin Kilpatrick, Barbara Kindt, Mary Lange, Anne Lara, Brenda McKee, Joseph (J.D.) Miles, Patsy (Pat) Myatt, Karen Rolling, Sue Ann Scott, Susan Slay, Terrie Spetalnick, Brent Tener, Judy Thompson, Maureen Writesman, Lynda Wyatt, Francene Gilmer, William A. Jenkins, Beth Turner, Richard L. Smogur, Sheila R. Thomas and Mary Nell Snoddy.

Regrets: Sylvia Boyd, Teresa Cowdrey, Karen Dolan, David Greenlee, Sue King, Lewis Saettel, Donna Smith, James Taylor, and William Corbin.

Meeting was called to order by President Brent Tener at 8:35 a.m. in the Rand Hall Dining Room.

Mr. Tener welcomed all representatives, alternates, guests, and ex-officio members to the September Staff Council meeting.

Approval of September 1996 Minutes --

Mr. Tener stated that the September minutes were distributed using E-mail and hopes that everyone has read the minutes. Additional printed copies of the minutes are available for all those who didn't received the minutes via E-mail. Mr. Tener then called for any corrections, additions, subtractions, or clarifications to the September 1996 Staff Council minutes as distributed. No changes were requested. Mr. Tener stated, that seeing no changes requested, that the September 10, 1996 minutes be approved as written. There were no objections and the minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Tener announced that Ms. Spetalnick would be late and we would proceed with the

remaining agenda until her arrival.

#### Committee Reports --

##### Traffic and Parking - Chris Germino

Ms. Germino stated the committee has not yet met for the new academic year.

Mr. Tener gave Ms. Germino the list of parking concerns raised at the last Staff Council meeting and Ms. Germino stated that she will raise the concerns at the next Traffic and Parking meeting.

##### Executive Committee - James Taylor

Mr. Tener reported that James Taylor sends his regrets. He is out of town. The next Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, October 30, 1996 at 11:30 a.m. in 108 Baker Building. Mr. Frank Gladu, from Dining Services, is to be present to discuss staff discounts. Mr. Tener stated that Mr. Gladu is willing to discuss the possibility of discounts and definitely believes that the staff are an important part of the Dining Services operation.

##### Benefits Committee -

Mr. Tener reported that the committee has not met, however the Council's recommendation was approved and Ms. Spetalnick has been appointed to the University Benefits Committee.

There were no other committee reports.

#### Old Business --

Mr. Tener reported that the Ad Hoc Committee on Volunteerism Policy will meet with Jane Cleveland and others to map out strategies and develop plans for the committee. Individuals are currently researching various things that happen outside of the University and whether the policies and practices are applicable to Vanderbilt. Mr. Tener stated that there are a lot of issues and believes that the committee can have some real positive results.

There was no other old business.

#### Announcements --

Mr. Tener announced that the Staff Council web page has officially been transferred over to Financial Aid. The new address is <http://www.vu.edu/financialaid/usc/usc.html>. The page can also be accessed from the VU home page.

Ms. Thomas announced that the Medical Center Staff Advisory Council Needles and Pens Craft Fair will be held on Thursday, October 10, 1996 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the VU Hospital mezzanine.

Mr. Smogur announced that Medical Center Service Awards are at 3:00 p.m. today in Langford Auditorium and the University Central Service Awards will be October 15, 1996 at 3:00 p.m. in Langford Auditorium.

Mr. Rollings, from HRS, announced that Human Resource Services now has a web page. A handout is available for the address or it can be accessed from the VU home page. The site includes information about HRS and a complete copy of the Staff Handbook.

Mr. Augst announced that the Opportunity Development Center's 10th Annual Affirmative Action Awards will be held on October 16, 1996 in Branscomb South dining room. The reception starts at 3:00 p.m. and the awards presentation is at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Tener announced that the Tailgate party is scheduled for November 2, 1996. The game is with UAB. There will be a limit on tickets to four tickets per staff member. The party starts at 10:30 a.m.. There will be a mailing to all staff members at their campus address. Mr. Tener requested volunteers to work the ticket area. Mr. Smogur stated that there are only 6,000 tickets available and Human Resources is requesting that individuals only take what tickets are needed for their family and encourages the use of season tickets

New Business --

Mr. Tener stated that the Council needs to appoint a representative to the Community Affairs Board. Mr. Tener read the purpose of the Board, which includes the establishment of policy and changes with community activity, the establishment of regulations for extracurricular activities and student conduct. The Board meets monthly, with the next meeting scheduled for October 24, 1996. Mr. Tener asked for volunteers to serve on the Board as Council representative. Mr. Burt Augst expressed an interest in serving.

Ms. Davis asked if Council members have received any comments about the personalized benefits statements recently received from Human Resources. One comment was

the statements were great. A concern was noted that some of the data was inaccurate. Ms. Davis expressed the opinion that the statement was useful as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Mr. Smogur asked if examples could be given. One was the FRA benefit. The statement told what Vanderbilt pays, but not what the individual balance was. An individual stated that the data presented was based upon last year's open enrollment, and if changes were made afterwards, the statement did not reflect the information even though it stated the information was current. A comment was made that there was nothing wrong with the statement, but the statement didn't tell you anything that you didn't already know. It was generally agreed that individuals would like more information like the FRA balance and beneficiaries on the insurance policies. Mr. Smogur stated that he would tell the Benefits Office about the comments and concerns.

#### Presentation - Terrie Spetalnick, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Benefits

Ms. Spetalnick started her presentation by first giving an overview of the committee. Benefits has been an issue of concern for the Staff Council for some time. Mr. Corbin started the committee last year because he felt that many individuals came to Vanderbilt in years past because of the excellent benefits and have stayed. However, there is a feeling that over the past few years, the benefits have eroded and are now more competitive to outside levels. The purpose of the committee was to obtain evidence on whether that feeling of erosion was true. The committee was also to look at benefits as recruitment and retention tools.

Ms. Spetalnick then thanked the members of the committee who included Sheila Thomas as Medical Center representative, Sandy Martin, Brenda McKee, Lewis Saettel, Brent Tenpenny, Sue Ann Scott, Mary Lucus, Judy Thompson, James Taylor, and Patsy Bleeker.

Ms. Spetalnick stated that the mission of the committee was to obtain benefit data from other employers and institutions. To analyze and compare the data with Vanderbilt benefits and then make recommendations based upon the information.

The committee first identified institutions to survey, which included Bridgestone, Baptist Hospital, St. Thomas, the State of Tennessee, and AAU universities. 60% of the surveys mailed out were returned. The committee designed a comprehensive survey. It was four pages long and had detailed questions about health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, short-term

disability, long-term disability, personal spending accounts, retirement plans, educational benefits, and a miscellaneous area that included parking, vacation time, sick time, and holidays.

The committee worked with the Benefits Office in developing, sending, and reviewing the survey. It was felt that there was a common interest in the gathering of the information that would be useful for everyone involved. The Benefits Office has taken the information and is reporting the data in the Register.

The survey found that while health insurance benefits are not as good as in the past, the benefit is still good and slightly better than most others who participated in the survey.

The committee did find four areas that are important from a recruiting and retention point of view and which Vanderbilt could make improvements. These areas are short-term disability, retirement, educational benefits or professional development, and holidays.

The committee felt that the most important area was short-term disability. Vanderbilt ranked in the lowest quartile, with the only benefit being sick leave. It takes 11 years and three months working at Vanderbilt, without taking any sick time, to accrue enough time to get through the short-term time frame of six months before long-term disability starts. More than one half of the respondents that provide some type of short-term disability insurance don't pay for the insurance. The committee recommends that Vanderbilt provide the opportunity to secure short-term disability insurance at a group rate. A question was asked about the cost of short-term disability insurance. Ms. Spetalnick responded that the survey asked what percentage, if any was paid by the employer, but not the actual cost.

The second area is educational benefits for staff professional development. Vanderbilt has a very fine benefit for dependents. The committee would like to see more attention to staff education. It is felt that it would benefit Vanderbilt to have a well-educated work force. The survey found that several programs are more liberal and innovative than Vanderbilt's. The committee is not recommending specific programs but recommends that staff professional development be made a priority. Possible ideas would include paying 100% tuition at accredited institutions if the courses are job-related. A question was asked if the committee is talking more about an academic degree pursuit as compared to a one to two day or week long training session. The policies vary greatly across campus and what departments are willing to pay. Ms. Spetalnick indicated that the committee is referring more toward the academic degree pursuit

than one day seminars.

In the area of retirement, at Vanderbilt individuals can put into the retirement plan varying percentages, but Vanderbilt will only match at 5%. The survey found that most companies offer greater flexibility in the retirement contribution requirements. The committee recommends that Vanderbilt match up to 5% and not just at 5%. Also, that a defined benefit plan be made available as an option. The committee is concerned about those staff members that don't contribute to a retirement plan. The committee also recommends that health insurance be offered to retirees at an appropriate rate, and that extended perquisites such as discounts on athletic tickets, library privileges, and PERQs program be made available to staff. It was the committee's understanding, but without hard data, that faculty are given these benefits and would like to see the benefits offered to staff also. A comment was made that currently at Vanderbilt, that after one year, individuals are fully invested in the retirement plan, extending the time frame could help with retention of individuals. Ms. Spetalnick responded that the committee agrees that retirement can be a large incentive to retain individuals. Mr. Jenkins commented that a defined benefit plan was discussed four or five years ago, and it was rejected by just about everyone. Ms. Spetalnick stated that the plan was an either or option, and what the committee is recommending is an additional option, not one or the other. The option would give more flexibility.

The last area is holidays. The committee wants both Martin Luther King's birthday and Presidents Day as holidays, instead of having to choose between the two. Institutions surveyed averaged 11 paid holidays, two more than Vanderbilt, which has nine paid holidays. The highest number of paid holidays was 14. The other holidays included Good Friday, Veterans Day, Columbus Day, New Year's Eve, the day after Thanksgiving and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. The committee requests that Vanderbilt increase the number of holidays. A comment was made that at Vanderbilt's own run day care, it closed the day after Thanksgiving, but staff members still had to work and had to make other arrangements for day care on that day.

Finally, Ms. Spetalnick stated, based upon the committee's general opinion, it is recommended that the Staff Council undertake a study of factors that make individuals want to stay at Vanderbilt. The committee should study quality of life and other factors that appear to be

more important than salary.

In addition, a global, uniform exit process would be beneficial if conducted by Employee Relations and not administered by the departments. The process could help learn more on why people leave Vanderbilt. Mr. Smogur commented that individuals that leave can have comments given to Employee Relations and Employee Relations will inform the departments as appropriate.

Mr. Tener thanked Ms. Spetalnick and the committee for all the hard work done and the excellent job.

Ms. Spetalnick indicated that copies of the recommendations are available.

Mr. Tener asked if there was any other announcements or business.

A question was asked if the University Central photo id issue is still on going. Mr. Tener stated that he believed that the issue is dead, even though from a security standpoint it was a good idea.

A comment was made that volunteers to work at the ticket booth for the Tailgate party do not have to be Staff Council members. So if anyone in the departments are interested have them call Mr. Tener.

Mr. Tener reminded everyone to be sure to sign the attendance list.

There was no other new business.

Being no further business, Mr. Tener thanked all present for coming. The next scheduled meeting is November 12, 1996, at 8:30 a.m., in the Rand Faculty Dining Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m. by Mr. Tener.