Staff Council Minutes
January 21, 1998

PRESENT

Rugena Hall, Deborah Birney, John Shearer, Gil Herrera, Bob Stoller, Carla Rasch, Elizabeth Wunder, Sheri McDowell, Donna Catron, Ginger Webber, Cindy Barry, Karen Simpson. Present for part: Tom Ellis

The minutes of the January 7, 1998, meeting were approved as corrected.

Bob Stoller and Karen Simpson have served respectively as Chair and Secretary of the council since the first meeting. Both were nominated and approved unanimously to serve in those positions until elections are held to create the next council.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Regarding recommendations to the President: Since the holiday break recommendation will be the first to come from the staff council, members agreed that it is important to consider the process and format used to reach the final recommendation so that it can be followed by future councils (ie: Do we need to send a synopsis of comments with a recommendation, or should the recommendation stand alone, without attachments? Does the Chair vote, or is his/her vote used to break a tie?). It was decided that a concise list of concerns should be attached to the recommendation, and that the Chair will vote only to make or break a tie.

- Holiday Break issue: Discussion was held on issues that had not previously been presented, including statistics from Deborah Birney about the number of staff who worked between Christmas and New Years. On December 26, 104 staff employees worked, and 150 did not. During the week that followed, slightly more worked than did not. The issue of creating a "Discretionary Day" is a popular one. Payroll will have to work next year during that week, because a payroll due on the 31st of December. KTWU has very unique considerations, including the fact that the last couple of days of the year are often "prime" giving days. They receive substantial donations during that week and do not feel that they could close. Generally, the council members felt that they had done a good job of soliciting input from staff on campus, which we feel is an important part of our charge as a group. Some council members distributed a survey and tabulated the results, which served as a good vehicle by which to obtain feedback, and discussion within the council meetings has shown that we have listened carefully and taken seriously the concerns expressed to us. Tom Ellis informed us that if the decision is made to close during that week, two existing holidays will be "bumped" into that week, and a new holiday will be added, thus requiring that every seven years two days of personal leave will be taken per person; otherwise, only ONE leave day will be required. He also stated that Dr. Farley has implemented this practice on two other campuses, and in both cases it has been successful and very popular after the first year of change. In fact, employees on those campuses, when offered the opportunity to go back to being open during the week between Christmas and New Years, were more adamant about NOT changing it back than they had been about not closing it in the first place. Gradually, many areas/offices on the campus determined that they could
indeed close during that time with no negative effects. Following all discussion, the following recommendation was presented for a vote: "The Staff Council supports Dr. Farley in his proposal to close the university between Christmas and New Years. An affirmative vote would support the proposal; a negative vote would not support the proposal. It was agreed that if a majority of the council members are in favor of the proposal, a concise list of concerns gathered from colleagues on campus would be attached to the proposal for Dr. Farley's information and consideration in making the final decision. The council vote was as follows: in favor of the proposal: 7; not in favor: 4; abstained: 1. Bob Stoller will draft the final proposal and send it to council members for final approval before sending it to the President. In addition, each council member is encouraged to forward to Dr. Farley any pertinent comments, concerns, observations, etc, which they have received that they believe might be of additional interest to him.

The following items were added to the "issues list", giving council members who were not present at the previous meeting a chance to include concerns that have been voiced to them:

- Safety (more sidewalks; trimming or elimination of hedges which could conceal an intruder)
- Insurance issues
- Shortened summer hours (4-day, 10-hour work weeks, closing on Friday, as many other universities and large corporations do)
- "Re-hires" would like to have their employment time with WU be retroactive to include previous time worked at the university
- Staff release time to teach in Continuing Education
- Time off for class during the work day or for community service
- Equitable recording of leave time across campus
- Make benefits more equitable (ie: make the plan for singles more equitable by perhaps covering deductible costs so that the university covers an amount of health insurance costs more equal to the family plan, etc).

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Don't forget Gene Mosiman's retirement reception Friday, January 30, 3-5 pm. The dinner is Saturday night: social hour at 5:30; dinner at 6:00; $20 per person; reservations to Personnel.
- The new Vice President, John Moore, starts work on Tuesday, January 27.
- Council members will get a sneak preview on netscape of the council's new web page, created by Bob Stoller.

The next Staff Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, at 3:00. Place TBA.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25.

Submitted by Karen Simpson