Members Present: Cameron Mott, Jim Streicher, Matthew Crawford, Misti Williams, Diane Wilson, Lynne Brock, Sandi Hatcher, Bill Edmonds, David Betsch, Lisa Bellamy, Dan Lawless and Lisa Bernadyn.

Members Absent: Shane Tay, Tukonya Vereen, Derek Doss, and Kevin Bowers.

Approval of Minutes: A motion to accept the December 10, 2015 minutes was made by Matthew Crawford and seconded by Diane Wilson. The minutes were approved by the members.

Old Business

Follow up discussion on the following items:

Suggestion:

- "When the school closes due to weather, we get an email or text alert telling us "The University is closed." Notice the wording used, in particular, the word "closed."

If we are not expected to come into work when the university is "closed," then what part of "The University will open at 10:50 a.m." and "Faculty and staff should report by 10:50 a.m." would make employees think we are to report at normal time?

Suggestion would be to have better communication, especially coming from a University that has a "communications department," so that when the University says it will open at 10:50 a.m. but instead means show up at normal time, I know to come in so I am not forced to use leave time when I was just sitting at home waiting to come in.

This is reminiscent of the Singleton heat outage last year during the coldest day of the winter when they allowed Singleton employees to leave around 11:00 a.m. and didn't bother to mention they would have to use their own leave time until 3:00 p.m."

D. Lawless forwarded this suggestion to Kim Sherfesee, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer, and shared this is being looked into with the Governor’s office. Mr. Lawless read a paragraph that was at the end of the email from the initial email that came out regarding the closure. “Please note that these instructions may have to be modified based on any future determination made by the Governor’s office regarding this hazardous weather event.”

D. Lawless shared an update regarding the hazardous weather closing from Kim Sherfesee, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer. “Thank you for your feedback. When a hazardous weather event occurs, it is necessary to communicate information as broadly and quickly as possible. When the University closes, the CCU alert system is the mechanism used to convey urgent messages to students, faculty and staff.

When a hazardous weather event occurs, there are many aspects that need to be considered. Examples include: essential staffing required, support services for residential students, personal safety of employees and students, campus conditions, etc. The assessment of these aspects can take time and often these details are not finalized at the time the CCU alert "closed or delayed opening" notice is sent. In the interest of personal safety, employees are expected to follow the closing/delayed opening notices unless they are in "essential services" positions and/or they have been otherwise notified by their supervisors to report to work during periods of closure.
Based on current state regulation, the decision to close the campus in the interest of safety does not automatically result in paid leave. Payment of leave during a hazardous weather event must be granted by the Governor via executive order. Any declaration of paid leave will not come until after the hazardous weather event has ended. Since paid leave determinations are after the fact, the University will occasionally take interim measures in an effort to ensure employees are paid timely. If paid leave is not granted, employees will have to report annual leave, make up the time or leave without pay.

In collaboration with several offices campus-wide, the Office of Emergency Management continues to develop strategies to enhance systems and processes when hazardous weather events occur.”

On December 9, 2015 the following email was sent out from Kim Sherfesse, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer. “The Office of Human Resources & Equal Opportunity (HREO) received notification from the state that authorized leave with pay (ALWP) was granted to eligible non-exempt employees who were required to report to work at/by 10:50 a.m. on October 6, 2015, due to the hazardous weather event. Our records indicate that you had reported annual leave during that period. Since ALWP was granted, the Payroll Office has credited your annual leave balance accordingly. No action is required on your part.

If you are an exempt employee, you are receiving this email because you have one or more eligible non-exempt employees reporting to you who reported annual leave on October 6.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Toben in the Payroll Office at extension 2752.”

D. Lawless will follow up with Ms. Sherfesse regarding individuals that made up the time and how will they be accommodated?

D. Lawless shared an email has been sent out to all individuals who were affected by the closure.

- “Parking at Baxley Hall for staff is horrible, I thought there were supposed to be some reserved spots for staff in GG. When is this going to occur?”

D. Lawless pulled the previous email regarding this suggestion from last year and discussed it with Rein Mungo.

D. Lawless shared after speaking to Mr. Mungo he was informed to contact Dr. Byington, Provost and Executive Vice President, regarding these parking spaces. Mr. Lawless will reach out to Dr. Byington.

D. Lawless shared he was able to briefly talk with Dr. Byington regarding setting up a time in the future to meet.

D. Lawless shared he has sent over information to Dr. Byington regarding parking lot GG. Dr. Byington will look at the parking survey findings.

- This suggestion was in the Wall building. “My friends and I think the bathrooms (women’s) in Wall on the 1st floor are the dirtiest on campus. Never clean even after she clean.”

S. Hatcher shared the bathrooms were pressure washed and cleaned over the holiday break.

- “I’d like for there to be a safer way of crossing Hwy. 501 to get to the other side of Campus at the Atlantic Center. Perhaps an elevated, enclosed walkway like you’d see in larger cities. This way students & staff would have a safe way to cross Hwy. 501 on foot or bike. I know that I would commute by bike if there were some sort of option like this.”
D. Lawless will forward this suggestion to the appropriate person.

The council discussed the option of taking the shuttle across 501. It was also noted the shuttles are equipped with bike racks.

D. Lawless will take this suggestion to the next long term facility planning meeting.

- “In reference to this fall’s policy change on graduate tuition reimbursement, was this policy designed to serve as a means of “forced” employee retention or to discourage employees from taking advantage of the tuition reduction benefit? As an employee, I would love to take advantage of the benefit of free/reduced cost tuition to become a graduate of CCU, however, it is possible that unforeseen events in my life may impact my career and require that I leave CCU. For example, if I begin pursing a Master’s degree at CCU and my spouse secures a new job that requires our family to move or if I need to move closer to my parents for health reasons or if I am offered a position at another institution that allows me to follow my desired career path, why should I be punished for choosing to do so? It just seems unfair that our institution would require our employees to pay an “exit fee” to take another position elsewhere regardless of the circumstances surrounding that employee’s reason for leaving. I am aware that it is a choice for an employee to enroll in classes within our university; however, it is impossible for an employee to foresee his or her future life requirements three or four years down the road.

This policy simply reduces one of the primary benefits of working in higher education; access to education is a reason why many employees chose to work at institutions of higher education for less pay than a private sector job. Imagine if an employee who left university employee was forced to pay the university back for retirement contributions upon leaving! In addition, I have yet to talk with any of my colleagues at other colleges/universities that have a similar policy for employee tuition benefits, why has Coastal instituted this policy when it appears no other universities are doing so? In the end, this policy simply discourages entry level employees from taking advantage of the educational benefits available to CCU employees as these younger employees are more likely to want to earn an additional degree but are also at a point in their careers where job fluidity is a virtual requirement to meet their career goals.”

D. Lawless shared the following response from Kim Sherfesee, Director of Human Resources/EEO Officer.

“Thank you for your feedback. By offering employees the opportunity to gain additional education either through the tuition waiver program or the graduate tuition reimbursement program, the University must commit financial resources. In the case of the tuition waiver program, this commitment means that participating employees are occupying seats in the classroom that would otherwise be occupied by tuition paying students. In the case of graduate tuition reimbursement, the University has to allocate financial resources to pay a portion of the employee’s graduate program. The intent of these tuition programs is to provide employees with professional development opportunities that will not only benefit the employees but support Coastal Carolina University as well. The administrative decision to require reimbursement of tuition fees for a limited period of time was put in place to ensure that the University receives at least some benefit from its’ financial commitment to participating employees.

The specific details of the tuition program can be found at www.coastal.edu/policies (HREO-152/HREO-153).”

New Business

Suggestion Boxes:

Suggestion:
• This suggestion was in the Wall building. “[Name redacted] is doing a great job at cleaning the bathrooms on the first floor. Today was the first time that I walked into the bathroom and felt that it was actually clean. There is definitely a noticeable difference! Keep up the good work!”

S. Hatcher will share this comment with Buddy Hendrick, Director of Facility Operations.

• This suggestion was in the Wall building. “The ladies’ bathrooms on the first floor of the Wall building smell clean and fresh for the first time in years. [Name redacted] is doing a fantastic job. I no longer feel like it’s dirty and unclean. We hope she stays here for a long time. She’s great!”

S. Hatcher will share this comment with Buddy Hendrick, Director of Facility Operations.

Web Page Comments:

Suggestion:

• “The grass (fuzzy) at the round-a-bout needs trimming. It’s difficult to see in a car if someone is walking.”

S. Hatcher shared she spoke with Kevin Brown at Horry Georgetown Technical College in reference to the trimming of the round-a-bout and he said he would have this trimmed back by the end of this week. Kevin is in Facilities there and HGTC is responsible for the trimming of this area.

• “I would like to address a comment made on 11/19 regarding the 1st floor bathrooms in the Wall Building. I would like to state, what was written, was an exaggeration. I work in the Wall Building and have been in those bathrooms at peak times and they are as clean as can be. I have been in there after the janitors leave and they smell fine. I have never heard people complain about the restrooms actually. I appreciate that she uses cleaners that are "green" certified as many people are sensitive to fragrances, like myself. A bathroom does not need to smell like bleach or other harsh chemicals to be disinfected and clean. For the building being as busy as it is I will say that the bathrooms are kept as clean as possible and both of the workers in this building [names redacted] do a great job and both are hard workers. Thank you for what you all do.”

This comment was shared with Buddy Hendrick, Director of Facility Operations.

• “It would be nice if the staff were thanked during the commencement ceremony along with faculty and parents. Staff work just as hard, if not harder to assist students throughout their journey here, and staff have to work the event as well. It would just be nice to have some acknowledgement.”

D. Lawless forwarded this suggestion to Dr. DeCenzo’s office and the Provost’s office and shared this will be worked into the script for next time.

• Additional Discussion items by members:

D. Lawless shared it has been requested, that two people from the Staff Advisory Council serve on two other committees. Mr. Lawless went over the committees and asked if anyone would be interested in serving.

Jim Streicher will serve on the WebAdvisor Committee.

Matthew Crawford will serve on Enterprise Risk Council.

• Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:00.
**Next Meeting:** The next SAC meeting will be held January 28, 2016 in Edwards 164.