

Staff Senate

April 13, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Note: The remarks of the senators and others are summarized and not verbatim. The recording of this meeting is available in the Staff Senate Secretary's office.

PRESENT: Sandy Baldrige-Adrian; Matthew Barnes; Dwayne Beam; Penny Bell; Jean Bennett; April Betsch; Roger Brown; Alli Crandell; Brittany Donatelli; John Dooley; Mark Garrison; Judy Johns; Michelle Lewis; Ebony McCray; Kelly Moore; Justin Poindexter; Daniel Rabon; Wendy Singleton; David Speiser; Michele Varga; David Yancey; Travis Youngblood; Bobbi Yurkin; Sharlene Zwing

SUBSTITUTIONS: Angel Onley-Livingston for Sean Pierce

ABSENT: David Klauder; Melanie McKeefery; Brad Queen;

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Michael Benson; Dr. Dan Ennis; Travis Overton

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: no minutes available for this meeting

SENATE PRESIDENT REMARKS:

- Multiple policies reviewed in Executive Council; staff salary study is on-going; reminded senators that they are representatives of their constituents and need to be reaching out to them regularly.
- Morale Focus Groups will be meeting soon and will need volunteers from Staff Senate to be note-takers for these meetings.

PRESIDENT AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

President Benson:

- Graduation is approaching, May 7th and May 8th.
- We still have our mask mandate in place on campus even though the governor has ended the state-wide mask mandate. We hope that everyone will continue follow the mask mandate while on campus.
- Board of Trustees meeting is coming up in May. This will be the first meeting that the Staff Senate President will have an opportunity to report to the Board what Staff Senate has been working on.

Provost Ennis:

- Cautiously optimistic about Fall 21 enrollment numbers and retention rates. Will have more definite numbers in the next couple of months.
- While we have announced face-to-face instruction in the fall, what that will look like is has not been set in stone yet, will be based on DHEC guidelines.

Travis Overton:

- No comments

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

In an effort to streamline Staff Senate meetings, but also continue to collect valuable employee feedback data, the Senate will begin referring Topic Suggestions that relate to specific areas of operation to the appropriate person in those areas. The Senate will continue to collect these submissions and will review them in total each semester to determine if there are organizational patterns that should be addressed by the Senate as a whole.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy and Welfare Committee – Staff Senate survey closed last Friday (April 9th) and there was just over 50% response rate; we will begin looking at those results in the next few weeks; we will be updating Staff Senate bylaws as needed; also looking at the subcommittee structure to realign them more closely with Faculty Senate and SGA.

Membership Committee – Senate elections will run through April 21st; additional pay for Staff Senate President will be presented in the May meeting; worked with Policy and Welfare committee on the specifics for the Staff Ombuds position which will be presented later in this meeting.

Communication Committee – committee will meet next week to discuss the topic submitted about recording votes by senator name and report back to Senate in the May meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

Employee Tuition Waiver Motion submitted by Policy and Welfare Committee –

SUMMARY:

Faculty and staff in an FTE (slotted), temporary grant, time-limited, research grant and unclassified positions may apply for a Coastal Carolina University Tuition Waiver.

POLICY:

L Tuition Waiver Program for Faculty and Staff

A Eligibility

1. Faculty

A faculty member must be employed in an FTE (slotted) position, have successfully completed six months of employment and have been admitted to Coastal Carolina University.

2. Staff

A staff member must be employed at least thirty hours per week in an FTE (slotted), temporary grant, time-limited, research grant or unclassified position, have completed six months of service and have been admitted to Coastal Carolina University.

B. Faculty or staff who have received notice of non-reappointment are not eligible to receive a tuition waiver for the academic term(s) following notification of non-reappointment.

C. Employees who change status from an eligible position to a position that is not eligible for a tuition waiver while taking a course may continue in that course. However, once in the new position the employee will not be eligible for future tuition waivers.

II. Admission

A. Employees must apply for admission to Coastal Carolina University and fulfill all requirements of the admission policy, based on the requirements germane to the program for which the employee is applying. For program participants, regular admissions fees will be waived. Special fees for admission in some graduate areas will not be waived.

UI. Enrollment, registration, tuition and fees

A. All eligible coursework must be offered through Coastal Carolina University.

iB. Eligible employees are allowed a tuition waiver for up to six credit hours **:ier** a cademicterm.

- C. Employees enrolled in their first undergraduate or graduate, degree-seeking program may enroll in terms commensurate with their student class level. All other enrollment may occur beginning with the day before classes begin for the term. Registration should occur through existing student registration processes.
- D. Employees may enroll in a course for academic credit, audit a course or select the pass-fail option.
- E. If an employee is receiving other assistance that does not require repayment, i.e. scholarships, tuition assistance is available for eligible costs incurred while participating in the program so long as the reimbursement and other funds received does not exceed the total cost of tuition for the course(s) taken.
- F. The Tuition Waiver program does not pay for expenses incurred or required by the course such as textbooks, field trips, course specific fees or technology fees.

IV. Scheduling of Courses

- A, Faculty and staff members can enroll in day and/or evening courses. Scheduled class times and course work must not interfere with the performance of job duties and responsibilities; however, supervisors are encouraged to allow flexible schedules when possible. Of courses are taken during normally scheduled work hours, faculty and staff members should discuss the possibility of a modified schedule with their supervisor prior to registration. A modified work schedule on behalf of a participating faculty or staff member should accommodate the course schedule and still allow the faculty or staff member to meet all job expectations.

V. Potential Tax Liability

A. Undergraduate Courses

Undergraduate participants are not taxed on this benefit.

B. Graduate Courses

Per IRS publication 15-B, the Internal Revenue Service has ruled that the graduate tuition benefit is not excluded from the income of employees. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires the taxation, via your paycheck, of any tuition assistance, which is provided to an employee enrolled in a graduate program and in excess of the \$5,250 threshold per calendar year. Further, the IRS requires the University to establish payroll tax withholdings from your paychecks to offset any tax liability. If it becomes necessary to establish tax withholdings, the faculty or staff member will be notified by the University of the taxable income to be included in each paycheck and the subsequent tax impact. Program participants can modify the pace at which they approach a graduate

program to remain within the permitted \$5,250/calendar year tax-free educational assistance.

VI. Program Procedures

- A. The employee must submit the Tuition Waiver Request Form to the Office of Human Resources and Equal Opportunity within ten (10) days after the start of the course. If the waiver is not received within this time frame, the employee may be responsible for all or part of the tuition fees.
- B. HREO will send approved tuition waiver forms to Financial Aid for processing. An employee who withdraws or does not otherwise pass the course will be liable for the tuition

Motion submitted by Policy and Welfare Committee and seconded by Judy Johns. **Motion passed (25 in favor, 0 not in favor, 0 abstain).**

Staff Ombuds Motion submitted jointly by Policy and Welfare and Membership Committees –

A part time Staff Ombudsman be hired externally with Ombudsman experience and training in conflict resolution. The position would start at 10 hours per week and be evaluated based on need.

and

The Charter Agreement for the Coastal Carolina University Staff Ombudsman Office be amended to read:

Under Section IV. Authority and Limits of the Ombudsperson

The addition of:

C. Other Administrative Duties

The Ombudsman are independent of other entities at CCU, and this Ombudsman will not hold another position at the university that compromises that independence. The Ombudsman cannot serve on University Committees or working groups.

After Section V – The addition of:

Section VI. Appointment, terms of employment, evaluation, and removal of the Ombudsman

1. Criteria for selection of the ombudsman include:

a. A preferred understanding of university policies, procedures, and organization structure

b. Demonstrated discretion in confidential matters and a reputation for fairness

c. Willingness to abide by the IOA standards, ethics and best practices

2. Appointment and Terms

- a. The Staff Senate Executive Committee will have input in the hiring process of the Ombudsman position.
- b. The University President will make the final decision regarding this appointment.
3. Annual evaluation will be based on the:
 - a. Annual online Ombudsman office evaluation survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis
 - b. Ombudsman Annual Report
 - c. Other relevant sources judged appropriate by the University President
4. Termination procedures
 - a. In cases other than Reduction in Force, the termination of the position must include advance notification to the Staff Senate and a vote of the Senators.
 - c. The University President will consider the voting outcome in making the final decision.

Motion submitted by committees and seconded by Michele Varga. **Motion passed (22 in favor, 2 not in favor, 0 abstain).**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Reminder – graduation is May 7th and May 8th
- Next meeting is May 11th at 9:00 am

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:11 am.