Call to Order

The meeting of the Staff Senate was called to order at 1:01pm by Chair Lori Payne.

Senators Present: Ursula Allen, Charlene Bearden, Alicia Braswell, Donna Bravard, Mary Brown, Wayne Bullard, Jeanna Chapman, Linda Fields, Cynthia Hillery-Jackson, Tammy Honoré, Kameka Houston, Theodora Johnson, Vickie Johnson, Gail McCain, Lori Payne, Rebecca Rakoczy, Sharon Riley, Imani Roberson, Debra Scott, Ramon Selles, Tesa Talley, Patricia Young

Senators Absent: Donna Frazier, Kara Kennebrew, Rodney, Pegues

Ex Officio Present: Immediate Past-Chair, Emily Cowdrick; Executive Director of Human Resources, Jim Rasmus; Director of Human Resources, Patrice Masterson.

Welcome and Introductions of New Senators

Each senator introduced themselves. Lori Payne asked that comments during the meetings be kept to 3 minutes or less.

Review/Approval of Minutes

Although it was previously thought that the minutes of the 2/8/13 meeting needed approval by the senate, Gail McCain reported that according to the minutes of the June 6th meeting, they had already been approved. Therefore, no action was taken on the minutes of the 2/8/13 meeting.

A correction to the June 6, 2013 minutes was proposed, removing the word “false” from the last paragraph of the Staff Development Committee report. Motion to accept the minutes as corrected was made by Wayne Bullard; seconded by Mary Brown; passed without opposition.

Updates from the Chair

- Lori thanked senators for their help as ushers during Convocation. She also thanked Emily Cowdrick for her guidance of the new Staff Senate Officers.

- Goal for the coming year: Lori wants the Staff Senate to be more visible to GPC Staff members.

- Future Meetings: A minimum of 4 meetings per year is required; no more than 1 meeting per month (per By-Laws). Senators discussed the merits of video conferencing (saves gas and travel time) versus face-to-face meetings (allows everyone to see each other better). A vote was taken regarding preferences: The option of Face-to-Face meetings (with optional video conferencing as a backup) was the most popular.
- **President’s Cabinet Meeting:** President Watts wants to make sure that we are serving students to the best of our ability. There will be cross training to help departments that experience especially heavy loads. Jim Rasmus outlined the cross training program and said that President Watts would be sending out an email about it shortly. Mr. Rasmus also spoke about the issue of the age and technology use of GPC students vs. those of the faculty and staff. Focus groups are being considered to study the phenomenon, but the cost involved is a prohibitive factor at this time.

Patrice Masterson talked about the recent email regarding changes due to the Affordable Health Care Act. The changes will only affect part-time employees and GPC is providing the information as a service to them so that they can obtain health insurance for themselves (otherwise, they must pay a penalty on their income tax next year). Ms. Masterson also mentioned that there will be new vendors for full-time staff to consider for benefit plans for next year. The Kaiser premium is going up 4%; no changes to BCBS.

A question was asked about employees donating sick leave days to others when they end their employment at GPC. Patrice Masterson informed the senators that employees can only donate sick leave during Open Enrollment.

- **Budget / Foundation:** Current balance in the Staff Senate account is approximately $125. Employees (including senators) may donate money to the Staff Senate operating fund through the GPC Foundation.

**Descriptions of the Standing Committees**

Each of the Officers described one of the standing committees (By-Laws, New Employee on Board, Website, Staff Development Day). Senators were asked to choose one committee to serve on this year and to sign up for it at the end of the meeting. Absent senators will be assigned to a committee based on need.

**Election of 3 Non-Officer Positions**

- **Parliamentarian:** Mary Brown nominated herself to this position. No other candidates were proposed, so no vote was needed to declare Mary the winner of this post.

- **University System of Georgia Staff Council (USGSC) Representative:** Although not in attendance at the meeting, both Donna Frazier and Kara Kennebrew had sent emails to the Chair stating their desire to self-nominate for this position. A brief discussion regarding the duties of the USGSC Rep revealed that anyone can attend USGSC meetings (either in person or via Wimba for the 4 annual meetings) and anyone can be on the USGSC ListServ. The USGSC Rep’s main duty is to report about the USGSC meetings at the GPC Staff Senate meetings and to relay any GPC issues back to the USGSC body.

Vickie Johnson made a motion that the nominations for USGSC Representative be closed; Linda Fields seconded.

A vote was taken between the two candidates. Donna Frazier won the vote and will serve this year as the USGSC Representative for GPC.
• **USGSC Alternate:** In her email to the Chair, Kara Kennebrew had also expressed her desire to serve in this position if she were not elected as USGSC Rep, so her name was entered as a candidate. Debra Scott nominated herself for the position.

Wayne Bullard moved that the nominations be closed; Sharon Riley seconded the motion.

Debra Scott left the room during the vote taken to elect the USGSC Alternate. Debra Scott won the election and will serve as the USGSC Alternate for GPC this year.

**Break:** During a pause in the meeting, Senators were asked to sign up to work on the standing committee of their choice.

**New Business**

• **Convocation Concern:** During his Convocation speech, Ron Stark did not thank staff members for contributions to cutting costs. Several staff members told Lori Payne that they felt slighted by this and she relayed that information through Jim Rasmus back to Mr. Stark. Jim Rasmus reported that it was an oversight on Mr. Stark’s part and that he is now aware of the Staff’s concerns.

• **Staff Development – Proposed Date:** Multiple dates in May were considered in relation to graduation and open registration activities. It was decided to propose **Wednesday, May 14th** (first choice) and **Thursday, May 15th** (second choice) to the administration for their approval.

• **Other:**
  - **Making Staff Senate More Visible:** Rebecca Rakoczy recommended that Staff Senator photos could be shown on GPC TV. Senators were asked to email Rebecca (Rebecca.Rakoczy@gpc.edu) if Bill Roa had taken their picture when they were a new employee (Rebecca will then do a search to find the photo). It was also suggested that those photos could be used on the Staff Senate website.
  - **Staff Senate Shirts:** Wayne Bullard brought up the fact that new senators (and some existing ones) don’t have polo shirts with the Staff Senate Logo on them. These shirts have been worn to Convocation and Staff Development Day, and could be worn on meeting days to bring more attention to the Staff Senate.

    Emily Cowdrick will research prices for senators to buy their own shirts (approximately $18 to $20 each). Anyone interested in purchasing one for themselves should send Emily **the size that they want and send the money to pay for the shirt in advance** to Emily.Cowdrick@gpc.edu.

  - **Sponsors:** A question was raised about whether the Staff Senate could have sponsors that could provide either goods, services or financial donations. Patrice Masterson reported that all such donations must be funneled through the GPC Foundation so that businesses and individuals are not overwhelmed by multiple requests for help.
Other Methods of Advertising Staff Senate: Emily Cowdrick mentioned that 2 years ago the Staff Senate held “Voices and Choices” meetings at each campus to let staff members express their concerns to their senators. A suggestion to consider having a Staff Senate Facebook page or Twitter account was referred to the Website committee to investigate.

Making Compliance Simple: Lori Payne mentioned that the Director of Audit had provided each senator with a brochure about the Compliance website. This website is available to report any wrong doing that one observes within GPC.

Old Business

- Safety Ad Hoc Committee Report: Charlene Bearden reported that she had sent an email to all senators with the cost of installing panic buttons. Many departments had found that they did not have enough money in their budgets to purchase the panic buttons. Ms. Bearden asked if the senate should write a grant proposal to cover the cost of installing panic buttons for those departments that wanted them.

  Jim Rasmus informed the senators that the GPC Technology group is researching the feasibility of establishing buttons on GPC landline phones (one for a silent call for help and another to call dispatch). Their feasibility study should be completed within the next 30 days. Since this method would be less costly than additional panic buttons, he suggested that the matter be held for future consideration once the results of OIT’s study are complete.

Committees Meet to Choose Chair and Co-chair

The senators broke up into four groups (each representing one of the four standing committees). The Chair asked each committee to elect a committee chair (and co-chair if needed) and to decide the date for their first committee meeting.

After the groups met, Lori Payne announced the chairs for each of the committees. She thanked each of the chairs for offering to serve as head of their committee.

- New Employee On Board:
  - Donna Bravard, Chair
  - Cynthia Hillery-Jackson
  - Kameka Houston
  - Kara Kennebrew (added in abstentia)
  - Sharon Riley

- By-Laws:
  - Vickie Johnson, Chair
  - Mary Brown
  - Wayne Bullard
  - Donna Frazier (added in abstentia)
  - Gail McCain
Website:
- Debra Scott, Chair
- Ramon Selles, Assistant Chair
- Ursula Allen
- Jeanna Chapman
- Imani Roberson
- Tesa Talley

Staff Development Day
- Theodora Johnson, Chair
- Patricia Young, Assistant Chair
- Alicia Braswell
- Charlene Bearden
- Tammy Honoré
- Rodney Pegues (added in abstentia)
- Rebecca Rakoczy

Future Meetings – Lori Payne requested that the next full Staff Senate meeting be held shortly after the Staff Development Day committee meeting so that preparations could begin immediately for that event.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 7, 2013 at 1:00pm. Room information will be sent out as soon as reservations are made.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 3:52pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail McCain

Staff Senate Secretary
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