Call to Order
The meeting of the Staff Senate was called to order at 1:16 pm by Chair Lori Payne.

Senators Present:
Alicia Braswell   Theodora Johnson   Rebecca Rakoczy
Mary Brown       Vickie Johnson     Sharon Riley
Linda Fields     Gail McCain        Imani Roberson
Kameka Houston  Lori Payne         Tesa Talley
                Rodney Pegues         Patricia Young

Senators Absent:
Ursula Allen     Donna Frazier
Charlene Bearden Cynthia Hillery-Jackson
Donna Bravard    Tammy Honoré
Wayne Bullard    Kara Kennebrew
Jeanna Chapman   Ramon Selles

Ex Officio Present:
Emily Cowdrick
Jim Rasmus

Since there were only 14 senators present at the meeting, a quorum of 15 (60% of the 22 current senators) was not established for conducting business. This meeting was held for informational purposes only.

Updates from the Chair
Lori Payne

- The President’s Policy Advisory Board (PPAB) and President’s Cabinet (PC) normally meet on the first Tuesday of each month.
  - Ms. Payne emails each senator an agenda and a copy of the policies that are being discussed at these meetings. She encouraged senators to send her any comments or concerns about the discussion points.
- Preparation/transition for incoming Senate
  - Ms. Payne would like to create a repository of information for the incoming senators to help them understand the procedures and responsibilities for each of the standing committees.
  - Each committee chair is requested to submit a report and post it on the Sharepoint website. The report should contain a checklist for the processes and deadlines that are involved for their committee.
  - Rodney Pegues suggested that an orientation session be held for all of the freshman senators prior to the first meeting of the fiscal year.
    - The senators would be told what their responsibilities will be; what each committee does; what each officer position is responsible for.
• Thank You Executive V.P. Stark
  The $3,000 that the GPC Foundation donated for the Staff Development Day will only cover the cost of lunch. Executive Vice President Ron Stark is donating the funds to provide coffee and tea for the morning.

Standing Committee Reports

By-Laws Committee

Vickie Johnson

At the request of several senators, a discussion was held about the timing of the selection of the Chair Elect.

- In the current By-laws, a specific date is not mentioned.
- In the By-laws revision which was presented and approved by the full senate at the November 7, 2013 meeting, all non-officer positions would be filled at the first meeting of the new fiscal year. The Chair Elect position was included in group (although that was not pointed out at the time).
- Since these By-laws revisions have not been presented to President Watts and his Executive Committee, they have not been formally ratified
- Ms. McCain read the following summary of the pros and cons for possible changes:
  - Select the person at the first fiscal meeting of the year, along with the other officers
    - Advantage: gives the Chair-Elect the most time to shadow the current Chair to learn the job.
    - Disadvantage: new people on the senate don’t know each other’s strengths and weaknesses, nor do they know what the Chair position entails in workload.
  - Select the person at the first meeting of the spring semester.
    - Advantage: senators have had time to learn about each other and the work and responsibilities involved in being the Chair.
    - Disadvantage: Chair-Elect only gets to shadow the Chair for ½ year.
- Mary Brown expressed the opinion that we should not make too many changes to the By-laws. She also stated that first year senators will meet each other at the last meeting of the term and can get to know each other then.
- Chair Lori Payne stated that the position is a lot of work. She expressed her concern that during the first part of the year, the Chair is still learning their position and doesn’t know enough to be a teacher to the Chair Elect. She encouraged the selection of the Chair Elect to take place during the second half of the term. She also felt that it was important for new senators to understand the responsibilities and time commitment of the job before they agree to serve in that position.
- Immediate Past-Chair Emily Cowdrick stated that she did not have either a past Chair or a Chair Elect to work with when she took the Chair position. She is the one who proposed the creation of the Chair Election position in the By-laws in an attempt to pass knowledge along. She emphasized that it is crucial to have the Chair Elect in place by the time Elections are held in the spring.
  - Ms. Cowdrick also made the point that if the Chair Elect is chosen at the first meeting of the fiscal year, that person is being asked to make a 3 year commitment (1 year as Chair Elect, 1 year as Chair, 1 year as Immediate Past-Chair). This might intimidate people into not offering to serve.
o Vickie Johnson made the point that the Chair Elect position is a voluntary one; anyone who would like to do the position should be allowed to take the spot from the beginning of the term and learn it as fully as possible.

o Linda Fields expressed skepticism that people would volunteer to do a job if they did not understand the organization well. She felt it important to give new senators time to learn about the senate’s functions before they committed to the Chair Elect spot.

o A suggestion was made that the new-senator orientation would be an excellent time to discuss the Chair Elect position with the first year senators.

o Since there were not enough senators at the meeting to take a vote, it was decided that the discussion would be moved to the Share-point website and that a decision would be made at the next staff senate meeting.

Election Committee

Gail McCain

o Nominations were open from March 7 to March 28, 2014

o Kara Kennebrew and Linda Fields collected the nominations and did an initial check to make sure the candidates were qualified to run (staff members who have at least one year full time employment at GPC)

o Each nominee was contacted to make sure that they were willing to participate in the election

o There are a total of 25 non-duplicated nominees

o For each category, we have sufficient nominees
  ▪ In 4 categories, we have exactly enough people to fill the slots; no election required
  ▪ In 4 categories, we have more than enough people (an election will have to take place)

o The list of finalists has been sent to the HR department to verify qualifications

o The names of people in the elections will be sent to OIRP
  ▪ Ballots will be verified by the Elections Committee

o The election will be run over a 2 week timeframe via computers
  ▪ Paper ballots will be available through a campus coordinator
    i. Alpharetta: Kara Kennebrew
    ii. Clarkston: Pat Young
    iii. Decatur: Rodney Pegues
    iv. Dunwoody: Tesá Talley
    v. Lakeside: Sharon Riley
    vi. Newton: Mary Brown

o After the election results have been verified,
  ▪ emails will be sent out to all participants and to the supervisor of each new senator
  ▪ a broadcast email will be sent to all staff members to announce the results

o People shared their experiences in being elected
  ▪ It was suggested that there be more information about the candidates made available

New Employee on Board – No new meetings

Staff Senate Website Committee – No new meetings
Staff Development Day Committee

Dora Johnson and Pat Young

- Senators should arrive between 7:30am and 8:00am.
- The committee will contact absent senators about choosing areas to work
- An email will be sent out by May 8th to each senator to tell them what duties they are assigned
- There are over 200 staff members registered currently
  - Please remind co-workers to register so that we have an accurate count for lunch
- The committee is working on a list of presenters to create a booklet for the day
  - Most presenters are GPC employees
  - Vendors have also been asked to do presentations
- Executive V.P. Ron Stark has graciously agreed to provide coffee and tea in the morning
- Human Resources and Financial Affairs are also making contributions
- Jeanna Chapman has put the art work and a link for registration on the Staff Senate website to increase awareness of our organization and its activities
- May 13th is Prep Day; there will be a walk through for the Staff Development committee and speakers

USGSC – no one available to report on this area

Old Business

- Both the bereavement leave and last payday of the calendar year topics were sent to the USG and presented at the GPC Cabinet meeting. Both of these topics are addressed in the new employee handbook (Jim Rasmus sent out an email to announce this recently).
  - Each time you download a copy of the employee handbook, you get a time-stamped copy
  - The employee handbook is not a contract. It is just a listing of important information and can change at any time.
- Payroll won’t be able to change the pay date at the end of the year at the GPC level.

Election of new Staff Senate members

Full Senate

- Chair Elect selection could not be accomplished because there was not a quorum at the meeting.

New Business

- Rodney Pegues reported that President Watts has started a task force to develop plans to implement the new Tobacco and Smoke-Free policy. The new policy will eliminate all tobacco and smoking on USG campuses and will go into effect in October 1, 2014. Mr. Pegues is serving on the task force.
- Lori Payne floated the idea of having the New Employee On Board committee take responsibility for creating the Orientation for New Senators. She will discuss this possibility with Chair Donna Bravard.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM by Chair Lori Payne.

Next Meeting – Thursday, May 8, 2014 in CN-2220 (and via video conferencing); 1PM – 4PM