

# **UNIVERSITY SUPPORT STAFF KNOW THE FACTS**

**The Alternative Service Committee (ASC) would like you to know the accurate facts about USS prior to voting on November 19-21, 2013 regarding the conversion of classified positions from State Civil Service to University Support Staff (USS). Below is a list of common concerns and questions that classified employees have asked ASC:**

**Question 1:**

Is the Alternative Service Committee supportive of the conversion of classified positions from State Civil Service to University Support Staff?

**Answer:**

The Alternative Service Committee was created to be an impartial university committee to create the best plan possible for classified employees at Kansas State University under the Statue 76-715a, which allows the conversion of classified positions from State Civil Service to University Support Staff. The committee does believe a plan was created that is an improvement to State Civil Service.

**Question 2:**

Does a 'Yes' vote allow the university to convert any or all of its classified employees to the unclassified service?

**Answer:**

No. A 'Yes' vote will convert classified positions to University Support Staff, not to unclassified positions like the unclassified professionals we currently have on campus. Unclassified professionals and University Support Staff are NOT the same.

Differences include:

- Unclassified employees have a contract; University Support Staff do not.
- University Support Staff would still use the same Peer Review Committee (PRC) to challenge performance reviews; something not available for unclassified employees.
- If budgetary issues forced a University Support Staff employee's position to be eliminated, Human Resources would assist the employee in finding a comparable position. This is the same process currently used under State Civil Service. Unclassified employees are not given this privilege.

**Question 3:**

Will there be pay equality among similar positions?

**Answer:**

ASC has communicated to university administration the need for pay equality among similar positions regardless of what department they are in. A department that is well funded will not be able to pay their employees more than a department that receives a smaller budget.

At the request of classified employees, the plan created to convert to University Support Staff includes the ability for administration to allow for a merit increase to salary. This will mean that two individuals doing similar jobs may have a slight salary difference based on performance while working at Kansas State University. Because of the concern of favoritism, policies and procedures would be put into place to limit the possibility of this happening. An example of these policies would include an audit of individuals who were recommended for an extremely large merit increase or employees who were recommended for no increase.

**Question 4:**

If we convert to University Support Staff, can the university alter or have any impact upon benefits such as retirement, health, flexible spending accounts, and leave?

**Answer:**

According to statute, Classified employees whose positions are converted to USS shall retain all health and flexible benefits, leave, and retirement benefits provided to them under the state classified employee system.

**Question 5:**

If the Legislature provides pay increases, can the university decide how to distribute the funds or how to use them?

**Answer:**

The University is bound by how the Legislature approves the distribution of funds for salary increases. While many employees have asked for merit raises, if the Legislature passes legislation granting an across-the-board raise, the administration will be obligated to administer the funds as approved by the Legislature. Because the Legislature has not granted raises in many years, it is hard to say if they will grant them in the future and what restrictions or provisions will be included.

**Question 6:**

Because of budget reductions, will there be a chance that we will receive a pay increase?

**Answer:**

The university has made a commitment to all staff and faculty to create wages that are fair and appropriate. This is evident in K-State's 2025 plan Theme 5, which addresses excellence in faculty and staff including having competitive pay. Currently many classified staff are underpaid by market comparison. In the June 2013 Letter to Campus, written by President Schulz, he

outlined the financial strength of the university by announcing the ability to reinstitute the Faculty Salary Enhancement Award and increasing the amount given to \$3000 and planning to award 107 of these awards. Also, the university has made available a 2% merit pool for pay increases to faculty and unclassified staff for the next two years. If University Support Staff is passed, administration would be able to extend those commitments to University Support Staff.

In addition to salary increases, the Administration would be able to implement the longevity bonus to every USS employee that is currently only being given to employees who were hired prior to June 15, 2008.

**Question 7:**

Why does the administration want to unclassify employees?

**Answer:**

The administration is supportive of classified employees regardless of how the classified employees vote in November. If classified employees do not want to convert to University Support Staff, administration will be supportive of the classified voting outcome.

If classified employees vote to convert to University Support Staff, this will allow administration to continue their support with greater flexibility to do more for University Support Staff.

The committee's webpage, communications, copies of white papers, progress of the plan, and announcement of the vote can be found at: <http://www.k-state.edu/altservcomm/>.