

**Minutes of the K-State University Support Staff Senate**  
**August 20, 2014**  
**Annual Leave Special Meeting**  
**K-State Student Union Room 206**

**I. President Kerry Jennings called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM**

At the start of the meeting it was reminded that we are here for healthy discussion and to respect every ones words, opinions, etc. Remember we are here for the good of our constituents, not ourselves

**II. Roll Call**

- A. Present: Michael Ashcraft, Susan Erichsen, Carrie Fink, Janet Finney, Doris Galvan, Brittany Green, Steve Greinke, Kerry Jennings, Emily Johnson, Gary Leitnaker, Sharon Maike, Carol Marden, Lesa Marden, Lesa Reves, Rob Reves, Michael Seymour, Michael Seymour II, Janice Taggart, Lindsay Thompson, Heather Tourney, Pam Warren, Julie Wilburn, John Wolf, Kari Zook
- B. Absent, Excused: Amy Capoun, Connie Kisse
- C. Absent: Janel Harder, Cheryl Martin, Terri Savage

**III. Proposal of Annual Leave Letter to present to COPS**

A. Discussion

- Janet Finney inquired as to why the urgency to do this all the sudden. It has been discussed in previous meetings but we weren't lead to believe it was going to happen right away. Answer: The University Support Staff Council wants to present the proposal at the COPS meeting in September in hopes it can be passed this year.
- Are we under the Board of Regents (BOR)? Do we fully trust them? Will we end up only hurting ourselves in the future? Answer: Until June of this year, we have never been employees for the BOR, we were state employees. That is why they have never gone to bat for us in the past. Carrie Fink expressed her disagreement that the Attorney General covers Classified employees and since we are not Classified employees any longer there is nothing legal saying that we are in fact under the BOR jurisdiction. Legal documents would need to be changed to include USS employees as well.
- Gary Leitnaker said that the way the law is currently written we cannot change our vacation leave. To get it approved the BOR would have to get Bill 76715-B changed. KU's leave is identical to the way leave our accrued before our improvements a few years ago.
- Janice Taggart suggested that rather than asking for an increase of leave perhaps we should we be asking for the bill to be changed.
- Sue Peterson, guest, Assistant to the President on Governmental Relations, stated that we are asking only to have a bill passed so that BOR has the authority to pass the vacation change.
- John Wolf asked if unclassified employees had to use the vacation time accrued that year or risk losing it. Answer: All employees have the same maximum accrual rate across the board.
- Brittany Green stated that some of her constituents had expressed concerns that new people coming in would earn the same amount as they did after years of service reducing the recognition of year of service.

- Janet Finey brought up Veterans Day. Currently USS employees earn 1 ½ time for comp time to use as leave and since the Unclassified employees do not earn that, will we lose that benefit as well. Answer: Kerry read from the Kansas BOR PPM, Page 3 of 6 ii: “Classified employees and unclassified non-exempt employees, including University Support Staff, required to work on such holidays shall be afforded compensatory time or compensation at the rate of one and one-half time for each hour worked.”
- Janet Finey referenced pages 11-14 of the USS handbook, that leave time will remain the same as it was when we were classified staff. LEAVE WOULD NOT BE CHANGED. It was voted on when Classified staff voted to pass USS that leave would not be changed and now this is the first thing that we change. If we start here so quickly, how long will it be before changes happened that were promised not be changed.
- Janice Taggart expressed the concern that people whom have just started may not have leave built up for the holiday season and they may already be low paid employees and now they are taking LWOP.
- Sue Peterson expressed that we have made great leaps with going to USS and the attorneys will do what we ask them to do by getting a bill passed if need be.
- Carol Marden asked Sue what is in our best interest to try to pass at the legislative level? We have asked for things in the past and it has back fired. In the past Carol has received information that we need to proceed cautiously so it doesn’t backfire again. We need to listen to the recommendation of Sue Peterson as she is the expert. Sue recommended that we approach COBO and COPS at the same time. Not in succession. She also recommended that we talk to legislators and introduce the bill that way. Other universities will be pushing this passing as well.
- Carrie Fink proposed the question of where the idea came from to change the leave benefits. It would really only benefit those new employees and our long term employees are not be rewarded for long term service. Answer: Becki Bohnedblust , guest, past Classified Senate President, gave us the history of this being presented in 2010 and 2011 and brought our attention the document from February 8, 2011. She then asked, why does there need to be a difference between new vs old employees?? As part of the 2025 vision we want to bring strong candidates onboard and have unity all as one team.
- Carol Marden asked if it’s gone before COPS, why wasn’t anything done before? Lesa Reves stated that COBO stated that they were not going down that road at that time as they wanted the focus fully on the Market equity support effort.
- Carrie Fink, if we are doing this for the new employees if someone is hired in October or November, they are still going to have to take LWOP even with the proposed leave time accrual rate. Maybe have reduced activity hours (used much like holidays) to be used during those holiday hours when the university is closed. She also stated that there are still many differences between Unclassified and USS employees rather than just leave.
- Kerry Jennings mentioned that hiring is rough across all departments. Since compensation is a little lower, maybe a higher leave accrual would help draw new employees.
- Janet Finey stated there are some universities that when they are closed for the holidays they don’t have to use leave time. Maybe we should propose that as an option.

- Rob Reves reminded everyone that we here to look after all of the USS employees, not just those employees that have been here for a long time. We are here to help everyone.
- Carol Marden posed a question that several of her constituents have asked, what door are we opening? We are trying to be more and more like the unclassified employees. How long is it going to be until we have to have the Unclassified contract. We are wanting all the benefits of Unclassified employees have but we don't want the risk of contracts.
- John Wolf brought up that with many other employers don't have leave benefits for a year and when people come to work at KSU they understand that the university is going to be closed. Why are we focusing on the leave accrual rather than the bill and getting that changed first. You have to change the legislation to change the leave.
- Julie Wilburn asked if it does pass and everyone's vacation goes up, isn't there a money factor here? Answer: Gary Leitnaker stated that if someone leaves before retirement, the department will pay out the 176 hours accrued. If someone reaches 55 and retires, the 240 will be paid by the state. Gary brought up the question if we are hiring these new people, are we going to be able to afford to have them gone more right off the bat?

**B. Vote**

It was moved by Janice Taggart that we approve the signing of the letter as written to be presented to the USS Senate Council then to precede to COPS and COBO. Mike Ashcraft seconded the motion. The motion passed 11 to 9.

**IV. Other**

- A. Lesa Reves stated that currently K-state is seen as a stepping stone, not your ultimate career goal. With the 2025 plan, what can we do to help K-State move forward?
- B. Janet Finney asked why can't longevity be part of our base pay? We would be farther along if it was part of our base pay. Answer: Carol Marden stated that it was never said that longevity would be part of the base pay. When it was discussed with over 900 employees in open forum during the town hall meetings before the USS vote the employees expressed that they didn't want to have it part of base pay. They only wanted it used to figure annual raises but not in base pay. TO DISCUSS IN NEW BUSINESS NEXT MEETING

**V. Adjournment**

John Wolf, moved to adjourn. Lesa Reves seconded the motion. Motion carried.