

- Meeting opened approximately at 10:07 a.m. by President Brad Patterson
- An attendance sheet was passed around and signed instead of roll call
- Motion was made to accept minutes as they are passed
 - Alveno Smith seconded the motion
 - Motion passed to accept the minutes
- Treasurer's Report - Juanita Sherman
 - Ben Fry motioned to accept the Treasurer's report
 - Alveno Smith seconded the motion
 - Motion to accept the Treasurer's report passed
- Proposed Changes to University Benefits – Alvin-Bailon Zafe Haas & Melanie Thornton
 - Increase of competitive employment makes recruitment and retention more important
 - Provided handout indicates points that support a reevaluation
 - Both proposals are working through Faculty Senate
 - Extension to include domestic partners of University employees and their dependents
 - Definition: The term "domestic partners" refers to a same-gender or opposite-gender couple where both partners are 18 years-of-age or older, not blood related, and in a committed relationship in which they declare that they are mutually responsible for each other's welfare. This definition is intended to cover those who are in a relationship which parallels a marital union* and not those who are simply roommates.
 - *The adopted definition should also include those who are married but whose marriages are not recognized in this state.
 - Scope: The resolution recommends that all benefits available to spouses be made available to domestic partners. It follows that benefits available to an employee's stepchildren or other dependents also be available to the domestic partner's children or other dependents.
 - Implementation: It is recommended that the administration explore practices adopted by other universities and endorse an approach that is respectful of the dignity of those seeking benefits for domestic partners while simultaneously addressing concerns that this coverage status might be open to abuse. Many models are available which include such practices as documenting and/or registering domestic partnerships through signed affidavits (see for example: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/benefits/domesticpartner/index.html>).
 - Costs: The proposed change would increase the cost of coverage though less than many might anticipate. Research indicates that additional costs of domestic-partner coverage are a small percentage (one percent to three percent) of the overall cost of health insurance. Hewitt Associates (2005) report the following trends:
 - On average, only one percent of eligible employees opted in for coverage for a domestic partner.
 - Sixty-four percent of employers indicated an increase of less than one percent of total benefits cost.
 - Eighty-eight percent had an increase of two percent or less.
 - Only five percent reported increases of three percent or greater of total benefits costs.

- Source:
 - http://www.hrc.org/issues/workplace/benefits/domestic_partner_benefit_costs.htm
 - There is systematic support throughout the UA System
 - Brad Patterson: UALR's proposal won't guarantee the change
 - Faculty and Staff Senate vote to make proposals
 - The proposals are sent to UA Systems as a recommendation
 - Dr. Powell's proposal is significantly different
 - It changes how benefits would work
 - Extended benefits would be "more equal"
 - More dependents means that UALR wouldn't subsidize them
 - Alvin's proposal would be system-wide; whereas, Dr. Powell's could be executed on a campus level
 - Chuck Werninger: Will this proposal be separated from Alvin's?
 - Melanie Thornton: Yes, this is a separate proposal.
 - Chuck Werninger: Is there a proposal for how to pay for domestic partner benefits that would increase cost one to two percent system wide?
 - Melanie Thornton: They were directed by administration to make the recommendation conceptually rather than including how to pay for it.
 - Brad Patterson: Cost savings would/could be considered a benefit.
 - Shanna Morris: Are senators supposed to vote based on constituents' wants rather than his/her personal beliefs?
 - Brad Patterson: The vote should take into consideration what the constituents want, but realistically, it could be tied to the senator's personal beliefs.
- Holiday Schedule – Brad Patterson
 - Staff Senate makes a recommendation to the Chancellor about the schedule
 - The Christmas holiday is scheduled to begin on December 20
 - Traditionally, we take 5 state holiday days and 5 vacation days
 - If UALR closes on Monday, December 19, that would force employees to use an extra day of vacation leave
 - We will have two full weekends and the same days off, but UALR would be open on Monday
 - Chuck Werninger/Ben Fry: Can UALR close December 19-January 1, and open on January 2?
 - January 2, is an official state holiday, so classified staff cannot work on that day
 - Can we use George Washington's birthday for December 19, rather than using it for Spring Break?
 - Ask staff, if possible, and let Brad know how you want to vote.
- Personal Finance Training – Chuck Werninger
 - A short video explaining Dave Ramsey workplace edition was shown
 - Chuck would like to form a sub-committee that will propose a package for offering this training to UALR
 - Email Chuck if you're interested in serving on the sub-committee
- Committee Updates
 - Staff Awards – Brad Patterson
 - Thanks to all those who helped with this event
 - The event only lasted one hour and 5 minutes
 - Nominations Committee – Brad Patterson
 - This committee will meet soon
 - Blood Drive – Joy Clark
 - Thirty-nine units were obtained, and she thought that was a poor showing.
 - Thank you to all the new volunteers

- Communications – Sarah Davis Travis
 - There is an article on the site about the Staff Achievement awards with Alveno's slide show
 - She is trying to tie Staff Senate, and the web site, into Facebook, and it needs more fans
 - She will post on the web site about the wooden roses fundraiser
 - She will be uploading pictures to Facebook, and you can tag yourself
- Kroger Cards – Chuck Werninger
 - Once 5 thousand dollars is raised, Staff Senate will be issued a check for \$250 or more
 - We are \$259 away from getting a check
 - Thanks to those who use their cards
- Fundraising and Implementation – Nancy Rea
 - Wooden roses are available in ETAS 105
 - She already has 8 orders
 - Janet Darling in RH 120 will also take orders
 - Deliveries will be made on Tuesday and Wednesday
 - She spent \$129, and made \$300+ for the Valentine's Day fundraiser
- Professional Development Committee – Stacey Hogue
 - The first event will be on April 27, from 2pm-5pm in DSCA, and it's called Mastering Your home Computer, which will be taught by Alveno Smith
 - Can we include information about our events on the Facebook page
 - The class information is posted on the Staff Senate page
- Issues and Concerns – Brian Kennerly
 - What is the nominations committee for?
 - To elect senators for open positions
 - We are working on the following issues/concerns:
 - Domestic partner benefits
 - Bicycle racks
 - Graduate school tuition discounts
- Last meeting – Brad Patterson
 - He will send out an email about this meeting
- Open Forum
 - Shanna Morris: Please email me your meeting minutes and other notes.
- Motion to adjourn was made by Joy Clark
 - Ben Fry seconded the motion
 - Meeting adjourned at 11:29am