



The University of Kansas Classified Senate Newsletter

February 2004

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CLASSIFIED SENATE

Your Classified Senate members have been very busy working on your behalf since the last newsletter.

Dennis Constance and I appeared before the Board of Regents in January. We presented the alternative to Civil Service Proposal. The Regents were fairly receptive to the idea and asked some very good questions but they decided to table the question so they could do more research. Their reasoning was that despite the argument that the proposal was for KU employees only, it would have a potential impact on the other regent's institutions. They wanted to be prepared for the possibility that some or all Regents institutions might decide to sever their relationship with Civil Service. We know that several other schools are in the midst of the process that we have gone through.

This delay means that the proposal will not make it to the Legislature this year. The work group will keep working to fine tune the proposal and will keep up constructive negotiations with legislators. We knew that it would be a long process; it just seems to be getting a little longer.

The Legislative Affairs committee and other Classified Employees lobbied on our behalf with the Legislators on February 10.

Some members of Classified Senate are hard at work on a revised and, hopefully, more effective employee evaluation form. This form will be making its debut to focus groups this spring.

The Governor has recommended a 3% increase for classified staff for the coming year.

Please let your Classified Senate representative know if there are any issues that you want to see us tackle. Senate can always use energetic, committed members. Please consider running for open seats this spring.

Kathy Jansen
Classified Senate President

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION DAY REPORT

Another LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION DAY has come and gone. Almost 50 representatives from the Classified Senates at all the "Public" Universities, i.e., KU, KSU, Emporia State, Pittsburg State, Fort Hays State, and Wichita State, spent Tuesday, February 10th in Topeka. Working in contact teams made up of members from each school's representatives, we spread throughout the Capitol to keep nearly 90 appointments with Senators and Representatives from across the state. Our purpose, as it always has been, was an attempt to persuade key Legislators that they need to provide better wages and benefits to classified employees.

In setting up appointments we followed the strategy we have used for the past 5 years or so. Each school made appointments with the legislators from their own areas. This information was forwarded to KU and we set up the rest of the meetings, focusing on leaders of the House and Senate, Chairs and Ranking Minority Members of all the standing committees, and the full membership of key committees like Ways and Means, Appropriations, and Higher Education. We can't literally talk to everyone, so the idea was to speak with those who have influence with all the rest.

In addition to the Fiscal Year '05 Position Paper, we took along supporting documentation to help explain why the paper's issues had been selected. In general, it pointed out things that show why, even in difficult economic times, we were asking for significant increases in pay and benefits. Things like the loss of buying power over the past 20+ years because COLA's have not kept pace with inflation. Things like the large number of steps in the pay matrix that pay wages at or below the most recent federal poverty threshold for a family of four. (And the fact that there are 6 more steps in that group than there were a year ago.) Examples of the way our health insurance covers less and costs more. Information pointing out that while the world's economy has grown 5 times more in the past 15 years than it did in the preceding century, classified wages have been losing value.

On top of this information, many of our people were able to tell personal stories of how low wages have made things difficult for them, and most importantly, why it is not always an option to quit, pull up stakes, and go somewhere else for work.

I felt that in terms of participation and cooperative effort on the part of our combined schools, this was one of our better Legislative Information Days. We had good attendance from everywhere, something that was especially impressive when, during the afternoon session, we were recognized from the Senate floor. Senator Lana Oleen, from the Manhattan area, asked for as many of us as possible to be in the gallery when the Senate started its session, so that we might be recognized. When the time came, it was an impressive number of people who stood up, our group filling most of the gallery seats.

I wish I could report that we were welcomed with open arms concerning our issues, that everyone we spoke to understood our problems, and they were ready to climb on the bandwagon for a 7.5% raise, plus restoration of step movement, but I can't. I can say that in general we were at least courteously received, and people listened. Some even had questions, because this year we e-mailed the position paper to all the Legislators in advance, and clearly at least some had read it. The most positive thing I can say is that very few people acted as if we were not likely to get the 3% raise the Governor recommended. There is some opposition to it by Senate President Dave Kerr of Hutchinson, and he is very influential, but unless he can turn the tide of opinion that most legislators seemed to hold currently, it seems likely the 3% will survive.

A subject that we did not speak about was the civil service alternative. That issue is not a part of the shared concerns among classified staffs at all the Regents' schools, at least not at this time, and was never planned to be any part of the Legislative Information Day agenda. The KU members of the teams did not have to field any questions about it either, as the idea is still being studied by the Regents and has not been made as any kind of proposal to the Legislature.

A big thanks is due to several people who helped with this year's effort. To Eleanor Kent, Sue Hewitt, and Kathy Stiers for working the phones to set up the bulk of the appointments. To Sue again for organizing the appointments into the database that makes the scheduling all workable. To Sam Hunsaker for organizing the contact teams,

orchestrating the advance e-mailing of the position paper to all the Senators and Representatives, and serving as Legislative Affairs Co-Chair. And to all the KU people who took the time (and in most cases a day of leave time) to go and carry the message to the Legislators: Sharon Lee Green, Nancy Brune, Sue Hewitt, Kathy Stiers, Rodney Smith, Jay Barnard, Jeff Odom, Tom Bryce, and Sam Hunsaker, and myself.

Dennis Constance

P.S. Discussions are underway for a possible rally of classified employees on the Capitol steps in late March. If that becomes a reality, it will be important for as many people as possible to take some time and attend. We need to draw more public attention to our needs, and this will be a way to do it. We will inform you when things are more definite.

IT ISN'T ALL BAD NEWS!!!

Although the chances of our getting a merit raise this year are very unlikely, Governor Sebelius has recommended a 3% pay increase for all state of Kansas employees.

Also, we will be getting 27 paychecks this year. Because of leap year, the calendar is set up so there are 3 months in which we will receive the extra paycheck. We already have the one for January. We will also receive a third paycheck in July and in December. The last paycheck of the year will be December 31.

So, not all news is bad news.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

SUMMER DEADLINE

5:00 P.M., FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2004

The Tuition Assistance program is available to classified and unclassified staff working 50 percent time or greater. To be eligible, employees need to have worked at KU for at least six months by the time classes begin, and classified staff also need to have completed their initial probationary period.

In order to apply, employees must submit a tuition assistance application form, a brief statement explaining how the course will benefit the employee and KU, and a letter of support from the supervisor. Making application does not automatically guarantee acceptance into the program. A number of factors,

including availability of funds, are taken into consideration when making awards.

The Tuition Assistance Committee does not approve requests for thesis or dissertation hours, independent study courses, directed readings, classes listed as "by appointment" or accelerated degree programs offered by other universities. Approved courses must be structured classes with set meeting days and times published in the Timetable of Classes. For a listing of available classes, visit the online Timetable at www.registrar.ku.edu/timetable since printed copies of the Timetable are no longer available.

While it is encouraged that classes be taken at KU, the committee recognizes some programs, such as library science and vocational specialties, are not offered on this campus. In such cases, an exception may be granted to cover other schools. The committee will also consider making exceptions when employees live and work outside of the Lawrence area.

The Tuition Assistance application form is available on the Human Resources web page www.ku.edu/~kuhr under the Tuition Assistance link. For more information, contact Lynn George, at 864-7415.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR BEING NAMED KU CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:



October-**Tammie Zordel**,
Administrative Specialist in Clinical Child Psychology.

November-**Helen L. Carr**, Public Service Administrator at the Edwards Campus in Overland Park.

December-**Susie Albers Smith**, Senior Administrative Assistant in the Vehicle Rental Office for Facilities Operations.

This newsletter created and designed by Margretta de Vries, Bette Luther, Nancy Brune, Ruth Hatfield, Andy Pritchard, Debby Reed and Sharon Lee Green. The Classified Senate Communications Committee meets once per month. If you have suggestions for articles, please call Bette Luther (864-4229) or email us at clsenate@ku.edu. ©2003-2005 KU Classified Senate

Classified Senate Nominations

Members elected to Classified Senate serve two years, beginning at the first full senate meeting in May. We have openings in all EEO categories. EEO Categories and Job titles may be found on our web site: <http://www.ku.edu/~clsenate>, or you may contact University Governance, 864-5169.

If you're interested in being a member of Classified Senate, or know someone who is, please complete the following information and return it by March 2, 2004 to: **University Governance, 33 Strong, or email the information to clsenate@ku.edu, or call 864-5169.**

Name _____,

Department: _____ Job Title _____

EEO Category: _____, phone _____

email: _____

NOTE: A LIST OF EEO CATEGORIES AND REPS. IS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

OFFICERS

President
Kathy Jansen
Vice-President
Beverly Koerner
Secretary
Eleanor Kent
Treasurer
Kathy Reed
Ex-Officio
Mike Auchard

COMMITTEES**COMMUNICATIONS**

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UNITED WAY REPRESENTATIVE

Chris Finkbiner
eudorafi@ku.edu

SENATORS**Beverly Nightingale • EEO 3 Rep**

Bette Luther
Terry Proctor

Sharon Lee Green • EEO 4 Rep

Janice Andes
Nancy Brune
Sabrina Evans
Carol Gonce
Judy Greenberg
Susan Hewitt
Eleanor Kent
Maude Morris
Debby Reed
Kathy Reed
Kathy Stiers
Maxine Younes

Jean Robart • EEO 5 Rep

Sam Hunsaker

Tim Thomasson • EEO 6 Rep

Thomas Bryce
Doug Carter
Allen Eastland
Ken Squires

Tom Kearn • EEO 7 Rep

Dennis Constance
Chris Finkbiner
Angel Gillaspie
Mike Lindeman
Andy Pritchard
Ed Whittman

WEB SITE UPDATE

www.ku.edu/~clsenate/

Please visit our website and feel free to e-mail the Webmaster. Your input is appreciated.

clsenate@ku.edu

HELPFUL WEB LINKS**KU Home Page**

www.ku.edu/

KU Staff Benefits

www.ku.edu/~kuhr/faculty_staff/benefits/

Meeting Schedules

For KU Classified Senate

www.ku.edu/~clsenate/

On the menu, select 'Meeting Schedules'. Full Senate meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend.

Visit the Academic Computer Center www.ku.edu/acs/ and check out the new Summer 2003 classes and online registration.

KU News, Arts, & Events are available at www.ku.edu/news/.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE KU CLASSIFIED SENATE WILL BE ON DECEMBER 10TH AT 10:30 A.M. IN THE WALNUT ROOM OF THE KANSAS UNION.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CLASSIFIED SENATE

33 Strong Hall
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