

The University of Kansas Classified Senate Newsletter

August 2004

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CLASSIFIED SENATE

The Classified Senate is looking forward to an active and busy year working on behalf of all classified staff. We recently held a retreat for all senators to discuss the direction of and projects for Senate. Our first priority naturally will be to continue to work for the passage of the University Support Staff proposal. This proposal is in the hands of the Board of Regents at the present time; we hope to see it get approved there and passed on to the Legislature for action this legislative year.

There have been a number of changes for classified employees in the past year. The conversion of many dining employees to Kansas Union Corporation employees has been a form of privatization. The conversion has been voluntary but employees that want to promote will need to leave civil service and current retirement and health care benefits to do so.

The University is currently working on guidelines for dealing with the wages increases recently approved by the Governor. These increases will be based on criteria to be determined by HREO and University Administration. Recommendations for the increases will come from department deans and directors. The unfortunate part about these raises is that they will not be based exclusively on merit nor will they be across the board for all classified employees. While we are happy for those employees that will see a pay increase, we wish it could have been an across the board increase for all classified employees. The departments will need to come up with the money from their budgets.

The fact is that both of these changes concern situations that those against the alternative proposal said would happen if the proposal went into effect. We are still under civil service and have seen privatization and selective increases come to pass in the last year. There is something to be said for having a say in what happens to us when it comes to our jobs. As always, our meetings, held on the second Wednesday of every month in the Kansas Union are open and we welcome your participation. Please let us know how we can serve you.

Kathy Jansen

"IN-GRADE" PAY INCREASES

We are working on developing the KU guidelines for the new "in-grade" pay increase authorized by the Governor. We worked with a committee of representatives from the Classified Senate. We expect some further guidelines from the State of Kansas but hope to be implementing the program soon.

The program allows for staff to move from one step on the salary grade to another step, based on certain types of qualifying criteria. For example, an employee might be recommended for such an increase if he/she has assumed more complex job responsibilities that are not sufficient to warrant a reclassification but have changed the level of the job. The impact has to be budget neutral. The increases have to be approved by the State.

Our internal process will be for recommendations & justifications to be made through budgetary channels to HR/EO for approval. Then we'd have to obtain State approval.

The program is not designed to be comprehensive but is viewed as exceptional.

Ola Faucher

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

It is hard to know just what to tell you. The winds of change are blowing fitfully from several directions, and as we lay plans for the '05 legislative session, it is hard to plot a course to sail. There are risks and opportunities in several directions and much is going on that will impact classified employees one way or another.

One of those possibilities for change is KU's proposal for a civil service alternative, the University Service Staff. It has been in the hands of the Board of Regents since January but as yet there is no word about where it stands. Members of the Classified Senate who were involved with creating the proposal have offered their assistance to the Regents as they study the concept, but we have not been taken up on that offer. This situation leaves a great many uncertainties about how best to use our time and effort to press the legislature for improvements to the conditions of classified employment. If the Regents come out soon with support for the USS proposal, it will be a factor in the next legislative session. If the Regents come out too late with support, or if they want to make modifications, or broaden the concept to the other schools under their sway, or are against the idea entirely, that would likely delay any action for yet another year, or even kill it.

Another wind of change is blowing in from the on-going review and revision of the rules and regulations governing the existing classified system, now being conducted by the Department of Personnel Services. This has been in the works since last summer, and there are already a large number of proposed changes in wordings, definitions, interpretations, and guidelines. If I knew the extent of them all I could not cover it in one little newsletter article, but it is fair to say that the general

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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direction of the changes is toward less centralized control at the higher levels of government, and more autonomy on the part of individual state agencies. Clearly, when all is said and done the changes made in this process could very fundamentally alter the nature of being a classified employee of the State, and until we know more details it is hard to judge what we should push for or against.

One of the most recently arising breaths of change is the June Executive Order signed by Governor Sebelius, authorizing in-pay-grade step increases. It appears to be an effort by the Governor to resolve some of the problems created by a) her predecessor's lopping-off the bottom 3 steps of the pay matrix, and b) the lack any step movement for a couple of years now. The result of the 2 factors is that approximately 70% of the classified employees of Kansas are bunched up on step 4 (the lowest step) of their ranges. Put another way, 70% of the workforce earns the lowest possible amount of money for their job class.

The order itself is phrased in fairly broad terms and contains very few guidelines for how to carry it out. There is no new money authorized, so funding for any such raises granted must come from within a unit's existing budget. More detailed criteria for such step raises are being worked out by the various state agencies and one of the concerns, very likely a legitimate one, voiced by officials of K.A.P.E. is that this situation undermines the very fundamentals of a civil service employment system. Whether that proves true or it doesn't, this executive order from Governor Sebelius could also change the basic nature of classified employment.

Given all these conditions, when it comes to figuring out what classified employee issues are currently the most important, and what an appropriate stand on them should be, and how we are most likely to find success seeking support for them, things are much more uncertain than they have been for years.

By the time this newsletter is out, you will have all hopefully seen or been told about the KU Position Paper being drafted. Since we have very little indication as to exactly how the forces for change will affect us, this document is very much like last years'. It has most of the same points it always does, focusing mostly on money issues. This document will define what we think is important for the legislature to do for us, and it will be used in early October at the Kansas Council of Classified Senates to help create a common position paper for classified staff at all the Regents schools. Historically, that

paper is often very similar to the one submitted by KU, so we are trying hard to make it as good as possible, and your comments (contact any senator) are welcome.

The one most noticeable change is inclusion of support for the USS proposal. The decision was made to put it in the KU position paper, as it is the one employment issue where we actually have the guidance of a vote to go on. It may not get included in the final Kansas Council version, but because we all voted on it and it passed it would be contradictory to leave it out of the KU position paper.

Hopefully, all those winds of change will blow us all to a good place. The Classified Senate is working to try and make that happen.

Dennis Constance

COMMUNITY ADULT LEARNING SERVICES

The Adult Learning Center located at 2017 Louisiana offers learning support to the community at no cost. Both day and evening classes are available. Information about classes and program eligibility appears below, or you may call (785) 832-5960, Ext. 288.

CENTER HOURS:

Monday through Friday – 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and
Monday through Thursday – 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

In addition to the main location, day classes are also available at the East Heights Early Childhood Family Center at 1430 Haskell Ave. At East Heights, day care support is available for eligible students.

Class Offerings include:

- **Adult Basic Education**
- A study program that provides review support to improve reading, writing and math skills. Individuals with high school diplomas could be eligible for this program if their skill level in either math or reading does not test out at an 8th grade level or higher.
- **GED Preparation** - A study program that provides review in preparation for the GED Test Battery. The cost to take the GED test is \$65 and KU will pay for the cost of the exam. Contact Lynn George in Human Resources/Equal Opportunity at 864-7415 for payment information.
- **Workforce Essential Skills** – This course offers instruction in all aspects of obtaining and retaining employment. It is necessary to be enrolled in the Adult Learning Center to participate in this class.
- **English as a Second Language** – Classes are offered to those wanting to improve their communication skills in the English language.

COMING ATTRACTION

**OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR
HEALTH BENEFITS WILL BE
OCTOBER 1 - 31.**

Don't forget to mark this on your calendar.

Classes offered through the Adult Learning Center use a variety of media including: computer technology, video, small group instruction and GED preparation classes.

KU staff interested in participating in this study program may be eligible for release time from their jobs. For more information, contact Human Resources/Equal Opportunity at 864-7415.

If you are interested in enrolling in any of the classes listed above or want more information on GED testing call 785-832-5960 Ext. 288 or stop by 2017 Louisiana (the Lawrence High School Annex Bldg.). Look for the Adult Learning Center sign at the south door.

Need help?

Check out **LIFELINE**, a program that is very helpful for anyone who needs financial management counseling or assistance in finding an attorney or is depressed, stressed out or fighting substance abuse.

LIFELINE – A Good Place to Start
1-800-284-7575
A HealthQuest Program

TUITION ASSISTANCE

SPRING DEADLINE

5:00 P.M., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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 needs to have also 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 open 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.

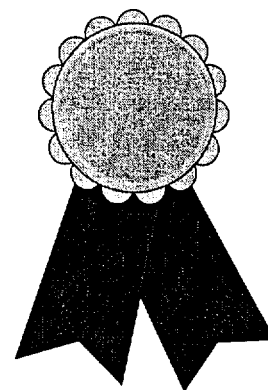
The Tuition Assistance application form is available on the Human Resources web page www.ku.edu/~kuhr under the Tuition Assistance link. For more information, contact Lynn George, at 864-7415.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to **Patricia Flory**, administrative specialist at KU Continuing Education, who was named Classified Employee of the Month in May 2004.

Lisa Hall, administrative specialist at African and African American Studies, was the Classified Employee of the Month in June 2004.

Ed Atchison, Research Technologist of Chemical & Petroleum Engineering, who was the Classified Employee of the Month in July 2004.



Congratulations to all of you for the recognition of your hard work and for your representation of Classified Employees at KU!

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The Classified Senate bids farewell to Eleanor Kent, long-time senate member and secretary, who is leaving after 10 years of dedicated service to the University.



She will be remembered for her willingness to serve, great secretarial skills, and her wonderful southern accent.

Eleanor is moving to Indiana with her husband, where he is beginning his teaching career.

Good Luck, Eleanor!

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This newsletter created and designed by Margretta de Vries, Kathy Stiers, Bette Luther, Nancy Brune, Ruth Hatfield, Andy Pritchard, Debby Reed, Kristin Tate, Allen Eastland, Pauline Sanders, and Sharon Lee Green. The Classified Senate Communications Committee meets once per month. If you have suggestions for articles, please call Sharon Lee Green (864-5888/5887) or email us at clsanat@ku.edu.

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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 Fall 2004 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 SEPTEMBER 8TH AT 10:00 A.M. IN THE PINE ROOM OF THE KANSAS UNION.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CLASSIFIED SENATE

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