

# University Support Staff Committee

## Questions and Answers

The University Support Staff committee was appointed by Classified Senate to write a proposal for Classified Staff to convert to University Support Staff and update, rewrite, and improve the Classified Staff handbook to be applicable for University Support Staff.

The committee was not formed to convince anyone to vote yes or no to the transition to become support staff. We are here to make sure that if we vote yes we have in writing an agreement and a process to move forward under Kansas Statutes Annotated [76-715a](#)

After the last Town Hall Meeting, we received several comments, questions, and issues of concern. This is the committee's response to the concerns conveyed to committee members. The comments/questions are in red. Committee responses are in black.

**1. Classified staff will have the confidential opportunity to give feedback on their supervisor and job.**

Quoted from the Proposal, Item #7 under Performance Evaluation.

**Employees will be given the opportunity to comment on supervisor effectiveness, working conditions, etc. by use of a separate form included with the evaluation. The staff feedback form will be sent to all employees by the HR office during the annual evaluation period. It is the employee's option to complete and return the form to the HR office.**

Quoted from the Handbook Page 24, Item #5

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**2. Training on the evaluation process will be mandatory for all supervisors.**

Quoted from the Proposal Item 2 under Performance Evaluation.

**Everyone conducting evaluations of USS staff will receive training concerning the process and instructions for documentation of reasons (with comments) as to why an individual rating was selected. This would be especially valuable for "unsatisfactory" or "needs improvement" ratings.**

**3. Changes to the handbook**

Quoted from the Handbook Page 3 under B. Handbook #1

All policies and changes shall include the dates of their approval by the University Support Staff Senate and by the President, as well as the date on which they become effective; (This would apply to the final handbook.)

**4. Tuition Waiver Program**

Located in the Handbook, Page 25, Section VIII, Staff Development. Item A

**5. In the past Dr. Hammond has mentioned numerous times he wished he could do something for classified staff like give us health care dollars, bonus, etc. like he did the last 4 years for unclassified personnel.**

The goal is to assure that in the future, we receive the same as unclassified staff.

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- 6. There was quite a bit of inconsistency with answers at the town hall meeting. I was really confused when the subject of longevity came up. The personnel people said one thing and the committee members (one of the guys) said something different. Which is it? Does everyone get longevity or just the people who started before the magic date?**

According to the State of Kansas anyone hired on or after June 15, 2008 was not eligible for any longevity bonus.

Quoted from Page 4 of the Proposal under Longevity.

**For those eligible for Longevity Pay at the time of implementation of the proposal, the longevity pay amount shall be included as part of an employee's base pay. Employees not currently at the longevity bonus level, but hired before June 15, 2008, would be eligible to receive the bonus at the time of conversion with the amount to go into their base pay. (Example: \$40 per year times number of years of service as of June 8, 2014 --\$40 per year x 6 years=\$240. The maximum allowable amount is \$1,000.)**

- 7. "I was told by a classified committee member, that some of the USS committee members attended a classified senate meeting and promised that once stuff was posted on the web, that if there were any changes, they would be added in red OR if something was going to be deleted, it would have a strikethrough it. Apparently that has not happened. How do you expect us to believe your committee when you guys can't keep your word about something that simple? Wow, I REALLY want to go back and re-read the first twenty two pages."**

The committee is continually updating and organizing the handbook. The handbook has not been posted with strikethroughs for a couple of reasons. The first reason--we are working on it being a document applicable to Fort Hays State University. The second reason--the committee decided to post it without all the strikethroughs we had to make because those strikethroughs would have made it exceedingly difficult for anyone (including the committee) to read and follow. We are also trying to organize it so that everything about leave time for instance, is all in one place, everything about work place would be in one place.

As an example: You would have something about leave time on page 5, then it would be repeated or added to on page 18. We are trying to avoid the type of confusion that would be created when you would be jumping from page to page.

We are currently proofreading it and checking web addresses to make sure they work when you "click" on them. We are also double-checking to make sure that everything concerning a particular subject is all in one place. That is one reason for the indexing of the document. With the indexing it will also be much easier to create a table of contents for the document.

There will be places that we cannot complete until or unless the vote carries to transfer to USS. For instance, the website for classified senate would have to be changed, because we would no longer have a "classified" senate. It would be USS senate.

We regret any confusion this may have caused.

However, please remember the document you will actually be voting for or against is the proposal, not the handbook.

- 8. It would be great if Dr. Hammond was at the next town hall meeting. We'd like to hear what he has to say and his thoughts on moving to USS.**

At this time, Dr. Hammond plans to attend the next meeting scheduled for November 13 at 2:30 pm in the Black & Gold Room.

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- 9. The main problem was not being able to hear, so if there are a couple of people passing microphones around, that should help. Also, Shannon has a very soft voice and she definitely needs to speak louder into the microphone.**

This will be corrected at the next Town Hall meeting.

- 10. I had a comment made to me yesterday that we should have explained how the vote will work, whether there will be absentee ballots, etc.**

Classified Senate is coordinating the voting process which will take place on November 19. Classified Senate will be making an announcement about the voting process, absentee ballots and other voting arrangements.

- 11. There were comments stating that the meeting was “unprofessional” and “unorganized.”**

We would like to take this opportunity to apologize to everyone who feels that we were unprofessional and disorganized. We learned very late that we would be in charge of the meeting, thus resulting in the “unorganized” effect. Many of us are not used to public speaking and felt uncomfortable in that particular situation. Please accept our apologies.

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New Questions and Answers as of 11-06-2013

- 12. "I am nearing retirement and have enough points to retire with full benefits with the civil service system. Will the same point system apply if we convert to University Support Staff?"**

This process does not affect retirement at all. Retirement benefits are provided by law.

- 13. "What happens to retirement benefits if for some reason a University Support Staff person is asked to leave university employment, receives an unsatisfactory rating, a reorganization eliminates this person's position, or whatever the case may be?"**

**Would that person be allowed to retire, if eligible for retirement, and still receive the benefits accumulated from the employer?**

**Or would the employee be forced to resign and lose those accrued benefits?"**

Again, this process does not affect retirement at all. Retirement benefits as well as other benefits are provided by law.

- 14. I've had at least 3 people ask me today if we are postponing the vote since Dr. Hammond will be retiring in June, that maybe we should see who becomes president before we take it to a vote. Is this something that everyone can vote on?**

There is no reason to postpone the vote. Dr. Hammond has indicated his support of the proposal and handbook. Any change in administration will not change the proposal or the handbook. The Classified Senate/USS Senate must approve any subsequent changes to the handbook.

- 15. I was also asked "what is the point of having Dr. Hammond at the next town hall meeting since he is retiring."**

Dr. Hammond is very well informed of the process, and, as the current president of Fort Hays State University, will be the person to approve the proposal and handbook.

- 16. In reading the handbook I wonder if the committee has considered what a department does with the merit increase for an under [performing] employee "A salary increase cannot be granted if an employee receives a rating of unsatisfactory or needs improvement." Are these funds available for the supervisor to distribute among the meeting expectations and exceeding expectations employees?**

Excess monies may be distributed to other staff within the department or division to employees who exceed expectations.

- 17. How will overtime be handled? Overtime pay, Comp-time, or no overtime at all???**

There will be no change. Overtime pay is set by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

- 18. Is the committee considering delaying the vote since Dr. Hammond and Dr. Gould have announced their resignations? Knowing who will be filling these positions could have an effect on how I will vote. Not knowing who will fill these positions could also affect how I will vote.**

No. There is no reason to postpone the vote. Dr. Hammond has indicated his support of the proposal and handbook. Any change in administration will not change the proposal or the handbook. The Classified Senate/USS Senate must approve any subsequent changes to the handbook.

**NOTE: The 2014 Holiday Schedule is posted online at [www.fhsu.edu/personnel/holidays/](http://www.fhsu.edu/personnel/holidays/).**