

CEPAC-Staff Senate Annual Report 2007-08

Office: Room B, Hannon Hall

Telephone: 994 6895

Web: www.montana.edustaffsenate

Introduction

The Classified Employees Personnel Advisory Committee (CEPAC) changed its name to Staff Senate, by majority vote of the membership, on August 22, 2007 but used the transitional name “CEPAC-Staff Senate” during the remainder of the fiscal year.

CEPAC Staff Senate's purpose is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the classified staff, the Administrative leadership including Human Resources/Personnel and Payroll (HR/P&P), Faculty Council (FC), Professional Council (PC), and ASMSU (students); to promote improvement of higher education in the State of Montana; to promote and provide for improved working conditions and professional welfare of the staff; to assist in the development of staff training programs and policies; and to carry out such other goals and activities deemed to be consistent with the overall purpose of CEPAC-Staff Senate and the Administration of MSU. CEPAC-Staff Senate has no union/bargaining unit affiliation.

CEPAC-Staff Senate's constituents are the classified employees of MSU. They comprise approximately 1100 staff in 187 titles from 5 categories of employment, working locally and remotely; from all union/bargaining unit affiliations, as well as non-union/bargaining unit covered positions; State and auxiliary funded staff. In existence since 1976, CEPAC-Staff Senate's activities are increasing with the growth of Shared Governance at MSU. In October, 2004, we assumed full partnership in Shared Governance (with Administration, FC, PC, ASMSU, and CEPAC-Staff Senate) and opened our office in Hannon Hall. We are an active member of, and take a leadership role within, the Montana University System Staff Associations (MUSSA).

CEPAC-Staff Senate's voting membership is comprised of eleven classified staff members, elected by their peers. Non-voting memberships are filled by classified employees who serve as Staff Senate representatives on University committees. These committee representatives are selected from MSU classified employees at large. Members' commitments of time are offered voluntarily, with supervisor's support. Operations and a half-time administrative associate continue to be discretionarily funded through the generous support of the Division of Administration and Finance.

FY08 Officers were: Mary Engel, Chair; Chris Bauer (July-November 2007) and Kevin Thane (November 2007-June 2008), Chair-elect.

Focus

CEPAC-Staff Senate strives to tie classified staff priorities into the mission, goals and strategy of MSU, the MUS, and the Board of Regents. We place great emphasis on communications with our constituents, partners, and governing bodies such that our research, presentation materials, and input are relevant within the context of others' objectives. As CEPAC-Staff Senate's role expands, we bring to the Shared Governance and MUSSA forums our belief in the benefits of consolidating experience and strengthening communication to build foundations, and fulfill objectives. We remain highly supportive of Shared Governance recognizing its effectiveness as a strongly collaborative medium for pursuing mutual goals and resolving problems.

2007-08 Overview

Staff recruitment and retention, uncompetitive salaries, and housing continued to dominate CEPAC-Staff Senate's activity this year. We conducted further research and reported regularly to the MSU Administration, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE), and the Board of Regents. Our work, and presentations in conjunction with our MUS Staff Association (MUSSA) colleagues, was instrumental in the formation of the OCHE Recruitment and Retention Task Force, and the CEPAC-Staff Senate Administrative Associate represented the MUS classified staff in Task Force deliberations. Various Board of Regents initiatives have resulted, and CEPAC-Staff Senate is collaborating locally and, with MUSSA at the System level, in support of them. We are greatly encouraged by the significance of the activity to date.

This year, two CEPAC-Staff Senate-conceived initiatives (also supported by the Board of Regents) came to fruition thanks to resources provided by Administration & Finance: information-sharing regarding flexible pay option procedures, and marketing the value of the benefits available to university employees. Other recommendations originating from CEPAC-Staff Senate, such as marketing MSU as an employer of choice, will progress further in early 2008-09, beginning in August with a presentation to the President's Executive Council.

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2007-08 saw updates to our bi-annual *Supplementing Staff Salaries* research, as well as the *360 Review* of CEPAC-Staff Senate's performance. The former indicates the continued impact of low salaries, and supplies valuable supporting data for our on-going research. The latter confirmed staff opinion that our work is on track, and supported by our constituents. CEPAC-Staff Senate continues to place maximum emphasis on contact with the staff, but the *360 Review* indicates more could be done in this area. As a result, we introduced remote staff member participation at monthly meetings (via telephone); hard copy mailing of essential information to personnel identified as using electronic media irregularly; and reminders and reports of open meetings.

Our work with the Shared Governance partners, and with MUSSA, has again been highly productive and CEPAC-Staff Senate sees these working relationships as broadening and strengthening. The MUSSA / OCHE collaborative decision to suspend work on the *Pooled Resources* project and redirect our energy into improving financial and human resource levels, was astute and demonstrated a depth of cooperation and flexibility previously untested. New this year is the emphasis we have placed on community liaison and find this an exciting and beneficial extension of our other collegial experiences.

2007-08's challenges for CEPAC-Staff Senate resulted from source problems affecting the University generally: workloads, and budget. For instance, staff and supervisor appreciation for Shared Governance is rising, but job pressures make it hard to participate. The *Pooled Resources* project was officially placed on hold in May, due to lack of manpower. Outreach proved complicated to arrange, not through want of interest, but because staff couldn't spare the time to meet.

In summing up, despite some logistical setbacks, CEPAC-Staff Senate has completed another fulfilling and worthwhile year. We are energized by our interactions with the staff, and our colleagues throughout the MUS, and look forward further achievements next year. Our focus will likely remain upon recruitment, retention, and compensation, with perhaps sustainability and other topics coming on board. *Pooled Resources* is still very well supported across the MUS, and much optimism exists for re-visiting it at sometime in the future.

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Voting Members

Mary Engel	Secretarial/Clerical	Chair
Kevin Thane	Classified Professional	Chair-elect
Chris Bauer	Secretarial/Clerical	To Nov 2007
Steven Beasley	Skilled Crafts	
Steven Burke	Classified Professional	
Rose Cain	Service maintenance	
Diane Helgeson	Technical Paraprofessional	
Gale Kinzie	Service Maintenance	
Michelle Larsen	Secretarial/Clerical	
Kristine Mashaw	Technical/Paraprofessional	
Robert Monnin	Skilled Crafts	
Jeannette Radcliffe	Secretarial/Clerical	From Nov 2007

Employees

Sara France, Administrative Associate

Committee Representatives

Becky Binco	Building Naming		Kevin Thane	Personnel Board (union exempt)
Sheron McIlhattan	Debt Planning & Management		Kathy Sobrepena	Recreational Sports Advisory Board
Sharon Matney	DFSCA Review Panel		Mary Engel	Shared Governance Steering
Diane Heck	Employee Recognition Selection		Sara France	Shared Governance Steering
Jen Joyce	Facilities Services Advisory		Kevin Thane	Shared Governance Steering
Judy Van Andel	International Programs		Beth Littlefield	Provost's Classified Luncheon
Jen Friar	Marketing Advisory Council		Sara France	Provost's Classified Luncheon
Ron Brekke	MSU Benefits Committee (union)	& IUBC	Cherie Eck	Strategic Planning and Budget
Sherry Todd	MSU Benefits Committee (union exempt)		Terry Dysart	To Improve Productivity TIP
Carol Shannon	MSU Benefits Committee		Mandy Hansen	UFPB alternate rep
Irene Decker	Parking Appeals		Sheron McIlhattan	UFPB
Carol Shannon	Parking Appeals		Sara France	UPBAC
Joe Carnes	Personnel Board (union)		Kevin Thane	UPBAC Streamline subcommittee

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Goals 2007-08:

GOAL AS DEFINED IN FALL, 2007	STATUS AS AT JUNE 30, 2008
<p>1. To act upon the outcomes of CEPAC-Staff Senate's research and data collection to broaden the awareness and involvement of its constituents and colleagues in CEPAC-Staff Senate activities and initiatives</p>	<p>Please also see information about general communications below.</p> <p>CEPAC-Staff Senate's 360 Performance Review http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/2007-360.pdf (published 10/5/08) concluded: effective use of 2005 recommendations; performance ratings up; improved staff awareness of CEPAC-Staff Senate's work, but attention still needed in this area; increased interest and support for shared governance but heavy workloads likely make participation difficult. Adequate or above overall ratings rose from 35% (2005) to 60%.</p> <p>[2007-08 aims] and status report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) [Expand participation in shared governance] adjusted the timing and advertising of committee rep recruitment to better reach all constituents; promoted shared governance via outreach; led special events such as the <i>Supporting Student Success</i> campaign; now leading efforts to formalize meetings of the Shared Governance partners (ii) [Better convey information on lesser-known topics] speakers on special topics at monthly meetings; announcement of the highlights of each meeting one week prior to the next; year-end newsletter; regular reporting by committee reps; 11 departmental outreach meetings reaching about 150 people (iii) [Continue to ensure appropriate focus of CEPAC-Staff Senate activity] incorporation of an off campus staff member, via telephone, and regularly participating departmental representatives at CEPAC-Staff Senate meetings; input at monthly meetings and via usual communications methods (email, surveys, outreach); networking at other venues (eg Provost-sponsored Classified Luncheons; OSP Round Table; Board of Regents meetings); input solicited via outreach (iv) [Enhance the MUSSA/Board of Regents (BoR) interactive experience] leading MUSSA in: combining MUSSA annual retreat with September BoR meeting attendance; expanding conference calling to include other participants (this year: OCHE); making a written submission when MUSSA is not on BoR agenda; establishing active work sessions prior to meeting the BoR (this year: produced a single handout representing MUSSA's collaborative view); attending presentations etc on the BoR agenda in addition to time set aside for MUSSA. <p>2007 Update - MSU Within the Community research http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/msu-community-2007.pdf (published 1/7/08) concludes that MSU's status is essentially unchanged from one year previously. May-June 2008 research (not published) update suggests local economic adjustments are occurring but Staff Senate does not consider alterations to its recommendations to be appropriate</p> <p>[2007-08 aims] and status report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) [Support MUS efforts to progress OCHE Recruitment and Retention Task Force efforts] via campus committee representation; participation with Shared Governance partners; at Board of Regents meetings, and in communications with the Commissioner's Office (ii) [Introduction of recruitment concepts such as better knowing MSU's recruitment "audience?";

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	<p>and hiring candidates with potential to grow (along with appropriate training opportunities)] preliminary efforts have been made through delivery of this research and its recommendations to MSU administrators; presentation to PEC scheduled for August 2008</p> <p>(iii) [Explore workforce development and expanding workforce numbers locally] preliminary efforts have been made through delivery of this research and its recommendations to MSU administrators but no strategy or action is currently planned.</p> <p>Supplementing Staff Salaries 2008 survey (published 3/12/08) concluded: salaries continue to challenge MSU's ability to recruit and retain capable staff http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/supplementing2008.pdf Status report: throughout the year, CEPAC-Staff Senate attended President's Cabinet meetings, and collaborated and liaised with OCHE, the Board of Regents, MUS administrators, MUSSA and our Shared Governance partners in a sustained problem solving effort. We are grateful for the System's inclusion of all constituent groups in the process of addressing the various issues, and greatly encourage by its timely action and efforts to improve student recruitment and retention, and employer competitiveness currently under way.</p>
<p>2. To enhance CEPAC-Staff Senate's recruitment and retention achievements in FY07 to continue identifying and implementing solutions</p>	<p>7/11-12/07 MUSSA annual retreat focusing on <i>Pooled Resources</i> inventory collection</p> <p>March – September 07 CEPAC-Staff Senate's Administrative Associate serves as the classified staff member on the OCHE Recruitment and Retention Task Force</p> <p>9/19-21/07 Board of Regents meeting. Regents introduced to Task Force report. Staff presentation http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/bor9-19-07.html</p> <p>CEPAC-Staff Senate undertook a complete "one year-on" study, updating the original <i>MSU Within the Community</i> report, researched in the fall of 2006, with its 2007 Update:</p> <p>October 07 using the same sources and criteria as previously, data were gathered as close to exactly one year on (from the original research). Recruitment ads, rents, population and employment data in MUS campus cities/counties were re-examined, and tables, graphs and textual comment re-crafted.</p> <p>10/25/07 CEPAC-Staff Senate delegates attended the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce Business Expo, networking and gathering information similar to that retrieved in the 11/2/06 telephone consultation with the Chamber. Recruitment and retention issues (lack of available personnel; catering to employee preferences; marketing vacancies, etc) common among local employers</p> <p>10/29/07 meeting with Bozeman Job Service re current local business and employment markets, and MSU's place within it</p> <p>10/30/07 CEPAC-Staff Senate among participants at President's MSU/community forum: common recruitment and retention issues raised and discussed</p> <p>11/15/07 preliminary findings reported to Board of Regents http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/bor11-15-07.html Regents, Commissioner's Office, campuses, UPBAC, CEPAC-Staff Senate, and Shared Governance partners (administrators, faculty, professionals, and students) now pursuing budgetary recommendations and considering other initiatives. Meanwhile, MUSSA discusses <i>Pooled Resources</i> dilemma with the Board</p> <p>12/19/07 President Gamble attends CEPAC-Staff Senate meeting; commends research and efforts in general; speaks with enthusiasm of the OCHE Recruitment and Retention Task Force report's recognition of campus's individual needs; discussed other associated factors and CEPAC-Staff Senate's related activity</p>

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	<p>January 2008 <i>Supplementing Staff Salaries</i> survey conducted</p> <p>1/7/08 2007 Update - MSU <i>Within the Community</i> research report published http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/msu-community-2007.pdf</p> <p>1/18/08 conference call with Commissioner's Office regarding <i>Pooled Resources</i></p> <p>2/21/08 submission of <i>Pooled Resources</i> status report http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/pr2-21-08.pdf</p> <p>3/5/08 CEPAC-Staff Senate collaborates with MUSSA in a written submission to the Board of Regents (MUSSA agenda time postponed until May) http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/bor3-5-08.pdf</p> <p>3/12/08 <i>Supplementing Staff Salaries 2008</i> report published: salaries continue to challenge MSU's ability to recruit and retain capable staff http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/supplementing2008.pdf</p> <p>March-May 2008 periodic conference calling and electronic communications with MUSSA and OCHE</p> <p>5/29-30/08 Board of Regents meeting http://www.montana.edu/staffsenate/bor5-29-08.html. Budgeting processes continue. <i>Pooled Resources</i> development postponed – much learned, and optimism for future plans expressed</p> <p>6/11/08 President Gamble invited CEPAC-Staff Senate to present at President's Executive Council on recruitment initiatives related to MSU participation in open houses and job fairs.</p>
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Some Key Issues Addressed in 2007-08:

Issue	Summary of Action
Benefits	<p>It was discovered this year that there should be three classified representatives on the MSU Benefits Committee, and the rep has been duly appointed. Reps from all committees have set agenda time at CEPAC-Staff Senate meetings, and/or regularly report back via email.</p> <p>A CEPAC-Staff Senate conceived recruitment tool, the Benefits Calculator, is now on-line (http://www.montana.edu/wwwpn/BenefitsCalculator.htm)</p>
Communications	<p>The meaningful exchange of information is an on-going focus for CEPAC-Staff Senate, and we strive to maintain strong communications in all we do.</p> <p>In August, we changed our name from the Classified Employees Personnel Advisory Committee (CEPAC) to Staff Senate in an effort to more simply convey our identity and purpose. We used the transitional “CEPAC-Staff Senate” title during this year only. Other communications efforts have included: electronic announcements of our monthly activity; regular committee reports; publishing notes from our weekly meetings with faculty, professionals and students; promoting shared governance; introducing the concept of podcasting the Provost-sponsored classified luncheon presentations; incorporating off campus staff representation at our monthly meetings; regular email and conferencing with our sister organizations across the MUS (MUSSA) as well as meeting periodically in person; presentations to the Board of Regents; regular interactions with President Gamble (at CEPAC-Staff Senate, at Board of Regents, and at President’s Cabinet meetings); hosting guest speaking on specialist topics at our monthly meetings; and continuing to interact with staff through email, flyers, surveys, and outreach.</p> <p>New in FY08 was the week-long <i>Supporting Student Success</i> campaign, coinciding with residence hall events, MSU Friday, and Parents Weekend. CEPAC-Staff Senate representatives walked over campus looking for participants; 226 “on the spot” prizes given to students, professionals, faculty, and staff displaying, buttons, posters, and other fare; 11 grand prize winners were drawn from these 226. Other, smaller campaigns (without prizes) were conducted on other MSU Fridays.</p> <p>CEPAC-Staff Senate has a strong voice on campus, and with the University System. MSU staff members are appointed to various committees (28 reps/committees in FY08) and classified input is solicited and valued at every level.</p>
Community liaison	<p>CEPAC-Staff Senate stresses the importance of community liaison within its work. This year, we attended the Gallatin Valley Speaker Series; the Bozeman Chamber Business Expo; President Gamble’s town forum; and met with the Bozeman area Job Service staff. These interactions are highly informative and very beneficial to our research and in building community relationships.</p>
Employee recognition / mentoring	<p>Please see “Communications” third paragraph above regarding the <i>Supporting Student Success</i> campaign. Also, various recommendations from the FY07 <i>Employee Experience</i> survey and interactive luncheon have been incorporated in further research recommendations which CEPAC-Staff Senate and aims to pursue them next year.</p>
Housing	<p>Housing is a key factor within recruitment and retention, and CEPAC-Staff Senate continues to gather appropriate data. We are also aware of various local initiatives for work force housing and keeping in touch any appropriate long range planning at MSU.</p>
Parking & transportation	<p>We are actively contributing input on issues of parking fees, Streamline, and the local transportation-based carbon footprint</p>
Payroll frequency and other related issues	<p>We continue to discuss payroll frequency and direct deposit with staff and administrators. The Business Procedures Review process on campus is impacting these issues, and new procedures are in process</p>

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Professional development and training	Professional development and training is of great importance to recruitment and retention, and CEPAC-Staff Senate is optimistic that the <i>Pooled Resources</i> on-line catalogue of available offerings will be pursued in the future. Currently, however, budget and staff workload circumstances (the “source problems”) are such that we and our MUSSA colleagues have suspended work on <i>Pooled Resources</i> for the time-being. Meanwhile, we aim to help progress initiatives that might sooner relieve these source problems and ultimately provide the human and financial resources to support concepts like this.
Recruitment and retention	Please see Goal #2, above.
Salary	In addition to Goal #2 above, CEPAC-Staff Senate representatives are working with MUSSA colleagues, and through all the anticipated avenues (such as UPBAC, PEC and the NWCCU accreditation self study) to help make MSU a more competitive employer and to address local living costs.
Shared governance status	In December 2007, the CEPAC-Staff Senate By Laws removed from Personnel Procedure and placed under our own jurisdiction – another demonstration of classified staff standing in the shared governance of our institution. In May 2008, CEPAC-Staff Senate initiated work, with our shared governance partners, to formalize current practices into protocol on campus (work in progress).

CEPAC-Staff Senate’s Participation in Shared Governance, 2007-08:

CEPAC-Staff Senate has experienced its regular shared governance meetings as an effective and collaborative medium for strong communication, considering issues of mutual interest, problem-solving, and progressing common goals. A venue for points of discussion raised by, and examined from the perspective of, each participant group with input occasionally being sought on matters unique to one member organization. In this context, CEPAC-Staff Senate has actively:

- Contributed to weekly meetings with Shared Governance partners (Faculty Senate, Professional Council, ASMSU)
- Networked at Board of Regents meetings
- Promoted the advantages of Shared Governance across the MUS
- Participated in President’s Cabinet meetings
- Provided input to the Recruitment and Retention Task Force
- Pursued Recruitment and Retention Task Force recommendations
- Interacted with constituent groups and topical experts in providing input on shared governance deliberations
- Begun building a focus on sustainability
- Continued to communicate on issues of parking and transit
- Joined in formulating MSU’s NWCCU accreditation self study
- Facilitated and coordinated classified representation on all relevant campus committees, task forces, and boards
- Lead current efforts to formalize partner organizations into Shared Governance status

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CEPAC-Staff Senate’s 2007-08 Role Within the MUS Staff Associations (MUSSA)

MUSSA comprises the Staff Senates from UM-Missoula, MSU-Billings, UM-Helena, UM-Western, and at MSU; staff representatives from MSU-Northern also actively participate although there is no formal Senate there. Montana Tech, and the College of Technology in Great Falls have no participating staff organization, but representatives from those campuses are in touch with MUSSA and included in its communications.

CEPAC-Staff Senate leads and coordinates MUSSA activity. MUSSA’s work and interactions are extremely collaborative, and its output very productive. MUSSA meets regularly with the Board of Regents, on a schedule similar to its faculty counterparts. It communicates amongst its member organizations by email, conference call, and in-person meetings, and is usually in contact at least once a month. MUSSA members participate in CEPAC-Staff Senate’s 360 performance review, and improving MUSSA interactions and working relationship form a critical part of CEPAC-Staff Senate’s goals and objectives. Acting upon outcomes of its latest 360 review, CEPAC-Staff Senate introduced working sessions to MUSSA’s gatherings at Regents’ meetings (this year producing written presentation materials). As a result of the November and May sessions, MUSSA has enhanced its collaboration and enriched its professional relations.

This year, it has been necessary for MUSSA to make some critical decisions and change direction as a result of financial and human resource limitations. The suspension of the *Pooled Resources* project is a demonstration of the depth of MUSSA’s flexibility, cooperation, and positive progression. We look forward to revisiting *Pooled Resources* once our redirected efforts in support of MUS initiatives have helped to sufficiently improve financial and human resource levels.

Summary of CEPAC-Staff Senate Communications and Contact:

We place great emphasis on communications with our constituents, partners, and governing bodies such that our research, presentation materials, and input are relevant within the context of others’ objectives. The chart below indicates the parties with whom CEPAC-Staff Senate communicated in relation to each issue (*= *contact made directly, or at Shared Governance partnership meetings*)

Issue	Classified Staff	Administration	Faculty Senate*	Professional Council*	ASMSU*	HR/ Payroll	Technical and other experts	Commissioner of Higher Education / Commissioner’s Office	Board of Regents	MUS Staff Associations (MUSSA)
Classified recruitment and retention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employment and housing markets in Gallatin County	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Communications	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Classified professional development and training	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CEPAC-Staff Senate activity in the context of institutional and system goals and objectives	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
CEPAC-Staff Senate’s shared governance activity	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Outreach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CEPAC-Staff Senate’s general activity	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Salary and benefits	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parking, transportation & sustainability	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employee recognition / mentoring	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Community liaison	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
CEPAC-Staff Senate’s role within MUSSA	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X