

**Employee Advisory Committee
Division of Facilities
February 28, 2006**

Members Attending

Silvia Cortez	Bob Harvey	Lisa McVey
Roger Padon	Craig Peterson	Sandra Roney
Vicki Schlieper	Cleo Tucker	Lawrence Vega

Members Absent

Gina Braaton	Charlotte Jones	Steve Nelson
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Guests

Gail Ridgeway	Tim Vinton
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Ex-officio Members

Charles A. (Chuck) Sippial, Sr.	Jane Schneider	Rosie Schoenfeld
Alissa Schroeder		

Bob Harvey, chair, began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes from the January meeting were approved.

Vice President=s Report B Chuck Sippial

Sidewalk along Agronomy Road - Chuck Sippial discussed with Chris Meyer the need to extend the sidewalk along Agronomy Road. Chris supports the safety concerns raised by the EAC. The sidewalk issue will be taken to a future SWAT meeting. Chuck would like to get this project on the funding list, even if there is no current funding. The estimated cost of the sidewalk is \$75,000.

Semi truck parked the wrong way on Agronomy Road B FP&C was contacted and their inspectors have been briefed on this safety issue.

Parking problems on Agronomy Road B Mary Miller is working closely with all parties moving into the General Services Complex (GSC). The traffic will be heavy once 600 people move into the GSC building. The work on F&B Road will not be completed by the time people move into the GSC, so flex work schedules may need to be considered.

Snack bar closures B Chuck Sippial is still gathering information on this issue. Some shops gave the extra money made through snack bars purchases to prior SECC campaign.

FM 2818/Luther and FM 2818/Holleman B The City of College Station has decided to fund traffic signals at these locations. The work will begin later this year.

Life Sciences Building (LSB) B Plans are moving forward on this building.

Emerging Technologies & Economic Development Facilities (ETED) B The final sighting should be known soon. If two buildings are built on Lot 54 and 55, a large number of parking spaces would be lost and people would be forced to park further from their offices.

Mitchell Building B This project is in the design phase.

Faculty Reinvestment - Dr. Gates has stated that parking will not drive the Faculty Reinvestment process. His goal is to increase the undergraduate and graduate enrollment numbers. This includes removing the current cap on freshman enrollment. To keep the student to faculty ratio low, this would mean hiring an additional 150 faculty members over the original 447 faculty members. With so many students graduating from high schools, universities will be forced to increase their enrollment numbers. The better educated our people in the community are, the more money they make and the more taxes they pay.

Planning Department B Why is the contractor doing the scope of work instead of the shop? Chuck Sippial reported there are over 128 different projects to be done and all work must be completed. Physical Plant uses contractors when they are not able to handle the job in-house. With over \$400M in projects (including the underground passageway and utilities), there is plenty of work for everyone over the next five years.

Transportation Task Force B The President formed the Transportation Task Force and the first meeting has been held. The group will be reviewing many issues including some people losing their 24 hour parking spaces in order to accommodate the maximum number of people per lot.

Custodial Issue - An employee that was harassing another employee was allowed to remain in the same crew while the person being harassed was moved to another crew. Jane Schneider and Ginger Melton are working on this issue.

Custodial Supplies - Crews are requesting a different type of glass cleaner that contains less petroleum. It takes too long time to get supplies and crews continue to run out of items.

AM5 - Several employees in AM5 received level notices. Chuck Sippial stated the employees were not where they were supposed to be and the actions/level notices are appropriate.

Physical Plant Job Titles - Physical Plant seems to be lagging behind other departments in updating job titles. Jane is working with Fred Navarette regarding the Accounting area titles. Human Resources is constantly looking at job titles.

Performance Evaluation - The evaluation should be placed in the employee's personnel folder. The Position Description should be reviewed and updated, if necessary, as part of the evaluation process. Employees can ask to see their personnel folder.

Reporting items without being reprimanded - Employees are asked to report concerns or problems to their foreman or supervisor. If their supervisor is part of the problem, then the problem or concern should be reported to the next level. All concerns should be addressed at the lowest level whenever possible. If that is not possible and all other options have been tried, Physical Plant employees can contact Dick Williams or Jane Schneider. If an employee is abusing state resources, this must be reported.

REC Concern - Recently a REC truck was seen with a ladder belonging to Physical Plant Area 3. The employee was not sure if REC purchased the ladder during a recent auction or picked it up at a job site. Employees should report any suspected theft to the University Police Department.

Tobacco issues - At Texas A&M, some students and workers are chewing tobacco and then spitting into water fountains, smoking inside shops and in vehicles and chewing on unlit cigars. Chuck Sippial stated the University does not have the resources to enforce the tobacco issues.

Time clocks - Currently most area maintenance shops and the radio room use time clocks. Other areas at Physical Plant do not. Supervisors should know where their employees are. It was reported that some employees leave at 11:30 and do not return until after 1:00. Non uniform employees seem to take longer lunch break. Chuck Sippial reported many exempt employees conduct business meetings during the lunch hour. Everyone has a responsibility to work eight hours per day.

Energy Conservation B The lights inside the campus garages must remain on at all times because of safety issues. If employees have energy conservation suggestions, please contact Jim Riley at Physical Plant. From September through December, TAMU saved \$3M by conserving energy. We must all continue to work together to conserve energy. The new buildings, being built as part of the Faculty Reinvestment, are constructed to be more energy efficient.

Corps of Cadet dorms - These dorms experienced some problems with lack of hot water during a recent cold spell, but the problem has been resolved. The south side will be getting an additional boiler to feed into this area. Our buildings and systems were not built to handle the 20-30 degree weather.

Wehner Building - Physical Plant is working with the staff in Wehner to correct the temperature problems in the building. Adjustments to the temperature have been made on weekends when training classes are held in Wehner.

\$99 Energy Fee – Texas A&M University is proposing an energy fee of \$99 that would be charged to every student.

Vehicles on the malls - Contractors are still allowed to park on the mall areas. Physical Plant employees are asked to park close to the building to unload their supplies and then move their vehicle to the back of the building or in a designated parking space.

Supplies consolidated - The process was implemented to provide better inventory control.

Charges for gas from Transportation Services - Transportation Services purchases their gas just like other suppliers. When they purchase fuel at a higher price, then that cost is passed along to the customer. Transportation Services used to partner with the College Station Independent School District and the City of College Station to get a better price, but Chuck Sippial was not sure if the joint effort still exists.

New Physical Plant vehicles - The new smaller vehicles purchased for Physical Plant are very small and poorly made. Concerns related to these vehicles should be passed along to Andy Green at Physical Plant. Transportation Services will handle the maintenance on these vehicles. The vehicles have been regulated to travel only 25 miles per hour. They are not designed for highway use, but can be used on campus. Agronomy Road is a university street. Committee members suggested Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) be contacted regarding some rules for operating these vehicles on campus. It was suggested these vehicles could be operated in the bike lanes if EH&S agrees.

Area 7 - A new maintenance crew has been formed to handle building reconditioning.

Be aware of your co-workers - A diabetic employee at Physical Plant recently had an episode and found himself in a strange area three hours later with a small cut. Please be aware of your fellow co-workers and their health conditions.

Benefits B Alissa Schroeder

The new SEBAC representative, Deborah Wright, Director of Budgets, with the Executive Vice President for Finance office, was introduced to the committee. Her email address is deb-wright@tamu.edu and she looks forward to hearing your concerns and suggestions.

The SEBAC met last Tuesday and the System is rebidding all plans except Life Insurance. The HMO=s and First Care are rebid every year. The System received 11 bids and will narrow the group to three companies that will be asked to make presentations at the next SEBAC meeting. Many companies bid each year, but only a few are able to handle our large group of employees and the special requests we make.

Jane Schneider requested coverage for dependent pregnancy be added on Blue Cross and Blue

Shield. SEBAC considered this last year, but the System decided against this coverage. Deborah Wright will take this concern forward.

Last year, the legislature provided a 6% increase in the state contribution. It is anticipated that employees should not see a substantial increase in out of pocket premiums.

There will be a series of financial seminars offered to all employees and a handout was provided. The first seminar will be held on March 10 at 10:00 a.m. and then again at 2:00 p.m. in 601 Rudder. The first topic will be "The Basic Understanding of Social Security." Future seminars will be held every three to four months and information will be provided to employees prior to each event.

Can TRS be moved to another group? Not as long as the employee remains at the university. TRS is one of the best retirement plans. Employees retiring with TRS benefits receive 25 times what they put into the program and these benefits are received until death. ORP is a higher risk retirement program. When the stock market was not stable in recent years, these employees were forced to delay their retirement. Additional retirement investments like the Texas Savers Plan are suggested. An employee can have as little as \$20 deducted directly from their paycheck into this plan.

Jane Schneider reported that eye providers and dentist are still using Social Security numbers. Hopefully SEBAC will require carriers to provide each employee with a personal identification number so that Social Security numbers are no longer used.

Old Business

The A+ Awards for Service Excellence nominations are due on March 10 at 5:00 p.m. The A+ Awards Ceremony will be held on April 25 at 9:00 in Rudder Theater. For this reason, the April EAC meeting will be held on April 18 instead of April 25.

PJ Jones has not been able to contact Rod Weis, but will have information at the next meeting.

New Business

EAC members received a Physical Plant Safety Crew list and upcoming Physical Plant training dates.

Landscape employees in the field are notified via radio when bad weather is approaching the area. This issue will be addressed once the new Safety Officer is hired.

Committee members were asked to determine how to handle the upcoming election so that all members do not get reelected in the same year. The topic will be discussed at the next meeting.

The EAC photo will be taken during the April meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m. The next EAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 28, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. in 218 Administration Building.