Activities & Issues 2004

Staff Council Activities & Issues 2004

Activities:

Monthly Staff Council meetings (open to all) Quarterly meetings with Human Resources Staff Council one day retreat (July) - included lunch meeting with President Liebowitz Staff Council Executive Board Met with Trustees (Oct.) Staff Council met with President Liebowitz to discuss Strategic Planning Process (Nov.) Staff Council met with some members of Faculty Council (Nov.) and Student Council (Nov.) to find areas of common concern/interest Staff Council met with the Dean of the Faculty, Susan Campbell to discuss childcare issues Annual Health Fair (January)

- Ice Cream Social and Survey (Aug.)

Staff Council Efforts (past year and ongoing):

CTO/SLR

The CTO/SLR subcommittee issued its recommendations, some of which were implemented and announced earlier this year (Middpoints article). Staff Council has questioned the rationale for needing to convert excess CTO to SLR in July. Response: the college does this to conform to accounting practices (reduce liabilities on the financial books). Also, the Treasurer and HR have explained that CTO is intended to allow staff adequate time off from work (for our own well-being) and is not intended to be "saved".

- Value of SLR when retire or leave – Staff Council has asked that this value be increased if possible. The administration feels the value is fair and feels that our generous pension plan helps balance health care costs paid by retirees.

Childcare availability and cost for employees

Some staff have raised concerns about childcare options. Staff Council inquired about our options with HR and the Administration. Middlebury has arrangements with area childcare centers to reserve slots for College employees (in exchange for a College subsidy to these centers). These centers are: College Street Center, Mary Johnson, Otter Creek, & Bristol Family Center. Employees inquiring about availability should identify themselves as college employees. Liability issues are too high to consider an on-campus center, so the college will continue to work with existing centers. Adequate number of slots? Some staff have indicated they couldn't get their children in daycare. Staff Council will continue to work with

Dean of Faculty Susan Campbell (who is the point person for faculty on this issue) to monitor the situation.

- Childcare rates reflect staff ability to pay? There are some need-based reduced rates available. Check with the centers or contact Human Resources.

Parental Leave

- Staff council has requested the same amount of leave (6 weeks) for staff as for faculty.

Change in overtime policy in Custodial Services and Facilities

To save money for the college, schedules were changed to reduce overtime hours. Staff Council worked with Human Resources and custodial and facilities managers to clarify confusion over the schedule changes and to make sure individual schedules continue to follow normal work week hours, (not working more than 5 days without overtime) and that individuals/teams have some say in how the workload is handled/scheduled. Staff council expressed concern over workloads of others on a team when staff have to take comp time off instead of overtime.

- Staff council expressed concern over reduced take home pay for staff who used to count on overtime to meet basic living costs.

TIAA/Cref investment options

On the Staff Council survey it was suggested that we have more investment options. Human Resources announced there would be new options (see Middpoints and letter from HR for details).

- Staff Council questioned the need for a waiting period for staff who aren't transitioning from a TIAA/Cref plan elsewhere. This is a financial cost that would have to be weighed against other benefits and will be studied.

Flex Time

- On the survey, some staff indicated flex-time was difficult to get approved. Staff Council reviewed the flex-time policy with HR. Core office hours are 9am – 3pm. Unfortunately, due to differences in office/department sizes & responsibilities, not all areas of the college can accommodate flex-time. If a staff member feels his/her flex time request wouldn't impact his/her area's ability to cover core office hours, yet has been denied flextime, the person can contact HR or a staff ombudsperson to review the situation. (In response, flex time policy was featured in a ripped from the handbook Middpoints article).

Educational Assistance Benefit for Employees (and their spouses/partners)

- Staff Council is seeking clarification on how Middlebury coursework can count towards a Middlebury degree and what the process would be.

Tuition reimbursement benefits

- Staff council has raised the problem of low-income staff not seeing any real benefit, since other schools reduce their aid package by the amount of aid given to staff by Middlebury. This results in the same amount of loans for the staff member, regardless of Middlebury's benefit. Higher paid staff who don't need loans end up seeing a reduction in tuition, while those on aid don't. This is a problem that needs to be addressed by financial aid offices here and at other colleges, since they all follow the same practice.

Task Force on the Status of Women

- Staff Council has requested that this task force be reinstated since it has been 10 years since it's first report.

360 Degree reviews

What are they and do staff really want this opportunity? Not only would it allow staff to give input on their supervisors, it would also mean giving/receiving input from peers.

- Would staff in small departments feel comfortable/secure evaluating their supervisors and peers? It appears that what's really desired is the opportunity for staff to identify supervisors who they feel aren't doing a good job or aren't doing their fair share of the work. Are some areas top-heavy (too many supervisors)? HR will take this under consideration as the College revises the evaluation process for supervisors.

Staff Council Elections

- Staff Council has used electronic voting for areas of the college with regular computer access, while continuing with paper ballots in areas without regular access. This has made the process more efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly.

Library Video/DVD checkout privileges for staff

- In response to a staff request, Staff Council requested that staff be given the same checkout privileges as faculty. The Library's new DVD browsing collection partially meets this request, since it provides popular films for checkout to staff and students. The main academic video collection is still restricted to in house

use for staff and students to protect the collection and keep it available to faculty for classroom needs.

Wage and Salary issues (ongoing)

- Staff Council has representation on the College Wage and Salary Committee and the Staff Resources Committee. The college has hired a consulting firm to examine our compensation plan and examine issues such as internal equity and the benchmark system.

Parking and Transportation (ongoing)

- Staff Council has representation on the Environmental Council, which has a subcommittee on the pedestrian campus issue. This issue will be taken up in the larger strategic planning process with input from Environmental Council's sub-committee.

Informational Meetings among Staff Council Districts

- Staff Council and HR are trying to schedule informational meetings among departments to explain benefits and provide information on various topics.

Staff Development issues

- The staff development committee has been working on this year's health fair and the new staff book clubs (see most recent Middpoints flyer). It is also actively looking for more opportunities for staff, such as computer clubs, lunchtime lectures, fun courses, employee swaps, etc.

College Safety Committee

- If this college-wide committee dissolves, staff council will seek to change its constitution to form its own subcommittee to help facilitate communication about staff concerns to Ed Sullivan's office and Public Safety.

Staff Council Members:

Executive Council Officers

President:	Patti McCaffrey District: Dining Services
Vice President:	Susan Levine District B: Summer & Off Campus Programs, College Advancement
Co-secretary:	vacant
Co-secretary:	Brenda Ellis Member-At-Large

Other Members

Mike Pixley	District: Facilities Management
Janet Lizotte	District: Custodial Services
Dan Frostman	District: Library & Information Services (LIS)
Cris Butler	District A: Museum, Admissions, Financial Aid, Dean of Faculty
Tammy Grant	District C: Student Affairs, Campus Safety, Service Learning
Vacant:	District D: President's Office, Provost, Commons, Athletics, Center for Int'l Affairs, Center for Educational Technology
Donna J. Paquette	District E: Offices of the Treasurer and Operations (purchasing, human resources, mailing services, reprographics), including the Bookstore, Golf Course, Pro Shop and Snow Bowl

Activities & Issues 2005

Staff Council Activities and Issues 2005

Regular Activities and Accomplishments:

Monthly Staff Council meetings (open to all)

Quarterly meetings with Human Resources

Skating Party for staff and faculty

Staff Council one day retreat (July) - included lunch meeting with President Liebowitz

Staff Council Executive Board Meeting with Trustees (Oct.)

Staff Council lunch meetings with members of Faculty Council and dinner meeting with SGA and Faculty Council

Annual Health Fair (October)

Ice Cream Social (Aug.)

Staff Council Constitution Changes (all proposed changes on the ballot passed)

Staff Council proposals. These have been submitted to the College Administration (the full proposals are included at the end of this document):

Administrative Review Proposal – requesting that the College institute a program in which it conducts regular periodic reviews (including staff input) of administrators to whom staff reports (result: HR is working with the Administration to implement some form of review).

Childcare Proposal – to form a College Ad Hoc Committee to study the availability, quality, and affordability of child care for Middlebury College employees in the surrounding area.(result: this issue will be taken up by the Benefits Advisory Board. Representatives of Staff and Faculty Councils also met with area consortium childcare providers to review the situation).

Computer Access Proposal – to improve computer access for staff (result: a sub-group of Administrative Council is working on this issue)

International Paper Tire Test Burn – Staff Council asked the Administration to investigate whether to take a stand to protect staff, faculty, and student health. Result: the Administration wrote an official letter to International Paper opposing the test burn.

Staff Council Committees (highlights)

Staff Development

Continued to sponsor book groups and is working on adding writing groups. Unveiled "The Bulletin Board" a website for staff to post messages about shared interests. Contact Dan Frostman for access instructions. http://seguecommunity.middlebury.edu/sites/staff_development

Wage and Salary

Worked with Human Resources and Mercer Consulting to gather input and help formulate Middlebury's new compensation plan.

HR6 (3 members of Staff Council and 3 members of Human Resources)

Improved how CTO is accrued for part-time staff (now based on years at the college, instead of hours). Other issues such as tuition reimbursement on hold while waiting for strategic planning task force reports. Also reviewed facilities CTO policy.

Election Committee

Conducted Staff Council, Staff Appeals, and constitutional changes elections, using electronic voting whenever feasible.

Events Committee

Sponsored the Staff Ice Cream Social and the Skating Party

Meeting highlights:

(For details, see minutes posted at
http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/scouncil/minutes/)

Jan. 12, 2005: guest speakers: Kristen Anderson (Budget Director) reviewed the operating budget and how salary pools are developed, and Susan Campbell, (Dean of Faculty) reviewed the day care situation.

Feb. 9, 2005: Highlights of the College biomass project were reviewed by MCSC's Environmental Council Representative (see 2/9/05 minutes – appendix for details).

March 9, 2005: Guest speaker Steve Trombulak (Environmental Studies faculty and chair of Environmental Council's sub-committee on Pedestrian Campus) reviewed the work of the committee – definition and issues identified. 2nd Guest Speaker: Karen Gutentag, (Asst. Dean of Student Affairs) gathered input on staff views concerning intellectual community at Midd.

April 13, 2005

A letter asking that the College implement performance evaluations of non-faculty administrative appointments was offered by a staff member and discussed. A committee was formed to draft a formal proposal to submit to the Administration. See minutes for details as well as final proposal (non-faculty was dropped).

May 11, 2005

No new business. Committee reports and old business.

June 8, 2005

Meeting spent electing new officers and assigning new members to committees.

July 18, 2005

Staff Council retreat and lunch meeting with the President (to help plan the year's activities)

August 10, 2005

Announced Staff Appointments to College Committees (see Minutes Appendix for full list). Reviewed final version of proposal from Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation of Administrative Appointments (for text, see Minutes – Appendix)

Sept. 14, 2005

Guest Speakers President Ron Liebowitz and Treasurer Bob Huth discussed the planning task forces, Monterey Institute, and the 3 proposals (administrative reviews, childcare, and computer access). Also discussed the Redistricting Poll to determine whether to merge the 2 facilities districts – results were to small to make a decision.

Oct. 12, 2005

Announced members of the Human Relations Committee. Discussed the Military Recruiting Conference held at VT Law School (re: allowing military recruiters on campus despite their discrimination policy against gays).

Nov. 9, 2005

Benefits Advisory Committee members announced. Discussed Presidents Open Mtg., Discussed a request that Staff Council take a stand on the International Paper Tire Test Burn issue. Continued to discuss childcare and computer access proposals.

Dec. 12, 2005

Staff Appeals new members announced. Continued discussion of the 3 proposals. Results of IP Tire Burn issue discussed (President's letter included in appendix).

Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluation of Administrative Appointments

Middlebury College Staff Council

Members: J. Toth, A. Holzapfel, S. Levine, P. McCaffrey and B. Ellis

Proposal:

Middlebury College Staff Council, on behalf of its members, respectfully proposes that the College institute a program in which it conducts regular periodic reviews of administrators to whom staff reports, and that these reviews include participation of employees in positions to express valid viewpoints on the performance of individual administrators. Staff Council recognizes that the College strives to improve the effectiveness of its employees so that it may achieve its goals in teaching, research, and service. Staff Council asserts, however, that without wider staff participation in formal review of the progress administrators have made in reaching unit objectives, furthering institutional goals, and conducting administrative responsibilities, the College cannot fully evaluate the strengths of the institution as a whole.

Staff Council further proposes that Human Resources, in its role as facilitator of staff development, should produce a periodic review process for the College, working with Staff Council to ensure that aspects of the process correspond with the need for staff members to feel free to offer candid feedback.

TALKING POINTS:

1. **What is a "periodic review"?**

For purposes of definition, we propose that the College distinguish "annual performance evaluations" from "periodic reviews of administrators". Annual performance evaluations are conducted in the context of awarding merit pay increases to an individual and thus deal with specific employee goals, objectives, and achievements. Periodic reviews are comprehensive assessments, not only of the individual's performance of administrative responsibilities, but of the progress of the unit's programs or services. They include

responses from the administrator being evaluated, from employees who report directly to the administrator, from employees who work in the unit the administrator manages, and from employees from other units who work closely with the administrator. Several instruments may be used to collect responses from these various constituencies.

2. **Who should be reviewed periodically?**

Because the College organizational chart is difficult to segment neatly, it is difficult to identify a level in the structure above which reside all candidates for review. To be sure, "senior staff" members are in this category, as are many deans, directors, and others with comparable responsibilities. In general, we focus on administrators because, as leaders in the College community, they play a key role in advancing College initiatives, promoting workplace innovation, and safeguarding quality services.

3. **What are the objectives of these reviews?**

The main objectives are to provide an opportunity for an administrator to improve his or her future performance and for the College to improve the effectiveness of its administration of College affairs. As with any objective, how it is achieved is as important as its bottom-line result. The significant part of the periodic review process in this respect is its level of participation: by soliciting responses from all employees in a unit, the College conveys to all employees the importance of professional growth, open communication, and transparency.

4. **How are these reviews to be carried out?**

We think Human Resources, which can rely on experience and the best practices of its field, can address this question more productively. Suffice it to say that many colleges and universities perform these types of reviews.

5. **What is meant by "periodic"?**

"Periodic" means every two to four years. Certainly, these reviews need not be done annually.

Proposal for the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to study the availability, quality, and affordability of child care for Middlebury College employees in the surrounding area.

During the 1999-2000 academic year, a joint effort of Staff Council and Faculty Council led to a comprehensive assessment of child care in the Middlebury area. We commend the Administration for conducting this survey and for the clear measurable outcome of the College Street Center.

At the present time, however, both Staff Council and Faculty Council have been made aware of several childcare concerns. These concerns involve availability, affordability, flexibility of hours, and quality of programs in existing child- care centers.

We propose that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed with representatives from faculty, staff and administration. We would like this committee to conduct an assessment of existing childcare options in Addison County and a survey of employee participation and satisfaction. We would like these assessments to include, but not be limited to the following:

a) Availability of child care for various age groups

b) Flexibility of day care hours for employees on various shifts

c) Affordability for employees in various economic levels

d) Availability and practicality of after school and summer programs in Addison County

e) Quality of available child care in Addison County

f) Quantity and quality of pre-school programs in Addison County

g) User satisfaction with existing programs

h) Level of participation and effectiveness of the Ceridian program for dependent care accounts now in use

After this assessment is completed, recommendations to positively address the committee's findings need to be documented and communicated to the College staff and faculty.

Submitted by:

MiddleburyCollegeStaff Council

MiddleburyCollegeFaculty Council

September 30, 2005

MEMO

Date: December 2, 2005

To: President Liebowitz

From: Staff Council (MCSC)

Re: Improved computer access for staff.

Staff Council (MCSC) supports efforts to identify areas of the college where improvements can be made in computer access and computer training for staff. Our goal is to see more staff able to access online information relevant to employees (Banner Web, benefits information, employee handbook, college events, etc.), as well as increase awareness with regard to college communications directed to staff. MCSC would like to see an increase in efforts to provide education for staff on the basic computer literacy skills needed to feel comfortable using public computers on campus. We believe that, in those areas where employees do not use computers as a regular part of their job, having

improved computer access and computer literacy skills will contribute to an enhanced feeling of inclusion and increased involvement of staff in the College community.

Improved computer access for Staff

Our first priority is to improve the availability and accessibility to public/networked computers on campus for staff. The increase in automated information such as the employee handbook, employee wage & salary information in Banner, CTO balances, College announcements, *Events at Middlebury*, etc. make much of this information seem inaccessible to staff who do not use a computer as a normal part of their job function. As a result of this inaccessibility, some staff report feeling marginalized.

Although we recognize an increase in public access computers, there are key areas of the campus that are unable to take advantage of these computers due to the location of the computers when compared to the areas where some employees perform their duties. Specifically, employees in Dining Services, Facilities Services, Golf Course, etc; are not in roles where quick and easy access to a public computer is either possible or comfortable. When a custodian spends the better part of their working day in a dormitory, a public access computer in the library is not truly accessible. Additionally, when reviewing the list of public access computers on the web, it is clear that many of these are located in academic facilities and used for regular classes (146). This results in a significant limitation of the true availability of the computers around a staff person's typical work schedule. (see attached scheduled usage of the computer labs on campus)

As with any computer access, supervisors and managers should work with staff to identify workplace priorities as well as the expectations and parameters for the use of a networked computer. Furthermore, as accessing information pertinent to ones employment is supported in the normal working day for most staff, we would expect the same, reasonable accessibility for staff when utilizing a public access computer. When possible, staff should be allowed time for computer usage to check information such as wage, CTO, benefit information, and all-staff communications, similar to what other staff who regularly use computers during work time are able to do.

We recognize that it is not feasible for every staff member to have his or her own computer. We believe that staff and supervisors working together could help identify additional locations for computer access, such as shared offices, break rooms and public

areas, which could handle additional public computers being placed in locations that focus on staff accessibility as the priority. At the very least, staff who supervise other staff should have their own networked computers *in their immediate work are*a so they can help share campus communications with their staff that don't have easy access, as well as quickly access college information they need to effectively do their jobs and provide employee relations support to their employees as necessary. (ie: find information in the employee handbook and Human Resources website)

I.(a) How Many Computers could we be talking about?

Of all of the publicly accessible computers, there are 146 of these computers that are located in classroom spaces and booked regularly for classes. Most of the computers not located in academic spaces seem to be more readily located for easy access for the students. For example, the computers are in the Libraries, Grille, etc. As mentioned before, this access does not necessarily equate to accessibility for staff working out of the Dining Halls, the Service Building, or the Golf Course, especially if considering one might need to wander around campus before finding a computer not already being used by a student.

If considering one truly accessible computer for every 10 employees who do not currently use a computer as part of their regular duties, in Facilities Services it is reasonable to anticipate needing as few as 18 in one a key area. (204 employees, minus 24 staff with computer access currently = 180)

Training for staff

We recognize there are concerns with staff supervision and time management when providing increased computer access to a group of employees who do not need computers to perform their roles at the College. However, we are more concerned that many staff are uncomfortable with computers and may not access public computers because they feel inadequate or recognize that it may take them longer than a peer to access the same information.

As our second priority, we feel that managerial support of regular, paid training opportunities for their staff will enable staff to understand where to find information on the computer quickly and efficiently. With increased security concerns and procedures, it is especially important that staff have training on how to login and logout of public computers to keep the computers secure and to keep confidential employee information private. Until employees have the training to reach a basic and sustained level of comfort, even the few computers now available for staff use will probably remain underutilized. We believe that with training support many staff can and will utilize public access computers to efficiently obtain information they need. If the college maintains adequate staffing levels, there should be enough time in the workday for these activities. When staff can easily access data on a public computer, supervisors may find that time is still managed and their employees feel more a part of the College community.

I. Improved Computer Access for MCSC Members

Finally, our third priority is to obtain improved computer access and skills for MCSC members.

Each year some Staff Council representatives work in areas that provide only limited shared access to computers. Staff Council would like all of our representatives to have convenient computer access on a daily basis in order to fully and efficiently participate in the work of Staff Council. Much of our work in between meetings is communicated via e-mail and often decisions are made within a short time period. We find that when some representatives are without ready computer access, communication is challenged and extra time must be spent to relay information amongst our members.

Without easy access to computers, it is difficult for our representatives to monitor, on a daily basis, email directed to all-staff coming from the President's Office and a wide variety of campus offices that regularly use email as the primary form of communication. We feel it is important for our representatives to have opportunity to keep current with campus-wide communication so they can be aware of issues and can help communicate these issues to staff in their districts.

We would like to see networked computer access easily available for our representatives, either through use of a computer *in their immediate work area*or through providing a wireless laptop loaned to the representative for the duration of their term. Additionally, should any elected representative to MCSC feel the need, we would value support from

supervisors in permitting our members to use paid time to attend any training sessions that will provide the needed instruction for them to be comfortable with a computer enabling them to be active participants in our communications.

In closing, MCSC feels that the end result of improving true accessibility to computers so any of our staff can easily and readily access information will contribute to a better informed staff who feel welcome to be and want to be involved in the College community. We greatly appreciate your consideration.