One of the primary functions of Staff Senate is communication. It is our job to communicate the questions and concerns of staff to the administration and to communicate answers, information and decisions from the administration back to staff.

This is accomplished through several means, not the least of which is direct contact with your senator. Get to know the senator who represents your department or division. If you don’t know who that is, find out. The list of senators is available online at http://www.clemson.edu/faculty-staff/staff-senate/contact-us.html. Talk to that person. Share your concerns with them, so that they may bring those forward to the senate and myself. Staff Senate is here to give you a voice. Use it.

Another way we communicate with staff is through this newsletter, which is issued monthly. Our communication committee works hard each month to put this newsletter together for you. I hope you read it and find it helpful.

I have also started a blog, which will be a way for me to communicate my thoughts and keep you updated on things the senate is doing. It’s brand new, so there’s not much there now, but I encourage you to check it out at http://blogs.clemson.edu/staffsenate. So far, I have written an introductory post about myself and some thoughts on President Barker’s retirement. My goal is to post regularly, so check back for more posts in the coming weeks. Please read it and feel free to post comments. I hope the blog will become a way for me to communicate with you, as well as a way for you to communicate with me.

Of course, another way to communicate with me is to reach out to me directly at anixon@clemson.edu or 656-0382. I am in this role to represent all Clemson staff members, so please do not hesitate to get in touch. I want to hear from you.

Angela Nixon
New Staff Senator Spotlight:

Extension Senator

The Staff Senator Spotlight introduces new staff senators with a brief Q&A each month. In this month's issue, meet Meredith Driver

Meredith Driver, Administrative Assistant for Cooperative Extension

What is your role for Clemson Extension?
I handle the financials, state vehicle fleet, Advocacy, Internships, along with assisting Dr. Meadows and Dr. Callahan in their day-to-day needs.

How long have you been with Clemson University Extension? Since September 2012

What is it like working for Extension? I learn something new every day working with Extension. Being in the director's office allows me to interact with agents and staff all around the state and get a better grasp on what goes on. You definitely never get bored and there is always something going on! If you could take your dream vacation, where would it be?

Why did you choose to be a Staff Senator? I thought it would be a great way to interact with others in the University. I wanted to be able to connect with other departments that I normally would not have any interaction with.

What might someone be surprised to know about you? I LOVE football!

Be a partner in education by supporting the Staff Senate Scholarship Fund

By donating to the Staff Senate Scholarship Fund, you will help children of Clemson staff members continue their education at Clemson. The fund provides scholarships for 10 students each year. You can donate any amount, and it's easy — just go to clemson.edu/faculty-staff-staffsenate/scholarships.html for more information and the payroll deduction enrollment form.

Employee Engagement: A Key Characteristic of Productive and Sustainable Work Environments

Tom Ward, Staff Ombudsman

Why is it that so many employees in organizations across the board report feeling demoralized, dissatisfied, disrespected, worn out...or, disengaged? Why is it that relatively few employees report feeling happy, committed, productive and proud of their employers and their own work-related contributions...or, engaged?

Two important characteristics of productive and sustainable work environments where employees report feeling engaged, committed, productive, proud of their work and where they work include 1) having a common purpose that employees believe in and support, and 2) fostering a culture of respect in the workplace. The first is a unifying characteristic while the second is a support characteristic enabling the ability to focus, and stay focused, on the common purpose of the work. While these two characteristics implicate everyone in the workplace, tones and expectations set from the top. Those with greater sanctioned authority and power have an increased ability to influence a work environment, as well as greater responsibility for ensuring employee engagement.

In his recent book, The Soul of the Organization: How to Ignite Employee Engagement and Productivity, David Benoff points to an organization’s ability to focus the work of the organization towards addressing concerns for people/problems involving service to others. When people believe and see the purpose in their individual and collective work, it sets the stage for good things to be able to happen. It’s when employees get distracted from their focus on the common purpose of their work that things start to slip and employee engagement comes into question. So, what is the common purpose of the work performed in your department? Do all employees buy into the purpose? If not, why not?

Staying focused on the purpose is a lot easier when the working environment values and actively supports a culture of respect. Conversely, it can be very difficult and unrealistic to expect employees to stay focused on purpose if they don’t feel respected. People certainly aren’t very motivated when they feel disrespected, whether intentional or inadvertent. Ever encounter a situation when you felt like you demonstrated respect for someone else but they left the interaction shaking their head? Intention alone is insufficient, outcomes matter.

Respect includes giving serious consideration to someone’s thoughts, ideas, wishes and preferences. Serious consideration requires listening and acknowledging the person, and being honest and accepting of their individuality and idiosyncrasies. It can be as simple as giving credit where credit is due, being fair and equitable in assigning and evaluating work, or maintaining positive and productive working relationships. People know when someone is serious about respect, and they know when words and actions don’t line up. Few things communicate disrespect like dishonesty, or feeling marginalized and devalued — no matter what words are spoken. So, what are some ways you can demonstrate respect to your coworkers, those who work under your supervision, and those to whom you report?

Employee Engagement...con’t

Having a common purpose and fostering a culture of respect are certainly not the only two characteristics of productive and sustainable work environments, but they are a pretty good starting point. Below are some references to learn more.

References
3. Dickson, Donna A. Fostering Employee Engagement: Practical Tools and Best Practice Techniques. HBR Press. © 2011

Campus Parking Update!

Dan Hofmann provided information about summer construction projects.

Employees can find all of the details for the Summer Construction Projects on the Parking Services web site http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/parking/ under Summer Construction on the left-hand lower portion of the web site.

The graphics have been improved on the parking service map (also available on their web site) which include all of the details of the construction projects for this summer that have an impact on parking. Parking services has a new parking map that can zoom in to see where all designated spaces are on campus (http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/parking/multimedia/pdf/ParkingMap.pdf). This could be very helpful for employees to see options that are available throughout campus.

There will be an employee shuttle running from Nu Street weekdays from 7:00 am to 9:30 am and 3:30 pm to 6:00 pm that will deliver employees to all of the surrounding buildings associated with parking at the Sirrine lot. (Suggestion by Staff Senate Policy & Welfare Committee is for departments with golf carts to volunteer to pick up employees who cannot walk up the hill and arrive or depart in the middle of the day when the shuttle is not running.)

However, if employees leave later than 6:00 pm they can contact Tiger Transit at 864-656-3333, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/cpdp/tiger-transit/index.html (with a link also on the Parking Services web site). This “on-demand” service is available to faculty, staff and students each day from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am.

Mr. Hofmann also reminded employees that an employee permit allows for parking in all commuter spaces on campus. Mr. Hofmann understands there may be some slight inconveniences associated with making these major improvements, but wants everyone to know Parking Services is doing everything possible to minimize the impact and they ask for your patience and cooperation during these projects.

Reader comments, questions and suggestions are always welcome!
Staff Senate Meeting Summary
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Standing Committees:

Policy and Welfare
Wendy Howard, Policies and Welfare Committee, reported there is a new parking map online to help employees find parking while the Sirrine lot is closed: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/parking/multimedia/pdf/EmployeeShuttle.pdf

Scholarship
The Scholarship Committee announced the Annual 5K is set for November 9th.

Legislative Update
The Senate Finance Committee's version of the budget includes a state employee pay increase of 1 percent and a 6.8% increase in the cost of health insurance for state employees, which the state will absorb. Under this plan, state employees would see a 20% co-pay increase. The S.C. Supreme Court on Wednesday, April 24, 2013 ordered that the Budget and Control Board apply funds to State Health Plan premiums according to the 2012-2013 Appropriations Act. Clemson University did not collect any employee premium increases from state health plan participants due to the pending lawsuit, so no refunds will be issued. No action is needed from employees regarding the court.

New Business
Staff Senate members were chosen for the following University Committees:
Staff Ombuds Evaluation Committee: Terri Vaughan
Alcohol & Drug Advisory Board: Adam Hunter
Bookstore Advisory Committee: Amanda Menefee
Click here for a complete listing of committee members http://www.clemson.edu/faculty-staff/staff-senate/committees.html

Open Commentary
Lisa Hughes, Massage Therapist, presented information on the massage therapy services provided at Fike. For more information, check out the website http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-recreation/additional_services/massage.html and call 864-656-6673 to make an appointment.

Announcements
The call for proposals for the Diversity Incentive Fund was announced (http://www.clemson.edu/ci/assets/documents/opportunities/rr/Diversity_Incentive_Fund_Guidelines_2013-2014.pdf)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 11, 10:30 a.m., Madren Center. Visitors always welcome!