Staff Budget Priorities Survey 2004 Summary

Staff Senate's mission states that it will "promote and foster the welfare and growth of University staff through a fact-finding, deliberative and consultative body of representatives that makes studies, reports and recommendations to the administration on behalf of its constituency." To fulfill this mission, Staff Senate must communicate with the University staff about their needs and desires.

Background

To further these communications, Staff Senate conducted an anonymous survey to collect input on what issues staff members feel are most important. The survey was offered to the staff through paper copies and the University web site **August 30-September 10**. During that time, Staff Senate received **273 responses** from SMSU staff members, which translates to approximately an **18% response rate** from the Springfield and Mountain Grove full- and part-time staff members.

The survey listed thirteen issues and asked staff to rate each item as *very important*, *important*, *not important* or *no opinion*. The survey also asked about the Staff Senate relationship with staff members.

Top issues

After compiling the results from the survey, Staff Senate was able to better determine which issues staff members felt were most important. **Two items that ranked among the top issues last year (increasing vacation accrual rates and establishing a summer work schedule) ranked highly again. However, these two issues are currently under consideration by the Administrative Council, so these were not ranked among the top issues.**

Taking the above into consideration, the survey identified four key issues:

- Prioritize annual cost of living adjustments as an unavoidable expense in the University's budget planning
- Retain the current University funded dental plan
- Provide short-term disability coverage
- Increase the course fee waiver to 15 hours, with the possibility of staff accruing fee waiver hours during their years of employment

Further, the staff offered several comments that identified other issues not listed on the survey. Common issues include healthcare, parking, salaries, course fees and time off.

Next steps

Staff Senate plans to use the results from this survey to focus its efforts during the next year and provide input to various University committees. Staff Senate will continue to gather more information, further focus the data and determine underlying themes.

Staff Senate will also continue to work with the University administration to determine the best way to promote and foster the welfare and growth of University staff. Since some survey issues may include a cost that cannot be funded due to University budget constraints, cooperation is key.

Finally, Staff Senate plans to increase the lines of communication with staff members. Not only will Staff Senate continue to let staff know about its activities through its email newsletter, website and senators, but it will continue to encourage staff to provide feedback and suggestions in person, through email and over the phone. Staff Senate also plans to offer another survey next year.

Staff Budget Priorities Survey 2004 Detailed Results

Staff Senate used four methods to analyze the survey data:

- Averaged the responses for each item
- Totaled the number of responses marked as *very important* for each issue
- Charted the percentages of each response per question
- Reviewed the written comments from each survey

Average response for each issue

The survey asked staff to rate each issue as *very important (2)*, *important (1)*, *not important (-1)*, or *no opinion (0)*. Using these value assignments, Staff Senate added each issue's ratings and determined the total response value for each issue. Then Staff Senate divided the total response value by the number of responses, which yielded the average response shown below.

| Issue	Average
Prioritize annual COLA as unavoidable expense	1.71
Retain current dental plan	1.67
Increase vacation accrual rates	1.01
Provide short-term disability coverage	0.96
Establish a summer work schedule	0.83
Allow course fee waivers to accrue	0.82
Increase course fee waiver to 15 hours	0.79
Increase personal leave to 2 days	0.77
Incentives/release time for wellness programs	0.54
Employees only fitness center	0.44
Financial incentive for fitness	0.33
University subsidized child care	0.11
Waiver for Greenwood/Child Care Center	0.03

Responses marked very important by all staff

Staff Senate compiled the number of responses rated as *very important* for each issue, displayed in the chart below:

Issue	Unclassified	Classified	Unsure	Total
Prioritize annual COLA as unavoidable expense	70	114	31	215
Retain current dental plan	66	106	26	198
Increase vacation accrual rates	21	77	19	117
Allow course fee waivers to accrue	32	58	15	105
Increase personal leave to 2 days	27	58	17	102
Increase course fee waiver to 15 hours	29	54	17	100
Establish a summer work schedule	27	56	11	94
Provide short-term disability coverage	24	50	15	89
Employees only fitness center	18	46	7	71
Incentives/release time for wellness programs	20	32	11	63
Financial incentive for fitness	20	34	8	62
Waiver for Greenwood/Child Care Center	14	18	7	39
University subsidized child care	16	16	6	38

Responses per question

For each question, the frequency of each response was tallied. These tallies are shown in the following pie charts.

### Increase vacation accrual rates

No Response .7%
No Opinion 8.1%
Not Important 16.8%
Very Important 42.9%
Important 31.5%
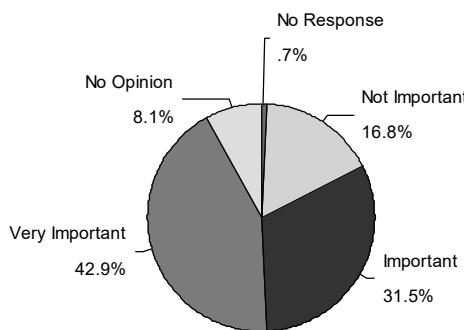
Increase course fee waiver benefit to 15 hours

Very Important 36.6%
No Opinion 7.0%
Not Important 25.3%
Important 31.1%
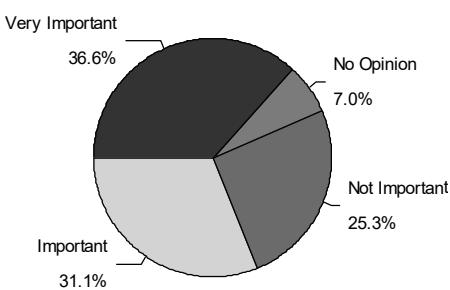
Allow course fee waiver benefit to accrue
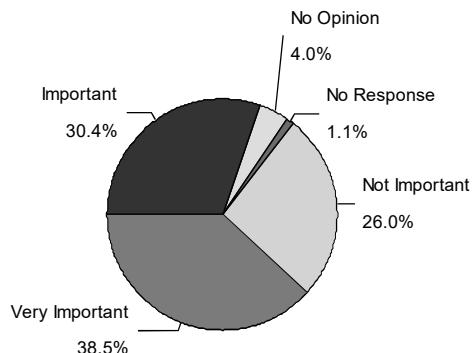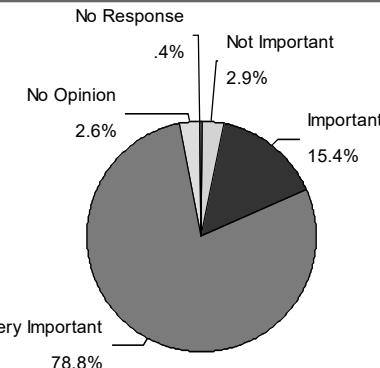
No Opinion 4.0%
Important 30.4%
No Response 1.1%
Not Important 26.0%
Very Important 38.5%

Prioritize annual COLA as unavoidable expense

No Response .4%
Not Important 2.9%
No Opinion 2.6%
Important 15.4%
Very Important 78.8%

Short-term disability coverage

Not Important 16.1%
No Opinion 4.4%
Important 46.9%
Very Important 32.6%

Summer work schedule

Not Important 20.9%
No Response 1.8%
No Opinion 9.5%
Important 33.3%
Very Important 34.4%

Retain current dental plan

No Response .4%
No Opinion .4%
Not Important 2.9%
Very Important 72.5%
Important 23.8%
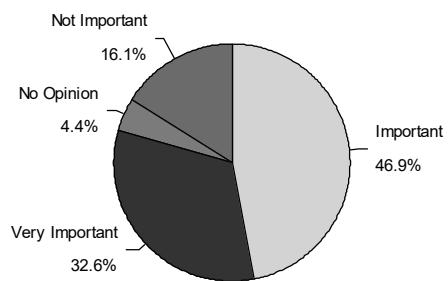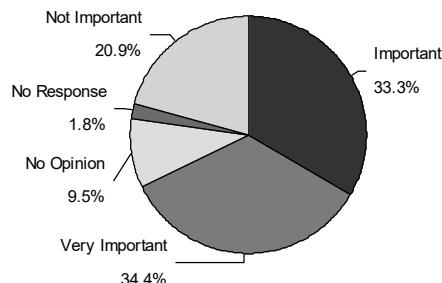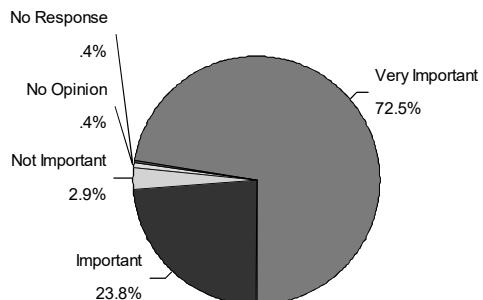
Course fee waiver for Greenwood/Child Care Center
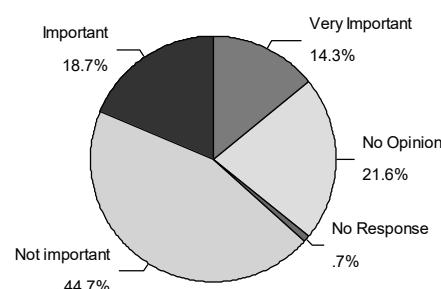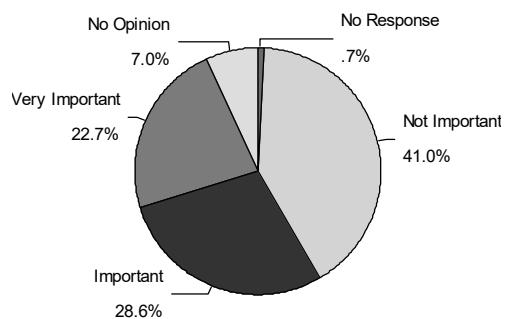
Important 18.7%
Very Important 14.3%
No Opinion 21.6%
No Response .7%
Not important 44.7%

Financial incentive for fitness

No Response: .7%
Not Important: 41.0%
Important: 28.6%
Very Important: 22.7%
No Opinion: 7.0%

Incentives/release time for wellness programs

No Response: .4%
Not Important: 31.5%
Important: 38.8%
Very Important: 23.1%
No Opinion: 6.2%

"Employees only" fitness facility

No Response: .4%
Not Important: 37.0%
Important: 28.9%
Very Important: 26.0%
No Opinion: 7.7%

University subsidized childcare services

No Response: .4%
Not Important: 42.5%
Important: 26.0%
Very Important: 13.9%
No Opinion: 17.2%
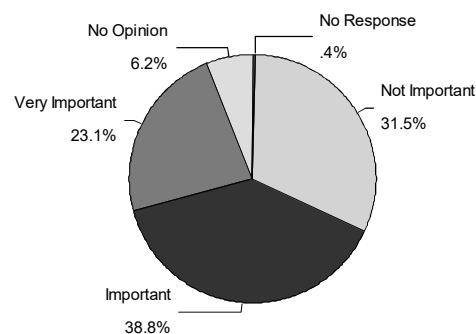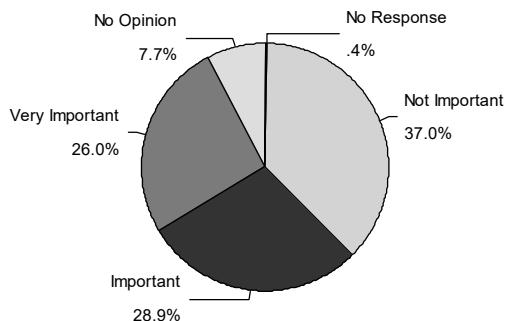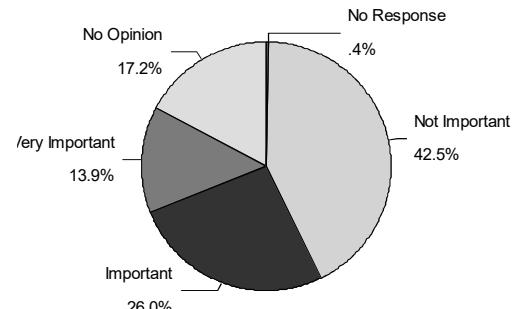
Staff Senate relationship with employees

The survey included a section about the communication and relationships with employees. The results are shown below.

Method	Count
Any of the following methods	272
Read Staff Senate email newsletter	146
Visited Staff Senate web site	105
Talked to a Senator	90
Participated in Staff Senate special event	79
Attended Staff Senate meeting	60
Viewed Staff Senate bulletin board in Carrington Hall	49
Served on Staff Senate committee	23
Served on SMSU committee for Staff Senate	18
Other	14

The survey also asked two open-ended questions. Below are common comments. The number in parenthesis after each item indicates the number of people who expressed that comment.

What would motivate you to become involved in Staff Senate?
- Release time (5)
- Belief that time invested would make a difference (4)
- More time/lighter workload (3)
- Supervisor support (3)
- Personal invitation (2)

How can Staff Senate better represent your needs?
- Already doing a good job (6)
- Continue with surveys (5)
- Equitable representation of all employees (4)

Abbreviated written comments from survey

The survey comments below were abbreviated and categorized into groups. The number in parenthesis after some items indicates the number of people who expressed that comment.

Issue	Comments
Healthcare	• Insurance structured as a co-pay model (2)
Parking	• Free or lower fees (12) • More parking (2)
Salaries	• Equitable salaries (7) • Merit-based salary system (6) • More flexibility in salary system (5) • Compensation system that rewards employees with more than 10 years of service (4) • Flat dollar raises (3)
Time off	• More vacation for classified staff after 25 years of service (2)
Course fees	• Fee waiver benefit for entire family of staff, not just legal dependents (4)

Southwest Missouri State University Staff Senate

Staff Budget Priorities Survey 2004 Sample

Staff Senate has worked hard to represent the staff--see a list of accomplishments and activities. We're again seeking input on what budgetary issues staff members feel are most important so we can continue in our efforts. We're also planning to do a separate morale survey in the future to cover non-budgetary issues. We realize that some of these questions are repeated from previous surveys, but we need to be able to rank ongoing issues with new issues.

Governor Michael Franks expressed surprise that more staff did not respond to the survey and wanted us to let the staff know that the Board does read the results and pays attention to staff concerns. So with this in mind, please review and rate the items below, then click the Submit Form button. Please only complete the survey once. All links will open in a new window.

What type of staff position do you hold?

☐ Classified ☐ Unclassified ☐ Unsure ☐ Not a staff member

Section I: Ranking of Issues

Issue	Very important	Important	Not important	No opinion
Increase vacation accrual rates so classified staff receive extra vacation days after completing five/ten years rather than after completing seven/fourteen years	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Increase free tuition benefit from 12 to 15 hours per year	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Allow tuition benefit to be accrued during years of employment	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Prioritize annual cost of living adjustments as an unavoidable expense in the University's budget planning	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Provide short-term disability coverage	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Establish a summer work schedule	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Increase personal leave from one to two days per calendar year	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Retain the current University funded dental plan	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Allow the course fee waiver to be used at Greenwood and/or the Child Care Center	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Provide some sort of financial incentive for fitness (such as a credit toward a gym membership)	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Provide incentives and/or release time for participation in wellness programs	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Establish an "employees only" fitness facility/area on campus	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA
Provide University subsidized childcare services	☐ 2	☐ 1	☐ 0	☐ NA

(over)

Are there any other issues that you would like Staff Senate to review?

Section II: Staff Senate and You

How have you learned about Staff Senate activities (please check all that apply)?

☐ Visited Staff Senate web site

☐ Attended meeting

☐ Talked to senator

☐ Viewed Staff Senate bulletin board in Carrington

☐ Read Staff Senate email newsletter

☐ Served on a Staff Senate Committee

☐ Participated in Staff Senate special events (such as Lee Denim Day, Veterans Recognition Breakfast or Flag Ceremony)

☐ Served as a Staff Senate representative on a University committee

Other:

How can Staff Senate better represent your needs?

What would motivate you to become involved in Staff Senate?