1997–98 STAFF COUNCIL ROSTER

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Richard Gnatok (CMP ADMJ 1 Year) | Gill Hall | x3271 | 
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Tracy Sutherland (NEI ADSU 1 Year) | Neilon Library | x2962 | tsutherland@library.ebsiu.smith.edu
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Bill Sheehan | College Hall 5 | x2222 | wsheehan@ebsiu.smith.edu
*Indicates at-large members

THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE
NEWS FROM THE SMITH COLLEGE STAFF COUNCIL
AUGUST 1997

Scott Girard, New Chair Council

I am truly honored. Election as Staff Council chairperson holds many different meanings for me. Most important, is that co-workers from across the campus have faith in my abilities. My strengths lie in the fact that, although I have made many mistakes in my life, I don’t allow those mistakes to stop me from pushing forward, and perhaps, making new ones.

Smith College has always played a role in my life simply because of its location, here in my home town. In presence is the reason for seasonal traffic jams, but also the reason that so many talented women frequent the streets of my home town. It is at least partially responsible for local inflation and high real estate cost, but is also the reason that Northampton is home to so much art, music and theater.

This year, Smith College fully consented to allow me to work on the campus. As a white male, in the age of affirmative action, my qualifications of farm laborer, factory worker, child-care worker and small business owner, were not enough to ease me through those golden Cressett gates. I wasted my turn and paid the price until my time came. A good paying job, near my home, with benefits to sustain my family, became my reward.

Still, somehow I don’t think that Smith was quite ready for me. I hold the view, perhaps a bit old-fashioned, that one gets out of a job exactly what one puts into that job. Strange how my philosophy and Smith College’s seem to be finally merging.

Seven years ago, Staff Council was just a gleam in the eye of a group of staff people who were committed to the idea that employees should have a voice at Smith. We talked, listened and lobbied, until we were heard, and then the college heard us. Employers had to create a structure to house that voice and we did that. On April 29, 1993, a constitutional convention approved the Smith College Staff Council charter. We received approval and support from president Mary Maples Dunn and the Board of Trustees. Our voices and our structure were in place. Granted, people’s misperceptions of each other and the assumption that there are some hidden agendas have permeated the structure from the beginning. But one thing I have learned since the creation of Staff Council is patience. It is necessary for workers to be patient as policy evolves. While maintaining our good intentions, we must all be persistent and vigilant. We cannot hide our ideas and plans, we must express them freely. Your children will grow up faster than your hidden agendas will become reality if you keep it to yourself. The more openly we interact with each other, the stronger we will become as a body and our individual ideas can become reality.

This year, some of the issues Staff Council must deal with include a review of the recommendations of the Staff Self Study team. Their ideas could lead to Staff Council by-laws revisions, but they will surely strengthen our employee voice.

Carmen Santena-Meloa has an ambitious plan to include employees in a study of diversity and the creation of a 5-year plan to bring innovation into the workplace. Staff Council is also in the midst of a debate concerning a Staff Mission Statement that we can all embrace. This year promises to challenge everyone who is willing to be become involved. We need you to step forward and volunteer your thoughts and comments.
There are many ways you can communicate with your Staff Council.

E-MAIL
staffcouncil@eals.smith.edu

THE WEB
http://www.smith.edu/~agillard/ec.html
(From the Web page you may e-mail individual Staff Council members.)

CAMPA M.
Send mail to the Staff Council box in Central Services.

TELEPHONE OR IN PERSON
See the Staff Council roster on page 8.

STAFF COUNCIL SPONSORED COMMUNITY FORUM
November 20—1:30–2:30 p.m.
(And don't forget the college's October 22 community forum, 1:30–2:30 p.m., which will include the staff recognition events.)

We are an organization for you and we want to hear from you. Questions, comments or ideas are always welcome. Contact us soon!

Buying Power

Today's busy lifestyles mean that most of us don't have time to shop endlessly for bargains on many of life's necessities... from automobiles to washing machines to consumer loans and even vacation travel. Sometimes we're in a pinch because we have to buy or replace a major item quickly, and there simply isn't enough time to shop. One of our least-known benefits may be a solution.

Through Smith, each of us is a member of Mass Buying Power, MBP is a membership-based consumer referral service. Membership is available to employers, businesses or professional organizations, and credit unions. These corporate members, in turn, extend membership benefits to their employees, associates or members.

The next time you purchase a car, how would you like to say to the salesperson, "I'll take 500 off the price this year. What's your best price?" In effect, when a member uses Mass Buying Power, he or she benefits from the buying power of over one million households in New England. Mass Buying Power authorized dealers and vendors have agreed to extend their best discounted prices to members. These discounted prices have already been negotiated for you. Saving both time and money.

To receive the Mass Buying Power discounted price on major items, you must obtain a referral for each purchase. For example, when purchasing an automobile (new or used), you must narrow the final selection to no more than two makes and models. To receive a referral, call Mass Buying 830-430. MBP will send you a Discount Certificate for the item at an authorized dealership, with the name of the contact person. Present the certificate to receive the discounted price.

In addition to cars, nearly all brands of household appliances and furniture are represented. A full-service in-house travel agency specializes in discounted trips to warm sunny places where we New Englanders need them most. Mass Buying Power members are eligible for rebate programs when booking travel through MBP.

In a spin over a home mortgage? The Mass Buying Power mortgage information program will help you find the mortgage best suited to your needs. With an extensive database of lending institutions, mortgage products and rates available, this free service will leave you more time to concentrate on that other crucial part of buying a new home—packing.

Call Mass Buying Power at 617-829-4900 or complete the online form at www.mbbuy.com

Driving Miss Daisy and All Her Friends

Through the good efforts of the Office of Disability Services, part of the Office of Institutional Diversity, we can now get from our cars to our desks or our dorms to our labs when we're physically challenged. The ACCESS Van Service, an on-campus transportation program for students, faculty and staff with permanent or temporary disabilities began the end of last semester. Passengers can rely on the ACCESS van to get them to their classes, on-campus jobs and college activities safely and efficiently.

The van service is available Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m., by reservation. Call Disability Services at 585-2071 to begin service. In most cases, medical documentation is required before Disability Services will authorize use of the van. Passengers will be billed either a temporary or permanent Ride Card.

After authorization, call the reservation line at 585-5143, at least an hour in advance of anticipated pick-up or before 3 p.m. the previous day, if a pick-up before 8:30 a.m. Passengers using the van service on a regular basis may make standing reservations. The service is not available during the lunch hour.

Community Forum Dates

October 22, 2:30-4:30 p.m. (Staff Recognition)
November 20, 1:30-2:30 p.m. (sponsored by Staff Council)
A Real Boycott Takes Sacrifice

BY TOM EHRICH

A word to the Southern Baptists as they stir up for a boycott of the Walt Disney Co. empire. Before you get too hot on Mickey's tail, I suggest you visit the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn. It's built on the site of the Lorraine Motel, where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated outside Room 305 in 1968.

Pay special attention to the story of the Montgomery, Ala., boycott in 1955-56, when blacks refused to ride city buses because the system treated them unfairly. Imagine yourself as Rosa Parks, whose arrest for refusing to move to the back of the bus sparked the boycott. She paid a high price. So did the blacks who joined her. They had to walk miles to work, spend time in jail and listen to city officials vow to crush their ugly little rebellion.

What will your boycotters be doing? Parading disdainfully by the Disney Store as they walk through the mall! Or making vacation plans that don't include Disney World? Renting a Bugs Bunny video rather than "Snow White"? Refusing to buy mutual funds that contain Disney stock?

A real boycott is about personal sacrifice, not a change in entertainment plans. Stand outside Room 305. See the balcony where King died. Remember the struggle, when men and women who had everything to lose stood up against real forces of darkness.

Second, before counting the press clip-pings you get for your anti-Disney vote and the anti-gay rhetoric that accompanied it, I suggest you visit a convention of the Episcopal Church. For 20 years I sat in church conventions and listened to impassioned debates on all sorts of hot topics.

We quoted Scripture, passed resolutions and sent them immediately to the press. We were proud of ourselves for being "prophetic." Then we went out for drinks with the people we had just debated. Nothing had changed. We had enjoyed a few seconds of passion, that's all. Ethic as theater.

But during each debate, we spent a bit more of our remaining capital—our public respect—our tax-exempt right to speak with the expectation of being heard. The next time we gathered, we had a little less capital. By now, we have virtually none. The Episcopal Church speaks, and no one listens.

That could happen even to you, Southern Baptists. America's largest Protestant denomination. Since having bathed gays and shunned a TV actress for playing the part of a lesbian, you now have less capital to spend. In time, you could have none.

Third, go back to the Bible. Yes, those Bibles that you waved so magnificently as you condemned homosexuals. Read about the ministry of Jesus. Can you imagine the son of God taking a public vote, holding a press conference and sending delegates back home with a charge to proclaim deliverance from a cartoon empire?

When given the chance to go public, Jesus stayed silent. When the crowd came to him, he took his small band of disciples aside and taught them about blindness.

When he sent out his followers, he warned them they would suffer for their faith, to the point of joining him in a baptism of blood.

Do you really believe that castigating Disney's gay-affirming employment policies is the kind of suffering seventhousand that Jesus had in mind? Has Calvary been telescoped to such a small vision of godliness as avoiding Disney?

I may sound harsh, but the spectacle of several thousand well-to-do white folks chasing after Mickey Mouse is a bit over the top.

But mostly, I am saddened. I am saddened that evangelical fervor in America is coming down to gay bashing. This nation needs the Gospel, not a sex war. And I am saddened that you are bowing that which is indeed crucial above Disney, namely, the power of illusion. Disney sells the illusion that one can "wish upon a star" and make life better, that appearance is the same as reality, that watching Mousekевer Annette play on a beach blanket is the same as having a life creed.

Tom Ehrich, an author and former reporter, is an Episcopal priest in Winston-Salem, and is the grandson of Ruth Helleksen Lindley, Smith class of 1914. This piece of Tom's, which appeared recently in the Los Angeles Times, puts some current social activism into historical perspective and is reprinted here with his permission.

Over the last couple of years, in committee meetings such as the Self-Study, and at Staff Council, the subject of a Smith Ombuds Office has been discussed. The University of Massachusetts has both an on-campus ombudsman service which is for on-line, Instant and Immediate disputes only, and a regular in-person Ombuds Office. The regular Ombuds office is what we'll discuss here.

The mandate of the UMass Ombuds Office is to ensure that all University students and employees receive fair and equitable treatment within the University system. In addition, the office makes recommendations, where appropriate, for general changes in University structures and procedures, and stimulates discussion of wider institutional issues. All members of the University community—students, faculty and staff are able to become clients of the Ombuds Office.

What They Do
- Help resolve conflicts impartially without judging, rewarding or punishing parties.
- Mediate disputes.
- Facilitate communication.
- Provide appropriate information and referral to grievance procedures and other services.
- Investigate claims of unfair treatment or erroneous procedure.
- Listen, advise, and make recommendations.

At UMass, records, contacts and communications are normally confidential; in unusual circumstances (which are explained to clients), rare exceptions are made if required by law. If assistance is requested, the client's name is not used in a case investigation without permission. To resolve disputes, the Ombuds Office has the right of access to most University records, reports, and documents.

What They Don't Do
- The Ombuds Office does not have the power to change rules, regulations, policies, or procedures, but rather, makes recommendations to the University for changes and to help find a resolution to the situation.
- It has been the experience of the UMass Ombuds Office, that the great majority of University faculty, staff and students have been responsive to recommendations by their office.
- The Ombuds Office does not automatically take the client's side in a matter, but rather considers all sides in an impartial way.

What They Handle
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Personnel issues
- Administrative matters
- Academic disputes
- Ethical concerns

In addition, the Ombuds Office offers the services of the Campus Mediation and Negotiation Team. Mediation is an approach to conflict that provides an alternative to formal, established procedures, legal action, or continued dispute. It emphasizes the process of communication and creative problem solving.

The team mediates in pairs, with two graduate or undergraduate mediators assigned to each case under the supervision of the Ombuds Office. They serve as 'multipartisan' third parties; in other words, they try to understand each of the disputants' concerns and to facilitate understanding and agreements. Often the people who come to mediation are seeking a definite agreement that can be implemented to end the conflict. However, the team recognizes that there are some situations in which the best result is not a specific agreement, but simply a raised awareness of the issues causing the conflicts. The goal is not to achieve voices of dissent, but to promote constructive communication and negotiation over issues.

The Campus Mediation and Negotiation Team provides confidential, culturally sensitive dispute resolution for the campus community. One of its strengths lies in its diversity. Men and women from many age groups, countries, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and religions work together on this problem-solving team. Student mediators receive extensive training and are prepared to create a safe, confidential, and open forum for communication. This voluntary and confidential process is open to all members of the University community.

The team also provides facilitators for group problem-solving and group discussions who help campus organizations, residence halls and work groups to discuss heated topics and reach agreements on current issues.

Here at Smith, we do not have an Ombuds Office, but we do have a confidential resource for advice, support and referral. She is Carmen Santana-Melgosa, the Director of Institutional Diversity. Most of the services that the University Ombuds Office provides to their community of 30,000, Carmen's office can arrange on our campus.

-Dick Fish

http://www.umass.edu/ombuds_office/
Scott Girard...

Staff Council Recommends Directory Additions

CAP, GCED, CAD and CSA are all commonly used acronyms somewhere on campus, but maybe not in your department. Want to know what they mean? Check the new college directory this fall and you'll find six of those little bits of administrative speak explained. A list of standing college and faculty committees will also be available.

Did you know that an e-mail alias allows you to send a message to an office without having to know which specific person to address? Simply type LANDSCAPE and your message will go to the Lyman Plant House, or just write JOBLOT to get Human Resources Job Listing. A page of aliases will also be included in the next directory.

These and other additions to the directory have been suggested by Lars Hartman. The year-long effort to help make the directory more useful has been the main focus of the Staff Council Communication Committee, which Hartman chairs.

On My Mind

Attitude is Everything

Jerry was the kind of guy you love to hate. He was always in a good mood and always had something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, "If I were any better, I would be twirled!"

He was a unique manager because he had several waiters who had followed him around from restaurant to restaurant. The reason the waiters followed Jerry was because of his attitude. He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Jerry was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation. Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Jerry and asked him, "I don't get it. You can't be a positive person all the time. How do you do it?" Jerry replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, 'Jerry, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.'"

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested. "Yes it is," Jerry said. "It's all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood. The bottom line is: It's your choice how you live your life."

—Dick Fish

Faculty and Staff Picnic Memories

At the picnic's first-ever dunking booth, Colin Campbell, son of Steve Campbell, wipes the proceeds deepest attention.

Huge and huggable were the balloon hats. Sally Donohue bought her granddaughter to the picnic, where Rashed found herself "costumed" in a syrinx military creation.

Christopher Nagle (left), grandson of Det Nagle, and composer O'Dea (right), grandson of Rita Songer, wait patiently for the balloon creation line.

Our New Students, in Profile

According to Deb Shaver, Associate Director of Admission, "The numbers are not yet final as changes will occur over the summer. However, our first year statistics as of 7/19/97 are:"

Admission expects to enroll 645 students in the first year class and an additional 95 transfer students.

First-Year Class Information

• Applications: 2996
• STRIDE students: 42
• International students: 50
• Students of Color: 138
• Alumnae Connect: 64
• Smith International Scholars: 4
• Jean Picker Internation Fellows: 6

The largest number of students are coming from New England, the Mid-Atlantic and the West. The folks at Admissions say they are extremely pleased with the class and all look forward to welcoming them to campus!
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Balloon magic by Ed Popielackiewicz attracted a lot of interest in the younger crowd, some of whom displayed the creation. Multiple hats in the tradition of Bartholomew Cubbins are worn here by Regina Chen, son of Choy Chen.

Face painting changed the familiar into the unknown. The tiger stripes on young Aidan's face are an example of the fierce but friendly creatures that attended 1997's picnic.

Christopher Nagle (left), grandson of Dot Nagle, and Conover O'Dea (right), grandson of Rita Slinger, wait patiently in the balloon creation line.
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BY TOM EHRICH

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- Academic disputes
- Ethical concerns

In addition, the Ombuds Office offers the services of the Campus Mediation and Negotiation Team. Mediation is an approach to conflict that provides an alternative to formal, established procedures, legal action, or continued dispute. It emphasizes the process of communication and creative problem solving. The team mediates in pairs, with two graduate or undergraduate mediators assigned to each case under the supervision of the Ombuds Office. They serve as "multisided" third parties. In other words, they try to understand each of the disputants’ concerns and to facilitate understanding and agreements. Often the people who come to mediation are seeking a definite agreement that can be implemented to end the conflict. However, the team recognizes that there are some situations in which the best result is not a set agreement, but simply a "wise" awareness of the issues causing the conflict. The goal is not to achieve voices of dissent, but to promote constructive communication and negotiation over issues.

The Campus Mediation and Negotiation Team provides confidential, interpersonally centered dispute resolution for the campus community. One of its strengths lies in it's diversity. Men and women from many age groups, countries, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and religions work together on this problem-solving team. Student mediators receive extensive training and are prepared to create a safe, confidential, open forum for communication. This voluntary and confidential process is open to all members of the University community.

The team also provides facilitators for group problem-solvers and group discussions that help campus organizations, residence halls and work groups to discuss heated topics and reach agreements on current issues.

Here at Smith, we do not have an Ombuds Office, but we do have a confidential resource for advice, support and referral. She is Carmen Santana-Melgos, the Director of Institutional Diversity. Most of the services that the University Office provides to their community of 30,000, Carmen’s office can arrange on our campus.

-Dick Fahl

http://www.umass.edu/ombuds_office/
There are many ways you can communicate with your Staff Council.

E-MAIL
staffcouncil@eais.smith.edu

THE WEB
http://www.smith.edu/~sgirls/scc.html

From the Web page you may e-mail individual Staff Council members.

CAMPUSSC
Send mail to the Staff Council box in Central Services.

TEL: 413-538-3000
See the Staff Council roster on page 8.

STAFF COUNCIL SPONSORED COMMUNITY FORUM
November 20—1:30–2:30 p.m.
(And don’t forget the college’s October 22 community forum, 1:30–2:30 p.m., which will include the staff recognition events.)

We are an organization for you and we want to hear from you. Questions, comments or ideas are always welcome. Contact us soon!

Buying Power

Today’s busy lifestyles mean that most of us don’t have time to shop endlessly for bargains on many of life’s necessities... from automobiles to washing machines to consumer loans and even vacation travel. Sometimes we’re in a pinch because we have to buy or replace a major item quickly, and there simply isn’t enough time to shop. One of our least-known benefits may be a solution.

Through Smith, each of us is a member of Mass Buying Power. MBP is a membership-based consumer referral service. Membership is available to employees, business, or professional organizations, and credit unions. These corporate members, in turn, extend membership benefits to their employees, associates or members.

The next time you purchase a car, how would you like to say to the salesperson, “I’ll take 50% of them this year. What’s your best price?” In effect, when a member uses Mass Buying Power, he or she benefits from the buying power of over one million households in New England. Mass Buying Power authorized dealers and vendors have agreed to extend their best discounted prices to members. These discounted prices have already been negotiated for us, saving both time and money.

To receive the Mass Buying Power discounted price on major items, we must obtain a referral for each purchase. For example, when purchasing a automobile (new or used), you must narrow the final selection to no more than two makes and models. To receive a referral, call Mass Buying Power at 830-430. MBP will send you a Discount Certificate for the item at an authorized dealer, with the name of the contact person. Present the certificate to receive the discounted price.

In addition to cars, nearly all brands of household appliances and furniture are represented. A full-service, in-home travel agency specializes in discounted trips to warm sunny places where we New Englanders need them most. Mass Buying Power members are eligible for rebates when looking travel through MBP.

In a spin over a home mortgage? The Mass Buying Power mortgage information program will help you find the mortgage best suited to your needs. With an extensive database of lending institutions, mortgage products and rates available, this free service will leave you more time to concentrate on that other crucial part of buying a new home—purchasing.

Call Mass Buying Power at 617-425-4900 or complete the on-line form at www.mspbuy.com

A Raise Is a Raise

A number of staff have remarked recently about the recent pay increases. While everyone is thankful that they received a raise, it is felt that the letters from Human Resources should explain what portion of the increase has been earned for "merit".

Because department heads set new directly responsible for determining pay increase, HP has no control over the formula which can be applied across the board, and then explained. A rule of thumb might be to take the prevailing inflation rate, which is about 1.5% at the moment, and figure that any raise above that number is a merit increase.

Meanwhile, in a recent Union News piece, Marcia Blomberg reported on the annual state-wide "in" survey conducted by Associated Industries of Massachusetts. Apparently, Western Mass professionals top the state. While the average pay increase across Massachusetts is pegged at 3.64 percent, the average increase in our area for "non-exempt" workers—professional, technical, administrative and sales—was 4.3 percent, the highest in the state. This compares with the national average of 4 percent.

For blue-collar workers under the hourly category, the average raise this year is 3.4 percent in Western Massachusetts. For "non-exempt" workers—secretarial and other office workers—dual averages 3.08 percent here.

Driving Miss Daisy and All Her Friends

Through the good efforts of the Office of Disability Services, part of the Office of Institutional Diversity, we can now get from our cars to our desks or our dorms to our labs when we’re physically challenged. The ACCESS Van Service, an on-campus transportation program for students, faculty and staff with permanent or temporary disabilities began at the end of last semester. Passengers can rely on the ACCESS van to get them to their classes, on-campus jobs and college activities safely and efficiently.

The van service is available Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and 1–5 p.m., by reservation. Call Disability Services at 585-2071 to begin service. In most cases, medical documentation is required before Disability Services will authorize use of the van. Passengers will be billed either a temporary or permanent Ride Card. After authorization, call the reservation line at 585-5143, at least an hour in advance of anticipated pick-up or before 5 p.m. the previous day, if a pick-up before 8:30 a.m. Passengers using the van service on a regular basis may make standing reservations. The service is not available during the lunch hour.

Community Forum Dates

October 22, 2:30–4:30 p.m. (Staff Recognition)
November 20, 1:30–2:30 p.m. (sponsored by Staff Council)
Scott Girard, New Council Chair

I

am truly honored. Election as Staff Council Chair holds many different meanings for me. Most important, is that co-workers from across the campus have faith in my abilities. My strengths lie in the fact that, although I have made many mistakes in my life, I don't allow those mistakes to stop me from pushing forward, and perhaps, making new ones.

Smith College has always played a role in my life simply because of its location, here in my home town. In presence is the reason for seasonal traffic jams, but also the reason that so many talented women frequent the streets of my home town. It is at least partially responsible for local inflation and high real estate costs, but is also the reason that Northampton is home to so much art, music and theater.

Ten years ago, Smith College finally consented to allow me to work on the campus. As a white male, in the age of affirmative action, my qualifications of farm laborer, factory worker, child-care worker and small business owner, were not enough to ease me through those golden gates. I waited my turn and paid the price until my time came. A good paying job, near my home, with benefits to sustain my family, became my reward.

Still, somehow I don't think that Smith was quite ready for me. I hold the view, perhaps a bit old-fashioned, that one gets out of a job exactly what one puts into that job. Strange how my philosophy and Smith College's seem to be finally merging.

Seven years ago, Staff Council was just a gleam in the eye of a group of staff people who were committed to the idea that employees should have a voice at Smith. We talked, listened and learned, not only in the office but in the room. Employers had to create a structure to house that voice and we did that. On April 29, 1993, a constitutional convention approved the Smith College Staff Council charter. We received approval and support from president Mary Maples Dunn and the Board of Trustees. Our voice and our structure were in place. Granted, people's misperceptions of each other and the assumption that there are some hidden agendas have permeated the structure from the beginning. But one thing I have learned since the creation of Staff Council is patience. It is necessary for workers to be patient as policy evolves. While maintaining our good intentions, we must all be persistent and vigilant. We cannot hide our ideas and plans, we must express them freely! Your children will grow up faster than your hidden agendas will become reality if you keep it to yourself. The more openly we interact with each other, the stronger we will become as a body and our individual ideas can become reality.

This year, some of the issues Staff Council must deal with include a review of the recommendations of the Staff Self Study Team. Their ideas could lead to Staff Council by-law revisions, but they will surely strengthen our employee voice.

Carmen Aracena-Melguaca has an ambitious plan to include employees in a study of diversity and the creation of a 5-year plan to bring innovation into the workplace. Staff Council is also in the midst of a debate concerning a Staff Mission Statement that we can all embrace. This year promises to challenge everyone who is willing to be involved. We need you to step forward and volunteer your thoughts and