



"The council that's working for you."

Martin Luther King Day Holiday

In recent days the news media has broadcast that the Board of Regents approved OSU to have Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday. It was agreed upon by the Regents that this was a holiday that OSU as a whole should be recognizing. With the additional holiday came the possible issue of how to implement this holiday in to a schedule without going over the Big 12 “average number” of paid holidays.

The Staff Advisory Council has been known for, and continues to be, the voice of the staff. We are “the Council working for you”. In listening to numerous constituents, the Council was asked to go before Administration and ask for Martin Luther King Day to be an additional holiday for Faculty and Staff, not just a student holiday. After much consideration and research, the recommendation was made to Administration for an additional paid holiday. Faculty Council joined Staff Advisory Council and supported the issue. Initially Administration counter-offered the recommendation trying to accommodate the additional paid holiday by changing the current holiday schedule. Staff Advisory Council responded to the counter-offer and very clearly stated that the recommendation was not intended for bargaining over what other holidays should be taken away, or using mandatory leave days at Christmas to accommodate the request. The request was clearly for an additional paid holiday and it was stated that if it could not be added as such, Administration should not proceed.

Staff Advisory Council does acknowledge the fact that any time proposals are made, the chance is there that the outcome could be different than proposed. No fault can be found for a Council that listens to the staff, studies the issues, and makes the choice to voice the request. The outcome cannot always be predicted.

If in fact, the holiday schedule must be changed to implement Martin Luther King Day, Administration will be undergoing that task in the next year. It has been stated that Staff will have input on this issue.

The recommendation to Administration and SAC's response to the counter-offer were stated as follows:

Recommendation O21113PBB-8

Oklahoma State University is the only Big 12 University that does not recognize Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday for faculty and staff.

Few people have had as much impact upon the American consciousness as the late civil-rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who believed in the freedom, equality, and dignity of all races and peoples. In light of recent events at OSU, we believe it is important for the university to visibly embrace those ideals for which Dr. King fought by allowing staff to celebrate his life as a paid holiday on Martin Luther King Day. This should be a day to remember Dr. King's lifelong work for peace by reflecting upon the importance of cultural diversity and change through non-violence.

Staff Advisory Council's counter-offer to Administration

SAC recommendation O21113PBB-8 stated very clearly that we desire an **additional** paid holiday to celebrate Martin Luther King Day. This was not intended to be a starting point for bargaining with Administration on what other holidays should be taken away, or mandatory leave days formalized at Christmas time in order to accommodate the request.

SAC finds Administration's counter-proposal completely unacceptable.

Furthermore, SAC fails to see why OSU cannot lead Big 12 schools in the number of paid holidays offered to staff and faculty. Administration's response indicated that this was unacceptable, yet no formal explanation was provided as to why. SAC believes that leading the Big 12 in one aspect of benefits would be a good recruitment tool, something to boast about, and something in which to take pride. We believe that this would be a morale booster at a time when raises are scarce and staff morale is low. We believe it would be a symbolic gesture to acknowledge the importance of diversity at a university criticized for its lack thereof.

SAC formally requests that Administration reconsider their response to our original recommendation with the understanding that we will not "bargain" on this issue.

Thank you for your continued support of Staff Advisory Council and please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, comments, or concerns.

Sheryl Beeler – Chair, Staff Advisory Council
angel@okstate.edu