CSSC Report Prepared for Kansas Board of Regents on January 20, 2011

By Becki Bohnenblust, K-State Classified Senate and CSSC President

Good morning! The CSSC has been very active since the last time I spoke with you in September. A quick recap -- according to the 2009 Workforce Report, the classified and support staff working at Regents Universities had an average of 13 years of service, account for 51% of the workforce and have an average salary of only $31,000. Thus, some employees, after working 40 hours a week, take on a 2nd job in order to make ends meet and provide for their families.

On October 25, 2010, K-State invited each President of Classified Senates, Assemblies and Support Staff from the other Regents Universities to Manhattan to discuss issues and set priorities for classified and support staff employees. Here is the position paper we will be presenting to Legislators at the annual CSSC "Day on the Hill" event scheduled for January 25.

1. Continue to fund the market-based increases recommended by the Division of Personnel Services as proposed by the Hay Group Study and approved by the Kansas Legislature HB2916 - 2007.

2. Fund a 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment for all university classified and support staff.
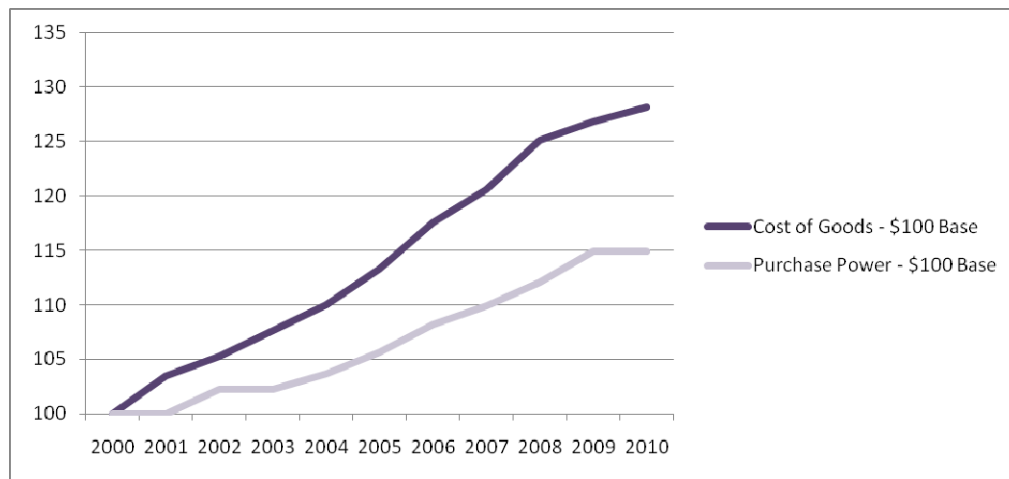
*Cost of goods calculated using the Current Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/inflation.htm). For this chart, monthly inflation rates were reported as fiscal year (Jul-Jun) instead of calendar year (Jan-Dec). COLA data reported by the K-State Division of Budget -- (http://www.k-state.edu/budget/Percent%20increase%20Classified.pdf).

**The Consumer Price Index measures items such as: food & beverages, housing, apparel, transportation, medical care, recreation, education & communication

3. Continue to support and fund longevity for all eligible employees.

4. Maintain and fully fund the existing KPERs retirement system for new and current employees.

As noted in the Governor's Budget Recommendations, he is requesting to *"Lapse the FY 2012 and FY 2013 SGF funding for the undermarket salary adjustments for classified employees appropriated*

by the 2008 Legislature." I recognize classified and support staff salaries are determined by the Legislature and unclassified faculty/staff salaries are determined by the Regents, but I want to explain our concerns with this recommendation by the Governor and why we feel it is imperative the Regents support our efforts of continued funding for these market adjustments.

The current market-based increases have been in effect for 3 years. At the beginning of this process, job classifications were put into three groups, with each group or part of each group receiving market adjustments to salary during a specified fiscal year. Group 1 began receiving market adjustments in FY09 and have continued to receive market adjustments in FY10 and FY11. Group 2 received market adjustments in FY10 and FY11. Group 3 has yet to receive a market increase. The continued funding for these market adjustments over the past 3 years has begun to make an impact.

I am happy to tell you that according to the 2010 Workforce Report, progress is being made toward the average salary of classified and support staff. The average salary has increased 9.59% to an annual rate over $33,500. This is due to the support of the Legislature in funding the market adjustments as set forth in HB2916 (2007) for the past 3 years. For a brief moment, some employees believe the jobs they are performing bring value to the State of Kansas and that Legislators are finally understanding and appreciating their efforts.

However, those employees in Group 3 have yet to see an increase in salary and have not received a "step increase" since September 2006. The last increase employees in Group 3 have seen was in June 2008 with a COLA of 2.5%. This brings me to point #2 above and why employees seek a 2nd job. Employees in Group 3 have not seen an increase since 2006 except for a 2.5% COLA; the cost of goods has greatly increased yet the purchase power has remained stagnant. If the Legislature approves the budget set forth by Governor Brownback and lapses the market adjustments, then progress made toward improving salaries has been "all for not". If the proposed 2 year lapse is approved, those in Group 3 may not receive a salary increase for 5-7 years and the process of market adjustments will need to be reviewed.

We do appreciate the fact that Governor Brownback has left longevity bonuses in his budget and that KPERS will be reviewed. We are hopeful the Legislators will go against the Governors' budget recommendation of lapsing market adjustments like they did last year.

Now for issues not on the position paper. The CSS Presidents are discussing with their respective administrators and gathering support and statistics for a future proposal to bring forth to the Board of Regents regarding a health care bridge for classified and support staff interested in retiring, who choose to remain employed due to the cost of health insurance premiums. This would be similar to the one currently in place for unclassified faculty and professionals. Preliminary data shows this could bring a significant amount of savings to the State and to Regents Universities. We will keep you posted on our progress of this proposal.

The CSS Presidents have participated in monthly conference calls which have been an effective way to communicate and stay informed of the issues on each of our campuses and what needs to be addressed.

An upcoming event, together with our classified and support staff constituents, will be the annual "*Day on the Hill"* where we meet with many Legislators to lobby support of our position paper and educate newly elected members about CSSC issues and who we are. This year we are pleased to have President Scott from PSU attending the event with us.

CSSC continues to collaborate with each governing body on their respective campuses to address and find solutions to issues which make the educational experience a positive one for students, educators and staff.