

Classified Staff Council urges employees to contact legislators

By Fred Amaro

President, Classified Staff Council

Budget, budget, budget! The message is loud and clear. There is no mistake. Gov. Fife Symington has a focused agenda as the 40th Arizona legislative session approaches.

On Jan. 13, our elected representatives will begin their quest to solve an anticipated \$96 million budget deficit.

As ASU braces for another possible reversion and additional budget cuts, the following observations must be made.

- Arizona's education reform: Although Symington's newly formed Education Reform Task Force has recommended increased spending for education, the governor has already discredited such a recommendation because of the cost involved.

- To tax or not to tax: With one side toying with income tax reduction ideas and the other focused on raising taxes, this bipartisan issue remains a disagreeable factor for our elected officials. However, a couple of things are clear: (1) voters of Maricopa County recently have defeated a major bond election, sending a resounding message to our elected officials, and (2) as the list of competing interest groups grows, voters aptly are preparing their ballots and agendas well in advance of next year's election.

- The economy: Although local, state and national leaders cannot seem to agree on whether or not we are experiencing a recession, it is clear that whatever we are experiencing

actually is affecting all staff, faculty and students at ASU. Further, it is threatening the quality of education and the future of our state.

As unprofound as these observations may seem, what is profound is the continuing apathy of those who are most affected by our sluggish and depressed economy and the lack of direction and commitment to education on the part of our elected representatives.

The ASU Classified Staff Council continues to hear from many of its constituents who are worried about losing their jobs and the future of higher education in this state. Issues include the absence of yearly cost-of-living adjustments for staff and faculty; the future of Arthur Young funding; additional reductions in force, specifically those that target staff positions; and the cutting of undergraduate classes.

All are legitimate questions; however, they are questions that must be posed to our specific legislators, either in the form of a letter, phone call or by attendance at one of the upcoming Legislative Task Force brown bag meetings and/or legislative district receptions (sponsored by the Alumni Association). Legislators are, after all, the persons to whom we entrust our votes of support on election (re-election) day. It is vital that staff members realize that decisions that affect their everyday lives continue to be generated at this level.

The Classified Staff Council has accepted this challenge and calls on all of its constituents to answer the same call for

action. It is clear that we must abandon traditional approaches to the legislative process. Apathy is no longer an acceptable means of communicating our concerns to our legislators.

All university employees and students must become accountable for their actions if we hope to hold our elected officials accountable for their actions.

You are urged to get involved with the Legislative Task Force Steering Committee. Be responsive and responsible.

For more information, call the CSC at 965-9700 or PROFS @ASUCSC.

Happy holidays from the Classified Staff Council

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