

Modernization of Classified Civil Service 2007 (CSS)
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated September 16, 2009

The frequently asked questions below were started as a collaborative effort among the Human Resources Officers belonging to the Inter-University Council (IUC). If you view web sites for other IUC universities you will see many of the communications look like the ones found our website. Input was then requested of our BGSU Classified Staff Council leadership and incorporated into the questions.

Q What has happened?

A The rules that Ohio adopted many years ago for staff identified as classified under the Ohio Revised Code are being revised so that state universities may adopt their own rules for this group of employees.

Q What programs do the rules affect?

A The rules cover such areas as: classification and compensation plans, recruitment, selection and appointment procedures, performance, discipline and termination procedures, layoff and reduction-in-workforce processes, paid leave, holiday leave and benefit programs and the appeals process for employee concerns.

Q Why is all of this happening?

A Public employers have sought legislative action for many years to modernize the rules and regulations governing the classified civil service. This increased flexibility to the rules governing staff, when implemented in a controlled, consultative and incremental manner, is vital to Ohio's campuses and for higher education in general to accomplish the lofty expectations placed upon it by the legislature.

BGSU may want to update our work rules so that we can operate more effectively, while still assuring employees certain workplace protections. For example, we may want to streamline and enhance the application and hiring process to assure that we reflect the modern era and to ensure that we continue to attract the highest quality talent and experience.

Q Why should this be considered a good thing?

A The state rules are very old and do not provide universities with the ability to offer classified staffs the benefit of more current programs that other employers are able to provide to their employees. For example, with these changes we can now establish a Catastrophic Leave Bank.

Q Shouldn't I be worried that my rights are being reduced?

A The State Universities, as a body, have made assurances to the legislators, our Boards of Trustees (BOT), the Cabinet, Classified Staff leaders, and staff members that any changes to rights provided under the previous state classified civil service rules will be made in a controlled, consultative and incremental manner... As an example of how your rights will be maintained please know that classified staff will continue to have the ability to appeal concerns to the State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR). That right will be built right into any new policies and procedures that may eventually be adopted.

Q Will I continue to be considered Classified Staff?

A Yes, you will continue to be a classified civil servant.

Q Is there a chance that we will lose our State Employment status?

A BGSU does not intent to change you change your current employee status and we do not see HB 187 as affecting this dramatic a change. When a question is asked like, "Is there a chance..." we must remember none of us knows what the future will hold and what changes might occur through future acts of legislation.

Q What exactly is going to happen?

A We are beginning conversations on campus that will help with the design and development of policies and procedures in each of the areas mentioned above. These conversations will give you an opportunity to voice your beliefs, ideas and concerns. The draft policies/procedures will then be provided for review and comment. Once we are satisfied that we have formulated current and effective policies and procedures they will be submitted to our Board of Trustees for review and potential adoption

Q What happens during the time when these rules are being created – will I have any rights?

A During the interim time, while the process for formulating any new rules is taking place, the University will continue to rely upon and follow the laws and regulations contained in the old rules.

Q I hear that there will be open forums, how can I find out about these?

A Dr. Linda Dobb and representatives from the Office of Human Resources held open forums for all staff. Classified Staff Council Leaders did attend and participate in the forums. These forums were announced through the Campus Updates provided by the Office of Marketing and Communications and the CSC leaders placed information on the classified listproc.

Q I'm still anxious about change, what assurances do I have that this will be carried out in a manner that will take into consideration my concerns?

A Make sure you stay involved. Attend any and all meetings on the subject. Ask lots of questions and compare notes with any other person you wish. If you find anything that does not make sense to you or you believe is a problem, please let us know.

You may contact Marsha Serio in the Office of Human Resources at; 372-2228 or via e-mail at mserio@bgsu.edu. Or you may contact Rebecca Ferguson in the Office of Human Resources at: 372-2259 or via e-mail at fergusb@bgsu.edu. Additionally, Classified Staff Council has appointed ad hoc committees for the specific areas so you may contact:

Classification plans – Kathy Dean, Chair, kkdean@bgsu.edu

Recruitment, selection and appointment processes- Glenna Rufo, Chair, garufo@bgsu.edu

Performance, discipline & termination processes – Violet Serrato, Chair, serrato@bgsu.edu

Layoff & reduction-in-workforces processes – Faith Olson, Chair, folson@bgsu.edu

Paid leave & holiday leave – Holly Amos, Chair, hamos@bgsu.edu

Q I heard under HB 187 you can stop me from being an hourly employee, is this true?

A No! The fact you are an hourly employee is governed by Ohio law and Federal Law, specifically the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

- Q Is there a possibility of taking our jobs out of civil service so that we would no longer have OPERS retirement?
- A All newly hired full-time classified staff have multiple retirement plan choices with in OPERS and the Alternative Retirement Program (ARP). HB 187 does not change these options.
- Q The Ohio State has posted proposed changes to work rules on their web site. Does this mean we're next?
- A You may find proposed work rule changes on web sites of other Ohio Public 4 year College/Universities. If and when BGSU decides to change a work rule we will be posting the change on our web site.
- Q Since the budget has not been finalized doesn't it make sense to not make changes until it is finalized?
- A Actually we know what our budget is, we are in the first year of a biennium budget. The fact is we are in a hiring hold/slow down in order to meet our budget short fall. Waiting to ask our Board of Trustees to adopt the "guidelines" will not affect the decisions we have to make related to the budget.
- Q College Compacts will define BGSU's "niche". How can decisions be made if we don't know what our "niche" is and our 5 yr. plan is not finalized?
- A The only decision being made at this time is to ask our Board to adopt the guidelines. That is, a context for considering future changes. We have not made any decisions to change any work rules at this time.
- Q How is the change process going to be different with the passage of the "guidelines"?
- A We will now have the extra step of posting the rule change on the web site prior to taking the change to the Board. This extra step will occur with or without or Board adopting the "guidelines".
- Q Is it true that the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources (AVPHR) will be given authority to make changes without Board's knowledge?
- A No!
- Q Could the Board of Trustees pass a resolution to give power to allow the AVPHR to make changes without the Trustees' knowledge?

- A They could, but that is not an approach we are recommending or considering recommending.
- Q Is there a way that we can be given advanced notice to proposed changes?
- A Normally changes to work rules are worked on with Classified Staff Council. That process will continue. The additional step we will add is to now post the work rule change on the web site for thirty (30) days prior to proceeding to our Board for requested action. The Office of Human Resources will utilize the “Campus Updates” to notify the campus when a new work rule has been posted for review.
- Q How do “quality” points figure into the calculation of retention points?
- A Prior to July 1, 2007 the Ohio Revised Code had provisions to allow employers to calculate performance evaluations into retention points. BGSU had chosen to apply 100 “quality” points to all employees’ retention point calculations to stay in compliance with the law while neutralizing the effects of performance evaluations on retention points.
- Q How do performance evaluations affect retention points?
- A Layoffs are done by retention points within classification and classification series. Marsha Serio and Becca Ferguson developed an educational presentation regarding the layoff process. These Power Point slides may be found on the web at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/execvp/file28281.pps>
- Q Is it true that the duration of time has changed from five years to three years for an employee to return to a former classification if their position is eliminated?
- A Yes, this was changed for all state classified employees with the passage of HB 187.
- Q If the classification of Student Services Counselor is changed, would we still have the right to return to that classification in a layoff?
- A Yes, if that classification still exists on campus you would retain the right to return to that classification for three years. Normal application of retention points would apply to the situation.
- Q What are the bumping rights contained in HB 187?
- A Part-time probationary, part-time permanent, full-time probationary, full-time permanent.

Q Do retention points have anything to do with “bidding” on a job?

A No.

Q Can you discuss what changes you are considering?

A At this point in time the only discussions regarding a possible work rule change are occurring around the possibility to creating a Catastrophic Leave Bank. This is a benefit classified employees have been barred from having until the passage of HB 187. We anticipate working with Classified Staff Council to identify other, if any, possible changes.

Q If the Trustees do not pass the “guidelines what happens? Can they still make changes to work rules?

A Yes. The Board of Trustee did pass a resolution adopting guidelines at the November Board meeting.

Q There have been several stages of information sharing; 1) with CSC, 2) with public postings, 3) open forums. May we continue to expect this level of information sharing?

A During the open forums Dr. Dobb committed to continued information sharing with CSC Leaders, posting changes to the web and future open forums. Additionally, the resolution passed by the Board of Trustees on November 30, adopting the “guidelines” calls for a collaborative process.

Q Shouldn't open forums be held before a proposed work rule changes are posted for the thirty (30) day comment period?

A Not everyone thinks open forums should occur prior to the posting of a proposed rule change. This concern has been heard and will be taken into consideration when proposed changes are in process.

Q Is there a time limit within which work rules changes must be made?

A No.

Q If work rules changes are made, will they become part of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC)?

A No.

- Q If we change work rules, why do we still have rules under the ORC?
- A Under HB 187, if we have not established a work rule to address a specific issue the ORC will still govern.
- Q HB 187 would allow the Board of Trustees to make changes that we [classified employees] do not see as positive, like reducing wages and holidays, right?
- A Yes, HB 187 will allow the Board of Trustees to make changes. Prior to HB 187 changes could occur at the legislative level without our input. BGSU has a culture of communication and collaboration and we intend to continue to seek input from classified staff as changes are proposed.
- Q How broad is the ability to make work rule changes?
- A In accordance with HB 187 each institution may create a set of Classified Civil Service rules and regulations (“CCS Rules”), including but not limited to the following specific areas:
- Classification plans;
 - Recruitment, selection, and appointment processes;
 - Performance, discipline, and termination processes;
 - Layoff and reduction-in-workforce processes;
 - Paid leave and holiday leave;
 - Appeal processes for classification, reduction, abolishment, and disciplinary actions; and
 - Metrics and measures as appropriate for implementation and modernization of the above listed matters of personnel governance.
- Q Can the Board of Trustees modify a proposed work rule change that is sent to them for approval?
- A Yes they can. We would expect if the Board is not willing to approve the proposed change that they will refer the change back to the moving group for further discussion and work on the issue.
- Q Is there a restriction on who can bring forward a work rule change?
- A We are not sure if we understand this question so let us respond by saying; currently constituent groups on campus utilize their governing bodies to process and/or respond to proposed changes. We do not anticipate this practice to change; HB 187 has added the additional step of posting proposed changes for classified staff work rules to the web site prior to moving them to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- Q Can we remove the disclaimer in the handbook that nothing contained within it constitutes a contract?
- A The classified staff handbook is not a contract so we do not anticipate this being removed from the handbook.
- Q Do we have to work the day before a holiday in order to be paid for the holiday?
- A This question is not affected by HB 187. To answer that question please refer to the Classified Staff Handbook at: <http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/execvp/file11373.pdf> and see the Holidays section. The short answer, for full-time classified staff you must be in an “active pay status”, not working, the workday immediately before the holiday in order to receive holiday pay.
- Q Can we change the restrictions on political activity currently found in the ORC? Can we get rid of all of the restrictions on political activity?
- A If this is an issue important to classified staff members we would suggest you work within the classified ad hoc committees to bring forward your suggested changes.
- Q Can we repeal the Hatch Act?
- A This is Federal Law therefore you would need to contact your congressman and/or senator’s to affect this change. That would be your choice to do that BGSU will not be expending energy on this issue.
- Q If work rule changes are made, will they be incorporated in to our handbook?
- A If appropriate, yes.
- Q Does the ORC prevail over our Handbook?
- A This is not a simple answer. HB 187 gave colleges and universities Boards of Trustees the ability to establish our own rules in specific areas.
- Q Can you keep us informed about the proposal for BGSU’s future that is going forward to Chancellor Fingerhut?
- A We will try to communicate when possible, please understand at times things will be changing so quickly we will not be able to keep you informed. It is our all of our responsibilities to try and keep informed. We would recommend you

regularly visit the Ohio Board of Regent web site at: <http://regents.ohio.gov/> and
The University System of Ohio web site at: <http://universitysystem.ohio.gov/>

Q I am an administrative staff member how does HB 187 affect me?

A Only to the extent that if, when working with Classified Staff, we decide to change a work rule and that rule also affects Administrative staff then you could be affected.

Q How can I stay informed?

A Attend the open forums; get involved in a CSC ad hoc committee, contact Marsha Serio or Rebecca Ferguson with your questions.