APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

UT DALLAS STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
December 09, 2020: Microsoft Teams, 9:00 a.m.


ABSENT: Aaron Simpson

GUESTS: Colleen Dutton, Dr. Richard Benson, Terry Pankratz, Rafael Martin, Dr. Richard Scotch, Rutendo Chando, Brooke Schafer, and Sandee Goertzen

CALL TO ORDER
Staff Council President Naomi Emmett called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.

ROLL CALL
A quorum was met.

1) GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Richard Benson, University President
Dr. Benson presented to Staff Council about the current status of the University.

The Living Our Values Task Force website, was launched this week:
https://utdallas.edu/living-our-values/

Colleen Dutton, Chief Human Resources Officer
HR website updates are still moving forward. It will be rolled out in February. Plan to highlight at the HR Forum and live after that.

Campus Connections group is available on Teams, for HR Updates.
Comets United Day is Dec 21, 2020 which adds a day off during winter break. Essential workers must stay on campus if needed.

An email was sent to Deans and VPs about the proactive testing program. We will cover it more in depth at the next Staff Council meeting. Currently working on getting numbers of staff coming back in January. It is a self-administered test through UT Southwestern. Students will also be included in the proactive testing program. Please remain safe and careful during the holidays and take every precaution to limit exposure.

2) MEETING MINUTES
   Approval of November 11, Meeting Minutes
   Motion to approve was made by Charles Vincent. Motion was seconded by Richy Innis, and the minutes for November were approved.

3) COMMITTEE REPORTS
   EXECUTIVE BOARD (Naomi Emmett)
   HOP met before Thanksgiving and Debbie attended.
   Update on HOP provided by Debbie Greszler:
   Several policies were discussed and revised. The Staff Council Bylaws were approved, and the document has gone to legal for review for final posting.
   There was some discussion on the Police Oversight Committee, but there should be a policy going live soon

   CARE Award
   Winners were selected and are being contacted. We are discussing celebration options with the President’s Office

   ATTENDANCE REPORT (Debbie Greszler)
   Attendance is good, but Neil Gregerson is moving on from UTD. We will be reaching out to an alternate to fill his vacancy.

   BENEFITS COMMITTEE (Jennifer Klunk)
   The scholarship applications have been reviewed. The recipients have been notified to send in their grades to be finalized.
   The committee discussed on how to get more information out. Jennifer Klunk has discussed with Ellen Ammons about linking our Scholarship page to the tuition assistance website.
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (Melanie O’Brien)
Report sent from Chair, Melanie O’Brien via email:
Look for a new issue of The Sun in January, which will be focused on UTD’s swift pivot and transition due to Covid. If you’d like to share any of your experiences over the past 9 months about how your department transitioned and adapted, we’d love to hear them. Please follow UTD Staff Council on Facebook if you haven’t already done so. We are planning some fun and exciting posts in the coming year! If you have something you’d like to promote, please let one of the Communications committee members know.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE (Joey White-Swift)
The committee discussed assignments for future projects. The December committee meeting will be held via e-mail. More events should be coming out soon. If you have any suggestions for events, please reach out.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT (Fatema Syeda)
Staff Development has started the “Thankfulness Initiative”. As of this morning, we have had 79 responses. If you have not filled out the 2-question survey, please do so. We are currently working on a backdrop for social media posts to share these responses.

SECRETARY AND TREASURER’S REPORT (Pax Abrams)
Shipping from the last CARE awards have hit our accounts

FACULTY SENATE (Dr. Ravi Prakash and Dr. Richard Scotch)
The Faculty Senate met twice since the last Staff Council meeting. The regular meeting was held in November, and a special meeting was called last week by Dr. Benson. Degrees have been approved, as well as minor catalog changes. The senate will be considering new certificate programs at the Graduate level. Also approved a new course prefix for Korean language studies.
The proposal from students to extend grading deadlines for students to switch to Pass/Fail. The original proposal had been tabled earlier with concerns on implementation. The Senate reconvened at request of Dr. Benson to review a revised policy, which passed for implement. Students can opt-in for 3 Pass/Fail classes. We will not have a Senate meeting in December (due to break), we will be meeting in January.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT (Sara Brennen and Rutendo Chando)
Recently had a Town Hall meeting, with about 100 attendees. Comet Cupboard donations were distributed to students on campus, as the Comet Cupboard is currently closed and not open over winter break.
A student organization from the University of Houston called us about the Texas-Sized Christmas. We’re partnering with local food banks and doing a match-fund. If you donate to Minnie’s Food Pantry, North Texas Food Bank, or the Comet Cupboard; we will match up to $4,000 to donations given.
Texas-Sized Christmas donations page: https://impact.utdallas.edu/project/24052

RETIREE ASSOCIATION (Sandee Goertzen)
Everyone has been staying home. The executive committee is putting together a newsletter to update everyone on what has been going on.

4) UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES
Safety and Security (Melani Sherbet)
Will be meeting Friday Dec 11

Information Technology Planning and Policy Committee (Dennis Guten)
Will also be meeting this Friday, Dec 11

University Wellness (Pinky Reyes)
Still doing Watercooler Wednesdays, even on campus. Meeting at 3pm.
A virtual Lunch and Learn: Helpful Holiday Tips information is out on the website. Also, the Wellness Committee still meets every 3rd Tuesday from 2-3pm. Link to meeting is on the webpage: https://www.utdallas.edu/campus-wellness/

5) CONTINUING BUSINESS
Proposals:

a. 2020-025p: All university committees should have a staff co-chair if the committee has any impact on staff. (Executive Board)
This is still in process. We are trying to meet with Dr. Prakash to discuss this further.

b. 2020-028p: District rep distribution needs to be monitored closely each year and staggering terms should be rebalanced as needed. (Executive Board)
Information has been gathered on how the redistricting was handled in previous years before a recommendation is made.

b. 2021-001p: UT Dallas Graduate Student Assembly to be added to the Staff Council Agenda for updates. (Executive Board)
Joey White-Swift reported on this. The GSA is a student organization on campus that works with and represents graduate students across campus. They hold seats on a number of committees across campus. Their goal is to advocate for the needs of graduate students.
The GSA receive a number of questions from TA’s and RA’s, who are both students and staff; and they hope to have a dynamic with the Staff Council where the choices made by Staff Council can also be influenced by the needs of the graduate students.
There were concerns from the Staff Council and Executive Board about how GSA is classified on campus. Currently they (the GSA) are a student organization, but have the support of OGE and Dean Gonzales. However, they would like to become a governing body for graduate students. Starting in January, GSA will have a standing slot on the Academic Senate agenda.

**Action Items:** Staff Council members will read over the document of questions sent by Joey White-Swift. Any questions will be sent to him for answering, and this will be discussed for retirement at the January meeting.

6) NEW BUSINESS

**ADJOURNMENT**
Motion to adjourn was made by Jennifer Klunk, and the motion was seconded by Charles Vincent. The meeting was adjourned at 10:36am.

Respectfully submitted,
Pax Abrams
STAFF COUNCIL SECRETARY/TREASURER