

STAFF SENATE MEETING

February 13, 2024 – 3 p.m.

In Person, Senate Chambers (Union 332)

Minutes

I. Call to Order

A. 3:08 p.m.

II. Roll Call

A. Quorum met

- Senators absent: John Bellon, Parker Ellis, Tammy McDaniel, John McIntire, Tori Merkle, Sarah Romack, Amber White, Matt Wierzbicki

III. VOTE to Approve Previous Meeting's Minutes (12/12/23)

A. Minutes approved unanimously

IV. Guest Speakers

A. Mr. Clay Simmons, Vice President and Chief Integrity Officer

- Compliance Overview – Tools and advice, evaluates risk, etc. Hub and Spoke structure. One university-wide compliance officer. We're all part of the compliance program.
 - a) Executive Compliance Committee works closely with System Internal Audit. And OGC.
 - b) Specialized compliance functions.
 - c) Frontline staff members are the most common reporters of compliance issues.
 - d) Ethics – policy.unt.edu. 05.015
 - e) Introduced Asa Johnson, Integrity Officer, in charge of the Trust Line, and introducing Integrity Champion Award. All year-round award, someone who consistently exemplifies integrity at every opportunity, making ethical choices even when facing challenging circumstances. Looking to award 15 people this year. Winners will receive 2 \$15 vouchers to any retail dining, and a lapel pin with lanyard. To nominate someone, go to compliance@unt.edu
- Q&A
 - a) Q: Deadline for nominations? A: No, all year.
 - b) Q: If we nominate them this year and they did not get it, can we nominate them again? A: They will keep their nomination for one full year from the time they were nominated.
 - c) Q: Will people know if we nominate them? A: Good idea, we will work on making sure people know they have been nominated to help build that culture.
 - d) Q:A: If we nominate one year and they don't get it, can we nominate them again next year? A: Can only be considered once a year.
 - e) Q: How soon will they be notified that they were selected? A: Before the end of every semester. We'll let them know they've been nominated.
- B. Mr. Clayton Gibson, Vice President for Finance & Administration and CFO
 - Finance & Administration Overview – President and board approved compensation increases, TUF fund money is approved and will go into our "trust fund" for the state, and every year we will get that interest (about 20 million a year). Had healthy enrollment this fall semester and conservative budget estimates for the upcoming

year. Not aware of any fiscal deficiencies, we are a healthy campus. No state appropriation or tuition increase. Utilities and insurance are going to go up. Inflation hits the university – even milk, eggs, projectors, repairs, etc.

- Q&A
 - a) Q: MIT Living Wage Calculator – \$18.24 (no kids). Do you think that we're ever going to hit that living wage? A: Facilities is the biggest unit – many custodians making just over \$14/hr. We've increased a lot in the past few years, but we still have a way to go, and it adds up quickly. Because of what we talked about earlier with no increases in tuition and increased inflation. In the near term, we won't get there. But it's not lack of desire. We're working within the available means that we have.
 - b) Q: Are we free as a university to spend the TUF funding as we see fit? What are the guardrails? A: We do have flexibility, but ultimately, they have to show how they used the money appropriately within the boundaries. It does not need to be 100%, but it can be viewed as a breach of trust if we do not use it accordingly.
 - c) Q: An Assistant Dean is having a hard time hiring in the community regions. What are your goals for those issues? A: There is not lack of will or desire to do these things. There is a gap on the staff side, however. It is our hiring practices historically, and the ranges we present. These things have gotten us behind. There is a lot of people being underpaid. If I get data now, it will be worse. But the money has to be spent evenly and accordingly. We are also having to cover the most important payments first; Bond, Insurance, Utilities, etc. We are trying to not be irresponsible with what we have.
 - d) Q: Speak to priorities for capital projects? A: Good thing is that we have HEAF. The state requires this money be used on infrastructure. We'll have 3-4 a year. Including laptops, other infrastructure.
 - e) Q: In your time, do feel like it has improved as far as across the board? Employee pay or actual change impacted? A: I am pretty optimistic because we know exactly how we are doing. We review reports every month in detail. We are healthy, with no cuts coming. We used funds from grad school enrollment to help cover gaps in areas we were not fully covered for in the budget. Compensation and deferred maintenance are our two main areas of focus going forward. Student minimum wage is also something we are wanting to help to increase. Yes, I have seen it gotten better. It is just a matter of being responsible with the money and filling in gaps as we see it. If we have it, we will give it. We just won't be irresponsible.

C. Maria Velazquez, Associate Director of Human Resources, UNT System

- Not present

V. Constituency Concerns

A. Call for new constituent concerns

- Q: One or 2 meetings it was discussed about the times of our meeting being from 3-5, to something else. Maybe 2-4, etc. A: Yes, we did talk about it, but we cannot change anything until next year.
- Q: Staff don't get paid enough. A: Consistent concern. As we heard Clayton, this is something we hope they will continue to work on.

VI. Officer Reports

A. Chair Report – Quortina Phipps (she/her/hers)

B. Chair-Elect Report – Brittany Landau (she/her/hers)

- President's Farewell – President Smatresk is stepping down. EC hopes for the support of the Senate to organize an appreciation project. There are plenty of articles you can review. We'll work with UBSC to create a farewell video. We'll write prompts. We'll invite staff to come to the Union to record a quick video message to thank the president. Need volunteers to help facilitate/manage crowds on March 21. We hope Frisco and DP will also have a location. Optional. Help us spread the word and help by signing up to staff the recording session. President Smatresk will be one of our guests for our March meeting, so we plan to reveal it to him at that time.
- C. Secretary/Treasurer Report – Megan Wheeler
 - The minutes from the last meeting have already been posted to the website.
 - Status of Staff Senate budget – Because we put a pause on most of our typical programming, we have not spent much money so far this fiscal year. So now is the time for committee chairs to start thinking about programming/needs for the rest of the year. If you are interested in putting on a program or procuring items that you think would benefit staff, please send those requests to Quortina or the entire EC. We have about \$20,000.
- D. Communications Report – Kara Ottinger (she/her/hers)
 - Not in attendance
- E. Parliamentarian Report – Anna Phelan (she/her/hers)
 - No update
- F. Assessment Coordinator Report – Taylor Jordan (she/her/hers)
 - No update
- G. Past-Chair Report – Megan Cunningham (she/her/hers)
 - No update

VII. Standing Committee Chair Reports

- A. Communications and Public Relations – Kara Ottinger
- B. Membership and Assessment – John Bellon
- C. Staff Success – Wendy Comfort / Toni Sorsdal
 - For our committee we have also been on a pause, but we have discussed some ideas. We plan on talking to our committee today to potentially do things before the end of the year and possibly use the money we have left.

VIII. University Committee Updates

- A. Wellbeing Task Force – Senator Wendy Comfort:
 - Work with groups of individuals across campus to plan wellness-related events and bring forward ideas for more big-picture ideas. Team of 10 or so people. We have been working on employee resources and is hosting an employee health and lifestyle expo. I just dropped the flyer for it in the SS Team. February 28 in Jade Ballroom. The paper flyer has a QR code that will take you to the vendors that are listed. We will have a table there to advertise for us as a Senate. We have a company coming to do biometric screening, including blood tests. Bring an insurance card and ID for the screenings, and I would suggest registering ahead of time. It is all available via the flyers I attached or the wellness page. We also have a cardiovascular screening. It is not traditional and helps check for blockages, etc. HR benefits will have representatives as well as many others such as financial, nutrition, medical, etc. Another thing we have been working on is the Wellbeing Champions program. If you know of anyone in your department who is encouraging wellness in your department, nominate them. All of this information can be found on the UNT wellness page as well.
- B. Call for other committee updates

- Union Board of Directors – Senator Brittany Landau: downstairs, the corner store is closed and redoing it for a new Chick-Fil-A, and will ideally open at the end of March, but summer will probably be the big day. The old Chick Fil A will now host a Panda Express. Every student pays a Union fee every semester based on credit hours, and it is now increasing by \$1/credit hour and has been approved. Students will start seeing this reflected in the fall. This will increase the Union budget substantially. If you have not seen this already, there has been a policy change to the Union regarding scheduling. It is dictated by annual events, importance, and student-priority organizations. Priority will be student organizations. The impact of this change on our staff is going to be minimal. Additionally, there will be a rental fee increase for departments. So, keep that in mind for when you budget.
- Distinguished Lecture Series – Senator Alex Ames: Ke Huy Quan coming soon! Staff tickets are \$10. Will broaden the seats available.

IX. Old Business

A. Basketball game Tailgate event

- Email will be sent out and flyers available for you to take; help us share the word.
- Sunday, March 3, 12-2 p.m. in the Super Pit (gymnastics room).
- Free but you need to RSVP. When you buy your ticket for the game, you have the option to RSVP for the tailgate. Athletics will send us a list and we'll send confirmation emails.
- Food (hot dogs, etc.) will be provided.
- Point is to make sure all feel like we're part of the community, bring your families. Same day as UNT Junior Dancers Clinic.
- Also need to get the word out using tabling (during Health & Wellness Expo, and other events). Please sign up to table between 4:30-5:30 p.m. in staff parking lots. Include your preferred parking lot when you sign up.
 - a) Q: Do you have to buy a ticket to RSVP? How do we sign up if we already get free tickets? A: Brittany to get an answer back to Suzannie ASAP. Perhaps will create a separate form for staff in Athletics and those who have season tickets.

X. New Business

A. Need support for Staff Appreciation Month (SAM) – We have a few dates and need a minimum of 2 people for each pop-up event. It is a good way to make sure we are being seen and participating. Brittany will send out sign-up sheets. We will be across UNT, Discovery Park, and Frisco. We plan on ordering swag items, and we will have a painting event. We are also taking suggestions for swag items that you think would be great giveaways. The purpose of these pop-up events is because we know a lot of folks do not know we exist and our purpose. This is our opportunity for us to be present and around.

- Q: What are we doing during the pop events? A: Having popcorn, drinks, candy and this is truly an introduction to staff and get to know each other. This is supposed to be a fun and casual event to help getting to know constituents.
- Q: What is the time commitment? A: One hour
- Q: Suggestions for swag items?
 - a) Tote bags
 - b) Stickers, good quality
 - c) Reusable set of silverware
 - d) UNT printed flash drive
 - e) Blue light glasses
 - f) Fidget stuff
 - g) Luggage tags with different shapes/designs
 - h) Buttons for jackets and backpacks

- i) Ice cream coupons
 - j) USB with different charging ports
 - k) Keychain flashlight
 - (1) Drop any other suggestions in Teams that is affordable, and we can have in large quantities.
- B. Charge to committees: New events, programming for the remainder of this fiscal year
- Send those proposals to the EC member in your group
- C. Changes to Bylaws (as identified in retreat) – Senators charged with reviewing proposals, be prepared to propose new and/or vote in March
- Division Representation
 - Presidential Liaison Role
 - Split Combined Divisions
 - a) Planning
 - b) Compliance and Ethics
 - c) Enterprise Systems
 - Executive Committee Positions
 - a) Adding Treasurer Roles
 - Q: I get off at 4:30, and I don't want to miss anything, but should I have to since that is my normal schedule to leave? Am I penalized for my attendance? A: The Bylaws dictate that we are supposed to, but we have not been enforcing. If you think it needs to be changed, bring it to the next meeting. If we truly want to abide by the bylaws as is, it will be stricter. But, if you want to make changes to the bylaws, bring them to the next meeting and propose them. Right now, we're going to focus on the changes that will affect seats. We can evaluate additional changes after elections.

XI. Announcements

- A. Guest speakers at May general assembly meeting will include President Smatresk
- Adam Fein (VP for Digital Strategy and Innovation and Chief Digital Officer) will speak with us in April.

XII. Adjournment / Dismissal to Standing Committees

- A. 4:42 p.m.