

STAFF SENATE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING**4/14/26****In Person, Union 332****Agenda****I. Call to Order – 2:02pm****II. Roll Call -Quorum met****III. VOTE to Approve Previous Meeting's Minutes (3/10/26) – motion to approve passes, none against****IV. Guest Speakers****A. Dr. Donna Asher, Vice Chancellor for People & Culture**

- **Concerns about change to the new policy**

1. Donna clarified that this is not an absolute. Policy has provision to indicate that if you are equipped and able to work but choose not to, that's when you take vacation. However if you are not equipped to work from home and/or your job is not conducive to working at home, you may use emergency time.

- (1) Vesta asked clarifying question about having equipment, but unable to work due to other reasons (confidentiality concerns, shared spaces, etc): per Donna, policy allows for these circumstances where your supervisor can allow you to use emergency time rather than vacation time. She again emphasized that the statement is not absolute.

- (2) Alex asked for clarification regarding if home has a power outage, would you be able to use emergency leave with management approval?: Donna stated that yes, the policy allows for this.

- (3) Donna provided background of why this policy was put into place. She stated policy needed to evolve based on changing circumstances (i.e. ability to work remotely after Covid, etc). There was strife caused when other area universities were able to do remote work when we had to be open/completely closed. This policy allows for leadership of each campus to talk with each other and make unilateral decisions, and provisions to allow for discretion of leadership as well.

- (4) Online question: how do you request for emergency leave to be approved due to internet outage on snow day. Donna: recommends directly reaching out to your supervisor via phone/text to let them know what is going on. If you're unable to access any type of communication, she suggested you treat it like sick leave and enter/request after you return to work. She also recommends meeting with your supervisor to understand their expectations and how they want to communicate in advance.

- (5) Difference from faculty leave and staff leave: Donna stated there is a provision in policy that states faculty must follow standard

set forth by university leadership. Staff has a different work environment and different types of jobs. Faculty may not be able to teach, but they may still be able to do research, other activities. She will not say that they will be made equal because the jobs and expectations are different.

(6) Watching children vs. working during weather events: Donna recognized that this is a challenge. As a state employer, we have to operate in the best interest of the organization. If you are unable to work because of too much going on in your background, that is not a reason to use emergency leave. She pointed out that children are home during summer and people are working with them at home then. With exception of possible FERPA violation concerns, etc.

(7) Darriel: If a department is closed due to inclement weather, but decide to be open and many did not have laptops or access to work from home, many were told they did not have to work. However, that left very few to answer phones for UNT/UNT Frisco unexpectedly. Donna: was informed by Vesta that most call center employees now have laptops when they didn't before. She emphasized that emergency leave is a management position based on being equipped/conducive to working remotely.

(8) Alayne: Suggested Donna clarify that when supervisors are making emergency leave determination for individuals, if they are the only one/small group that don't have power, then supervisor can still say they may use emergency leave. Also clarify childcare; if child is home because school is closed—do you do your best with the circumstances, or should supervisor be able to say you can use emergency leave? Donna stated that power outage does not have to be widespread to grand emergency leave. However, having a child at home does not qualify you for emergency leave. Discussion amongst Senators about living alone vs. FERPA violations/children, etc.

(9) Cheyenne: Could clarification be sent out in mass? She was told that their office was not allowed to work from home due to children at home. Donna: We will be glad to do whatever needs to be done to be sure it's understood. She also emphasized that she gives grace as this policy is new and still being understood/interpreted. If they need HR to speak with their department, they can do so.

(10) Jenna: is Bridge training for supervisors regarding this policy possible for advisors? Donna: not a quick turn around, but this is possible.

(11) Donna: if any questions, please reach out to HR and ask. Know that each situation will have its own set of facts to consider.

B. Clayton Gibson, Vice President for Finance and Administration

- Budget updates, etc.
- SASCO accreditation visited last week; no citations! 10 year reaffirmation.
- University credit evaluation by Fitch: AA rated; University has plan for success

- Transfers, domestic grads, etc. up!
- Budget plan: combo of revenue and expense reductions. We have ample budget to make payroll, but University is taking steps to get back into position to be balanced. Retention is #1 to help revenue. Every division has expense target, and we will be trying to reduce those expenses. Finance will provide guidance/guardrails, but VPs will come up with their own plans. (ex: cutting programs with low enrollment). This will mean different things for different areas. Deadline May 1st to get to board for approval. Plan is by FY28 to be sufficiently balanced. Responses to budget needs must be measured and strategic. (ex: some divisions are cutting empty positions). The hope is to have sufficient funding with state funding and begin investing in staff/compensation.

1. Shelly: What have we learned in losing the grad students and what will we do in the future? Clayton: Diversify. The more countries/domestic states we can recruit from, the better. Sometimes changes come quickly and can be very impactful. They have tried their best to build reserves for university so employees are taken care of.

2. Alex: Do you have general idea about how much impact we expect this to have on budget? Clayton: Not off the top of his head.

3. Jeffery/Jenna: Someone had applied to grad school to a program that is now gone. The message they got was that they shouldn't apply to UNT. Clayton: this is feedback they need, so we need to communicate with students better about being allowed to still apply because they must "teach out" those programs.

4. Nikki: Advisor wasn't sure where to put her because she was accepted to grad program that is now cut.

5. Shelly: Can you share further any timelines for budget? Clayton: May 1 deadline for budget. Actual deadline will base on unit, but must be done this FY as we are budgeting based on the savings.

C. Adam Sharrah, Associate Athletic Director

- Available to answer ticketing questions if needed
- Successful year throughout Athletics program
- Offer faculty/staff appreciation football games (will be 9/25/26 game vs Houston Christian). Discounted tickets will be available for non-staff for this game. Last year, approximately 4000 tickets were claimed by staff/faculty
- 20% faculty/staff discount for any season tickets.
 1. Christian: How as University do we address being a "feeder" school to others? We lost most football players. Adam: Transfer portal is a common topic throughout college athletics. UNT is trying to capitalize on the momentum they gained from that team, sharing the story of what UNT can provide. Reached national news last year. Educating new staff. Bringing in high quality athletes/individuals.
 2. Lupita: Discounts on single tickets or season pass? Adam: season passes only; payroll deduction available. Contact ticketoffice@unt.edu or adam.sharrah@unt.edu or call 940-565-2527 for staff discounted tickets/passes.

D. Sue Aichele, Human Resources

- No pending items, will stay if senators want to come individually

- E. Jeanette Garriga, President's Office Liaison
 - Update on event: Linked In on campus next week; the only stop at any University and in Texas. Open to work lab 4/21 Emerald Ballroom (10am-11am); attendees will receive a book, book signing at 11am. Student events that afternoon in Emerald ballroom.

V. Constituency Concerns

- A. Call for New Constituent Concerns
 - Jeffrey: request for performance evaluation: there should be comment section for employee to comment that is not always visible to supervisor. Sue: may be due to system limitations, but will take this back to HR.
 - Zach: What should staff be telling students who's certificates get eliminated and they cannot get the credential. Jeanette: will take this back to her team and get an answer.
 - Rachel: Training/guidance on how to approach interpreting the law as a staff member in light of staff member being fired over viral video. Training will help staff and make us feel like we are all on the same team. How to we speak for UNT in a way that is true. Alex: SS can talk with compliance/OGC to see if there's any training possible to be given. Christian: Feels like there was no answer with CCO, felt it was intentional avoidance of giving clear answer. Jenna: can reach back out to UIC and general council to get better answers.
 - Shelly: Suggested writing a letter to compliance/OGC to ask with more clarity. Alex: Agreed, yes, we can do this in writing. What is policy and how does media attention affect policy?
 - Nikki: Remember to update your license plates for virtual parking permits, will be live for FY2027. Can have as many license plates as necessary, but both vehicles cannot be on campus at the same time.
 - Lupita: After programs cut, getting emails for day of giving felt insulting. Is there a way to unsubscribe? Jenna/Alex: no, but can create a rule to send those emails to trash if preferred.
 - Senator Question: If 2 different license plates at different times, is this okay?: yes per Nikki.

VI. Officer Reports

- A. Chair Report – Alex Ames (he/him/his)
 - Quarterly Executive Committee Meeting with the President on the 27th
 - 1. President Keller will be at the June meeting as well!
 - Met with UNT Health Staff Senate (newly incorporated)
- B. Chair-Elect Report – Jenna Schuster (she/her/hers)
 - Getting staff cords together; may be asking for help with delivery.
- C. Secretary Report – Christina Rucker -none
- D. Treasurer Report – Nikki Sparks-none
- E. Communications Report – Walker Smart -none
- F. Parliamentarian Report – Christian Bridge
 - Elections are live, many areas have several to vote for.

- Bylaw change #1 – motion passes
- Bylaw change #2 – motion passes
- G. Assessment Coordinator Report – Tsubasa Tajima
 - No report; personal announcement; leaving UNT at end of month
- H. Past-Chair Report – Brittany Landau (she/her/hers)-none

VII. Standing Committee Chair Reports

- A. Communications and Public Relations – ~~Shelby Simmons~~
- B. Membership and Assessment – Nicole Habern -none
- C. Staff Success – Cheyenne Moore / Laderica Paul
 - Cheyenne: Thanks for those who came to first lunch and learn. One more on 5/27 with Amanda Fisher: Five Languages of Work Appreciation. In person and Bridge

VIII. Staff Senate Professional Development Fund Requests

- A. Applicant 1- Motion approved, none opposed
- B. Applicant 2 – Motion approved, none opposed
- C. Applicant 3 – Motion approved, none opposed
- D. Please advertise this opportunity! Word of mouth is the best way to get more applicants.

IX. University Committee Updates

- A. Call for University Committee Updates
 - Athletic Council: New coach at recent meeting, discussed process of getting new team. They expect to have 40-45 transfers/graduates, so turn over is expected. 54 athletes are above 3.8gpa! Football showcase this Saturday
 - Jenna: Fine Arts Committee budget was eliminated for FY27; will try to bring one more artist on campus in August. Will update.

X. Old Business -none

XI. New Business - none

XII. Announcements

- A. Alex: Phillip has posted a list of discussion topics in Staff Senate Teams titled “Staff as Educators”. Topics and emails on Teams in that post.

XIII. Adjournment / Dismissal to Standing Committees

Adjorn: 3:30pm