



June Meeting Highlights

Guest Speakers

Dr. Harrison Keller, President

Sue Aichele, Human Resources

Jeanette Garriga, President's Office Liaison

Meeting Recap

Budget Update

UNT faced a significant structural budget deficit driven by two factors: a loss of state appropriation tied to enrollment from the prior legislative session, and a sharper-than-projected decline in international student enrollment (down approximately 2,500 international master's students, each contributing \$20,000–\$25,000 annually).

The projected deficit grew from an initial \$31M to \$45M. Through hiring slowdowns, a voluntary separation program, and program consolidations, the deficit has been reduced to approximately \$34M, with expectations to land close to the original \$31M projection by end of summer.

The proposed budget targets an even budget by FY28.

Recovery is contingent on improving student persistence, retention, and recruitment.

Academic Program Changes

42 certificate programs were consolidated or closed based on low demand (threshold: 2 or fewer students per year).

Approximately 20% of low-demand minors were eliminated — specifically standalone minors with no associated major.

Programs will continue to be evaluated annually on student demand, workforce trends, cost to the institution, and "time to value" (how quickly students break even on their UNT investment). UNT is noted as the only research university publicly publishing this data.

New programs will be developed where workforce demand exists.

Compensation & Budget Inclusions

A merit pool has been included in the proposed budget (going to the Board of Regents for adoption in August, effective September).

A modest minimum wage increase of \$0.50/hour was also included.

Dr. Keller expressed commitment to budgeting for merit every year and acknowledged the need to improve salary competitiveness and retain top performers.

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is a living document; implementation plans for all academic

and administrative units will be posted on the website soon.
UNT is pursuing a supplemental accreditation tied to economic mobility and student outcomes.

Staff Initiatives Highlighted

Professional Development Grant Program: Funding was doubled to \$20,000 from the President's office. Dr. Keller noted fewer requests than expected, likely due to budget-consciousness, and encouraged staff to take advantage of available funds.

Customer Service Initiative: External funding was secured through the UNT Foundation; the DeJulius Group was engaged as a consultant. A Customer Service Task Force (with Staff Senate representation via Jenna) is building campus-wide workshops to be deployed in the coming months.

Q&A with Dr. Keller

Q: How are eliminated low-demand programs saving money if courses still exist? Dr. Keller clarified that eliminated minors were standalone (no associated major), meaning courses exist primarily to serve that credential. Savings come from reducing low-enrollment course sections and deploying faculty more efficiently. He acknowledged some cases have less direct cost savings and the primary goal was clearing low-demand offerings.

Q: Is there news on an interim provost? An appointment is expected within a week or two. The delay is due to the Board working through new responsibilities under **Senate Bill 37**, which gives boards more explicit authority over provost-level appointments. Dr. Keller noted he has temporarily absorbed 27 additional direct reports.

Q: What are your top 3 priorities for UNT Frisco?

1. Focus on high-demand credentials in Collin County — particularly healthcare, financial services, sports/hospitality/entertainment, and disruptive/innovation technologies.
2. Expand non-degree and workforce upskilling credentials, given widespread corporate slowdowns in entry-level hiring amid AI disruption.
3. Deepen the partnership with **Collin College**, including the co-enrollment partnership and planned health professions collaboration.

Q: Update on the smart/pre-populated registration initiative? Dr. Keller expressed strong support, calling it a priority for UNT going forward. The goal is to pre-populate student schedules so students can stay on track to graduate.

Advisors' time is being freed up from routine approvals to focus on more substantive counseling. He acknowledged implementation is bumpy and commended **Lisa McIntyre** and teams in the Registrar's Office for their heroic efforts. Advisors also noted current challenges helping students navigate the system during orientation.

Q: How did the voluntary separation program go? Approximately 44 faculty applied; ~40 were approved (tenure-track and professional faculty meeting eligibility criteria). Beyond cost savings, the goal was to free up faculty lines for strategic reallocation. Deans have already been told which new lines they can hire for next year. Dr. Keller opposed blanket hiring freezes, emphasizing the need to build capabilities strategically.

Q: How will UNT fare in the next legislative session? Dr. Keller was optimistic, emphasizing UNT's strong story: redesigning thousands of seats, publishing time-to-value data, driving economic mobility. Key legislative asks will include:

- Funding for healthcare workforce development
- General operations funding
- Support for outcomes/performance-based funding models (which would benefit UNT)
- Capital investment to renovate and better utilize existing facilities (e.g., unused floors of the Life Science Building); the new Science Building opens in January.

Q: Support for staff through the financial waiting period? A staff member from the Career Center raised the reality of not being able to afford gas or food on current salaries. Dr. Keller acknowledged the concern, noted staff salary increases can move faster than faculty processes, and committed to looking into additional non-financial support options.

Meeting Recap Continued HR/Compensation Discussion

Following Dr. Keller's departure, Sue Aichele addressed several ongoing concerns raised by senators:

Cost of Living & Wages

Acknowledged as a widespread challenge, not unique to UNT. The formal flexible work arrangement policy exists (remote, hybrid, alternate schedules) when job duties and department operations support it.

Wage Compression: A significant and recurring concern. Long-tenured employees are earning the same as or less than newly hired colleagues. Compression increases turnover and institutional knowledge loss, and costs the university more in rehiring and training. The compensation team is working on job architecture and market analysis. Senators requested not just continued monitoring, but a concrete plan with a timeline.

Flexible Work / Fear Culture

Multiple senators noted that even where policy allows hybrid/remote work, many employees feel uncomfortable requesting it, and some supervisors actively block it. Senators requested stronger advocacy from senior leadership. A concern was raised about whether President Keller might move in the direction of the University of Houston, which recently eliminated all remote/hybrid options — suggested as a question for the president-staff lunch.

F1 Student Work Hour Cap

Philip Aguinaga raised a specific case where an undergraduate international student enrolled in a required internship class was limited to 20 hours/week by UNT policy (not federal visa regulations), preventing them from completing the internship hours required for the course. Sue noted the policy is designed for equity and compliance (FLSA, ACA thresholds). Staff Senate will follow up with HR on this issue, which appears to be affecting more students than a single case.

Holiday Reductions

Senators expressed frustration that traditional benefits of higher ed employment (spring break, floating holidays, Friday afternoons off) have been eroding without corresponding salary increases. Sue noted the number of state holidays is set by the state, not UNT.

Performance Reviews

A senator asked why performance reviews feel meaningless if merit is unavailable. Sue reminded staff that reviews document performance for protection, inform merit distribution when funds become available, and support promotion decisions. The question of whether current reviews will count toward

merit when funds are released was taken as a follow-up item.

Bereavement Leave

HR confirmed they are aware of discrepancies between UNT and UNT System definitions of "family" in bereavement policies and are actively reviewing alignment. No timeline yet; updates will be communicated when finalized.

Dining Staff

A dining team member noted that dining employees often can't access professional development events (held during meal service times), can't work remotely, must work holidays, and are among the lowest-paid on campus — yet new hires sometimes earn more than existing staff.

Show Your Fire



UNT Police Department Forensic Fun Day

Friday, July 17th, 2026

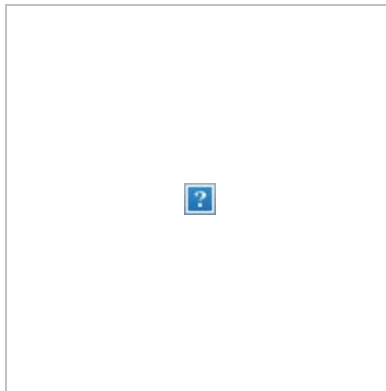
There are 2 separate half-day sessions for different age ranges. The morning session is from 9am – 12pm (preferred ages 5-9). The afternoon session is from 1pm - 4pm (preferred ages 10-14). (Siblings can attend the same session regardless of age.)

We will have several stations which include investigating hair, photographing and sketching a crash investigation, some messy casting activities and a puzzle room to test your skills at mechanical contraptions.

Snacks, pizza, and ice cream will be provided. Event specific details will be shared during the RSVP process. Each session will be capped at 40 participants.

Please RSVP by June 26th to Sgt Cory Lane - cory.lane@unt.edu

Be Curious



Staff Senate Origins

UNT's Staff Senate was established in Fall 1999 and was formerly called the UNT Staff Council. In March 2013, staff members voted to change its name to Staff Senate. To this day, elected members represent and provide service to over 2,300 staff members at UNT.

What is Staff Senate?

The UNT Staff Senate is the vehicle for peer leadership among the university

staff. The senate is made up of 42 elected members who represent more than 2,300 staff employees. Senate members receive input from and provide feedback to an assigned group of employees, who are considered their "constituents." The Senate meets six times per year in the general session and the organization's executive committee meets five times per year. To learn more, visit our [website!](#)

What staff events do YOU want?

The purpose of this survey is to gauge what kind of event program would be most beneficial and needed for staff. Despite requiring a UNT login, this survey is anonymous.: <https://forms.office.com/r/L4B5dGKR9G>

Tuition Benefit Reminder

The University of North Texas offers an Employee Tuition Benefit to eligible UNT and UNT System component institution employees and employee dependents enrolled in UNT courses.

Employees and/or dependents must meet all eligibility requirements as of the 12th class day (Fall/Spring) or 4th class day (Summer) to receive the Employee Tuition Benefit.

Learn more [here](#).

Professional Development Fund

Through the Office of the President, funds have been set aside to ensure staff across UNT have access to meaningful professional development opportunities. We are excited to share this opportunity and need your help to spread the word.

We are asking staff to identify valuable external professional development opportunities that align with their roles and receive supervisor approval. Staff can then [apply](#) for up to \$400 (in addition to any departmental funding) to help offset related expenses.

Engagementors: Making Waves Together!

Looking for new ways to strengthen engagement within your team? Join us on July 10th from 1:30–3:30 p.m. in SSB 102 for Engagementors: Making Waves Together! Hear from Peter Palacios, Director of Maintenance & Operations, then participate in interactive roundtable discussions where supervisors and leaders can share ideas, challenges, and best practices for building engaged teams.

[Register today!](#)

We Care



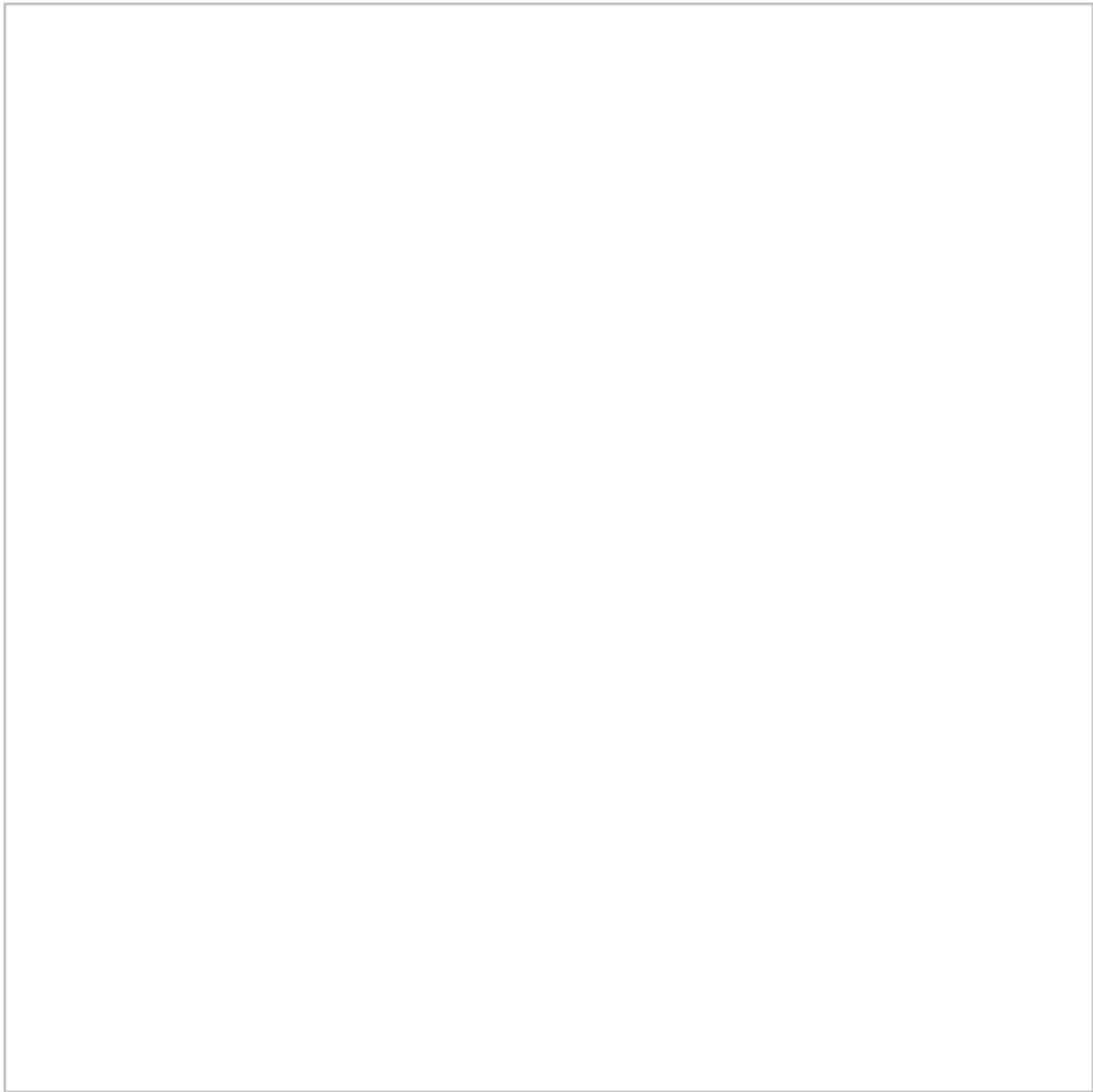
2026-2027 Parking Permits: Now Available

Permits for the 2026-2027 academic year are now available for purchase. Parking and Transportation has transitioned to a new system where permits are now virtual, utilizing License Plate Recognition technology.

- Physical permits will no longer need to be displayed on your vehicle.
- Your license plate will serve as your parking credential once properly registered to your account.
- Multiple vehicles may be added to your permit account for convenience.
- Only one registered vehicle may utilize the permit on campus at a time.
Vehicles associated with the same permit found parked on campus simultaneously may be subject to citation.

To purchase your permit and manage the vehicles on your account, go [here](#).

Better Together



Welcome Our New Staff Senators

Allesanda Griffitt

Will Branch

Alysa Perkins

Chad Flenar

Rachel McMullen

Jazmyne Dixson

L. Patton Griffith

Hannah Kronenberger

Zechariah Tillman-David

Ethan Gillis

Savannah Vela

Dallas Hogue

Indra Bhagat
Grace Graves
Linda Mckeiver
Nicole Scott
Alex Khraish
Elizabeth Ayala
Tori Clark
Toni Clarkson

Join Us at Our Next Meeting

Meetings are open to all UNT staff members.
Please join us at 2pm in SSB 105 for the next meeting on July 14th.

Can't make it in person?
Stream the meeting via [Zoom](#)

Can't make the meeting time?
Submit your concern via the [anonymous suggestion box](#).

[Send in](#) your news, events, and announcements for inclusion in the Staff Senate
Newsletter and Social Media Channels.

Contact Us

For questions, comments, or announcement submissions,
please email: staffsenate@unt.edu.

Beyond the Desk

Featuring: Jasmine Carter: The Mean Green Adventure Seeker



When she's not leading alumni engagement efforts at UNT, Jasmine Carter can often be found planning her next theme park adventure.

A self-proclaimed theme park enthusiast, Jasmine has visited Disney destinations for 13 consecutive years and recently scored sneak peek tickets to the highly anticipated Universal Kids Resort in Frisco. Whether it's discovering new attractions or revisiting favorite rides, Jasmine loves the creativity, storytelling, and excitement that theme parks bring to every experience.

Email Staff Senate to nominate a coworker to be featured in our next newsletter.

Important Links