



STAFF SENATE MEETING

April 14, 2020

3:00 PM – Zoom Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Officers Present: Suzan Cruz, Chair; Charlotte Cooke, Chair-Elect; Katie McCoy, Past Chair; Megan Cunningham, Secretary/Treasurer; Allison Peeler, Parliamentarian; Lisa Cuevas, Communications Coordinator.

Senators Present: Alisha Carter Harris, Alexis Guess, Allyson Gardner, Amanda Bennett, Amy Ferman, Chris Cunningham, Connor Meier, Corey Davidson, Craig Howard, Devin Axtman, Elizabeth Berry, Emily Gautraud, Erin McKinnis, Jesse McBroom, Jim Rogers, Karen Goss, Kayla Green, Koby Osowski, Latrice Owens Moore, Louise Dunn, Margarita Venegas, Monique Scales, Natalie Bernard, Stacy Buchanan, Steven Tudor.

Guests Present: President Neal Smatresk, Katy McDaniel, Paul Goebel, R. Mark Miles

I. Call to Order (5 minutes): 3:00 PM

II. Speakers/Presentations (20 minutes)

- i.** Katy McDaniel, Director of Human Resources
 - a)** COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented situation that has affected staff members in many ways.
 - b)** We are faced with making rapid changes to the way we work and serve the campus community.
 - c)** With these changes come lots of questions which we have worked to ensure that the information on the UNT and the HR resource websites is kept up to date.
 - d)** UNT website is healthalerts.unt.edu. It has lots of FAQs and information specific to telecommuting.
 - e)** Human Resources page is hr.untsystem.edu. It has lots of information regarding employee leave.

- f) Anyone with a specific leave situation can contact Human Resources for assistance.
- g) First question from a constituent: Clarification on the Chancellors' email regarding extension of emergency leave until May 31 and if staff will get further pay from April 3rd to May 31st.
 - (1) Answer: All regular staff employees (someone who is employed in a part time or full time staff position and who are either not considered essential personnel and so are not able to work on campus right now, or their jobs are not conducive to telecommuting and there are no alternate duties assigned to them right now) will continue to receive Emergency Leave pay either until campus reopens to non-essential personnel, or they are assigned alternate duties, or until May 31st , whichever of those comes first. Staff who fall into this category should be entering the Health Pandemic Emergency Leave code for the days missed in order to continue to be paid.
 - (2) Non-student hourly employees were paid through April 3 and they will not be paid beyond that date, unless they are actually working.
 - (3) Emergency leave is only for the situations in which the University has directed a staff member not to work and does not apply to personal health situations.
- h) Second question from a constituent: Clarification on the recent email sent regarding the new federal leave options that are available.
 - (1) Answer: There are two new provisions from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. One is Federal Emergency Sick Leave, and the other is the Expanded Family and Medical Leave. The Act is effective from April 1 through December 31 of this year.
 - (2) The Federal Emergency Sick Leave provides up to two weeks of paid sick leave up to a certain salary threshold, depending on the reason for leave.
 - (3) Employees who want to utilize that must provide supporting documentation to their supervisor, which will be maintained at the department level.
 - (4) The second part of the act provides extended FMLA leave where an employee is eligible for up to 12 weeks of leave if they are caring for a child whose school or place of childcare is closed due to COVID-19 related reasons.
 - (5) To apply for extended Family and Medical Leave, an employee will follow the normal FMLA leave procedures and submit their request for leave through our SLA source vendor.
- i) Third question from a constituent: What happens if employees do not have leave such as a sick or vacation time to cover through the end of May? Will they lose their job? Should they file unemployment until we reopen completely? Others have done that with their employees. Will UNT follow suit?

- (1) Answer: UNT established measures to pay Health Pandemic Emergency Leave to those regular staff members who cannot work because either they are not considered essential personnel and therefore can't be on campus to do their jobs, or their jobs are not conducive to telecommuting or we don't have any work right now as alternate duties to assign them to perform.
- (2) Since staff members are continuing to receive the Health Pandemic Emergency Leave pay, they should not file for unemployment benefits since they have not experienced loss in pay or employment status at this time.

ii. Paul Goebel, Director, University Student Money Management Center.

- a)** Founding and Managing Director of the University Student Money Management Center.
- b)** The center normally works with students.
- c)** Black Swan, a new lexicon is a financial term that refers to an unpredictable event that is beyond what is normally expected of a situation and has potentially severe consequences.
 - (1) Black Swan events are characterized by their extreme rarity and severe impact. From a money management standpoint, it's typically during crisis.
- d)** Top money management skills will see us through the best of times and more challenging times.
- e)** Lessons learned during these times will carry us forward to be better prepared and best prepared for similar events.
- f)** There are relief packages in the pipeline at the state and federal levels, including rent and mortgage reprieves.
 - (1) Credit card issuers are offering different types of debt relief, such as waived fees and deferred payments.
 - (2) The Texas Supreme Court has halted residential evictions until April 19.
 - (3) The US Department of Education is offering to give most federal student loan borrowers a payment reprieve until September 29.
 - (4) The Cares stimulus package will not be included in 2020 income.
 - (5) IRS has extended the due date for tax filing in 2019 tax payments until July 15.
- g)** Step up and reach out if you are not able to pay your credit card statement balance, call the number on the back of your credit card to discuss your options rather than defaulting.
- h)** Reach out to your bank if you have some issues and need some help from your bank.
- i)** Listen to your financial planner and don't panic to sell. Investors should be careful not to let emotion dictate their investment decisions.

- j) Many utilities, car loan companies, credit cards, banks, and other creditors are allowing payment deferrals.
- k) This is the time to get started. Sit down, develop a budget, and work out a money plan.
- l) Manage expenses and adopt an emergency money plan. Have a plan when it comes to setting priorities for the monies you bank.
- m) Stock-up and avoid the panic mindset of stockpiling.
- n) Avoid high cost alternatives, get help, and be proactive.
- o) Remember in the years to come to pay it forward to help and give back to the university.
- p) If you are working with any students in need, please direct them to the online form available on the Start Green Stay Green website.

iii. R. Mark Miles, Director of Organizational Development and Engagement (ODE).

- a) Team has been working hard to provide professional development during this time.
- b) Beginning in May, our activities will be in the newsletter view of ODE's training session.
- c) We are offering our training in real time via Zoom.
- d) Trainings include: How to Handle Change, Coaching for Performance, Emotional Intelligence, Communication with Confidence, Performance Interviewing, and Deconstructing the Difficult Conversation.
- e) These trainings will be hybrid going forward.
- f) ODE has prerecorded webinars. They are recorded and posted on UNT World learning where they can be downloaded.
- g) Training can be taken at any time.
- h) ODE offers free consulting services. Reach out to us if your department has a need for consulting services.
- i) Started something new called Five-minute Wisdom podcast. One can play it in the background while working.

III. Consent Agenda Discussion Items (10 minutes)

i. Ad Hoc and University Committees

IV. Approval of Minutes

- i. No discussion.
 - a) Minutes approved.

V. Constituency Concerns (5 minutes)

VI. Officer Reports (10 minutes)

i. Chair Report – Suzan Cruz

- a) Need to ensure that our constituents know we are always there for them.
- b) Send constituency concerns my way, and I will ensure they are addressed.

ii. Chair-Elect Report – Charlotte Cooke

- a) Very impressed with the University, especially the different departments coming together such as today to hold webinars on how to deal with stress.
- b) Always look out for COVID-19 Update emails that we have been receiving.

iii. Budget Report – Megan Cunningham

- a) Staff Development Committee to work together with HR to come up with ways to support staff while we can't do Lunch and Learns.

iv. Communications Report – Lisa Cuevas

- a) Let us know if there is anything you want included in the newsletter or social media.

v. Parliamentarian Report – Allison Peeler

- a) Update on Staff Senate Elections.
 - (1) The Call for Nominations has gone out to the divisions with open seats.

VII. Staff Senate Committee Reports (10 minutes) -- these meetings will be held after the general meeting

i. Communications and Public Relations

- a) No report.

ii. Bylaws and Elections

a) Staff Senate General Elections –

- (1) Call for nominations was sent on Monday and we are keeping it open through April 24.
- (2) The goal is to have plenty of time to get enough nominations and the corresponding Supervisor Approval Forms.
- (3) We have sent out an email to people who are up for reelection and are eligible to run again.
- (4) Voting will be from April 30th to May 8th and results will be announced on May 15th.

iii. Policy and Benefits Committee

- a) Summer enrollment (for insurance) will be from June 29 through July 10.

iv. Staff Development

- a) Committee has been meeting every Friday for the last couple of weeks to discuss how Lunch and Learns can be reorganized.
- b) Committee is considering calling it another name since it will not be possible to hold it over lunch as has been the practice. We are looking at either 10 AM or 2 PM.
- c) We would love to entertain some new name suggestions.
- d) To work with HR in order to make some of the workshops originally planned for Staff Appreciation Month come to fruition at a later date.

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

- a) Our new normal.
 - (1) Most people now telecommute and for some essential services, it is hybrid.
 - (2) Need to ensure that our constituents' concerns are always addressed.

X. Adjournment: 4:11 PM