

Stephen F. Austin State University
Staff Council Meeting Notes
Monday, February 14, 2022
1:30 p.m. – 3:56 p.m.
McGee Business Building (Room 133) and Zoom

Attendees:

Attending Representatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair: Megan Weatherly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair-Elect: Alison Reed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parliamentarian: Rebecca Galatas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treasurer: Grace Romero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary - Meredith Baily <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leiah Allen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Veronica Beavers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brittany Beck <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharon Brewer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Brown-Moreno <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Catton <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surry Consford <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jennifer Crenshaw <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jessica DeWitt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denise Douglas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Harless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stina Herrera <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Veronica Herrera <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Kennedy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trina Menefee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agatha Moreland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caleb Perkins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Scott <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marc Scott <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Stobart <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lissy Turner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tierney Twigg <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mindy Wolbert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lissy Turner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tierney Twigg <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mindy Wolbert
Not Present	

Meeting Minutes

Topic	Minutes
I. Call to Order	Chair Weatherly called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
II. Roll Call	Secretary Baily called roll. Individuals noted above were in attendance. No proxies present.
III. Presentations	<p>a. Ms. Judi Kruwell, Interim Vice President for Finance & Administration Topic: Status of possible outsourcing of positions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official announcement – Dr. Gordon has said, for the moment, “he will not pursue layoffs in favor of outsourcing.” No current RFP and RFQs related to outsourcing of employee positions. Future of outsourcing – we will be thinking strategically and holistically about what is best for our employees. Current discussion is around sanitation services because (a) it does not affect current employees (jobs) and (b) our truck is at end of life. We will perform an RFP to determine if outsourcing sanitation services makes sense or not. <p>Open for questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair Weatherly: For those positions that are not being filled how are those being communicated to the campus? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kruwell: have not to date communicated these. Conversations are around what makes sense for these positions – debating options. We have not formalized how to communicate but that conversation is happening how to communicate these changes or contracting possibilities. Painfully aware of how short staffed we are and how that affects services. Representative V. Herrera: Staff need communication around these decisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kruwell: agreed and we can work through that over the next several weeks. Representative Crenshaw: Who are the ones making these decisions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Kruwell: Generally, the Cabinet meets and makes these decisions

	<p>and then reports to the Board. Regarding these decisions, it is at a Cabinet level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Graham Garner (Chief Communication Marketing Officer): as for managers within divisions, we ask that you communicate things up to Cabinet so they in turn may communicate to the campus. If any departments recognize there needs to be a prioritization of services, the ask is to share up to the appropriate Cabinet-level executive. • Representative Crenshaw: There seems to be a wide variance in information flow. Some decisions made at the Cabinet-level and high-level managers do not get communicated to front-line staff. Encourages executives to remember that staff are interested and want to be aware and informed and need information to be communicated from the top and not just via managers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. John Branch (Interim Director, Physical Plant): Now that outsourcing decision has been made, the discussion will be around what needs to occur with custodial. Recommendations will be made by PPD managers, then taken to Cabinet. • Representative Harless: Is this (halt on outsourcing discussions) long-term, or will it be revisited? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Kruwell: Cannot answer that but the halt is the decision for the day. Goal is to make it hard to have outsourcing even considered. • Representative M. Scott: If we are in great financial health, why are we not filling positions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Kruwell: Where we closed the year is a snapshot in time. Explanation of the events after COVID hit. Doing an analysis of the last 10 years of fund balance, we see that in the last three years, we have been hovering around break-even. Our revenues have declined, so we've restricted expenditures. The government gave us one-time monies (CARES Act monies), which boosted unrestricted net position. Must now consider how we will spend remaining CARES monies until we are at normal operating conditions. In FY22, our projected revenues are less than our projected expenditures. ○ Representative M. Scott: Would it be fair to say that COVID hit, we got some assistance, but we don't know what is going to happen next year, therefore we have this money that could carry us but if things don't get better with enrollment etc. then it is not necessarily a healthy budget time? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Kruwell: Confirmed. • Representative V. Herrera: For the current staff, we used to supplement income with paid overtime. But we can no longer get overtime unless work seven days a week, including in other areas (graduation, etc.). This is burning out staff. Will this change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Kruwell: We would have to discuss these approaches, but it is a quality of worklife issue, and we don't want to burn people out. But we should be able to use flex to save money. • Representative S. Herrera: Judi said we can put off talks about outsourcing and be as efficient as we can. But if we have to reduce services and are burning out our staff trying to be efficient, doesn't that keep us from being able to provide
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the level of service expected without adding to our staff?

- Ms. Kruwell: We still have a budget deficit for the year and are trying to figure out which parts of the budget can be cut. Right now, all we can do is decide at which point a reduced level of service is going to please the campus. If we communicate properly, she thinks the entire staff is willing to have reduced services provided to them. And it has to be a campus-wide decision.
- Representative Moreland: Everyone is stretched thin. We don't have the option to choose comp time or overtime pay. Why wouldn't Res Life have same option as Physical Plant to choose comp pay or comp time?
 - Ms. Kruwell: Res Life, being an auxiliary service, is paid from a different pot of money. The money that we get from the state and tuition we get has restrictions, just like auxiliary money does. Notes that she was unaware that Res Life was being governed with different rules than others. Should talk about that and see a best path forward. One of our top priorities is to figure out what to do since decisions now can be made around staffing.
 - Mr. Branch: We have been hung up on outsourcing discussion and can move forward now. Meeting aggressively to move forward. If Housing Operations is not ready to go by end of May, will be in trouble with summer obligations.
- Representative Beck: How can staff be expected to increase retention of students when short-staffed, facing conversations of reducing services, and facing burnout?
 - Ms. Kruwell: We just need to continue the conversation on how we get through this year. Regarding reducing services, thinks we will be surprised by acceptance of this. She believes this is temporary, and we are still coming out of the pandemic phase. We can act now. Constrained somewhat with our budget this year. Take pride and satisfaction in knowing your value. We will be adding staff but have to be strategic.

b. Mr. John Wyatt, Interim Director of Human Resources

Topic: Staff salary study

- SFA leadership selected and contacted Hanover Research in Spring 2020 to look at the salaries of faculty and staff. Goal was to better understand our competitiveness nationally, regionally, and locally. Median salaries compared with equivalents.
- One recurring theme is that there is a lot of difficulty when say "equivalence." Some positions don't match well with other institutions, so comparison is difficult. If there is not a match, the position is not getting reported.
- Review of the data used
 - 3 job families = administrative, professional, staff.
 - Our categories don't exactly fit in these categories.
- Salary data is only as good as the matching, and we have many positions that cannot be matched.
- When you look at the tool, you can see things changed in reporting from SFA

over the years as well.

- A lot of the methodology is through descriptive analysis, and there are data limitations to the salary survey. Worked with HR's comp and class staff to get as many matches as possible. Process was manual, which can lead to error.
- Hanover findings – SFA median is lower than that of our peer institutions at every level. There are isolated individual positions in some categories where we are doing better, but there is not a causation. Pay gaps are particularly pronounced for the minority categories. When using Hanover tool, recommend turning on the number under the graphs to see the numbers that comprise these populations. Those numbers tell more of a story.
- Where are we going now that the key findings are presented:
 - Needs some deeper diving – when we look at comparatives, we need to consider what equivalents are paid by competitors.
 - There may be some factors that have unfavorably skewed the data; will have to look into this.
 - Any instances of discrimination will be handled.
 - Focus on internal equity – alignment within our university.
 - Compensation policy – we could do better and should have done better with this policy. Looking to add another level of review on an annual basis.
 - Will be incorporating this data in our mid-year monitoring, which will and should inform our recruitment efforts.
 - Targeted recruitment efforts where diverse representation is lacking.
 - Improvement is going to take time.
- SFA has had a prolonged imbalance. Hoping this leads to significant change.

Open for questions:

- Representative DeWitt: You mentioned a potential change in our employee recruitment plan, but what have you been thinking about related to a retention plan?
 - Mr. Wyatt: Looking for ideas and reaching out to groups for ideas
- Representative V. Herrera: Because of cost of living, we still have employees making \$9 an hour. Could money that was slated for President's raise go to perhaps correcting this imbalance? Where did the money from that controversial raise go?
 - Mr. Wyatt: Part will go to funding the EAP. The rest cannot be spoken to directly.
- Secretary Baily: We've had years of costly surveys with no action and people at your level planning or wanting to take some action. Are you confident you have the backing from administration to accomplish action now?
 - Mr. Wyatt: Confident there will be action on the other end of this. He is not alone in seeking action, and information has been transparently presented. Such information becomes difficult to ignore once it is out there. This feels different; the timing and leadership is different.
- Representative Crenshaw: Constituents have taken on different roles and more people's jobs. Can this lead to more inequity?
 - Mr. Wyatt: Other duties as assigned encompasses a lot. But if work being done is not reflective of job duties and job description, it is generally not going to feed into this.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative S. Herrera: Did the study shed any light on general size of department (e.g. EEO categories) and whether we are roughly similar to competitor institutions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Wyatt: Not targeted at staffing levels but that is an interesting and worthwhile consideration. Representative Kennedy: Was this survey planned before our financial crisis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Wyatt: Yes, it was prior to COVID. Representative Perkins: Our position structures affect the average in many cases if you lump all in a field into one pay structure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Wyatt: When lumping multiple levels in one category, data does not give the clearest picture. This is part of what would be addressed in the future. Representative Harless: If this study happened pre-COVID, does that mean if we are still looking into this, it will be several years before we see change or get any answers.? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Wyatt: This is saying where we are positioned or a one-to-one comparative of competitiveness. Right now we need a better understanding internally. Therefore, change will not be immediate; this kind of change will take some time. <p>c. Dr. Michara Delaney-Fields, Chief Diversity Officer Topic: Campus climate survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanted a better understanding of the climate around diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty, staff, and students. Lumped a lot of different areas in the survey, making it a long survey. Encouraged all to complete the survey and to answer honestly. There will be no retaliation or tracking. Really need to hear from all in order to move this institution forward. Incentives available for participation. <p>Open for questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representative Beck: How are staff selected for prizes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Delaney-Fields: Department with highest percentage of response will be selected, and then will draw for who gets prizes within that group. Representative Beck: Have you ever thought about using student's skills to save these funds used for paying external surveying. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Delaney-Fields: Is always concern about survey being anonymous, so wanted to make sure that layer of security was there due to it not being internal. Representative Brewer: When do you expect to have the results? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Delaney-Fields: Plan to share at the April board meeting.
IV. Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request to amend or approve minutes posted on the website. Motion to approve minutes made by Representative Turner. Motion seconded by Representative Menefee. Unanimously approved. No abstentions. Motion passed.
V. Officer Reports	<p>a. Chair – Megan Weatherly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended expanded Cabinet meeting on January 25. Intense meeting with much

	<p>questioning. One outcome was clarification regarding transparency on behalf of everyone at the table. Very honest discussion about the lack of trust on campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Board of Regents meeting (January 30-February 1). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graham Garner shared the results of Hanover brand study. Faculty and staff had lowest perceptions of the institution. Graham indicated interest in discussing this with Council. ○ Anthony Espinoza (Chief Information Officer) noted stress in recruitment and retention. ○ Hanover presented on staff salary study. ○ Shared governance document approved. ○ Approved increase in room and board requested by VP of Student Affairs. ○ Report on budget deficit (currently about \$8.5M). ○ Changes to go to the board in April about LEAP. Discussion that processes are too manual, and there is consideration of that going back to a scholarship. ○ Current SCH is lower than the lowest reported in 2004-2005. ○ Current slate of BOR officers was re-elected. ○ Made Staff Council presentation on February 1. Talked transparently about salary, job security concerns, financial concerns. • Met with Cabinet on February 3 regarding her call with Staff Senate Chair at Midwestern State University in January. Addressed questions, noting that desire to discuss joining a system stems from concerns about job security. <p>b. Chair-Elect – Alison Reed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended Faculty Senate meeting. Discussed survey for faculty that gathered their opinions on joining a system. About 490 replies (of 950 sent), with 73% stating they were in favor of joining a system. • Attended LIT (Lumberjack Innovation Team) meeting, which will discuss more in depth later in agenda. <p>c. Secretary – Meredith Baily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report <p>d. Treasurer – Grace Romero</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 expenditure (\$24.95 for the gavel) <p>e. Parliamentarian – Rebecca Galatas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report • Asks all to pay attention to Teams, where has been some discussions around bylaws amendments. If there are proposed changes to bylaws, we will notify Council 10 days prior to a vote.
VI. Committee Reports	<p>a. Executive Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Weatherly reporting. Committee met February 7 to set the agenda for February meetings. <p>b. Nominations & Elections Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative Crenshaw reporting. Committee met and is reviewing bylaws.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominations cycle picks up in June. • Looked at makeup of Staff Council in EEO categories and will discuss more in March meeting. <p>c. Communications Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative A. Scott presenting. Discussion with Representative Crenshaw to discuss an awareness campaign for elections at launch time around June. • One of the goals is to have conversations around campus, as it affects how we communicate going forward. Been a revealing exercise and notes paper communications will need to be utilized in addition to anything electronic. <p>d. Worklife Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative Brown-Moreno reporting. Reminds all of special Council meeting on February 28 at 1:30 p.m. Committee will be presenting impartial information on systems. The floor will only be open to representatives. <p>e. Ad Hoc Committee (Staff Service & Retirement Awards)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative Brewer reporting. Committee has 12 members, mostly Staff Council representatives but also some from outside. • Event dates: 2020 and 2021 retirees and service award recipients honored on April 19, 2022 recipients on April 20. Both events at 5:30 p.m. at the Cole Art Center. • This will be the exact same quality of the faculty awards.
VII. Old Business	<p>a. Update on Employee Assistance Program RFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Representative DeWitt, Council's representative on the RFP committee. Have had administrative delay but will be meeting in the next several days.
VIII. New Business	<p>a. Changes in employee programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunsetting Employee Wellness Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Affairs is sunseting the classes, open faculty/staff wellness time in some facilities, and other such programs. No home for the program once it leaves Student Affairs. ○ Representative Brewer: It is a shame. This is a small thing university can offer to staff, but is being taken away. ○ Representative DeWitt: Still think the university needs to offer this program in some way. This is likely their version of reduction in services. Needs to stay as a topic around a non-salary benefit for employees. ○ Representative V. Herrera: Staff in her area do not work traditional hours so were never considered in setting program times. Greatest concern is preservation of wellness release time. ○ Representative Harless: Her constituents are wondering why EWP is being taken this away when is one of the few perks left. ○ Representative Kennedy: Police officers have to stay healthy for their jobs. Asks for clarification on departments covering this programming loss. ○ Chair Weatherly: Clarification: concern is more about staffing particular wellness activities than about the wellness release time (which does not seem to be changing).

- Representative M. Scott: Would be interesting to get an actual cost of running the program.
- Treasurer Romero: EWP goes employees access to HPE at no cost. This is an academic building, so Campus Rec cannot access the building for programming during class times. The issue of the EWP comes back to funding, availability of students willing to work (and maintaining required ratios), and other staffing challenges. The focus has changed and is on student success.
- Representative Brewer: Why not offer the program at Campus Rec since staff are there?
 - Treasurer Romero: Faculty and staff don't want to pay dues to access Campus Rec.
 - Representative Brewer: Yes, so give access at specific times.
- Chair Weatherly: To representative M. Scott's question: It is reasonable to ask what the cost has been. Would like three to five years of data. She has concern that if program transitions to another department, are putting more workload on a person with an already full plate.
- Representative M. Scott: Wasn't Wellness Center originally for faculty/staff? General discuss that this is now an Athletics facility.
- Chair Weatherly: Concern that what was once a no-cost benefit will require staff to purchase a Campus Rec membership.
- Representative Beck: Understood EWP was being sunsetted due to lack of attendance in correlation to cost. If benefit isn't being used, would not make sense to continue.
- Representative M. Scott: What is the cost saving to institution for healthier employees?
- Representative A. Scott: If usage isn't that high, would it be feasible or sustainable to take a voucher approach?
- Representative Menefee: If are discontinuing because of usage, did usage decline because of COVID? Will usage pick back up once COVID passes?

- **Faculty/Staff Breakfasts and Social Events**

- Representative DeWitt: Her constituents want the breakfasts back. Those are time to gather with staff beyond your department.
- Representative Perkins: Confirms that sentiment and importance of event to ITS.
- Representative Moreland: Was good opportunity to get to know people in other departments and create a better community. Her constituents felt intermingling wasn't happening as much in last months.
- Chair Weatherly: Does it matter if it is an appreciation supported by institution versus vendor? Many representatives responded no.
- Representative Kennedy: Many may not care if it is a cost.
- Representative V. Herrera: A low cost matters, and management is often happy to pay for their employees to attend.
- Secretary Baily: Concern is that these decisions are not being communicated. These decisions directly affect staff. How do we change that leadership makes these decisions and doesn't share them?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chair Weatherly: Frustration related to EWP has been shared. Notes that on the HR website, the EWP is touted as a benefit for prospective employees. Respects positional authority and need to realign, but institutionally, there is a need and desire for these programs. Asks representatives to share additional input. <p>b. Call for input: flexible work schedules, 4-day work week, telecommuting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair-Elect Reed: LIT was tasked by Provost to consider flexible work schedules, including four-day work weeks. We already have this, but it is not widely known or utilized. Looking into what currently exists and ways to expand it to meet our needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Considering telecommuting as a standard option within a position if needed. Considering needs to make this happen (e.g. computers) ○ Analyzing benefits to meet needs and expectations. ○ Conversation is in very early stages. Reaching out to a wide variety of individuals across campus. ○ At first meeting, requested that all staff be considered. Encouraged representatives to reach out and provide feedback. Don't forget that comments and suggestions form is on Staff Council website. • Representative Brewer: Certain areas do not allow this. Determine what policies it is tied to in order to be fair and available. • Representative Brown-Moreno: Saw a company who did this, but the change came with a cultural shift (e.g. no meetings on Fridays). Notes that some staff cannot take off due to the current workload and scheduling. • Representative Kennedy: Some departments just cannot do that have this flexibility. • Representative Beck: If people are physically not on campus during Orientation, then students don't come. Asks to consider cycles due to heavy times where people can or cannot shift their work schedules. • Representative DeWitt: Cannot be campus wide. Current utilization of these practices is based on individual flexibility. • Representative M. Scott: Keep it to a management-level decision. • Representative V. Herrera: Already having to look at reduction of services and looking at how to manage groups because these sorts of shifts mean certain services will not be occurring because staff is already maxed out on hours. • Representative Turner: For a lot of people, this flexibility cannot happen. (e.g. Title IX isn't even allowed to slow down for Christmas, much less take one day a week off.) Consider that many staff will not be allowed to take advantage of this perk, which can contribute to inequity. <p>c. Reminder of Special Meeting on February 28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special meeting to take place on February 28 at 1:30 p.m. in Business 133 and via Zoom. • Meeting #4 scheduled for Monday, March 14 at 1:30 p.m. in Business 133 and via Zoom.
IX. Adjournment	Chair Weatherly adjourned meeting at 3:56 p.m.