

Stephen F. Austin State University
Staff Council Meeting Notes
Monday, February 28, 2022
1:30 p.m. – 2:19 p.m.
Ferguson Building (Room 179) and Zoom

Attendees:

Attending Representatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair: Megan Weatherly <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"/> 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"/> Mark Scott <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lissy Turner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tierney Twigg <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mindy Wolbert
Not Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair-Elect: Alison Reed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denise Douglas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Stobart

Meeting Minutes

Topic	Minutes
I. Call to Order	Time: 1:30 p.m.
II. Roll Call	Secretary Baily called roll. Individuals noted above were in attendance. Angela Johnson served as proxy for Alison Reed.
III. Worklife Committee Report	<p>Presentation: Research on Joining a System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note: Committee members collected information from staff at system institutions about those individuals' experiences during joining a system or at a system institution. They did not speak to individuals formally representing systems. The questions the committee received and asked can be divided into three categories: structure and organization, job security, employee benefits. What is a system? A system is a group of institutions that are independent in their identity and functionality but are governed by a system board and leader. Though there are currently seven systems in the state of Texas, committee focused on four with broadest reach: UT, A&M, Texas Tech, Texas State. Note: SFA's name is protected by Texas Senate Bill 596 (2009). <p>Structure & Organization Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joining a system is a Board of Regents-level decision. The ultimate decision lies with the Board, and any legislative action would originate from a Board decision, with no faculty or staff input/involvement. Example: Midwestern joined the Texas Tech system formally in 2021, but conversations started years ago. The process would likely not be quick. How would the organizational structure of SFA change if we joined a system? There may be possible redundancies such as General Counsel. One individual at a system school stated that nobody lost jobs due to joining the system as far as they were aware but that some individuals in redundant positions shifted from working for the institution to working for the system. Would there be significant facilities improvements? Mostly, the system office works with each institution to get things accomplished, but joining a system doesn't often

lead to a significant change in facilities.

- Would the system set our institutional calendar(s)? Calendars may change a bit but mostly are university-managed rather than set system-wide.

Job Security Questions

- Would staff be expected to initially re-apply for their positions? No.
- What departments might likely be outsourced? A&M outsources services, grounds, and custodial. TTU had no outsourcing. No demonstrable link found between outsourcing and joining a system.
- Might departments be expanded? No individuals reported observing departmental expansions.

Employee Benefits Questions

- Do system institutions have the same ERS benefits as SFA? Benefits at system schools closely aligned with SFA. A&M does not provide any additional coverage for critical illnesses, but they are looking into it as future offering.
- Are there system-specific educational benefits? Answers varied by institution, not by system. All institutions require employees to pay for parking.
- Are there system-specific leave policies? Leave policies were consistent with SFA.
- Would our pay grade structures and ranges change? UT realigned job titles to be consistent. A&M has certificate pay (job related skill enhancement).

With this presentation and questions to follow, Worklife Committee considers its work on this issue done. (Committee members include: Co-Chairs Ryan Brown-Moreno and Surry Consford, Leah Allen, Trina Menefee, Veronica Herrera, Veronica Beavers, Caleb Perkins, Brittany Beck, and Mark Scott.)

Questions

- Chair Weatherly: Can you provide some examples of what might constitute certificate pay?
 - Representative Allen: Certificate pay is a direct pay escalation based on awarding of job-related certifications.
- Chair Weatherly asked approximately how many individuals the committee spoke with in total. Committee members spoke with approximately three individuals from each of the systems were asked the questions. Representative Brown-Moreno confirmed. Representative M. Scott noted that some individuals with whom the committee spoke had experience at institutions in more than one system.
- Secretary Baily asked to committee to confirm staff did not having to reapply for their jobs. Confirmed. However, there were some strategic absorptions and reassignments.
 - Representative Brown-Moreno: Midwestern and UT Tyler did not have to reapply. Job loss was not expected for individuals who would be absorbed into the main system structure such as legal, but information was less clear regarding Title IX and audit.
- Chair Weatherly noted that reason multiple individuals had mentioned Midwestern is not that Midwestern is like SFA but rather than Midwestern is the most recent university in Texas to have joined a system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Weatherly asked for clarification on whether outsourcing occurred as a result of going system or at another point in an institution's livelihood. Representative Brown-Moreno mentioned that experiences regarding outsourcing differed from institution to institution. • Representative Beck: What caused the most recent colleges to go into a system? Were the reasons financial? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chair Weatherly: Conversations have been going on for many years. We cannot say with certainty that the reasons institutions have joined a system have been largely financial. • Representative S. Herrera: If we join a system, would our Board of Regents stay the same or would a new Board of Regents be appointed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representative Brown-Moreno: Our president would remain in place but would report to a system chancellor, who reports to a system board. Therefore, our Board of Regents would be dissolved. • Representative Beck: Would a switch to a system benefit the university financially and provide more stability? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chair Weatherly: In its efforts, the Worklife Committee has been intentional in not presenting pros/cons, benefits/negatives lists but wanted to share the information its members learned in order to allow all staff to make their own informed opinions. • Representative Brewer: Do other systems offer programs similar to LEAP? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representative Brown-Moreno: UT representative said tuition benefits only apply to the individual (not family). Other campuses offered benefits similar to LEAP, each with slightly different features. aligned with our program. • Chair Weatherly noted that in February 14 Staff Council meeting, Interim Human Resources Director John Wyatt noted that HR is working on updating SFA's pay grade structures. • Chair Weatherly notes that discussion is occurring on campus as to what next step is in this conversation about systems. Staff Council welcomes this conversation, and as soon as more is known, that information will be shared with all staff.
IX. Adjournment	<p>Representative M. Scott motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Representative Crenshaw. Meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.</p>