

Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2017

EMASS 2.124A

Guest Presenters:

- Mr. Doug Arney – Senior Associate Vice President for Operations
- Mr. Michael James – Chief Human Resources Officer
- Dr. Cynthia Brown – Deputy Provost

Senators Present:

Michael Aldape, Robert Cantu, Orlando Castaneda, Peter James (PJ) Ehimika, Maria Espinoza, DeAnna Garza, Nelly Gomez, Alicia Morley, Silverio Nieto, Bianca Otero, Lisa Pena, Gilbert Perez, Lisa Smith, Linda Ufland

Senators Absent:

Oscar Barrera, Selene Castro, Veronica de la Garza, Milton Hernandez, Javier Zambrano

Meeting Notes:

- Meeting was called to order at 9:36am
- Lisa Pena moved to approve minutes; DeAnna seconded

Committee Updates:

- Business Processes –
 - Silver presented survey for Shopper, Reconciler, Approver roles for improvement; meeting first Wednesday of month
- Communications –
 - Lisa adding new documents and pictures to website; working on FB page; Bianca explained that the website allows for anonymous comments also
- Constitution –
 - PJ proposed changes to constitution will be sent one week in advance for March meeting; main changes are districts for accurate representation and update # of representatives for election
- Events –
 - DeAnna raspa/ice cream truck wants an estimate of patrons, planned for “dead days” or May 18 both days Thursdays; next steps are to estimate for both campuses and obtain approval and set up fundraising to pay for event
 - meeting with Marianella Franklin proposition for sustainability efforts more time is needed but suggested recycling and organic food options, looking to include her as

- presenter for March meeting; best to support and endorse established efforts; they have a station in place and looking to see if it will work
- Food Pantry is also an option to focus on, they welcome help for summer months due to low donations, can look at either March or June as a month to sponsor; Spring Break can work with theme
 - Will check to see if Marianella and Clarissa are available to present at next month's meeting
 - Fundraising –
 - no updates at this time; will schedule a meeting afterwards to determine next steps
 - Staff Development –
 - no updates at this time; exchanging emails to determine meeting dates
 - Michael suggested to first meet with Fundraising committee members to determine what to do in order to decide if combining with Events is best

New Business:

- Lisa Smith – Jeff Graham putting together a committee learn about web video and web conferencing want a representative to be on committee to make IT resources and infrastructure improved
- PJ recommended to table appointment to send out to all senators in case someone is absent that might be interested; long term commitment is also something to consider
- Cynthia Brown for SACSCOC update – UTRGV will be under probation for 12 months; Letter was very long a group of representatives travelled to Atlanta on January 17th to discuss with SACSCOC.
 - Upon arrival, we made arrangements to meet with Executive Boards for Staff and Faculty Senates next day to be as transparent as possible; Dr. Whelan SACSCOC President reiterated that probation has nothing to do with academic programs at UTRGV, issues are with the opening of UTRGV in Fall 2015;
 - Two issues were identified:
 - 1st integrity finding – we were told that every time during transition communicated as UTPA and UTB, every time it was a misrepresentation, SACS considered UTB/TSC misrepresented w/o including TSC as part of UTB; 2 campuses 1 journey, her comment was to be accurate should have said 2 campuses 5 institutions, UTPA, UTB, UTB/TSC, TSC, and UTRGV; asked to address to clarify history of UTRGV and timing of institution's formation
 - 2nd timeline finding – timing of events led to out of compliance 4 years ago was announced, plans called for TSC to receive standalone accreditation, initial timelines resulted in our learning that this wasn't going to SACS board until later; June 2015 was not feasible due to TSC, option was to change UTPA to UTRGV name so to make change to open in fall 2015; then submit a request to add UTB into UTRGV at a later date; two timelines out of sync would have caused TSC students to lose financial aid due to loss of accreditation if we proceeded; left UTB open they didn't have students in Fall 2015 since all UTRGV

enrolled; Whelan had every confidence we will be removed from probation by December 2017 if we worked closely with them; policies weren't followed opening of UTRGV

- Board of Trustees meets twice a year, June and December, must have site visit report in order for Board to review, not enough time to go through process for June Board meeting
 - It was more complex process than anticipated for TSC to put all of the pieces in place in time to meet deadline
 - Trying to come up with standard wording to come up through webpages, brochures, and will need to change the language to reflect standard language for UTRGV community to use as soon as possible
 - Assure students that this doesn't impact financial aid, enrollment, degree, nothing is affected; important to convey to staff they were doing exactly as they were supposed to be doing
 - Required to notify all accrediting bodies; those bodies are not in question and remain fully accredited and no impact to students
 - Have rewritten language to ensure grant proposals have the new standard language to make sure we (Dr Brown and/or Patrick Gonzalez) amend the wording that will be acceptable to SACSCOC
- Mike James – noon Tuesday, we received directive from Budget Director from Governor immediate hiring freeze for positions funded thru legislative funds; had to stop job offers ASAP, 70 positions actively posted and subject to hiring freeze; exception details not known but expecting more direction from a meeting to request a waiver; effective thru August 31, no restriction for faculty starting 9/1
 - Certain agencies are exempt we are included for public safety positions such as Police Officers and PSOs, need clarification if there are others in there; this affects student hiring as well if it is legislatively funded; at this point anything that becomes vacant from now until August can't recruit; we are waiting for guidance from Presidents mtg with BOR; if they are posted online should be available for hiring
 - If a verbal commitment was made, we will proceed, grant funded positions are waived as well as any type of funds not appropriated by legislature
 - List of positions was given by Governor's office, we believe more should have been included; this is affecting all state agencies and are subject to Governor's office

- If reclassification is in process, will this be affected? Only the recruitment and filling of vacant positions, reclassifications are on-going, we will be subject to planning and analysis to review to determine how this will affect long-term
- Workstudy and/or student positions, subject to the same guidelines as FT positions provided they are funded by state funding; percentage of funding is coming from department and cannot use state appropriated funding; clarification was that this is a definite hard freeze; no recourse other than waivers at this point in time
- Strategic Planning Updates:
 - Sent draft to SPC yesterday as committee to finalize and will send to Marketing before releasing the plan; initiatives don't need outside funding but can reallocate existing funding; we know the vision and where resources are can reallocate; set to launch in March; please email Lisa to recommend name – UA Never Settle is name; Steering committee have provided feedback already; will make concerted effort to send out feedback to people who reach out; website utrgv.edu/spc
- Communications and Media Update:
 - Monday newsletter was sent 2/6 to see what we can call; Newswire suggested by Robert; requested suggested names
 - Doing something more catchy and format from UTPA was fixed
 - Suggested Staff Matters as name for newsletter
 - Looking forward to making it be great and have communication format newsletter
 - Like our UTRGV Staff Senate on FaceBook
 - Looking at doing a Twitter page and other sites but need some time
 - Great work done and will prepare something for the senate
- Additional Items:
 - PJ we will identify committees that need staff representation across UTRGV, will be compiling a list
 - DeAnna mentioned UTPA Staff Senate award plaques, suggested doing that for UTRGV
 - Mike are recognizing length of service for awards; concerns with UTB data due to different system and are working on; HOP policy has been drafted; UTPA UTB and UTHSCSA will be recognized for service
 - Lisa mentioned UT System award for discussion for next meeting
 - DeAnna reminder We Love our Donor event will be next week on both campuses; encourage everyone to come out to Edinburg on Tuesday at Chapel Lawn and in Brownsville at Student Union on Thursday
 - Reminder - Go walking for 10 min for Heart Walk
 - DeAnna moved to adjourn meeting; Robert seconded
 - Meeting adjourned at 10:52am