

Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

3/22/2017

Brownsville Campus-SU 2.36

Guest Presenters:

- Dr. Guy Bailey-President of UTRGV
- Mr. Rick Anderson- EVP for Finance and Administration
- Dr. Janna Arney-Deputy President
- Mr. Doug Arney-Sr. Assoc. VP for Operations
- Mr. Mike James – Chief Human Resources Officer

Senators Present:

Michael Aldape, Oscar Barrera, Robert Cantu, Orlando Castaneda, Selene Castro, Veronica de la Garza, Peter James (PJ) Ehimika, Maria Espinoza, DeAnna Garza, Nelly Gomez, Milton Hernandez, Alicia Morley, Silverio Nieto, Bianca Otero, Lisa Peña, Gilbert Perez, Lisa Smith, Linda Ufland

Senators Absent:

Javier Zambrano

Meeting:

- Michael called meeting to order 9:37am
- Establishment of Quorum:
 - Maria conducted roll call of senators to establish quorum; Javier Zambrano was absent
- Approval of Minutes:
 - Lisa Pena motion to approve; DeAnna Garza seconded motion to approve minutes with corrections
 - Meeting minutes will be corrected and posted on website
- New Business
 - Updates from Dr. Bailey-
 - Hiring Freeze: Dr. Bailey spoke on what was occurring at Legislature since this is session year. Due to the budget there is a possibility for cuts for Higher Education; as a result there is a hiring freeze for state agencies between now and 8/31. Although tuition and fees can offset some of the cost there is still that possibility. There are certain categories where one can hire, School of Medicine, Enrollment Management and P/T, Temp Students.

- Voluntary Separation: Dr. Bailey stated that a Voluntary Separation packet was announced around 3/9 for staff and faculty. That we should not think that this has to do with the financial issues occurring at the State level or the hiring freeze. He stated the Mr. Anderson, Mike James or Doug Arney could answer further questions on this.
 - He announced that new Doctoral Programs will be offered: Clinical Psychology and Physical Therapy. He also stated that there are a number of people working with SACSCOC on the accreditation and there should be no problem getting off probation in December.
 - Updates from Mr. Anderson-
 - Mr. Anderson announced the unexpected decrease in Graduate enrollment, that there is a slight increase undergraduate enrollment. He spoke on the VSIP plans that there will be some cost savings on faculty side (18 staff and 87 faculty). Ms. Linda Ufland stated that Special Items were told to expect cuts but haven't heard how much. Mr. Anderson responded that as Dr. Bailey mentioned the House/Senate are far apart on budget revisions and there is uncertainty when this occurs.
 - Updates from Dr. Arney-
 - Dr. Arney informed the audience that they are working with SACSCOC to meet the December deadline. Upon Michael Aldape's request, she reiterated that the probationary period had nothing to do with academics, the issue was the misrepresentation of the coming together of the legacy institutions. She also announced that they are currently working with Webmasters to update websites so that there is consistency across all websites.
 - Question from Audience-Are the webmasters/web owners being informed of what is happening? Dr. Arney advised that they are trying to do it verbally.
 - Question from Senator-How does this impact brochures? Dr. Arney responded that with any brochures that have been printed will continue as is; but all new publications will represent the correct language.
 - State of Texas Hiring Freeze-Mr. Mike James
 - Mr. James announced that there have been approximately 35 positions that were waived and in total there are 50 positions on website. He also stated that those areas where positions are needed, have been referred to executive leaders in the division and that everything has been fairly smooth.
 - Update on Salary Study-Mr. Mike James
 - He announced that there are 3 phases: Phase I Salary Equity project, which occurred in December. These individuals are personnel who were migrated over to UTRGV to include IT, Physical Plant, University Police. Phase II goal is for the end of the year this includes health care titles, medical related job titles, student support services. He also stated that all of this depends on legislative and enrollment; they want to finish Phase 2 by this year but can't commit.
 - Question Robert Cantu-How are the job family groups being identified? Mr. James responded that the initial group were the ones that migrated

over; most of the positions had to compete; 1st group for health titles, administrative and EH&S titles.

- Mr. Doug Arney stated that it is a priority for the institution to get this done.
- Comment from Ms. Kristina Chavez-Every job title should be done by Friday. There are 250 job titles and every 3 months segments will be presented to Mr. Anderson for approval.
- Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP)-Mr. Mike James and Mr. Doug Arney
 - Mr. Mike James announced that there were 19 staff eligible for VSIP, the information has gone out and have until 4/7. If anyone has specific questions, they can email or call Human Resources.
 - Ms. Linda Ufland commented that with the Separation announcement, there was a feeling of concern among staff especially with the announcement made after the hiring freeze.
 - Mr. Mike James reiterated for us not to read more into the VSIP.
 - Mr. Anderson commented that 80% of cost revolves around people; areas need to bring in revenue (student enrollment) as much as is spent on the expenditure side. It is everyone's job to recruit and retain our students.
 - Question: Is it more cost effective to transport our students to another campus than to hire additional faculty for Brownsville campus. Mr. Anderson responded that need to improve infrastructure as 97% of students use transportation, part of master plan is need bigger buses, all of this is paid through student fees.
 - Mr. Robert Cantu added that transportation services gives access to Federal funding.
 - Ms. Lisa Smith commented that trying to increase video broadcasted classes, at this point there are 190.
- Mr. Anderson expressed that with his 7 months on the job he has encountered, the process in transportation, new ERP system, SACSCOC probationary period but that with UTRGV being brand new, all is uncharted territory, there are periods of instability and concerns but the University is and can become something great.
- Questions from floor:
 - Regarding transportation, it is being addressed for students but what about staff members traveling with equipment, the shuttle is not adequate. Mr. Anderson stated that staff and faculty are reimbursed for mileage on personal vehicle at .23/mile, future options of car loaner programs as Valley grows. Doug Arney responded that need to present to departments what needs are.
 - Comment by Sergio Chavez, as IT employee need to travel a lot, there are no vehicles available to carry equipment, there is 1 shared vehicle in Brownsville, 2 in Edinburg. If there's a way to purchase 1 to 2 vehicles for departments to borrow. Mr. Anderson addressed that this is the opportunity to look at MPO transportation plans through Brownsville Metro and Valley Metro, they are working on Master Plans at UTRGV.
 - Salary Study question: Are salaries being compared to border region or other entities throughout the state? Mike James commented that looking at level

market, state wide evaluation. Some positions are beyond valley areas as well as the sister institutions within UT System

- How will information be disseminated to department heads? Mr. Mike James, managers, directors, department leads are notified via email.
- Review of Proposed Constitutional Amendments-Mr. Peter Ehimika & Ms. Lisa Pena
 - Reported that areas of concern was Section 7: Districts. With the University growing, voting districts are being affected as departments are moved under new areas. Changes to constitution were brought before the Senate, when addressing the number of Senators, kept in mind on how difficult it might be to meet quorum. A date will be set for feedback on changes, and there will be a special meeting committed to the changes in the Constitution.
- Committee Reports:
 - There was a motion to table committee reports due to the lack in time, Ms. Maria Espinoza motioned, Ms. DeAnna Garza seconded.
- Motion to adjourn was agreed to by all Senators.
 - Meeting ended at 11:31 a.m.