

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Minutes of the Staff Senate

June 11, 2018 9:30 – 11:30AM / Harlingen: HCEBL Auditorium 1.100 (WebEx
Locations in Brownsville: BLHSB 2.604 & Edinburg: EMSAC 1.102)

I. Call to Order - 9:30 AM

II. Establishment of Quorum -

Staff Senators Present: David Marquez, Lisa Smith, Peter James Ehimika, Monica Tovar, Cynthia Farris, Michael Aldape, Jaime Villanueva, Javier Zambrano, Rebekah Sepulveda, Jesus Buitron, Krystal Marroquin, Gilberto Perez, Milton Hernandez, Dalyn Ruiz, Roberto Castro, Silverio Nieto, Carla Lopez, Nicole Englitsch

III. Approval of Minutes – Dalyn Ruiz, Karina 2nd motion

IV. New Business - Budget Updates - Rick Anderson (Moved to July)

a. Hiring Freeze Guidelines - Mike James

[Guidelines](#) are posted on-line

Departments are asked to review all job postings, evaluate positions, and maybe look at job duties and process within your areas.

HR is asking departments to make a business plan to justify why the positions are necessary. Student facing, revenue generating positions are different, and we understand the need there. We are pushing back to departments for alternatives, and everyone is just asked to do more.

Q: When do you anticipate a change?

A: It seems like it will be indefinite. Based on the budget really we will have to look at the cost savings and wait to hear back from Rick Anderson. We are trying to reach a cost savings amount, but when will we meet that mark, we do not know that yet.

Q: Is this still from the Governor freeze or institutional?

A: No, it is not part of the Governor of Texas hiring freeze. Yes, this is a local or institutional freeze based on our decisions and needs.

Q: Are we hoping to save a certain amount?

A: Yes, we do not have that number, but we are looking to wait to hear back.

Q: Does this include reassignment or reclassifications?

A: Any promotional positions that affects the salary lines. So if you are going to increase your salary line it goes all the way to the President's office for approval.

Q: What about reorganizations? Is there a mandate?

A: When there are any vacancies, there is an opportunity for reorganizations. We are working with VP's and leaders to determine what works best for each department.

b. Election for Parliamentarian Replacement

Lisa Smith explained, recently, we had the Parliamentarian position open up, and there is now an opportunity for a replacement in this term until next September when we are set to have elections again.

Peter James will assist with this portion, (email was sent to explain duties for this position) the responsibilities shared with the group were from constitution.

Motion by Nicole Englitsch to open up elections; Michael Aldape 2nd motion, no abstentions, motion passed.

Nominations: Dalyn Ruiz would like to nominate David Marquez

Peter James confirmed nomination, David, accepted nomination

Nomination: Peter James Ehimika, nominated Rebekah Sepulveda;
Rebekah declines at this time.

Peter James Ehimika called for votes, all moved, no abstentions, motion carries.

c. SS Executive Board Updates - Lisa Smith & Executive Board Members

This new section is by recommendation from David Marquez. Lisa reported, EB did meet along with Faculty Senate EB – we learned elections for the next year held before summer.

The Executive Board also met with Dean Krouse from the School of Medicine.

Our meeting with Dean Krouse was to discuss the participation or exemption of participating in the University's Climate Survey. Some SOM Staff and Faculty expressed concerns about not participating, and unsatisfied with leadership.

SOM did participate in another survey while under Dr. Lieberman and expressed this was the reason why the SOM chose not to participate in this other survey. An invitation was extended to Dean Krouse to participate in one our meetings; he will be here in July's Meeting.

Cynthia Farris, stated the results or findings were distributed, as for action items, no information was released after the findings were shared. UT System office did come and conducted focus groups to review the findings, but the action report was not shared. Mike James reported that there was participation from all groups and restated that there was no action reports from that survey.

Dean Krouse also mentioned that the School of Medicine is looking at conducting a new survey that would look at other Medical Schools when comparing the results, also covering areas that are relevant. This engagement survey from AAMC, is geared for Medical School.

Implementation is estimated for this Fall, but no definite launch dates.

He also agreed to have periodic meetings with both Staff Senate and Faculty Executive Boards to share information and updates.

d. University Updates by Janna Arney

- UT System appointed an [Interim Chancellor](#), the search is still ongoing.
- Congratulations to the 1st group of Regent's Outstanding Award nominees and winners – Thank you for everyone's effort and good job selecting the candidates.
- SACSCOC Update, we are working on addressing the few last items.

They did add an additional item, the financial aid audit, student accounting, student financial areas. We are working with the state auditors; the state is working with us and is coming in earlier to get ready for the reports to come out in December.

Q: Lisa Smith asked, do they have the ability to look at other areas?

A: The visiting time is getting a charge, and is assigned to look at those areas on the report, however, that doesn't mean they couldn't ask to look at other areas.

We would like to thank all the departments involved; give the departments a huge pat on the back for working so hard and round the clock. We appreciate their efforts.

- PeopleSoft transition is on going; hats off to HR Staff for going live September 1st. Please read all the emails that are going out. It is important to remind each other to read all emails. Mike James reported there are some critical cutover dates in those messages for hiring processes, employee changes, dates established. Time cards are due earlier. Vacation balances, check balances are the same each month. Check to see if they have transferred. UT System, working that all things work.

Jana – we are the 1st to go with V9.2 , previously it was V9.1, so UTRGV is trailblazing.

To touch back, there is the Hiring Freeze to make up the 7million+ in cost savings, not including the 12million state budget cuts from the past.

- Retention – we need to make sure people are in place, and people have what they need. We need to constantly review our processes. If we are still saying “this is how we used to do this”, then maybe it is time to look at our processes again.

We need to make sure our students have what they need to be successful. We each have a role in retention, and we should be able to talk to our students to make that decisions to stay. Perhaps, maybe those staff that have Master's can teach. Maybe we can have a Co-Hort and they can get professional development to give back by teaching. We have a wait list for classes so this could be a way help our students and to give back.

Lisa suggested a possible call out- for staff who can teach; maybe they want to be trained to be part-time faculty. This would be an opportunity

Jana Arney announced, there is now a recruiting spot in Matamoros. Opening an office to include, global engagement, academic affairs, security, and more.

This location has an opportunity to make services available, to students that don't

have a campus nearby. We need to ask ourselves, how can we break down barriers? How do we deliver services? What is the missing link?

Q: Lisa asked is this part of our Master Plan?

A: Yes, this is part of our TYPE II Hubs, it is information centers, TYPE 3- pop-ups that are in shared spaces.

Q: From Robert Castro: Some people in my area asked about a teaching job and they were told this would be a 2nd job, and it was not recommended. Has this changed?

Mike James stated it would be an additional assignment, and not a 2nd job. There could be issues with this appoint based on exempt or non-exempt positions. There would be a need to look at it case by case. You can contact myself or someone in my office to review the situation.

To teach, you need Master Degree + 18 hours in experience in the program or field, you plan to teach.

Q: (Question from the audience) If you don't have a Masters, but Master's in Practice can you teach?

A: SACSCOC does have very specific requirements for teaching, requirements that do need to be met before teaching. For Specific qualifications, you can reach out to the department chair in your area.

Q: (question from the audience) Hiring Freeze, or budget; what was the target budget?

A: It is an estimated 7 - 7 ½ million. We had a dip in graduate enrollment that can offset the budget. Decrease in Administrative budget so that is positive thing, in our processes. We still need to hire some positions to fill areas that are needed.

Many schools have large enrollment windows, so adjusting ours can help with that. Reviewing our own processes can reveal some barriers that we can control. Recently, there was a new implementation for a new on-line registration process (2 years ago) that helped with the review process in the applications.

Q: From Nicole Englitsch, the PhD programs have a 2 year window, if you missed the deadline, then you have to wait for 2 years until the next opening. Why is that? Is there a way to change the application process to yearly?

A: We may have to look at those areas.

What area are you referring too? This would be for Business, it has 4 different areas, and the window to apply is every 2 years.

e. Noteworthy Announcements - All Senators

- Carla Lopez, reminder, benefits fair, [SAVE the DATE](#) on website. July 11 & 12th
- Jamie Villanueva, update with “Handshake” went live June 4th, employer implementation has taken affect. This will affect, on campus employment. Employers need to create profiles, automatically.

Students cannot see them until July 2nd.

Q: Nicole asked of this is that also for internship postings?

A: Yes it does, and this also includes non-student direct wage.

Handshake, is not the same as PeopleSoft.

Q: Any positions created in career connections will they need to be recreated?

A: Yes, postings will not carry over. However, once you create a position, you can duplicate the same position if needed. (copy and paste)

- Marketing Updates: Working on new overall look to be the same in all areas. Working with Athletics, to wear their shirts. Support university spirit.

V. Public Comments & Questions

Dalyn Ruize, had a public comment from her constituents, can our monthly meetings be broadcasted via WebEx so others that are unable to step away from their desk can participate? Monica Tovar, also 2nd the comment; she also received same request from the School of Medicine constituents. There was a lot of discussion on how this could happen with WebEx, zoom or Facebook live.

Comments: Peter James voiced a concern that people could hear, throughout the institution, and people could be intimidated. Some staff would prefer to be anonymous, so the meetings were not broadcasted in fear that there would be intimidation of making comments in front of supervisors or other leadership. Cynthia Farris also asked if there was a way to monitor our email during our meeting.

Can we Skype or Moderate the meetings? Can we have an access to comments that way?

Rebekah, asked, are we exempt or, do I have the right to be exempt to say I don't want to be live or broadcasted?

Mr. James brings the option to make parts of the meeting public and closed sessions off camera.

Q: David Marquez asked if we are currently getting, anonymous emails at the Staff Senate emails.

A: Yes, we just address them by email outside meetings. David asked if we can add this to be a discussion option for our next meeting. It was suggested that Dalyn work with Monica on options from IT, and get recommendations, and maybe vote at the next meeting.

Looking for students and Alumni to be featured in a radio; please contact:

Malena.hernandez@utrgv.edu (956-882-8787)

Q: Michael, receive a comment on the rising cost of the permits. Was there a reason why?

A: Yes, during the presentation from Parking it was stated that we are currently in year 2 of a 3 year plan to increase parking permits. The funds collected have been used for several project such as resurfacing parking lots, new signage, and lights. In their presentation, it was also stated that their budget is entirely based on revenue Minutes from our past meetings include parts of the presentation and archived on the Staff Senate Website.

Q: How would staff know what minutes include? How are the minutes archived?

A: At this time, the minutes are archived by month, not by subject. Staff could also reference the agendas for more specific topics.

Karina, speaking, can we highlight, comments or concerns by divisions.

Can we highlight divisions, and allow for question and comments in the agenda?

Public Comment:

[Marianella Q. Franklin](#), Chief Sustainability Officer reported in 2015, AASHE STARS first recognized UTRGV's sustainability initiatives with a Silver rating. We had another visit in 2017, and we received a [GOLD rating](#). We want to reach Platinum by 2020.

This would make us the 1st in UT System to do so. We are on track to host the 2020 (Feb/Mar) conference at South Padre Island. Would like to start coming to the Staff Senate Meetings; we have a report on our website and there is a checklist on the last part of the report, and you can see where we are doing well. Least amount of points is in Operations. We need staff help, in policy, and we will review policies. We need policies to support Sustainability.

Q: Where can we find the checklist?

A: Three are 4 categories it would be in the end.

Q: Can offices email their checklist as they meet goals – to get pins?

A: You can do this on a department level or personal level. Sustainability Leader supporters can get pins by sharing their checklist.

VI. Committee Reports

- a. All committees will deliver updates on their most recent meeting(s) and developments.
 - I. Staff Appreciation ad-hoc Committee – Jesus – looked other universities. Some have a university event in one location for 2 hours. Are we looking to do a event at each location or just 1 event. And How many employees are we looking at? 3rd Friday of May to not interfere with commencement. Picnic, self-care, pet day, bring in family for movie day, and scary day are all ideas that we have seen.

How many staff do we have?

Budget restrictions?

Events at the island, limited with space to 1,500 or having events after lunch to just limit the meal to finger foods. Knowing the number, helps plan events. So it looks like it would be off-site.

Lisa Smith stated, we looking for a policy, or recommendation to adopt a policy, which will tell UTRGV what is expected; no specifics, not yet. Recommendation of a policy, for the institutional level.

Comments included having a week, maybe better. Estimated numbers are Staff, 4,875 / Faculty, 3,000 + 1950 - residents

Dalyn likes that staff senate does have a part in it. Employee appreciation could be a game for staff appreciation. You get a ticket for a game.

Maybe it could be titled employee professional / appreciation development. Include a keynote speaker, if it should be included as a day. Call an institutional that had a week to get a draft budget.

Staff appreciation awards can be a day in the week.

What would be cut off date be for awards to calculate the years of service, December? That is still to be determined.

- II. Business Processes and Procedures – No report
- III. Communications – Reminder to staff senators, we still missing photos. We already spoke with Gilbert, to take pictures of events. Changes on the home page; is there anything that we need to announce.
- IV. Constitution and Elections
All votes came in, and everything passed. We have information on the districts. We are now ready for elections. Peter James, we can send a message about the divisions, and how they will be filled. This year elections will set as they are structured now, and once we get the list from HR we can revisit the structure and seats needed.
- iii Professional Development – No report
- iv Staff Relations, Retention, and Morale
- v University Development and Events

VII. Pending Items - There are no pending items.

VIII. Motion to adjourn by Michael Aldape and motion was 2nd by Krystal Marroquin

IX. Adjourn 11:31 am