



**Minutes of the Staff Senate Meeting**  
**May 21, 2018 9:30 – 11:30AM**  
**Brownsville: BMAIN 2.402 Salon Cassia**  
**(WebEx Locations in Harlingen: HCEBL 2.116 & Edinburg: ESSBL 1.139)**

I. Call to Order at 9:47 AM., by Lisa Smith, Staff Senate President

II. Establishment of Quorum – roll call was completed by Monica Tovar, Staff Senate Secretary

**Staff Senate Senators Present:** David Marquez, Peter James Ehimika, Monica Lisa Tovar, Lisa Gonzales Smith, Diana Ocanas, Michael Edward Aldape, LanLan Alvarado, Rebekah Sepulveda, Jesus Alberto Buitron, Krystal Marroquin, Veronica Esmeralda De La Garza, Gilberto Perez, Milton Hernandez, Dalyn Posas Ruiz, Roberto Carlos Castro, Carla Renee Lopez

III. Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve minutes by Michael Aldape, Veronica De La Garza 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

IV. New Business

a. Clinical Updates from the School of Medicine - Sofia Hernandez, Chief of Staff not available to attend, but Monica Tovar was able to share a little bit of information.

I. The School of Medicine has developed a **Website** – uthealthrgv.org (Going live May 2018)

II. **Access Center** – 833-UTRGVMD active June 2018, patients will be able to call this 800 number to make appointments and to get information on the UTRGV Doctors available in the area.

III. **Clinical Sites-** The School of Medicine is opening new clinics

- UT Health Pediatric Specialty (Pulmonary, Genetics, General Pediatrics, Developmental..) - Grand Opening April 2018
- Primary Care at Laguna Vista – Opened May 2018
- Surgery & Women’s Specialty
- General Surgery, Urogynecology and Gynecological Oncology – Opening in May 2018

b. Employee Advisory Council March Meeting Minutes - Lisa Smith & Michael Aldape

Lisa Smith shared accomplishments; distinguished award winners attended the award ceremony on Monday, May 14<sup>th</sup>. This award started in 2016 at UT Regents level. There will be changes from the regent’s level for next year’s nominations; they are moving towards a standard electronic form. Using an electronic form would make it easy for everyone to complete the form and make it fair.

Michael added, The University of Texas System Board of Regents named Larry R. Faulkner to become Chancellor ad interim of The University of Texas System. For more information:

<https://www.utsystem.edu/news/2018/05/18/ut-system-regents-name-former-ut-austin-president-interim-chancellor>

Carla Lopez shared the Chancelor Address, he recognized UTRGV. (website) David added it is good to have a history of all the initiatives from past EAC.

10:00 am – Break for a moment of silence

**Governor Abbott Calls For Moment Of Silence  
To Honor Victims Of Santa Fe High School Shooting**

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today issued a statewide call for Texans to take part in a moment of silence at 10:00 AM C.T., May 21, 2018, to honor the memory of the victims from the Santa Fe High School shooting.

"The act of evil that occurred in Santa Fe has deeply touched the core of who we are as Texans," said Governor Abbott. "In the midst of such tragedy, we pray for the victims and those mourning in Santa Fe, while we work to ensure swift and meaningful action to protect our students in schools across our state. I ask all Texans to join in holding a moment of silence tomorrow morning to remember the victims, their families, and first responders of the attack that took place at Santa Fe High School."

- Michael Aldape added comments from the Benefits & Compensation Committee - there isn't enough to support tuition reimbursement. For example, with UT Tyler there are many that offer tuition assistance for staff and their family. It would be nice for UTRGV to invest in our own employees and family.
- Flex time – is still a huge topic for many in the UT System Institutions.
- Engagement surveys – what is being done? When will results be released? The report is not completed yet so it is still pending.
- Communication committee – Twitter and Facebook for EAC; be sure to look them up and add them.
- Susan Franzen, recently took over and is looking at how EAC is doing.
- Smoking Sensation – new sidewalk signs in Brownsville and Harlingen have been placed in key locations. Be on the lookout for more signs.

c. Proposal to Draft a Resolution entitled "Distinguished Staff Awards Institutional Policy" -Lisa Smith

Lisa wants to request approval to draft a policy. UT Tyler voted to not have awards; they preferred to have a staff appreciation day or ceremony.

Create a policy for all departments or divisions should have their own recognition program.

Comments from Harlingen Dr. Stillsmoking, would it be an option not to have awards for individuals. Staff would appreciate recognition from administration; other institutions, from my experiences would offer celebratory meals served by Administration. Thru UTHSCSA, out legacy institute, we were allowed to have potlucks, or meals provided and served to employees to network and talk about updates, or a letter or recognition to recognize other areas to show appreciation.

To second that or to add to that, do you also consider that some staff do not have offices or access to email and so getting the word out in other ways about having an event like a "Picnic with the President" for employees would be appreciated if addressed.

Rebekah asked about recognition if we go that route, would it be by division or University. Each division should decide based on their schedule their best time to have the event. Can the President have an event on each campus instead of by division? It would be nice to see him in person to talk to him.

Carla asked, did we have any statements in the Climate survey that relate to the awards? Can the staff senate maybe help draft ideas to recommend to the President's office? Recognition awards, there is no indication or references to Health and Wellness. It would be good to incorporate health, encouraging others to take care of themselves.

In the climate survey, there were comments, but we don't get the comments until the statement is released. Should language of equity and language that include the minimum of XYZ. It should be the same across the board.

PJ some divisions are huge and others that are quite smaller, but it will be able to communicate with others outside of their division. David added a comment, to take advantage of the moment and bring departments together. Make an initial investment to bring people together; it will take time, but there are still pockets of division between Edinburg or Brownsville staff.

Veronica asked if we can find out from the Climate Survey if there is comment specifically about morale. Lisa says it will still be a while before it is ready.

Lisa summarized a draft Distinguished Staff Awards Institutional Policy. Veronica asked, can we vote if we want to have a resolution.

Michael, suggested maybe a committee can be appointed to review the draft and create a draft to bring to the senate.

We could vote now would be if want to make a resolution or can this be assigned to a committee?

LanLan, Staff Morale, and retention committee has been working on the emails coming into our Staff Senate email.

Events committee, maybe could work on this?

Do we have a motion to create a resolution to have an Employee Appreciation Institutional Policy?

Michael Aldape motioned for resolution, and Carla Lopez, seconded the motion; motioned carried.

Lisa Smith is creating an AdHoc Staff Appreciation Committee. Lisa stated the charge is to draft a Staff Appreciation Institutional Policy.

Volunteers will meet to discuss the charge. (**Volunteers:** Dylan Ruiz, Carla Lopez, Rebekah Sepulveda)

Lisa mentioned another example, another institution has a raffle Lunch with the President.

Michael, it is a great idea. UT Austin has positive feedback, but it is a great way to communicate with the President. They do it monthly, but maybe it can be quarterly. Carla likes how it gives the remote sites an opportunity as well.

Veronica, can the Staff Senate recommend to administration that this is important and is needed.

Michael Aldape made a motion to draft a proposal for the President suggesting lunch and what it is for.

Veronica dela Garza second motion; motioned carried

Comments: Dalyn Ruiz stated there needs to be clarification on the policy; how are the staff going to be picked?

Peter James Ehimika Obstain because now the group will be writing 2 resolutions.

Veronica 2<sup>nd</sup> – it needs to be voted and moved on because I am voting for action. Lisa added that this a very important topic.

## II. Wellness Activities -Carla Lopez

### **Upcoming events –**

- 1. May** is Mental Health awareness month. Ask someone “how are you today –really”  
Reach out to co-workers and others you come in contact throughout your day.  
We can play a big role by helping others. Reminder, we have the EAP for all employees to take advantage of. We have access to a set number of visits. Let us start the conversation and reduce the stigma of what mental health is.
- 2. May 31** is National Smoke Out. Our campus is proud to be Tobacco Free.
- 3. JLU.com** there is an app that is available for people that has the equivalent of 1 pack of cigarettes . There is a reporting tool to allow users to report smokers. Website: [www.utrgv.edu/keeputrgvtabaccofree](http://www.utrgv.edu/keeputrgvtabaccofree)  
[www.Utrgv.edu/hr/wellness](http://www.Utrgv.edu/hr/wellness)

It is an anonymous reporting system, sometimes you do not know the person, but you can identify the area that it happened so they can monitor them. Does it include people smoking in their car? Yes anywhere on campus.

Diana added it is hard to promote smoke free, when faculty are the ones caught smoking between buildings. You can use the reporting system or report it to campus police when possible.

1<sup>st</sup> time offenders they will get a reminder from Campus Police, and notified of the resources available.

2<sup>nd</sup> – reports go to supervisors for staff or dean of students.

4. [Naturally Slim](#) is in it's 7<sup>th</sup> week out of 10 weeks.

5. **Benefits and Wellness Fair:** July 11 & 12<sup>th</sup>, more details are still to come.

Rebekah, how did that challenge go? We had UTRGV 10 % increase with completion. Our goal is trying to change the culture of health for others.

Michael added a thank you for all that you do. It is great to hear how you are trying to work on the events. Mental health, it is important to remember the 1<sup>st</sup> responders. It is hard for them to handle and process at the end of the day. Who do they talk to? They need someone to talk to as well.

It is important to reach out and support our own Campus Police!

### III. Noteworthy Announcements- All Senators

- Veronica De La Garza – **Tuesday is Election Day.** It is always important to vote. Our turn out numbers are low, 1<sup>st</sup> day had 13 people. We do need to spread the word, each of us can be champions in our departments and encourage others to vote. If you want to see change, vote.  
David has a comment about voting, some employees don't vote because they don't know the candidates, and what they represent. It is important to offer more platforms or ways for them to meet the people. Sometimes it is a matter of funding, what we can do? We have had student events that invite participation, but we do what we can do.

Has there been a survey on if employees if they vote, why or why not. What can we do to improve turnout?

Peter James shared how easy it was to ask for a Yellow Sheet that had who is running and what they represent. Michael added locally in Brownsville, there was a cycling event and they all rode their bikes to the polling location. It was a small group, but it was free event that did get 25 more people going out to vote.

Lisa Pena will be leaving for a new position. Do we want to open the roll as Parliamentarian?

David says that maybe at the next meeting would be a better time for this roll to be selected.

This will give the candidates an opportunity time to read up on the responsibilities before taking on the roles.

PJ says we could send out a segment of the constitution to all the Senate Members for review.

### IV. Committee Reports

- a. All committees will deliver updates on their most recent meeting(s) and developments.

### V. Business Processes and Procedures

i Communications -NA

ii Constitution and Elections – Rebekah, double check some changes on the referendum. We emailed Mike James and Dough Arney to discuss the changes of the divisions and elections to be maybe in Late June.

iii Professional Development -NA

iv Staff Relations, Retention, and Morale – David Marquez added, Tuition assistance, needs to be revisited. Turn out is low due to wording on eligibility: “to be in good standing, with at least of a 2.0 GPA , But is was many years ago.

What can it be used for? Continuing Education Program has many topics that are available and if it could be applied to these areas then maybe more staff can take advantage.

Propose a resolution, with the Executive Board can we offer these suggestions.

Peter James proposed 2 items: to allow employees with lower GPA or lower completion of 70% to apply for a 1 time exception then reapply. The other proposal is assistance for continuing education classes.

Michael Aldape 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

No discussion; motion carried, Carla Lopez abstained

v University Development and Events – no meetings yet, but looking at where we are going to have our next Taco’ about it.

Diane Ocanas asked if it is possible to ask for more responses, was promoting our email a 1-time thing, or can we can we send out another message to staff.

## VI. Public Comments & Questions

NA

## VII. Pending Items

a. There are no pending items.

Next meeting to discuss Hiring Freeze and Budget impacts. Doug Arney, is invited to discuss Travel changes.

Jana Arney and Rick Anderson were also invited. More information on a Dream Center next time.

Motion to adjourn, Veronica De La Garza