



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - SAN ANTONIO

Staff Council

Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2019, CAB 410

In attendance from Staff Council:

President-Brandon Oliver

President-Elect – Nancy Larson

Secretary – Sarah Timm

Treasurer-Teresa Petersen

Parliamentarian – Larry Ynman

Others in attendance:

President-Cynthia Teniente-Matson

1. Begin meeting
2. Review Minutes
3. Shared Governance Hot Topics
 - Suggestion Topic Item (Anonymous): Parking permit for Alamo Colleges students
 - i. There are many students who take courses at alamo colleges and tamusa. In my circumstance, i am only taking a course with alamo colleges but it is for the degree plan at tamusa. it would be nice to be able to purchase a parking permit and use the computer labs on campus. Just a suggestion, thought maybe i'm not the only student who is probably doing this. Kind of like a dual credit permit. thank you.
 - ii. Dr. Matson said she will look into this request.
 - Suggestion Box Item (Anonymous): Food for Staycation event
 - i. Perhaps next year you could order enough food and drinks for the "staycation." This was very disappointing after I invited my family to this event for lunch and they received one tiny hamburger. Why call it a 2 hour "lunch break" if you aren't serving a real lunch? The only one who didn't have to eat again was my 6 year old son. It would have made more sense if you had the event from 3-5 and had a snack. Very disappointing and poorly planned.
 - ii. Response from Brandon Oliver: We ordered the exact number of food for the amount of RSVP's we received and made an additional run as well. No one voiced their concern to the Council members assigned at the front in the food stations. Budget was also a concern as the catering alone was over \$1k. Staycation events are also tough to plan for due to people taking the day off and electing not to go/too busy to attend. While I certainly would have resolved this issue on the spot, we can certainly plan for a higher food count as long as it is within reason. However, I cannot disagree more that the event was disappointing and poorly planned. We received overwhelming praise and feedback (see example below) and the Council



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worked diligently to produce a morale boosting event. We did not want to do a 3-5 p.m. event in case people took a half day, keeping it at lunch hour when the most people were available assisted with turn out. This turned out to be correct versus attendance from previous SC events that took place later in the day.

- iii. From Karen Ivy via email March 15: Just a shout out to you and Staff Council! Well done event today! Still in my first year here, and I'm impressed with the amount of impact the group makes. It's noticed and appreciated! Please spread my thanks!
 - iv. Dr. Matson said she noticed that after about 12:30pm most of the food was gone so she does understand the complaint, however it's a lesson learned for next time. Overall she thought this was a fun event and remarked that she even stayed longer than she had intended to.
- Suggestion Box Item (Anonymous): Hiring Processes at the University
 - i. I have concerns about the hiring processes at the University. The search committees on which I have been a member have not been impartial and do not follow the same process every time. I've seen searches left open while chairs wait for their friends to apply. Frankly, it's just really bad and members of HR have contributed to the problem.
 - ii. Response from Martha: We are sorry you had a poor experience when participating on search committees. The HR office provides training to search committee members, and discusses the importance of providing a fair and thorough process for our applicants. The HR office has begun sending out surveys to search committee members to ask for feedback on the training, and also to provide comments on improving the process. We encourage you to reach out to the search committee chairperson or Human Resources, so you can provide more specific information on your comment. This can lead to addressing and resolving your specific concerns. Thank you.
 - iii. Dr. Matson stated she will follow up with Martha about this.
 - Suggestion Box Item (Paula Garza): Lack of Financial Merit Raises
 - i. This is my first year here and I was highly disappointed to know that this is the first place of employment that does not give financial merits during annual evaluations for staff. One of our staff members has been here TEN YEARS and their compensation has only changed by \$4. The cost of living in San Antonio has gone up triple that amount. That is so sad to know that A&M doesn't take care of their workers in that sense
 - ii. Response from Martha and sent to Paula by Staff Council: Thank you for your submission to the Staff Council Suggestion Box. The Texas A&M System is committed to maintaining a compensation program directed at attracting, retaining and rewarding a qualified and diverse workforce. Within the boundaries of financial feasibility, employee compensation shall be externally competitive and internally equitable. I don't know if you had a chance to review the Staff Council's meeting minutes on our webpage (<http://www.tamusa.edu/staff->





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Staff Council

council/Minutes-Agendas.html), but the subject of Christmas bonuses and cost of living increase has been sent to us before. We reached out to Martha Gonzalez, Chief Resources Officer, for a response in which she copied our CFO Dr. Spindle. She noted, "The decision not to give merit increases this year did not come lightly, and was purely a business decision. All employees are valued, and while we may have received merit increases in the past years, it is something we cannot guarantee every year. We have a lot of confidence in our employees and the continued growth of our campus which will help evaluate the prospect of merit increases in the future." Furthermore, I would invite you to review Rule 31.01.08.01, Merit Salary Increases in the University's rules and procedures. This gives a clear "why and how" a merit salary increase can be performed. In addition, according to Martha, a quick scan of employee records show that merit increases whether one-time allotments or salary increases were given the prior four years from last year. There are more than the quick scan show, but generally, the University has given merit increases when able. In addressing other ways the University takes care of its employees, the University does offer fair, competitive and affordable benefits as well as health fairs, employee development, sick & vacation leave, longevity pay, employer retirement contributions and a Staff Council to represent our needs and concerns. I certainly empathize with this individual. I do not know all of the details of this employee's salary history. I certainly recommend that this individual engage in a conversation with the immediate supervisor and check with Human Resources regarding salary over the years. If you have any further questions, please let me know. I will also be bringing this up in April Staff Council Meeting and in our April Executive Officer's Meeting with Dr. Matson.

iii. Dr. Matson stated that she has asked Dr. Spindle to look into the possibility of a merit raise.

- Suggestion Box Item (Anonymous): University Pay Rates Below National Average
 - i. TAMUSA pay rates are well below national average and often well below what staff in comparable institutions are paid. We will not be able to get the right staff unless base salaries are increased.
 - ii. Dr. Matson made a commitment to review the PricewaterhouseCooper's study of salaries that was completed back in 2014/2015. She said we'll have a conversation about this again when Martha Gonzalez can be present.

4. New Business

- Staycation
 - i. Huge success!
 - ii. 120+ people attended
 - iii. Thanks to all those involved!
- Nominations for FY20 Staff Council
 - i. Memo to be issued beginning of May





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Staff Council

- ii. List from HR with employees of at least six months of service and in the respective vacant EEO categories.
 - iii. Brandon mentioned that our next all staff meeting would be on April 17th from 9 to 10am. Dr. Matson said she will plan to attend a short portion of the beginning of the meeting as she is double booked at that time. Brandon stated he has put out a call to all of the VPs asking if they wanted to attend and give updates and he has heard from a few that they will be attending.
5. Unfinished Business
 - Suggestion Box Item: Staff Emergency Fund
 - i. Sub-committee: Sarah Timm, Rebeka Delgado and Michelle Anguiano
 - ii. Received accounting number from Dr. Ortega.
 - iii. Sarah mentioned also that just today Fernando was able to add the Staff Emergency Fund as a specific giving category on the A&M-San Antonio Foundation's page.
 - iv. **ACTION ITEM:** Dr. Matson asked Brandon if he would work on advertising the Staff Emergency Fund on social media.
 - Suggestion Box Item: Staff Council Sponsored Employee Spotlight of the Month
 - i. Sub-committee: Teresa Peterson, Frank Sanchez and Rachel Montejano
 - ii. This is being changed to quarterly rather than monthly.
 - iii. Submit proposal to Dr. Matson by end of April.
 - iv. Teresa mentioned she has a few questions that she would like to take to the Staff Council meeting this Wednesday to ask for input on. In terms of a timeline she envisions collecting the first round of nominations and reviewing them in August, with the first employee award going out September 1, 2019. Dr. Matson likes this timeline since HR is currently collecting nominations for awards as well and she doesn't want to overload staff.
 - Summer Hours
 - i. Marketing & communications Vice President is putting together communications plan.
 - ii. Dr. Matson mentioned that not every department will be closed but employees will have the option for a flexible schedule. She said they discussed the memo at their most recent cabinet meeting and that it is almost complete.
6. Dr. Matson's Final Remarks
 - She is very pleased that suggestions are coming in and that staff appear to appreciate this electronic submission format.
 - They are working towards a May 13th groundbreaking of the new building and a block party for the school's 10 year anniversary.
 - On April 28th the school's 10 year anniversary book will be released at the Festival de Cascarones.

