



## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

### SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE STAFF COUNCIL MEETING OF December 13, 2007

The fourth regular meeting of the Staff Council for the 2007-2008 academic year was held at the Student Recreation Center, Texas Room, at the 1604 Campus 9:00 a.m., with Sarah Gonzales, Chair, presiding.

#### **Call to Order**

Members present: Paula Castillo, Allegra Castro, Brad Chandler, Carolyn Cochran, Carlita Contreras, Patti Dunn, Sarah Gonzales, Pat Hedelius, Steve Hemphill, Brent League, Alegra Lozano, Cece Ortegon, Cindy Orth, Sharron Pacheco, Elba Ramos, Maria Roberts, Shirley Rowe, Susan Sandoval, Anne Speights, Lisa Talcott, Melissa Tenberg, Cissy Thorpe, Donna Ware, Andrea Watts, Todd Wollenzier.

Members absent: Sally Crouser (excused), Roy Garza (excused), Carol Gonzalez (excused), Sherry Lindsey (excused), Derrick Ozuna (excused), Dee Russell-Terrell (excused), Frank Segura (excused), Jennifer Storm (excused), Amy Strong, Brenda Tamayo.

#### **Introductory Remarks by the Chair**

Overview of meeting agenda items. Meeting notes from November reviewed, accepted, and approved with changes. Chair is working on setting up guest speakers for the spring, including Kerry Kennedy, VP for Business Affairs, and Janet Parker, Associate VP of Financial Affairs. Picture release forms distributed, signed, and returned. Group picture has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for another date.

#### **Old Business**

##### Committee Reports:

Issues Committee: No report. Committee expects to have a full report ready for next meeting. Website has been updated and is routing the way it should be.

Fundraising Committee: Committee has not met yet. Members have ideas, but will need certain approvals before advancing further.

By-Laws Committee: Committee will meet in January. Chair Steve has asked for Staff Council members' feedback on current by-laws. Members are asked to review current by-laws and bring proposed changes and/or suggestions to next meeting.

Elections Committee: Committee is looking into the use of Survey Monkey for election processes, but will still have paper process in place for individuals who don't have technology

access. Two new members signed on to the committee, Carolyn Cochran from the Anthropology Department and Pat Hedelius from the Registrar's Office.

Communications Committee: Committee asked for nominations for replacing the vacant committee Chair position. Shirley Rowe was nominated, action was moved and approved.

## **New Business**

- Staff Council scholarship applications are now being accepted, deadline is the same as the general scholarship application deadline, Feb 15<sup>th</sup>. Information regarding the scholarship has been sent to the UTSA newsletter, the VP newsletter, and is already posted in the VPSA newsletter. Announcements will be made in HR training classes and New Employee Development. Chair asked for members to email her to pass word on, and suggested posting flyers.
- University Assembly meeting updates:
  - An item for discussion included the athletic complex expansion, with ways to get funding. One suggestion was to request Bexar County to pay for the expansion. If the funding comes from the county, not only just from UTSA, the area schools would be able to utilize the athletic complex.
  - The Board of Regents retreat: discussion included considering placing a cap on tuition increase to 4.9%. Discussion of possible concerns with placing a cap on tuition included how it would affect funding, salaries, merit increases. Regents are continually meeting to discuss the issues and concerns.
  - VP search updates: UTSA Today announced the new VP for university advancement, Marjie French, as well as the new Provost, John Frederick.
  - Sandy Norman, Chair of Faculty Senate discussed the replacement of 3 Regents, none of which are from the San Antonio area. Also discussed was the suggestion to have a student representative to the Board of Regents to address student issues and concerns, and to put forth a member from the staff (non-voting) to represent staff issues.
  - The Employee Advancement Committee will meet in March, and issues discussed will most likely be presented next fall as initiatives for the year.
  - Student President on issues from the student government: members are attempting to have a park established on UTSA grounds and amphitheater behind the recreation center for events, to honor deceased UTSA students. Campus Recreation has already pledged to donate 6 BBQ pits if the student government can find a place to build the park. Members are also discussing initiating a safe ride program for students. Two new resolutions have passed: library expansion, which is necessary for accreditation, and making condoms available in vending machines.
  - New business from retreat:
    - Student healthcare issues: last year it was determined that students were no longer employed in positions that are eligible for health care benefits. Faculty does not want this to happen, they want the graduate students to be benefits eligible. Plus, they felt it's an important feature to attract graduate students to UTSA graduate programs. UTSA representatives made it clear

to the UT System that we are not in support of that change. It is uncertain at this point if the change will happen.

- Benefits after retirement: the current Legislature is looking at capping benefits after retirement or the possibility of increasing the co-pay, as they believe it will save the State money. This would apply to the state of Texas as a whole, not just employees in Higher Education. 60% of UTSA employees will be eligible for retirement within the next 5 years.
- The Legislature will not consider the cost of living until they meet again in 2009. The Faculty Senate and Board of Regents are working on addressing this issue to be addressed in 2009 (merit vs cost of living is not meeting the inflation rate).

New Staff Council initiatives: members grouped together to brainstorm new initiatives and ideas:

- Example: Joint effort of UT Tyler and Tyler Health Science Center, where students can use a tuition break at either campus.
- Example: Employee time off to take classes during the work hours. The idea is to change the educational benefit to read mandatory release to take classes. Currently, it reads, "The coursework does not have to be job related. Supervisor's prior approval is not required unless the employee wants to take course work during the employee's normal workday. Refer to Handbook of Operating Procedures: (Section 4.8 Employees as Students)." It was suggested to have this change added to the HOP. For reference: <http://www.utsa.edu/sc/msc/employeebene.cfm> .
- Other examples/topics given to look at (for employees) include: evaluation of what is covered for tuition and fees, having the application fee covered, a wellness program, skeleton crew and energy efficiency.

### **Next Meeting**

January 24, 2008, 9:00am-11:00am, in the Recreation Center Studio Rowdy, at the 1604 Campus.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

*Minutes prepared by Alegra Lozano, Secretary/Historian.*