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Staff Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Human Resources

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4-17-2020

## Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Georgia Southern University, Staff Council

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Staff Council Meeting  
Friday, April 17, 2020 | 9:00 - 11:00 am  
Google Hangouts Meet

**Present:** Paul Barnes, Tina Brookins, Rebecca Carroll, Frank Collins, Mary Driggers, Theresa Duggar, Ava Edwards, Lakesha Hill, Christopher Johnston, DeAnn Lewis, Katherine Lewis, Memory Littles, Adrienne McCollar, James Michael Morgan, John Pate, Brenda Richardson, Lindy Sherwood, Nick Shrader, Trina Smith, Dee Thompson, Ashley Thornton, Jessica Weaver. **Regrets:** None. **Absent:** None.

**Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am

**Presidential Updates and Comments - Updates from President, Dr. Kyle Marrero are as follows:**

- **Covid-19**
  - Governor Kemp's shelter in place ends on April 30th. Universities are exempt. Anyone who must report to campus in person should have their employee identification with them at all times. GS Administration has been in communication with local authorities.
  - USG is following the guidelines set forth by the Georgia Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. The link to the federal guidelines for reopening will be on Human Resources' webpage. Reopening will be dictated by the Governor and will involve a phased approach.
  - Dr. Marrero was selected as one of five USG presidents to serve on the USG Reopening Taskforce. GS will have its own taskforce to establish protocols.
  - The GS Covid-19 Taskforce met daily following the initial outbreak but now meets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
- **Enrollment**
  - Spring semester was shifted to fully online. Summer semester will also be fully online.
  - Costs have been reduced for Summer semester to encourage enrollment. Students will only be charged for base tuition and fees regardless of the level. The third phase of the e-tuition differential has been accelerated to lower costs.
  - Enrollment fluctuations are expected. The numbers are down for Summer semester but are up for Fall semester.
- **Commencement**
  - There are over 4,300 graduates. Virtual commencements are planned for May 8th and 9th. The online ceremony will be divided into colleges. Students have been asked to submit a photo of their choice and a thank you message to whomever they wish to thank. It will be both live and recorded.
  - The university is considering in-person ceremonies for late July, but firm plans have not been announced at this time.
  - Students will also be given the option to participate in the December 2020 ceremonies.



- **Financial Impacts of Covid-19**

- 4400 students moved out of the residence halls. 170 remain on campus.
- A total of \$11M was refunded to students. 76% was refunded via direct deposit. 24% was refunded via checks.
- 44% of housing and dining costs were refunded. Refunded fees were prorated. Fees could not be refunded 100% because some employee salaries are dependent upon them. Some USG institutions were able to refund at 100% but GS was not able to do so.

- **Community Support**

- GS has provided 3D face shields to local healthcare workers.
- GS has partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to host a food drive on the Savannah-Armstrong Campus.
- GS has donated food items including lots of cheese to the local food banks.

- **Student Support**

- GS has supported students by mailing laptops and other technology from computer labs across both campuses as well as hotspots to assist students in need of internet access.

- **Cares Act**

- GS received \$22.7M of the federal stimulus funds for higher education. \$11.3M, approximately 50%, went to students for emergency aid. Funds were distributed directly to students through the Office of Financial Aid. Each institution has their own plan for disseminating the funds. The following GS plan was submitted to USG for approval:
  - All students except online students with a FAFSA on file were given \$350 each. Online students were not impacted by the shift to online courses caused by Covid-19. A total of 15,862 students received \$350.
  - Students with the lowest Expected Family Contribution (EFC) who are Pell Grant eligible were given funds ranging from \$109-\$675 additional dollars based on credits. A total of 855 students received the additional aid.
  - \$550,000 is being held and will be distributed based on need for specific emergencies. Students will have to submit an application.
  - \$1M has been set aside to assist with Summer tuition based on Pell Grant eligibility.
  - The other \$11M has not been received but will go towards helping GS make it through. It is anticipated that there will be a loss of \$27M in revenue from April 1 thru July 31st.

- **Admissions**



- The requirement for ACT/SAT scores has been waived and the GPA requirement has been lowered to 2.5. This added 3000 students who were not initially eligible for admission.
- April is no application fee month.
- The Eagle Success Program that normally takes place in the Summer has been pushed back to the Fall.
- **Performance Excellence Awards and Service Recognition**
  - The University Awards of Excellence and Service Recognition Ceremony will be Monday, April 20th.
  - Dr. Marrero recorded a video to acknowledge the faculty and staff being recognized for their years of service and the winners of the awards. Everyone will receive in-person recognition in August during the State of the University Address.
  - There were a total of 250 nominees, 18 individual awards and 1 team award. The winners will receive \$1000 for professional development.
- **Engagement Survey**
  - The campus climate survey will be administered in September. The purpose for the survey is to gauge employee satisfaction. The results will be used to build action plans. It will be confidential and is strictly voluntary.
- **Staff Professional Development Conference**
  - Dr. Marrero expressed appreciation for the conference and special thanks to Jessica Weaver and Nick Shrader for their hard work and dedication.
- **Marketing Campaign**
  - Television commercials have been created and aired specifically to raise awareness of the University's presence in Savannah. The Savannah market was deliberately targeted in this mini campaign.
  - STAMATS is developing new branding that will showcase and highlight all 3 campuses.
- **FY20 Budget**
  - The FY20 budget was reopened and amended. Revenue has fallen and will continue to fall due to Covid-19. It is likely that funds will have to be returned to the state.
  - All state government agencies have been asked to submit any open purchase orders and to continue with the Critical Hire Process.



- \$141M in state E & G dollars must be spent in the fiscal year. \$295M in earned dollars must be encumbered or returned. GS has set aside funds in case the state requests a refund of unused encumbered funds.
- \$11M was refunded from Auxiliaries. The State has authorized a one-time refund from the end of year funds to mitigate this \$11M loss and replenish the FY 20 budget.
- **FY21 Budget**
  - The FY21 budget will not be finished until May or June, in time for the July 1st start.
  - The \$141M was already reduced by the \$6.95M already reported.
  - There are 3 areas where savings have been identified.
    - Travel Funds. Travel funds have been reduced to essential travel only.
    - Reduced operating costs. Expenses lowered due to virtual work environments.
    - Vacancies. Hiring will be limited to essential positions only.
- **People, Purpose, Action**
  - Dr. Marrero expressed that tough decisions have to be made but his goal is to protect the faculty and staff. He is committed to putting people first.

**Dr. Marrero invited questions from members.**

**Question:** Is GS still considering border state waivers?

**Answer:** Yes. I submitted a proposal to the Chancellor to extend the waivers to Florida and South Carolina. A response is pending.

**Question:** Has USG considered not starting classes until Spring 2021?

**Answer:** No. My intention is to begin classes in the Fall. We do not know what it will “look” like but that is the goal at this time. We will follow the guidance of the Georgia Department of Health and the CDC.

**Question:** Is there any consideration for staff and faculty who can continue to work from home to be allowed to do so? This will reduce operational costs and travel.

**Answer:** Yes. This pandemic has shown that we can work virtually and be flexible. We have to look at every opportunity for telework and flexible scheduling. We have had those conversations, but keep in mind that not all jobs have that level of flexibility.

**Question:** How is GS prepared for a possible resurgence of Covid-19 in the Fall?

**Answer:** A taskforce has been assembled. The taskforce is responsible for planning the reopening and for any disruption that may occur in the Fall. It will establish benchmarks and protocols for acting quickly. It will also depend on Health Services’ rapid testing capabilities.

**This concluded the President’s updates.**

**Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Updates from AVP Dr. TaJuan Wilson are as follows:**

- **Pulse Survey**
  - The Pulse Survey will inform the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. This will be a comprehensive plan that is an offset of the Strategic Plan’s Pillar 3. The survey replaces intended events that were planned pre-pandemic. It will serve as a guide to inform how



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the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion moves forward. The goal date to have the plan developed and rolled out is June 1, 2020.

- **Seed Grants**
  - Seed grants awarded in the fall. The grants will be awarded to students, faculty, staff, and student organizations. The grants will be in \$5000 increments. For events, programs, etc. Anything that drives GS forward in terms of inclusive excellence.
  
- **Campus Climate Survey**
  - This survey is separate from the climate survey that Dr. Marrero is administering. It will likely come in November. Dr. Wilson will share the instrument with the Staff Council for feedback prior to publishing it to the campus community.
  
- **Employee Affinity Groups or Employee Resource Groups**
  - Dr. Wilson is exploring the idea of employee affinity groups in collaboration with Human Resources and Dr. Marrero. He invites input from members of Staff Council regarding this idea.
  
- **Campus Climate Support Team**
  - The Campus Climate Support Team would handle issues related to bias. It will not address issues related to EEOC or Title IX specific. This group would help to mitigate issues of bias as they arise.

**Dr. Wilson invited questions and comments from members.**

**Question:** Are there plans for staff to have inclusive excellence representation throughout campus?

**Answer:** Yes. Each college or division has its own IE committee. Staff have the opportunity to be engaged and should speak with their supervisors on how to get involved. The President's Diversity and Advisory Council (PDAC) has been expanded to be the first line of communication. I will be providing each council with a template from which they can work.

**Question:** What are the plans for more diversity in hiring, in particular, in leadership roles?

**Answer:** I am currently working on this with the President and Human Resources (Dr. Wilson).

**Answer cont'd:** The Student Government Association (SGA) brought forth a resolution for a more diverse faculty and their voices have been heard. We are working on this. The SGA did not see a problem at the staff level but staff recruitment, retention, and advancement will also be addressed (Ava Percell).

**Human Resources - Updates from Mrs. Rebecca Carroll, AVP as follows:**

- **Frequently Asked Questions Webpage**
  - AVP Carroll encouraged that everyone be made aware of the webpage that has been developed to answer the most frequently asked questions regarding the CARES Act and Emergency Paid Sick Leave.
  
  - There have been several applications for the Emergency Paid Sick Leave and the Public Health Emergency Leave. Those applications are under review and some have already been approved.



**AVP Carroll invited questions from members.**

**Question:** What is the status of the Administrative Support Role Review?

**Answer:** Due to Covid-19, the process was put on hold, however, the plan is for Sibson to meet with the VPs to analyze the roles in each of their areas.

**Question:** For those working remotely, should the time be reported as regular or telework?

**Answer:** This question should be submitted to Karen Iler. She can give a more accurate answer.

**This concluded updates from Human Resources, AVP Carroll.**

#### **Consent Agenda and Minutes of Meeting**

- Adoption of agenda
- Adoption of minutes for February will be held via email vote. There was no meeting in March.

#### **Committee Reports**

- Treasurer Report
  - ARM Discretionary Fund (Acct#2072): \$1053.62
  - ARM Scholarship (Acct# 7071): \$1792.89
  - Statesboro (Acct# 0869): \$2811.73
  - Statesboro (Acct# 7110): \$4585.21
  - No large scale events are planned at this time. The annual picnic has been postponed due to the global pandemic. It may occur in the fall with participation of both faculty and staff.
  - A proposal has been submitted to VP Whitaker to move funds from the operating account to the Shelley Merrick scholarship account for textbook scholarship awards in the Summer. This has not been approved to date.
- By-Laws Committee
  - The proposed membership structure has been approved by President Marrero.
  - Several amendments will be forthcoming.
  - We are establishing a new election process to align with the membership structure that was recently adopted. In the interim the Ad-hoc Elections Committee has begun planning for the election with the guidance of the Office of Institutional Research. The committee will be able to move forward once the officers for 2020-2021 have been determined.
  - We are seeking to establish a standing elections committee as a subcommittee to the By-laws Committee. Nominations for new members will be solicited at the end of this month.
  - We are seeking to add three new standing committees to assist with planning and coordination the University Awards of Excellence Ceremony
- Communications Committee
  - Work has continued on updating the website.
  - Photos are still needed for a few people.



- Fundraising and Scholarship Committee
  - No updates.
  
- Staff Development Committee
  - Reviewed the surveys. Fewer than the fall conference. Over 90% positive. The negative comments were related to things that were out of the committees' control.
  - In the process of seeking recommendations for next years' conferences. There is a working document. Everyone is welcome to share their ideas. The document will be shared with the incoming SDC.
  - Working on surveys that will go out to the campuses asking staff what they would like to see in the conferences next year.
  
- Staff Outreach and Special Events Committee
  - No updates.

#### **Old Business**

- n/a

#### **New Business**

- The nomination form for the Executive Committee has been sent out. The ballot will be going out today.
- Teleworking and coping with Covid-19
  - Human Resources has resources available to help employees cope with Covid-19.

#### **Announcements**

- The search process is underway for the next Vice President of Student Affairs. The communication concerning the candidate's interviews and presentations (virtual) will be sent to the campuses today.
- Make sure that students are aware of all of the resources that are available to them in this online environment.
  - The University Libraries are open to students, staff, and faculty by appointment. Laptops are being mailed to students. Resources are available online and via Interlibrary Loan. Librarians are monitoring. Students can request one-on-one consultations.
  - The Russell Union and the Armstrong Center are locations where students can access computers. They will need to make an appointment via an online reservation form.
  - The University Libraries have an initiative called Eagle Nations' Response to Covid-19. The Student Outreach Committee is asking everyone to share their experience during this current global crisis by sending pictures, videos, etc.
- Jessica Weaver shared a folder with Zoom backgrounds. There are several Georgia Southern themed backgrounds. The folder contains a link to Zoom where you can find instructions.

#### **USG Staff Council - Updates from Mr. Jasper Stewart are as follows:**

- USG Staff Council Nominations.
  - Nominees for Chair-elect are Ava Edwards, Georgia Southern University and David Brown, Georgia Tech.



**GEORGIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY**

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- Nominees for Treasurer are Jasper Stewart, Georgia Southern University and Gretecia? Banks
- Nominations are due to USG by May 20, 2020.
- The Council voted electronically via chat. There was a majority vote for Jasper and Ava.
- There are no known issues with multiple members from the same institution.
- The next meeting to set the agenda is Monday, April 20, 2020.

#### **Important Dates**

- University Awards of Excellence Ceremony | April 20th
- Virtual Commencements | May 8 - 9th
- Next Staff Council Meeting, May 15th | 3-4 pm
- USG Staff Council Monthly Meeting | May 20th

**Meeting Adjourned** 11:17 am

Minutes recorded and submitted by Dylitchrous Thompson