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Staff Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes

Human Resources

2-19-2021

Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Georgia Southern University, Staff Council

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Georgia Southern University, Staff Council, "Staff Council Meeting Minutes" (2021). *Staff Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes*. 118.

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Staff Council Meeting
February 19, 2021
Zoom | 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Administration/Guests: Annalee Ashley, Maura Copeland, Dr. Brian DeLoach, Dr. John Lester, Dr. Kyle Marrero, Dr. Carl Reiber, Ron Stalnaker, Robert Whitaker, and Dr. TaJuan Wilson.

Staff Council: Will Avra, Paul Barnes, Jeff Blythe, Nichole Booker, Victoria Brannen, Tina Brookins, Jane Cardell, Franklin Collins, Kimberly Couch, Tiffany Courdin, Kelly Crosby, Cinnamon Dowd, Mary Driggers, Theresa Duggar, Andrew Durden, Ava Edwards, David Henry, Jessica Hersey, Devon Hodges, DeAnn Lewis, Memory Littles, Jonathan McCollar, Hal McCool, Michael Morgan, Michael Murphy, John Pate, Matthew Pulliam, Matthew Reynolds, Matthew Shingler, Hollie Sisk, Lindy Sherwood, Jasper Stewart, Trina Smith, Allen Stovall, Greg Surrette, Scott Taylor, Ashley Thornton, Tommy Thurson, Lauren Tremble, and Jennifer Wise. Regrets: John Ramfjord. Absent: Betsy Reaves.

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

Consent Agenda and Minutes of Meeting

- **Adoption of consent agenda**
 - Motion to adopt by Jeff Blythe; seconded by Kelly Crosby. None opposed.

Presidential Updates & Comments – Updates from Dr. Kyle Marrero are as follows:

- **COVID-19 Updates**
 - State number of positive cases continue to come down
 - Regional number of cases
 - Bulloch County: 316 cases per 100,000
 - Chatham County: 395 cases per 100,000
 - Liberty County: 257 cases per 100,000
 - Local hospital systems
 - Region J is stable in terms of capacity, even trending down
 - Local hospitals all showing trends of more hospital bed availability
 - University total numbers of cases continuing to go down
 - Vaccine Update
 - Brian DeLoach
 - Even with lower case numbers, we must still stay vigilant and adhere to public health protocols
 - Still waiting on vaccine supply
 - University has not received any vaccines for the past three weeks, despite continuous requests
 - Those that received their first dose from the university have been steered towards other community resources to receive their second dose since we do not have the vaccines to give right now
 - Campus community encouraged to get vaccinated at any location they can if they are eligible to receive vaccine
 - [Georgia Vaccination Locator](#)
 - Phase 1B that will render all GS Faculty/Staff eligible to get vaccine is anticipated to start in March or April
 - Question:
 - Does the State of Georgia have specific distributors (i.e. retail pharmacies, grocery stores, etc.) that they focus on in their vaccination distribution plan? Can we lobby in some way for more vaccines to come to Georgia Southern?



- We are using results of the vaccine survey sent out to campus community to gauge how much demand there is for vaccines to be able to clearly demonstrate our need to the state. Department of Public Health is not using any type of hierarchy for who gets vaccines but is using data to drive their decisions of vaccine allocation.
 - Do we have any results of the USG vaccine survey that you can share (sent via campus email on February 15th)?
 - Results are sent straight to the USG office, so we do not have any information about that to share at this time.
- **Fred and Dinah Gretsich School of Music**
 - Company is 132 years old and based in Savannah
 - \$3 million gift commitment
 - Also donated collection of instruments which will be on display in exhibits at Statesboro museum on campus, Fine Arts hall on Armstrong campus, and Plant Riverside District
 - Partnership with Plant Riverside District guarantees that GS music program will get 20 nights per year to perform on stage there
- **Junior Achievement Discovery Center**
 - Armstrong Campus
 - Groundbreaking, 3:00pm on February 19th
 - Estimated to be fully operational by January of 2022
 - 15,000 middle school students from 10 county regions to receive financial literacy training, innovation leadership training, etc.
 - Work study positions for GS students to serve as instructors
- **Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center**
 - Budget was granted for construction
 - Design process already funded and began
 - Infrastructure work on South Campus to be completed over the next 24 months
- **Commencement**
 - Face-to-face ceremonies have been set
 - May 8th: 2 ceremonies at Savannah Convention Center
 - May 10th-13th: 4 total ceremonies at Paulson Stadium
- **Budget Update**
 - FY21 Amended Budget has been signed and adapted
 - GS received no new growth money
 - No return on 10.8% reduction because of economic downturn
 - FY22 Budget determined at April Board of Regents meeting (held mid-April)
- **Employee Engagement Survey**
 - Survey will be open March 1 - 15, 2021
 - Encourage staff to participate and engage
 - Survey will be used as a tool to create action plan from results
- **Campus Climate Survey**
 - Dr. TaJuan Wilson
 - Currently editing executive summary
 - Two weeks estimated completion
 - Hope to present at next month's Staff Council meeting
- **Bonus for Employees**
 - \$1,000 bonus for USG employees making less than \$80,000 per year and are regular, full-time, benefitted employees active on February 15, 2021 with a standard workweek of 30 hours or more
 - Temporary and part-time employees are not eligible
 - Supplemental payment will be included in March 26th pay cycle for biweekly and March 31st pay cycle for monthly, exempt employees
 - Bonus payments will be taxable



- Bonuses funded with HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief) money
- \$2.6 million expense
- **Stimulus Funds**
 - December 2020 bill signed giving HEERF funds
 - Received \$11.3 million funds available for our students
 - Will be able to provide assistance to approximately 12,000 students
 - 2-3 weeks away from being able to directly disseminate money to students
 - Student have option to take funds directly or to apply directly to their student account bill in the Bursar Office
 - Received \$25 million in Institutional funding
 - Focusing on revenue loss and expenses due to COVID-19
 - Mandatory fees, auxiliary fees, student activities, parking, athletics, etc.

This concluded updates from Dr. Marrero

Human Resources - Updates from Rebecca Carroll, AVP, are as follows:

- **Employee Wellness Coordinator**
 - Currently recruiting
 - Position responsible for engaging employees with USG wellness initiatives and resources, as well as creating new wellness initiatives specific to our campus
- **Building a Better U**
 - Upgrade to new platform
 - Available April 1, 2021
- **Inclusive Excellence Action Plans**
 - Collaborating with Business and Finance division to start defining the action plans that support the campus' IE action plan
- **HR Metrics**
 - HR Ticketing System for Month of January
 - Received 1,069 calls
 - 2,430 new tickets created
 - 2,363 solved
 - Overall satisfaction rating = 94.97%

This concluded updates from Human Resources.

Treasurer Report | Paul Barnes

- Shelley Merrick Textbook Scholarship Fund = \$1,831.30
- Staff Council Advisory Discretionary Fund = \$ 1,053.62
- General Staff Council Account = \$2,919.73
- Staff Development Account = \$15,109.73

Committee Reports

- **By-Laws Committee | Michael Morgan**
 - Began working on amendment proposals
 - Preparing for upcoming Staff Council election process
- **Communications Committee | Lindy Sherwood**
 - Working to streamline Marketing materials for faster turnaround times
 - Super secret project in the works! Stay tuned!
- **Fundraising and Scholarship Committee | DeAnn Lewis**
 - No updates at this time
- **Staff Development Committee | Hollie Sisk**
 - New professional development session
 - Ergonomics and You, A Workstation Workshop - February 26, 2021



- Reminder to everyone: Some of the professional development workshops have been recorded and are available on our website here
- **Staff Outreach and Special Events Committee | Scott Taylor**
 - Planning several new spring events
- **President's Diversity Advisory Council (PDAC) | DeAnn Lewis**
 - Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Fellows (Faculty/Staff/GAs)
 - Workshops: DIFF will be hosting multiple sessions for two workshops: "Managing Difficult Conversations" and "Unpacking Privilege." Faculty, staff, and graduate assistants are welcome to participate.
 - Fika with Fellows: "Fika" is a Swedish term for a short break involving coffee or tea, a snack, and conversation; an opportunity to connect with others around you. So join various members of DIFF and instructors across all three campuses in informal conversations around diversity and inclusion in the classroom. One you register for the event, you may drop in at any point during the time frame provided.
 - [Register for all events here!](#)
 - Eagle Talks (Students)
 - Eagle Talks is a student-led adaptation of Courageous Conversations, which is designed to provide a safe space that is conducive to open, honest, and authentic dialogue about difficult but relevant topics that impact the Georgia Southern community. These monthly discussions are student-centered and student-facilitated.
 - [Upcoming Event: March 2, 2021](#)
 - Employee Resource Groups (Faculty/Staff)
 - The Office of Inclusive Excellence will be hosting a series of information sessions to outline the process of establishing an ERG. Within these sessions, participants will have the opportunity to choose their breakout rooms to allow those that are interested to mingle with prospective members and identify potential leaders.
 - [Register for all upcoming sessions here!](#)
 - Application for Inclusive Excellence Faculty and Staff Fellowship (Faculty and Staff)
 - The application will be open from February 22-March 19, 2021! Additional information may be found on [our website](#).
 - CLEC and Seed Grant Applications (Faculty/Staff/Students)
 - CLEC, funded by Student Fees, funds intercultural programs that align with and support Pillar 3 of the Georgia Southern University Strategic Plan: Inclusive Excellence. Proposers may request up to \$1,500 for their event.
 - Seed Grants, funded by the Office of Inclusive Excellence, funds programming that aids in implementing the goals and action items listed in the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. Proposers may request up to \$750 for their events.
 - Faculty, staff, and students are welcome to apply for both grants. More information about how can be [found here](#).
- **USG Staff Council Updates**
 - Professional Career Development
 - Georgia Tech still working on pilot program
 - Will receive more information at next USG Staff Council Meeting
 - USG Employee Bereavement Leave
 - Asking for 5 consecutive days for immediate family and for 1 day for family/friends
 - USG asked for research about other higher education systems, K-12 systems, etc. to find what others in the industry are currently doing



- TAP Benefits
 - Asked for TAP benefits to be extended to dependents
 - Asked for TAP benefits to be able to be applied to certifications, etc.
 - USG asked for proposal
 - There are numerous budget concerns as well as issues regarding payment to employees for non-work
- Benefits
 - Asked if Kaiser could be offered to all employees
 - Determined that Kaiser can only be offered to those in Atlanta metro area and Athens
- Wellness Exam
 - Asked if employees could submit wellness exam for well-being credit or 5-8% discount
 - Determined that employees should participate in one of the well-being programs, such as diabetes management, etc.
- Leave transfer
 - Current policy does not allow an employee to transfer sick leave to another specific employee
 - Most institutions do have a shared sick leave policy
- Wellbeing credit
 - Asked if credit could be raised to \$200
 - Amount is reviewed annually
- Proposals guidelines
 - USG suggested that all of questions are best presented as a proposal:
 - Statement of concern with supporting data
 - Illustrate the impact of the issue
 - Illustrate who is impacted by the issue (positive or negative)
 - Timeline
- USG Staff Council Elections
 - Candidates presented by April 1
- Annual USG Staff Council Conference
 - Hosted by Georgia Tech
 - Virtual event open to all staff
 - October 2021
- **Ad Hoc Committees**
 - **Inclusive Excellence Action Plan | Trina Smith**
 - Update will be given under New Business
 - **Conference Committee**
 - February 17-18, 2021
 - Conference was a huge success! Thanks to all!
 - Special thanks to Katie Edwards in HR for her technical help and Jeremiah Womble and Joey Reeves in IT for working their IT magic to make these possible!
 - **University Awards Committee**
 - Review committees in process of submitting their awardees
 - Ceremony will be April 2, 2021 - 10:00am-12:00pm
 - Ceremony will be hybrid form with awardees attending in person and campus able to access virtually
 - Still working on finalizing format
 - Info coming soon!

Old Business & New Business

- No old business to discuss



- **New Business**

- Staff Council Inclusive Excellence Action Plan | Kelly Crosby
 - Overview of Action Plan
 - Committed to find ways that Staff Council as a whole and as individual members could promote and encourage inclusive excellence in our work
 - Council members were invited to provide input on both the executive summary and the action plan by the next week
 - Links to editable versions of these documents were sent to members directly after the meeting
 - Question:
 - Should we extend the deadline for input so that our action items can be guided by the results of the Campus Climate Survey?
 - This deadline has been set by Dr. Wilson and the Office of Inclusive Excellence, and all units across campus are working toward the same deadline. At this time, we are not waiting on the Climate Survey data.

Important Dates

- Next Staff Council Monthly Meeting, March 19, 2021

Meeting Adjourned at 10:12 am

- Motion to adjourn by Kelly Crosby. Seconded by DeAnn Lewis. None opposed.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Ashley Thornton