

General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 | 8:30-10:30 A.M. | Teams

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8:33 a.m. Meeting Called to Order

- Guests: Jerry Smith
- Attendees: Amy Fritz, Andrea McClure, Angel Espinoza, Angela Trejo, Angie Lopez, Anna Boyer-Chadwick, Bev Ostmo, Cindy Orth, David Dominguez, Drew Vincent, Stef Casper, Gabby Flores, Gaby Rodriguez, Harshan Raj, Heather Frazer, Jacqueline Ortiz, James Rodriguez, Jeffrey Miller, Jennilee Garza, Jenny Stokes, Jessica Vela, Josefina Fernandez, Julie Fisher, Justin Marmolejo, Katia Diamante, Lauren Hoffmann, Matt Keneson, Matthew Fey, Mickie Tencza, Nnenna Ikwuagwu, Olamiposi Kolajo, Peppy Garner, Sapna Naik, Sharon Martinez, Vero Salazar, Victoria Downing
- Excused: Eric Uriegas, Lauren Smith, Lisa Alonzo, Lisa Johns, Xavier Loredó
- Unexcused:

8:33 a.m. Old/Continuing Business

- Justin Marmolejo
 - Justin has accepted the Assistant Director position in the Office of Sponsored Projects in the newly restructured Research office.
- December general meeting minutes: <https://www.utsa.edu/staffsenate/Minutes/2023-12-13-Staff-Senate-General-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>
 - Vote on Staff Senate General Meeting Minutes from December 13, 2023
 - Teams Poll: 27 Yay, 0 Nay, 4 Abstain.
 - Minutes passed

8:35 a.m. Presentation

Jerry Smith, Sr. IT Project Manager, UTS

- Jerry has been at UTSA for 20+ years and was previously on Staff Senate (2008-2022) and continues to be an advocate for staff
- Agenda
 - Merit as a cost of living adjustment
 - Recognition of service
 - Senate supported events
 - These are Jerry's opinions, and he wants to bring some awareness to Senate
- Merit as a cost of living adjustment
 - State employees, by state statute, cannot get cost of living raises from the state. It's been through the legislature whenever it does happen. Texas citizens did vote for a cost of living increase for TRS retirees in November. Based on your years of service and retirement, you will be giving a certain cost of living increase.
 - At UTSA, has used under the guise of merit, increases in our salaries, varying by year. In the last 3 years, merit has been tied to the evaluation system, so that merit was based on performance.
 - Merit vs. Inflation: A band aid to a gaping wound.
 - VPBA has said that the strategic investment in our employees will result in an increase of up to 9.1% overall, the largest historical merit increase at UTSA over a 24-month period.
 - During this same period, inflation had gone up 16.7%. The average merit increase was around 2.7%, which creates a 7.6% deficit in salaries you receive across the board.
 - What merit and performance means – a hypothetical situation. Two people with \$60,000 where one gets 3% increase and another gets 2.5%, means \$1800 annual raise versus \$1500 annual raise. The difference works out to \$25 per month. Tying merit to performance is a cost of living increase but it's under the guise of merit.
 - Attrition rates and RIFs are consequences
 - Staff Senate solutions
 - Work with the president's cabinet to ensure that pay and recognition are at the

- top of the list for all strategic planning and decisions. Inform leadership of correlation between pay and retaining Tier One status.
 - Develop a strategy with HR to keep up with inflation by doing an annual review of salaries. Where compression studies and gaps are more than 5% raise them to retain staff.
 - Ensure that equitable evaluations are being audited throughout the organization. All policies should be equitable across the board. What the Provost office does so should all departments.
 - This was brought up the first year merit was tied to performance.
- UTSA Recognition
 - When Covid hit, retirement ceremonies and recognition decreased.
 - When you look at our Tier models, other Tier One, have recognition programs.
 - Recognition should be timely rather than later
 - Solutions – Service and Retirement
 - Work with the President’s Cabinet and People Excellence to ensure the timely recognitions of years of service and Retirement Acknowledgment.
 - At a minimum the recognition should be done at the senior level for service and retirements, especially over 15 years. PE knows when staff reach those milestones.
 - Right now the only recognition a staff member gets in UTSA Today is if they pass away. Staff Senate should push to require notices in UTSA Today of Service and Retirement acknowledgment.
- Senate Supported Events
 - Jerry’s questions
 - Are we really doing the right things at the right time?
 - Do these things really benefit all staff members?
 - Highest return for all staff
 - Merit and salary
 - Recognition programs
 - Low return on investment
 - Great Staff Appreciation event – this requires a lot of staff time and many staff members cannot attend as they aren’t given time to do so
 - Staff Emergency Fund (taxed) - at the beginning, Jerry was excited about this because it was tangible thing, but then he found out it was taxed. He’d recommend a 403c charity outside of the university.
 - Rowdy Games – this is another staff event that requires time and money and he does not think they are giving the highest return for staff members
- Jerry appreciates everyone who serves as a Senator because we are not paid and may not get recognition.
- Jerry is retiring at the end of the month.
- He asks us to think like a Tier One university. What do our peer models do for their staff? How are they treated at their institutions? Do those things that benefit the most people as we move forward in our decision making.

9:09 a.m. New/Continuing Business

Health and Wellness

Heather Frazer and Vero Salazar – 15 minutes

- Rowdy Games – Saturday, March 23, 9am to noon
 - What games would you like to see? In the previous Rowdy Games, had basketball, volleyball, badminton, racquetball, table tennis, pickleball, walking
 - In the past, trivia. Also thought about minute to win it games
 - Recommendations from Senators: pickleball, basketball, softball, soccer, kickball, dodgeball, group exercise class, yoga or chair yoga. Athletics used to do fundraisers for softball with a softball pitcher pitching to people who would donate for the chance to hit against them.
 - Other ideas include a field day
 - The committee will meet next week.
 - Do not have to be limited by games with awards. Could have broader wellness, like nutritionist coming to talk, cooking demos. Dance student orgs teaching choreography.
 - Golf used to do a challenge where you tried to get the ball closer to the hole than one of our players.
 - Mary Hernandez let know Rowdy Games will be funded by our Wellness group under A&O.
 - Feedback: One thing to consider is the “what’s in it for me for Rowdy Games?” question. Why should I come to campus on a Saturday? That may be something that need to discuss. I was also going to mention the family aspect - it can be harder for those of us w/ kids who have parenting responsibilities.
 - Going to promote it as fun, camaraderie, getting to know one another in not a work environment.
 - Other accessible activity suggestions: loteria, bingo.
 - Going to promote it as a fun activity.
 - We have to make sure before promoting bringing your family, make sure we can do that and find solutions to prevent injury and liability.
 - Could also have some sessions, like nutritionist and yoga/chair yoga with an online option, as many of the rooms have tech capabilities.
- Lego of Stress – Wednesday, January 31 from 11am to 1pm, SU 2.01.26 Pecan Room.
 - Please join us and help us get the word out.
 - There’s a big box of Legos and puzzles that Amy put in the closet. Anyone can borrow the key to the storage closet. The key stays in NPB 451 in Amy’s office.

Community Outreach and Events

Jessica Vela and Jo Fernandez – 15 minutes

- February 12, 13, 14, 11am to 2pm – Hearts of Appreciation – Fundraiser.
- Staff Senate will be tabling to raise money for the Staff Senate Scholarship.
- February 12 – SU window lounge, in front of the bookstore, February 13 – Retama gallery, February 14 – MH (outside).

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- Volunteer Sign Up - Hearts of Appreciation [Volunteer Sign Up.xlsx](#)
- Folks can enter their credit card info to donate and can donate as much as they'd like.
- \$2, \$3, and \$5 donations for different tiers and lollipop and heart cards – will be accepted via cash or card.
 - \$2.00 Donation – 1 Dumdum Lollipop and 1 paper heart to fill out.
 - \$3.00 Donation – 1 Heart Lollipop and 1 paper heart to fill out.
 - \$5.00 Donation – 2 Lollipops of your choosing and 5 paper hearts to fill out.
- They hope to raise \$350 from this.
- Credit card fees – annual giving will absorb those fees so we'll get our whole dollar amount.

Scholarship and Giving Day

Amy Fritz – 10 minutes

- Name has finally changed from Staff Council to Staff Senate Scholarship. One more change needs to be made to remove the line about current Staff Council members not being eligible to apply because that is no longer the case.
- We're participating in Annual Giving and will have a dedicated webpage.
- Ideas for website to draw attention to our scholarship: Had an idea of video with prior scholarship awardees of how the scholarship has helped, but none of the prior scholarship awardees wanted to participate. Ideas to make our page stand out against the rest? If we did a video, what could it be of?
- Do we have comms or marketing of happy staff – generic video of happy staff, and someone speaking to what difference the scholarship can make.
- We do have department images. Are there stock images or videos? Drew may be able to assist with this.
- Because this is for giving day, can Development help with webpage content and visibility ideas?
- Annual Giving agreed to receiving materials by March.
- A separate meeting will be scheduled to follow up with appropriate Senators.
- Can an Exec Officer or one of the Comm or Scholarship committee be the person on camera? They could talk about how many staff have gotten one, and what the scholarship helped them earn (bachelors, masters, certs, etc.)
- If any recipients wanted to just share a brief written testimonial, some snippets from those could be posted on the website or verbiage worked into the video

Staff Senate Virtual Coffee Chat Review

Amy Fritz – 10 minutes

- Held on Thursday, January 11, with 46 total participants (19 were Staff Senators)
- Suggestions for the next one
 - Timing
 - Suggestion is May to hype Great Staff Appreciation, wrap up year, and elections
 - Reaching more staff
 - We're still seeing low attendance despite the great efforts of the Communications team.

- Many of us advertise through Teams to our respective areas.
- Academic Affairs does not have a frequent newsletter. Academic Affairs Insights does get sent out – has stats about what’s happening. October was talking about Athletics, for example. We find out about UTSA This Week, UTSA Today, Teams, word of mouth.
- Social media.
- We can use the images shared by Drew’s team and use those in Teams to advertise.
- <https://linktr.ee/utsastaff>
- Team for Social Media Collective also has a lot of Comms people are in there – that’s more for training and emergency comms. Katia wants to caution using it for advertising because things can get lost in there. It might be easier to reach out to Comms leads instead. The Social Media Collective also has students in there.
- If you think of other ways to reach more staff, please share in the chat or on Teams!

9:53 a.m. Questions about Written Updates

- Note: For updates from Staff Senate Committees and University Service Committee Representatives, please review the written updates at the end of the agenda.
- Elections – Cindy Orth
 - We will have a meeting and begin looking out how reorganization will affect representation. They’ll have more information to share in February and will get feedback from Senators at that time.
- STAR – Sharon Martinez
 - Upcoming presentations: Friday, January 19 at 1pm in-person presentation at downtown campus; Tuesday, January 23 at 10am in-person presentation at main campus. Last one will be finalized soon. Please see Outlook invites for details.
- Feedback about Great Staff Appreciation
 - What Jerry was trying to convey was not that he was against the Great Staff Appreciation but rather that staff appreciating staff rather than administration and in administration conveying that as well.
 - The funds do come from leadership even though we are planning the event.
 - Leadership should attend and convey acknowledgment. This year, we can work to get leadership to be more present. We can ask other VPs to attend as well. Amy will also share with ULC to encourage them to come as well.

10:00 a.m. Reminders

- Attendance and [Bylaws](#)
- The next executive committee meeting will be during the Hearts of Appreciation event, so that

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will likely be rescheduled.

- Next newsletter will go out Thursday, January 25, 2024
- Lego of Stress – Wednesday, January 31, 11am-1pm, Student Union 2.01.26 Pecan Room ([add it to your Outlook calendar](#))
- University Excellence Awards nominations due Friday, February 2 ([Link to UTSA Today story](#))
 - Your reviewer name is due to Sharon by next Friday at the latest.
- Hearts of Appreciation Event/Fundraiser – February 12-14
- State of the University address is Monday, January 22 at 9am at the downtown campus. Veronica Salazar has requested our in-person presence.
- With Justin’s new position, he will have to fall off being the rep on Faculty Senate. Anyone interested? The meetings are virtual and during the academic year, Thursdays 3:30-5pm on Zoom. Lauren Hoffman has volunteered.

10:04 a.m. Adjourn

- Next General Meeting: Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 8:30-10:30 a.m., Teams
 - Will include an IRM24 presentation

Written Updates

University Service Committees

- Enriching Campus Wellbeing Committee – Gabby and Vero
 - They are looking at other efforts to outreach with wellness, mental health first aid
- Employee Advisory Council – Brandy and Matt
- Faculty Senate – Justin
 - Met in December twice, also received presentation about Research restructure
- Hispanic Thriving Leadership Council – Eric
 - Have not met yet
- HOP Committee – Andrea
 - In the process of voting for 5.21 Student Pregnancy and Parenting Non-Discrimination – minor edits and adding details
- Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board – Anna
 - Group has not met but it might be disbanded or name changed
- Operational Review Committee – Amy
 - Will begin operational reviews next month and plan to reconvene in late April or early May to review the presentation we will be delivering to leadership regarding our operational recommendations for this years units. You can view current and prior year operational reviews on our website: <https://www.utsa.edu/budget/irm/operational-review-committee.html>

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- 2024 Units
 - February – Public Safety
 - March – University Relations
 - April – Student Affairs
- Out-of-State Work Modality Committee – Lisa
- Parking & Traffic Committee – Heather, Lauren H., Harshan, Gaby
 - No updates
- People Excellence Working Group – Stef, Anna, Jennilee, Eric, Sapna
 - Submitted a request to increase EEB to 18 hours. They are exploring continuing education, certification, microcredentialing being part of EEB
 - Asked more information and data about Performance Evaluations
- Public Safety Advisory Council – Xavier
- Strategic Investment Fund Committee – Damaris
- Sustainability Council – Julie
 - No updates
- University Excellence Awards Steering Committee – Peppy and Sharon
 - Staff nominations are now open until February 2. As part of this, Staff Senate helps with scoring of nominations. Sharon has sent out emails to all committee chairs/co-chairs requesting volunteers. Please reply as soon as possible, by January 26. Sharon will meet with them about the process. Yes, as Staff Senators, you can still nominate someone, and you can be nominated.
- University Leadership Council – Amy
 - No real update: During our recent meeting, we covered two key topics: an update on SB17, which was disseminated by the President last week, and Dr. Browning’s Research Re-Org presentation that we had the opportunity to hear during our meeting last month.
- University Scholarship Committee – Justin
 - No updates
- Ad Hoc: Research Interview Committees
 - Those interviews are in progress or on track

Staff Senate Committees

- Bylaws – Harshan
 - No updates
- Communications – Drew (out) and Jennilee
 - Working on content plan and will share it with Staff Senate next month. Want to present it at every Senate meeting. If you do not see a communication piece on there, it doesn’t exist! Make sure it’s sent to the committee with enough time.
 - Social media planning and automation – they are working on setting up posts to release automatic posts rather than manual ones via platforms but most of those are way

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- outside our budget. May use platform's internal tools
- Received content for the newsletter and helping to finalize it
- Community Outreach & Events – Jessica (out) and Cindy
 - Hearts of Appreciation – Staff Senate February Scholarship Fundraiser and staff appreciation.
 - **Basic Information** – Staff Senate will facilitate a candy sale to raise money for the Staff Senate Scholarship and give everyone the opportunity to share why they LOVE UTSA Staff! - Show your love for UTSA Staff! Purchase a candy for \$1.00 and fill out a paper heart sharing why you Love UTSA Staff or shout out a specific staff member who is awesome. In sharing your love for UTSA Staff with a candy purchase you support the Staff Senate Scholarship, which go to Staff perusing their Undergraduate or Graduate degree at UTSA. – All hearts filled out will be displayed in public areas.
 - **Dates and Location of Candy Sales**
 - Monday, February 12, 2024 - SU Window Lounge
 - Tuesday, February 13, 2024 - Retama Galleria
 - Wednesday, February 14, 2024 - Outside of the MH
 - **Times: Every day of Candy Sales**
 - Start at 10:00 am
 - End at 3:00 pm
 - **Price of Candys and Potential Money Raised**
 - Candy Price - \$1.00
 - Potential Money Raised – TBD
 - **Volunteers Needed** – We will need Staff Senate Volunteers to help staff the Candy Sales Tables.
 - Link to Sign up will be shared at next General Meeting.
 - [Volunteer Sign Up.xlsx](#)
 - Shifts will be an hour long.
 - **Giving Day** – Staff Senate will be an option to donate to on Giving Day.
 - Giving Day will start on **Tuesday, April 9th 2024** at 10:11 am and end on Wednesday, **April 10th 2024** at 7:00 pm.
 - Amy, Sharon and Jessica are working with BA Communications to develop content for our Staff Senate Giving Day page. We will have a short video with testimonials from previous scholarship winners and a short information paragraph outlining our project initiative.
 - **We will need volunteers to be Ambassadors for our initiative.** – More information about signing up to be an ambassador and what that entails to come later as we get closer to date.
 - Initial plans for Giving day challenges and matches are in the works. Any ideas are welcome please share with Community Outreach and Events committee members.
 - Initial ideas are outlined on [planning doc.](#)

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- **Great Staff Appreciation** – Location, Date and Time finalized.
 - **Location** – H-E-B Student Union Ballroom
 - **Date** – Tuesday, May 21st 2024
 - **Time** – 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
- Elections – Cindy and Victoria
 - Had some discussion and will be meeting next week after the General Meeting and will share more information in February
- Finance – Angel and Lauren S.
 - Balance available in cost center: \$11,824.78 available in DXO021
 - Only processed one purchase so far since the budget requests were approved
 - Purchase Request SOP: [Purchase Request Process SOP.docx](#)
- Health & Wellness – Vero and Heather
 - Lego of Stress – Wednesday, January 31, 11am-1pm, Student Union 2.01.26 - Pecan Room
 - Rowdy Games – Saturday, March 23 – awaiting Rec Center confirmation
- QIC – Lauren H. and Bev
 - Question on SSA and TRS benefits. Recommendation to add info on People Excellence to clarify and refer to SSA for more information.
 - Retiree benefits: Free B Parking Pass, Rec Center membership same as staff, library access. Discussion on creating a website or link with this information.
- STARS – Sharon and Peppy
 - Awards will be presented to individual and team winners soon
 - Tomorrow the committee will meet about next set of winners
 - Staff Scholarships
 - Working on figuring out the criteria for Staff Scholarships and possibly creating changes to the essay.
 - Amy is working to change the name of the Staff Scholarship from UTSA Staff Council to Staff Senate.
 - Also trying to figure out whether to feature on the website
 - Highlights at the Great Staff Appreciation

E-Board Updates

- Newsletter in progress and will go out on Thursday, January 25
 - [January 2024 Newsletter Content.docx](#)