

## 2020-2021 Staff Senate Activities

### General Activities

- Increased the number of senators from 35 to 40 (effective for the 2021-2022 year). This was the first increase in membership since 2005. The increase will provide more equitable representation across institutional functional areas and will allow us to distribute the workload more evenly amongst our members.
- Officially launched the Roadrunner Staff Emergency Fund (RSEF) and distributed \$35,867.16 in assistance to 172 individuals, most of which was in response to the winter storm in February 2021.
- Raised \$1,146 for the Roadrunner Staff Emergency Fund (RSEF) through 30 donations during the UTSA Day of Giving.
- Partnered with Myron Anderson to offer his “How to Promote an Inclusive Culture” training for the second year (March 2021).
- Staff Senate members reviewed over 110 nominations for the University Excellence Awards.
- Updated the bylaws to match the Senate’s process for filling vacant positions.

### Staff Senate Committees

- Communications
  - Added all past meeting minutes to TEAMS.
  - Continued updating the new website to include past members, meeting minutes, history of activities, etc.
  - Began using Twitter again for the first time since 2017.
  - Began recognizing monthly appreciation awardees through the university-wide UTSA This Week newsletter.
- Community Outreach & Events
  - Hosted a staff trivia event as part of Homecoming Week.
  - Hosted the annual Great Staff Appreciation Event in a drive-thru format. Attended by over 300 staff members. Distributes 3-port USB wall charger blocks, light rings, and cookies.
- Elections
  - Explored alternative representation models to make the Staff Senate more representative of the UTSA staff population (should finalize in the 2021-2022 year).
- Finance
  - Confirmed scholarship cost centers and payouts for prior years. Transferred funding to the scholarship cost centers from the fundraising cost center so payouts can continue.
  - Worked with vendors to create a t-shirt design and order estimates. Matching t-shirts would help identify Senators at events.
- Health & Wellness
  - Took on oversight of reviewing requests for the Roadrunner Staff Emergency Fund (RSEF).
  - Partnered with EAP/HR to offer trainings in January & April 2021 on burnout (Switching Off – Preventing Digital Burnout).

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# UTSA Staff Senate

- Questions, Ideas, & Concerns
  - Began discussions with the Communications committee on revamping the online portal for staff to submit questions, ideas, and concerns.
- Staff Appreciation & Scholarships
  - Increased the monthly appreciation from 1 to 2 awards by creating designated “individual” and “team” awards. Recognized 20 individuals and teams throughout the year.
  - Took on a greater role with the University Excellence Awards. The Staff Appreciation & Scholarships committee took on oversight of over 140 nominations submitted for 6 awards.

## University Committees

- Staff senators served on:
  - 7 standing university groups/committees: Faculty Senate liaison (Brandy Barksdale), Food Services Committee (Venetta Williams), HOP Committee (Jaime Fernandez), Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board (Elle Marbach), Parking & Traffic Committee (Dominick Morales), Technology Planning & Prioritization Committee (Damaris Ibarra), and University Leadership Council (Matt Keneson)
  - Search committees for the COLFA Dean (Anna Boyer-Chadwick), COEHD Dean (Sylvia Mansour), COB Dean (Dominick Morales), and VP for University Relations (Amy Fritz)
  - 2 tactical teams (Enabling Clear Pathways to Graduation – Matt Keneson, Sarah Sanchez, Brandy Barksdale; Increasing Inclusive Access to Higher Education in our Communities – Jason Trevino)
  - Public Health Task Force (Crystal Martinez/Kat Carrillo)
  - Wellbeing Employee-facing Workgroup (Crystal Martinez/Sylvia Mansour)
  - IRM Strategic Investment Fund committee (Matt Keneson)
  - Operational Review Committee (Brandy Barksdale)
  - Public Safety Advisory Committee (Wanda Guntz)
  - University Excellence Awards Steering Committee (Sarah Sanchez, Amy Fritz, Matt Keneson)
  - Out-of-state Remote Work Group (Amy Fritz)

## Recommendations & Potential Topics for future meetings/years

- Consider working further with People Excellence on the new Performance Management process with a key focus on:
  - Ensuring that more training is provided for all staff, not just supervisors.
  - Advocating further for more direct communication to staff rather than relying on information to trickle down.
  - Consider conducting communication campaigns reminding staff to work on their self-evaluation materials throughout the year.
- Consider working with People Excellence on an anti-harassment statement (mentioned in 1-28-21 meeting).
- Explore further pathways for career growth/advancement (mentioned in 1-28-21 meeting).

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# UTSA Staff Senate

- Expand the Employee Educational Benefit program to apply to programs at other institutions (especially within the UT System), continuing education opportunities (such as those offered by UTSA through [PACE](#), [ed2go](#), etc.), and other programs.
- Have a joint meeting between Staff & Faculty Senates.
- Formalize the succession process related to the UT System Employee Advisory Council, as well as the involvement of the EAC representatives with Staff Senate.
- Consider hosting open forums or town halls to gather more feedback from staff, increase transparency, etc. (mentioned in 1-28-21 meeting).
- Roadrunner Staff Emergency Fund (RSEF)
  - Clarify why the funds are taxable and if we should increase amounts given to cover tax that will be owed by the recipient.
  - Determine if off-cycle checks be issued in cases of true emergencies.
  - Update the application to specify when payments will occur.
- Great Staff Appreciation Event
  - Consider having a Downtown-specific event simultaneously or on a different date.
- Communications
  - Continue adding past content to the website (meeting minutes, past rosters, etc.).
  - Create a template & timeline for announcing monthly appreciation winners through the UTSA This Week emails.
  - Create social media plans to include new and regular content.
- Community Outreach & Events
  - Host an event welcoming many staff back to campus. Distribute leftover giveaway items to those that weren't able to attend the Great Staff Appreciation Event.
- Elections
  - Consider splitting some/all of the VP areas into smaller groups to better diversify representation. For instance, Academic Affairs accounts for almost 43% of the 2021 elections pool, but 71% of Academic Affairs representatives in the 2020-2021 year were from a single area within Academic Affairs (Student Success). We could split Academic Affairs into several groups (such as the academic colleges, student affairs, student success, etc.) or into at least 2 groups (such as the academic colleges and support units) in order to diversify the representatives selected. The same approach may need to be taken with other divisions.
  - Consider allowing staff to vote for fewer representatives than needed in the election. One person did not vote in the Academic Affairs election for 2021 because 11 positions were being filled and they did not feel comfortable casting a ballot for people they did not know. Allowing staff to vote for fewer individuals than needed could result in too few individuals being selected, but this may be unlikely to occur.
  - Consider collecting and posting a short bio and statement of interest for nominees so that staff can review them before voting in elections.
  - Consider hosting tabling events leading up to elections to answer questions about Senate.
- Finance
  - Consider establishing a minimum number of approvals needed for purchase requests (e.g., at least 3 or 4 members) so that decisions don't necessarily need approval from the entire committee. This would allow requests to be reviewed even if someone is out of the office.

The University of Texas at San Antonio

# UTSA Staff Senate

- Determine whether there is sufficient funding in the 2021-2022 budget to move forward with ordering t-shirts for members (initial bids occurred in the summer).
- Update the Scholarship MOU to change the name from “Council” to “Senate” and to specify that Senators can qualify for the scholarship since we do not select the recipients.
- Health & Wellness
  - Establish a more formal process for tracking RSEF application decisions.
- QIC
  - Work with the Communications team to establish ways to more regularly gather feedback from staff (town halls, website comments, etc.).
- Staff Appreciation & Scholarships
  - Work with the Communications team on monthly announcements for the appreciation winners. These announcements can also serve as reminders to submit nominations.
  - Standardize the review of the University Excellence Awards.