

**University of Houston
Staff Council General Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2011**

Members Present: Bill Ashley, Christian Backstrom, Carol Barr, Rowena Castro, Ron Chance, Elyse Davis, Ron Gonyea, Helaine Guillory, Martha Hayes, Marquette Hobbs, Sherry Howard, Monique Jones, Ann McFarland, Mary Helen Meza, Andy Moon, Susan Moreno, Chris Muscarello, Pamela Muscarello, Elsie Myers, David Page, Roger Ramirez, Katelyn Rimmel, Paul Roch, Maria Saldana, Shatleh Sawsan, Mindy Stallings, Rebecca Szwarc, Patricia Taylor, Tommie Trevino, Esmeralda Valdez, Anne Wilburn and Kimberly Williams.

Members Absent: Khalid Bhatti, Linda Keng, Keith Kowalka, Shari Mauthner, Carrie Miller, Dawnelle Prince-Parks and Cynthia Romero.

Guests: List is in the Program Coordinator's Office.

Elise Meyers, Staff Council President, called the meeting to order at 3:08.

Minutes: Approval of the minutes was deferred to allow for corrections.

Guest: Charles Husk, Health Center Dentist

UH is the only university in the country with a dentist on staff. They can offer:

- Quality of care – They have been in business for 25 years.
- Appointments – They are available to any university employee.
- Convenience – They are here on campus and have been offering services since the beginning of the semester.
- Price – They take the published rate for services and discount them by 20%-30%.
 - They don't accept the ERS HMO dental option insurance, but can give a discounted rate.
 - They do accept the ERS PPO dental option insurance.
 - They also offer a discount program where the user pays \$13/month and receives a \$40-\$50 discount.
 - They can also set up a payment program.
- Services – They offer most routine services on campus.
 - They don't do major surgery or full anesthesia on campus, but can offer those services at their private office.
 - They can't see UH dependents on campus, but can see them at their private office.
- Contact – 713-22-SMILE.

President's Report

Elsie Meyers

Faculty Senate Meeting

- International students – They are working on a type of exchange program.
- Workload – The information is on the website and can be located by using Cougar Browse.
- Plant Ops – Melissa Rockwell gave a presentation. It was very technical, but she will be taking questions on November 7 in the Rockwell Pavilion; time unknown.
- Research Division – They are undergoing reorganization and addressing space issues.

- Financial Aid – They gave a survey to freshmen. Only 30%-40% were satisfied with the services (meaning 60%-70% were not satisfied).

USSEC (University System Staff Executive Council)

- They didn't meet last time.
- IT issues – The website for USSEC needs to find a location.
- Employee Morale Survey – The other campuses are interested and we will share the survey with them.
- Ron Gonyea was elected Chair-elect for USSEC.
- Carol Barr explained that Charles Henry was instrumental in starting USSEC. They met at Clear Lake to make policies. Now, they meet at Sugarland. They used to present to the Board of Regents on a regular basis.
- Elsie stated that USSEC plans to present to the Board of Regents again this year.

Human Resources (HR)

- There have been 56 RIFs this year. Elsie has the list of where the RIFs occurred and she will send that out.
- There have been 3 appeals. One appeal was denied; she was not sure about the other two. Sandy Coltharp was asked about the process for appeals. She was not sure, but said that she would find out and send the information out.
- HR is looking into the loss of vacation time.
- E-Performance – HR is trying to ensure that it is done fairly. The criteria needs to be set by December 15, and completed by May 1. Supervisors can't receive merit if they don't complete the evaluations of their subordinates.
- Mandatory training – some additional modules were added on late, but only for University Advancement employees.

Past President

No report.

Carol Barr

President Elect

Tuition & Fee Committee

- Increases were not discussed.
- They are discussing consolidating fees for the different colleges to make it simpler to figure costs and to offer discounts for off-hours courses.
- Students would be required to declare a major by their sophomore year.
- The goal is to enact this plan by 2013.
- They are also talking about setting tuition and fees every two years instead of every year.

Ron Gonyea

Treasurer

The budget report was distributed. Expenses are in orange. CFI bills are still coming in. The \$330 expenditure that was questioned last time was for the CFI luncheon set-up and take-down.

Rowena Castro

Parliamentarian

Members were reminded to sign in.

Maria Saldana

Historian

She has uploaded pictures from the Spirit Bell contest.

Cynthia Romero and David Page

Guest – Je’Anna Abbott, UH Ombudsperson

She distributed her yearly report. Historically, Staff Council originated the ombudsperson position.

What the ombudsperson does:

- Strives to create a fair workplace for faculty and staff.
- Helps to provide information for grievances, such as where to go.
- Allows people to vent.
- Helps them to analyze and solve problems.
- Reports trends in the organization.

What the ombudsperson doesn't do:

- She has no administrative authority.
- She can't overturn anything.
- She can't fire your supervisor.
- She can't represent faculty or staff in a formal proceeding.
- She can't testify; in fact, she can't talk about what people tell her.
- She can't provide therapy.

Tools she uses:

- Mediation.
- Facilitation.
- Systems change (informally).
- Follow-through.
- Identify trends.
- Shuttle diplomacy.

Contact Information:

- Her office is in the Hilton Hotel School, in the Provost Office wing; 231F Hotel (north wing, main hotel).
- Email: ombudsperson@uh.edu or jabbott@uh.edu
- Phone: 713-743-2417 or 713-743-2413.

Trends listed in the report:

- 19 staff and 35 faculty have come to her. The faculty tend to come in groups.
- Interpersonal communication is the biggest issue. This includes civility; not being respectful or polite.
- Another big issue is dealing with change.

Background:

- Law degree specializing in alternative dispute resolution.
- Masters in organizational communications.
- Completing her Ph.D.
- Reports to the Provost.

Staff Affairs**Marquette Hobbs and Pam Muscarello**

- Survey –
 - Handed out flyer encouraging staff to take the survey.
 - Survey is going live Monday.
 - Dr. Lisa Penney is overseeing the survey.
 - David Page expressed concern over how Plant Ops people in the South Zone would be able take the survey.
 - Pam replied that hard copies would be distributed to those without email. A schedule is being created to accomplish this.

Appointments**Keith Kowalka and Carrie Miller**

Neither Keith nor Carrie were there, but on their behalf, student James Lee brought forth a resolution requesting that gender identity and gender expression be added to the anti-discrimination wording the university uses. UH-Clear Lake has already passed this resolution. In order to enact this it will have to go before the Board of Regents. Staff Council had tabled this resolution once before until such time as it was passed by the Student Government Association (SGA). It has since been passed by SGA. James was requesting that Staff Council pass a similar resolution or support this one. Ann McFarland motioned that Staff Council support this resolution. David Page seconded it. Staff Council voted and the motion was passed.

Communications**Elyse Davis and Kimberly Williams**

- Most of the Staff Council website content has been migrated to the new system. Andy Moon, B. Renae Milton and Elyse Davis worked for two and a half hours to accomplish this.
- The Communications Committee has been speaking at New Hire Orientation each week.
- The next meeting is November 17, 11-12:30, PGH 646A. Members are invited to bring their lunches.

Cougar First Impressions (CFI)**Andy Moon and Troy Christensen**

- The next meeting will be November 10, 1:30-3:00, in the Library, Room 106T.

Events**Dawnelle Parks- Prince and Tommie Trevino**

- The Sock and Blanket Drive has begun and will run through November 18.
- There are six new collection locations.

Membership and Elections (M&E)**Christian Backstrom and Linda Keng****Replacements**

- Theresa Onofre, Continuing Education, was proposed as the replacement for Ana Medrano, who resigned. The nomination motion was voted on and passed.
- A request was made to ask future replacements to give a one-minute biography/statement prior to the vote.
- Don Perry had to resign from Staff Council because he was RIFFed and a replacement is being sought.

Districting

- M&E is working with Staff Affairs to complete the districting proposal.
- Districting is intended to solve the problem of ensuring that all staff members are receiving information from Staff Council.
- They will be providing a template message for Staff Council members to send to their constituents.
- Several of the divisions have multiple people in one district and no one in other areas. In these divisions, members will be asked to divide themselves up so there is one representative for each district. The list of districts will be distributed, and each member will be asked to express a preference for a district.

Ad Hoc Committees

- Staff Morale – They are contacting other groups to see how they handle staff morale issues.

Standing Committees

- Commission on Women (Rebecca Szwarc) – The faculty, staff and student awards will go live November 15. The faculty awards will look at excellence in research. The staff and student awards will honor contributions to women’s issues.
- Food Service Advisory Committee (Rebecca Szwarc) – Food Service is introducing two new meal plans that will allow unlimited visits to the dining halls. One will be a five-day plan and the other is a seven-day plan.
- TPAC (Tommie Trevino) – Several suggestions have been made to reduce the speed of cars on the roads around the university.
 - Reduce the speed to 25 miles per hour (city must do).
 - Add yellow lights (city must do).
 - Speed bumps (city must do).
 - Do something on Cullen to make streets safer for disabled students (city must do).
 - There is a petition on the website regarding parking on campus.
 - To report potholes, go to www.state.tx.us/contact_us/potholes.

Announcements

- Sandy Coltharp –
 - 40% of employees have completed their mandatory training.
 - HR will host the core staff tailgate on November 9. They will be giving away many items, including t-shirts.
- Rebecca Szwarc – Residential Life & Housing administration and Housing Office have moved to the ground floor of Moody Towers.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15.

Submitted by Rebecca Szwarc