University Staff Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 15, 2020
1:30 – 3:30 p.m., Zoom

I. Call to Order: Kristina Ballard

II. Roll Call of Members: Sally Yang
   a) Absent: Cindy Hurt, Jennifer Bradford, Lindsey Edrington, Jill Lee, Flora Reeves, Shelby Herbert
   b) Recognition of visitors: Rose Lucio and Juan Rodríguez

III. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
Motion - Brittany Ramsey
2nd by – Lisa Pierce

IV. Reports:
   a) Budget – Cynthia Hurt
      ▪ Current Account Balances:
      ▪ Operations: $13,112.46
      ▪ Professional Development: $1,526.59
      ▪ Summary of Expenditures: On 11/25/20 – Expenditure of $1,530.00 for Data Processing Employment Services – from TAMU CIS (waiting on verification of charge)
      ▪ Total balance of $14,639.05
   b) Inquiries – Cynthia Billington
      ▪ Newsletter header image is not diverse, and also is of previous committee. Due to COVID-19, the USC has not had the opportunity to take another group photo. To correct this, a new header graphic was created that uses the headshots of the current USC.
      ▪ Insurance questions – Inquiry forwarded to the WLB committee.

V. Update on Monthly Meeting with Vice President for Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness
   a) Memo requesting matching funds for the Staff Emergency Fund from the Office of the President sent and approved.
   b) Discussed hosting a virtual forum with interim president, provost, and VP of Diversity.
   c) Discussed the WLB comp-time proposal progress.
   d) Discussed the USC Proposal on Racial Climate Improvement and Education.

VI. Reports from USC Committees
   a) Branch Campus Committee – Vernon Camus
      ▪ Committee seeking a chair.
      ▪ Monthly meeting schedule – discussed having it the week prior to the monthly USC meeting at 8 a.m.
      ▪ Goal: Communication from Code Maroon and email notifications from TAMU to consider department and campus.
   b) IERW – Brittany Ramsey
      ▪ Meeting to discuss the “USC Racial Climate” document; Updates to the IERW committee site.
- Added the following resource links to the website: Aggie Allies, Step in and Stand Up, Stepping into inclusive conversations, TAMU Office of Diversity, and LGBTQ+ Pride center.
- Book of the Month: “An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States” - Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz ---Quote from book: “The history of the United States is a history of settler colonialism — the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft.”

c) Professional Development – Natalie Shaw
   - Met to discuss the possibility of proposing a book for the USC members to read (How Full is Your Bucket) which talks about how to recognize individual’s contribution and providing praise and recognition. Also discussed having a speaker on the subject.

d) Staff Emergency Fund – Flora Reeves
   - Monthly Report as of October 31, 2020
   - Assistance provided/paid this period: $ 00.00
   - Donations received: $55.00
   - Funds balance: $15,888.33

e) Work Life and Benefits – Sarah Frank
   - Update on Comp Time Discussion:
     1. Mrs. Schwartz provided group with peer institution and system components information concerning policies for exempt employees.
     2. Group had a thorough discussion about existing SAP and concerns of establishing standards such as extraordinary circumstances like other system schools have done.
     3. Concerns around an hour for hour exchange, logging and current staffing issues, potential of the comp time payout if employee leaves.
     4. Group has been charged with reviewing the current SAP and establishing mutually beneficial language to support both university and exempt staff.
   - Benefits Provided to TAMU Staff
     1. Discussion about drafting a survey to be given to USC staff to gauge the knowledge of benefits and options available. Constituents will need conduct dialog with the groups they represent. Will draft a list of available programs and benefits currently offered by our insurance and through other means such as Flourish.
     2. Survey to come next.
   - USC Webpage Updates
     1. Work Life and Benefits will draft a page with our representative information. The goal will be to spotlight positive information university is doing for staff, benefits, and other communication needs.
   - Newsletter
     1. Group discussed ways of communicating our updates with communications.
   - Alternative Work Location
     1. Further conversations will need to be considered in particular to discuss how the university/groups may achieve this. How the university may formalize this after COVID-19. Some potential benefits to be explored are:
        a. Space and energy savings
        b. Location issues
        c. Recruitment tool
        d. Better understanding or addressing staff outside of Texas
        e. Tax consequences
        f. Not an option for all staff

VII. External Committees
a) The President’s COVID-19 Advisory Committee has been put on hold until the first of the year due to both President Young and Provost Fierke leaving.

b) IT Governance Group – Eric Webb
   ▪ Meeting to draft an updated strategic plan to align/support the University strategic plan. Topic area and input dates are still being decided.

c) TAMU Crowdfunding Initiative – Nikki Cavender
   ▪ The initiative started with four university projects launched via email on November 17th - https://today.tamu.edu/2020/11/17/texas-am-kicks-off-spirit-of-giving-crowdfunding-initiative/. The application period for the spring cohort opened on December 1st and remain open until January 10. The committee will meet to review proposals in mid-January. Links to the first projects as well as how to submit a proposal can be found here: https://spiritofgiving.tamu.edu/o/texas-am-university/i/spirit-of-giving.

d) TAMU President Search Committee – Kristina Ballard
   ▪ The call for applications and nominations closed on Dec. 11, although candidates may continue to submit materials until the final choices are made (presumably in the spring). The committee members individually narrowed down the nearly 50 applications to a top 8 and submitted those to the search firm, which merged those top 8 lists together for a final pool. The committee met Monday, Dec. 14, in the afternoon to deliberate further on the pool and identify those they wish to learn more about and interview. Those interviews will occur after the holiday break.

New Business: Review USC Proposal along with the agenda

Old Business:
   • The University Staff Council Proposal on Racial Climate Improvement and Education – will send out proposal again and request recommendation by noon, Thursday, December 17, 2020.

Sending requests, questions and suggestions by emailing staff@tamu.edu