University Staff Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 19, 2020
8:45 – 11 a.m. Zoom

I. Call to Order: Cindy Hurt

II. Roll Call of Members: Sally Yang
   Out: Kristina Ballard, Alicia Meza, Shelby Hebert, Peg Hosea, Holly Hudson, Jill Lee, and Natalie Shaw

Recognition of Visitors:
   Dr. Shawn Gibbs, Infectious Disease Expert and Dean of the School of Public Health

III. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
   Motion – Eric Webb
   2nd by – Brittany Ramsey

IV. Update on Monthly Meeting with Vice President for Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness
   1. Discussed CHI-St. Joseph and those mostly impacted were the retirees; it has been resolved and all procedures during the time period will be retroactive and covered.
   
   2. If USC representatives have questions, concern or thoughts please send the information to Kristina and Cindy B. as they meet with the VP HROE once a month.

V. Reports
   1. Budget – Cindy Hurt
      • $13,112.96 balance; yearly charge of $1,530 charge last month is a charge the USC will need to budget for computer service and security
      • Professional Development has a balance of $1,526.51
   
   2. Inquiries – Cynthia Billington
      • No inquiries were submitted this month
      • Please share with your constituents the topics in the monthly newsletter along with a note that every inquiry is addressed and responded to by the USC.

VI. Reports from USC Committees
   1. Branch Campus Committee – Vernon Camus
      • Vernon Camus reported that no member of this committee can complete the responsibilities of chairing. Therefore, they will be unable to work on goals until they have a chair in place.
   
   2. Bylaws – Eric Webb
      • Voted on the DRAFT By-Laws Proposal – motion made by Vernon Camus to be approved and motion was seconded by Stephanie Thompson.
   
   3. Communications & Outreach – Angela Vasquez
Will begin to gather information from chairs and EOC for the newsletter; hopes to begin working on the communications committee’s goals.

4. Elections – Lisa Pierce
   - Meeting tomorrow (1/20); working to fill vacancies at Vet School, Administration at College of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy.

5. IERW – Brittany Ramsey
   - Book of the Month: How Propaganda Works by Dr. Jason Stanley
   - Resource: “Having difficult conversations “ from LinkedIn
   - Also discussed book ideas for February
   - Have information for Black History Month to share in the February Meeting

6. Professional Development – Cynthia Billington
   - Reaching out to the representatives without strengths assessment scores; testing them or gathering their scores; proposing the purchase of a book for representatives “How Full is Your Bucket”
   - Looking into a presentation for a monthly meeting concerning “Positive Conversations.”

7. Staff Emergency Fund – Flora Reeves
   - Balance of $15,940.52; 0 assistance given; but the committee did approve the 1st Staff Recipient for the COVID money; awarded them $1,500.

8. Work Life and Benefits – Sarah Franke
   - List of Benefits provided to TAMU staff: Liz has provided a compiled list of benefits. Martha confirmed she will begin drafting a survey and have it to WLB members by the end of January for review.
   - USC Website Page: Group had thorough discussions of what updates or WLB page should consist of: Updated goals, updates on representatives and benefits, links on timely information (Covid-19 e.g.)
   - Alternate Work Location - Current Process Review: Discussion tabled until next WLB meeting
   - AFLAC Supplemental Insurance Ticket: WLB has been asked to look into availability for supplemental offers such as AFLAC. Discussion focused around researching Perks Connect for additional information as well as a potential List of Benefits Provided to TAMU Staff.

VII. External Committees
1. Audio Visual Surveillance Technology Committee (AVST) – Jennifer Kuehn
   - Approved AVST requests via email for the following areas:
     - Giesecke Engineering Research Building (GERB)
     - Environmental Health and Safety--Two requests
     - Sully Statue Surveillance with Additional Cameras
     - Parking Key Management Lockbox
   - When next we meet, our goal is to revise the AVST Request submission process which is currently under review.

2. TAMU President Search Committee – Kristina Ballard
   - The President’s Search Committee meets next week to interview the top candidates over two days. Once those interviews take place, we will narrow candidates down and provide that short list to the Chancellor and Board of Regents.

VIII. Old Business
1. Please submit all constituent requests, questions and suggestions by emailing staff@tamu.edu for consistency and recorded official responses.

IX. Presentation:

1. Dr. Shawn Gibbs, Infectious Disease Expert and Dean of the School of Public Health. Watch the presentation from Dr. Shawn Gibbs here.
   - The current situation is not a surprise. Modelling team and experts have been warning. Back in November, they had big push for testing. Main changes back then were implemented in preparation with the current surge in mind. They were working to prevent the surge with all of the messaging and warnings about gatherings prior to break, but was still anticipated. Currently going into the return to spring testing process – completing for staff and faculty. In process for students.
   - Note/reminder: the tests you take are just one point in time. You can test negative one day, and then be positive an hour and half later. The aim with the current phasing of tests is to get as many of those positives identified and kept from exposing others as possible.
   - Have not seen much spread outside residential areas. Some spread has been noted in offices due to lunch or social behaviors. Don’t share a meal with those you don’t live with.
   - Human beings are just starved for social interaction. Driving cases nationally, many let their guard down over holidays and now seeing surge due to that. On campus, provide more social activities on campus for students in a more controlled environment rather than off campus and reduce spread in that group.
   - Update on vaccines – adhering to State of Texas rollout plan. 1-A and 1-B (clinical providers, over 65, have medical conditions). TAMU has not received a large supply of vaccines. As of 1/15, only about 100 doses. Since then, an additional 500-600 doses which are going to those on front-lines in 1-A or 1-B.
   - When are we going to return to normal? We don’t know. Vaccine availability and vaccine uptake impact this. As these roll out, people’s behavior changes. The vaccine is 95% effective, but only 2 weeks after you get second dose. It’s not immediate and really only protects those who have the vaccine.
   - Will A&M require employees to take the vaccine down the road? It’s currently on emergency-use authorization. While under this, it’s unlikely to be required. When it receives full FDA approval, that is likely to change.
   - Are faculty and staff in 1C? The groupings are not determined by TAMU but by the State of Texas. As of now, 1-C has been defined.
   - Is there any chance that instructors/staff in mission critical positions will be classified as “essential” and be able to have access to the vaccine before the general populace? That is up to State of Texas. Nationally, instructors have not presented at a higher risk. State plan: https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine.aspx

X. Announcements:

1. Effective January 8, 2021, CommonSpirit Health and BlueCross and BlueShield of Texas (BCBSTX) have reached an agreement and CommonSpirit Health is now in-network.

Next USC Meeting:
February 16 at 1:30 pm
Zoom link: https://tamu.zoom.us/j/95559059497?pwd=cURWbW1TdGVaSmF1T1c0QUx2T1FwQT09
Meeting ID: 955 5905 9497     Passcode: 459415