

## Staff Senate Minutes

February 7, 2023 (10:00am–11:30am)

Online Via Zoom

**In-Attendance:** Jenna Otto, Ambre Plahn, Amanda Bales, Kelly Rush, Keats Chaves, Keegan Gormally, Adrian Trujillo, Michelle Gallagher

**Absent:** Michael Reis, Michael Gonzalez, Jason Horne

**Guests:** Wendi Mars, Michael Ellis, Solario Sheree, Chris Solario, Sean Roush, Heather Brophy, Sandra Holland, Cheri Darby, Nick Miller, Sharon Price

### Approval of minutes

- Minutes for January 17, 2023, approved.

### Presentation

- No presentation today. However, we will have a presentation on February 21 regarding the Name Policy that Keats will be presenting. On March 7, President Peters will be joining us and he plans to attend in the Spring term tentatively on May 2.

### Reports

- Committee Reports
  - Administrative Equity – No Update
  - Shared Governance - Next meeting Feb 27
  - Cabinet –
    - We have three new people that have filled vacant positions on cabinet. Student Success Center provided an update on their new building project that will be replacing the Old Education Building. Questions about building accessibility and inclusiveness which will be discussed with the architect.
    - Presentation from the Academic Restructure Taskforce. They have recommended that the current two-college academic system be changed to a three-college academic system. The recommendation is now being evaluated by the President and the Board of Trustees. If approved, they will develop an implementation committee which will be primarily filled by staff who oversee the daily day-to-day. There have been concerns with the financial model of this

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- three-college structure. It is understood that there will be costs associated with the restructure implementation itself, but it is too early to know what those will be at this stage.
- Just a reminder that General Counsel has been revised. Carson has taken over as Interim General Counsel with the support of Marlee. Please be patient as they get used to this new two-person office.
- Budget reduction: The university is still implementing a \$5M reduction in our budget for next fiscal year. This means we are very likely looking at layoffs next fiscal year. At this point, they are not looking at implementing Article 15 nor are they looking at any buyouts or furloughs currently.
- University Council
  - Current discussion is about our upcoming NWCCU Accreditation report that is due soon.
- Other
  - Staff Connections has one new member...yay! Potentially looking at another 2-3 new members joining the committee in the upcoming weeks. They have a pretty strong team right now and everyone is starting to find their groove.

### Unfinished Business

- Committee Needs
  - UBAC - 2 Classified Staff
    - Changes to their structure and part of this requires two classified staff to be on the committee. With the current budget situation, having not just staff but classified staff on this committee please join. Feel free to reach out to Jenna, Kelly, or Keegan if you have any questions about what being on this committee entails.
  - WUC Advisory Committee
    - If anyone is interested in joining the committee, they are happy to welcome more members.
- Senate Vacancies
  - Unclassified – Kelly will be reaching out to unclassified staff to see if anyone is interested in running for a position.

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- Fundraiser Raffle
  - Given lack of items we have been able to obtain we will forgo doing a fundraiser this year.
- HRO 917 usage
  - This was traditionally a fund used for staff development in the amount of \$250 per individual to pursue professional development. In the past few years, it has not been used. Instead, it was used for miscellaneous HR needs such as CUPA membership, Skillsoft, and Employee Assistance Benefits (EAB). This year about \$9,000 was taken out to support EAB for 6,000 WOU employees which included faculty. Our understanding, this fund is for staff only and not for faculty. Concerns that these funds are being allocated elsewhere and not used for what it was intended for.
    - Wendi would like to bring this issue to her upcoming staff meeting with HR to make Alice aware of what is going on.
    - Should Staff Senate send an email or a Memo to HR about this? Who is the budget authority for this fund and would be responsible for making decisions on how the funds are used? How can we partner with the university to ensure staff members know this fund is available to them. Jenna would like a few senators to help her draft an email to HR to get this conversation started. Kelly and Keegan have offered to help with this.
- Reminder of upcoming elections
  - Executive – during spring we will have an election for the executive positions. If you have questions or want to learn more about these positions feel free to reach out to Jenna, Ambre and Kelly who currently hold these positions.
  - “General” Senate seats
- Closed captioning of Senate meetings
  - There is a significant shortage in captioners in general and it is becoming increasingly difficult to ensure a captioner will be in place. Do we want to continue the automatic service for captioners knowing there is a shortage and we do not have a known need for this service?
    - Motion to discontinue captioning service unless specifically requested. Keegan motions, Ambre seconds. 8 senators approve, motion passes.
- Performance Evaluations & Training

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- On hold
- Use of Direct Appointments
  - On hold
- Search Committee processes
  - On hold

### **New Business**

- Budget Cuts
  - Departments have until February 15 to submit their budget proposal with recommendations on where these cuts will take place whether they are within S&S or staff positions.
  - Departments have a huge role in helping to reduce our deficit by not spending on items not truly needed to function at this time. When making purchases, be sure you are requesting items that are needed and not just something that is a want.
- Layoffs
  - Unknown at this point what positions will be cut. However, we are embracing the fact that layoffs are inevitable. Folks are concerned with how prepared the university is for these cuts. What support systems will be in place for those who are losing their job, or for departments that are losing those positions? Many are fearful we will see a repeat of the last time we had layoffs a few years ago and we do not want to see a repeat of how that happened.
  - Is there anything staff senate do to help with this process? Perhaps being vocal about what resources are available to folks whether it be through WOU resources or even outside resources. Sending emails with active/correct links to help direct staff for resources available to them during this process.
    - Concerns with the level of support that HR will offer. Several folks feel communication coming from them is greatly needed and in a timely manner. Finding out your position is being eliminated should be done in person by your supervisor and not something done via email.
- Moving forward with Old Business that is “On Hold”



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### Announcements

- Agenda item suggestions
- Kudos/Recognition
- Public Comments - Anything for the good of the order?
  - Board of Trustees Meeting Feb 14 & 15

### Adjourn

### Upcoming

- Feb 21, 2023
- Mar 7, 2023
- Mar 21, 2023