



Staff Council General Meeting minutes for August 25, 2021

Zoom Meeting 2PM-2:22PM

Minutes recorded by Edith Arredondo, Staff Council Secretary

Board: Bobbi Shaw, Caroline Smith, Andrew Hannan, Sam Bible

Guests: Assistant Director of Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL), Caroline Smith; Director of Accelerated Transfer Academy (ATA), Krysti Turnquest

Attachments: Meeting PPT presentation, GatorServe Flyer, ATA Flyer

Call to Order: The Staff Council general meeting was called to order by Staff Council President, Bobbi Shaw at about 1:05 p.m.

Reports:

Bobbi Shaw opens the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first hybrid meeting of the year. She mentions she was nervous at the beginning of her term as Staff Council President because she was working at the Provost Office but then she went from nervous to grateful. She gives thanks to her direct supervisor, Dr. Michelle Moosally, for her patience.

Ms. Shaw thanks Dr. Gary Johnson, Interim Provost Uzman, Chris Rodney, Lucy Bowen, and Leah Long for lending an ear and advice when she needed. She also thanks her FY21 team, Caroline Smith, Andrew Hannan, and Sam Bible.

Staff Council Board also thanks the Faculty Senate for their continued support and IT department for saving the day many times.

Ms. Shaw then moved forward with the PPT presentation and begins with concerns made in the Staff Council climate survey (see below).

- The need to have an ombudsman for staff
- New Staff Council Advisor/Advisory Committee
- Staff retention and what it will take to keep our outstanding staff at UHD
- Listening sessions were held to discuss COVID and pay raises.
- How staff feels as it pertains to discretion when dealing with supervisors and the lack of trust there is when dealing with ESO.

FY21 Accomplishments

- An open letter to the UHD community was sent voicing concerns about returning full time and the increase on COVID cases and the density of people on campus.
- The goal was to get hybrid scheduling for staff and faculty.
- The concerns were taken to leaders which resulted a short term hybrid schedule and a “soft start” opening.
- Faculty Senate was not in agreement with the soft start opening different wording was received in the letter indicating that classes must meet one day per week.
- A one-time stipend across the board for all staff and faculty not based on merit was also requested for everything that we have gone through this past year.
 - The stipend was denied.
 - We wanted the funds for the Care Act to be use for this purpose but it was the denied because these funds cannot be use retroactively.
- Staff Council hosted two awards ceremony because we felt it was important to recognize the 2020 staff who missed out on their award ceremony because the lock down
- A month later a ceremony for Staff Awards FY21 was held
- We also participated in return to campus events distributing ice cream

FY21 Annual Staff Survey

- The survey was created on FY20 and included concerns related to COVID-19. The COVID portions were removed this year.
- The goal is to administer the survey annually to address staff concerns regularly.
- ESO/Staff Council Relationship
 - Staff feels hesitant to come to Staff Council because the VP of ESO is Staff Council’s advisor and staff feels that there is a conflict of interest. Ms. Shaw voiced this concern to Dr. Tillis as well as Dr. Blanchard.
 - Dr. Blanchard has been given advice as to who would be a good fit as an advisor or lead in the advisory board for Staff Council.
- There is also concern about being honest in meetings because of fear of retaliation or backlash.
- Staff morale is always discussed
 - The changes mentioned can be a remedy
- Pay raises and increases addressed with the Compensation Study
 - Staff receiving pay increases should know by August 31 weather or not you are in the group to receive that will be receiving pay increase
 - Merit Stipends will be given to those who qualify
 - September for Non-Exempt because they are paid biweekly
 - October for Exempt because they are paid monthly

Ms. Shaw presents Caroline Smith Staff Council President for FY22.

Ms. Smith greets everyone and begins to speak about what is coming up in FY22.

- FY22 Staff Council General Meetings
 - Will be conducted virtual until further notice
 - Possibility of hybrid meetings later right now because of spiking rates (of COVID).
 - A call will be sent to all the departments before monthly meeting inviting them to present upcoming events, topics of interest, policy concerns, etc.
 - You will have the option to come and speak about your event or we can present it on your behalf.
 - Responses to this call and the Q & A on the save the date is what is going to drive the agenda for the general meetings in the upcoming year.

- FY22 Staff Council Goals
 - Continue to collaborate with Faculty Senate. It has proven to be an effective tool and we plan to continue our relationship.
 - Advocate for ombudsman. Faculty has an ombudsman but staff does not and there is a little bit of disparity. An ombudsman or advisory board will help provide a separation ESO as this has been a concern for staff and the Staff Council Board.
 - Continue to campaign for permanent flexible workplace schedule and/or hybrid schedule as other state universities have in place.
 - Clarify bylaws that are on the website and prepare a set of standard practices to clarify things for boards moving forward.
 - Renovate Staff Council website, make it more user friendly and try to follow Robert's Rules more closely as far as approving minutes and getting minutes posted in a timely fashion.

- September General Meeting
 - Our next meeting is September 22, 10 am in virtual format.
 - Please when you get the call from our communications officer, please answer, if you have an event going on in your department, you are doing something that you are proud of. If you have an event that you want promoted to the UHD community, please come share it with us.
 - The agenda will be share a week prior to the meeting.

Ms. Smith asked Mr. Hannan if there are any questions of concerns coming from the audience.

Questions from staff attending meeting via Zoom read by Andy

Q: Are you going to keep the hybrid meetings for those that cannot attend in person?

A: Yes, right now we are going to keep them virtual. We will consider moving to a hybrid fashion but right now, it is going to stay virtual. There does not seem to be enough interest in the hybrid fashion.

Guest Speakers

- Caroline Smith promote the upcoming GatorServe at 9/11 Day of Remembrance event (see attached flyer).
 - First time that Day of Remembrance event falls on September 11.
 - Volunteers will meet at Finnigan Park Community Center in the Fifth Ward.
 - Commissioner Rodney Ellis will be speaking along with a historian and owner of a nonprofit organization that's helping organize the event.
 - Dr. Blanchard will also provide opening remarks.
 - The goal is to provide restoration to a local historical Evergreen cemetery.
 - If you heard about it, you know why it is important that we be there.
 - If you have not heard about it, come and listen to the historian and help complete the projects and you will understand.
 - We are hoping for a great turnout.
 - Volunteers will be provided with, t-shirts, hats, gardening gloves, sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and reusable water bottles.

Ms. Smith presents next guest speaker Krysti Turnquest to talk about another project that her students in the Accelerated Transfer Academy (ATA) are helping put together.

Krysti starts by thanking Caroline for letting them tag with GatorServe day and she is excited that three students are participating.

- In a project during the summer, students researched issues that they really cared about.
 - One student was interested in mental health and systemic racism and she decided to design a service project around it. The day of GatorServe day she will hosting a 30 minute guided meditation so both the community and volunteers attending the event that come 30 minutes early can use to combat some of the negative effects of systemic racism or just to improve your mental health. Generally.
 - The other project is, two students, one was interested in educational outcomes for students whose parents have been incarcerated and/or are currently incarcerated. The other student was interested in the effects of poverty in high school graduation rates. They teamed up to design a service project where they will be collecting books that are for K-12 students. On the day of GatorServe, they will be signing encouraging notes into the front of those books and then will be giving them out at a local high school that has a high population of both low-income students and students whose parents are incarcerated.
 - If you have gently used books to donate, even if you cannot come to GatorServe, drop them at our office S417, south side.
 - On the day of GatorServe come prepared, we will have markers for you to be able to sign and write encouraging notes.
 - I will make sure to get Caroline a flyer for next time that she sends a GatorServe reminder.

Ms. Smith thanks Ms. Turnquest and reminds her to share the flyer to attach to the minutes for this meeting.

Ms. Smith introduced the Q&A part of the meeting if any and calls Bobbi

Technical difficulties: Ms. Smith and Mr. Hannan are trying to get people unmuted to be able to hear the questions.

Mr. Hannan instructs attendees to raise their hand and then he will give permission to speak then they will be able to unmute the microphone and instructs attendees that they can also put the question in a text.

Andy reads a question from Nick Martinez

Q: In regards to parking, have we discovered a way to set expectations at the garage stop similar to the HEB garage?

A [Ms. Smith]: Nick thank you – that is a great question. At this time we have not but that is something we have on the agenda to try to tackle. At least make it where staff members are aware when parking lots are full so they do not waste their time driving around to the next one.

Ms. Turnquest (in Zoom) comments that staff in Zoom cannot hear Mr. Hannan reading the question and ask if Ms. Smith can repeat the question.

Ms. Smith: The question is asking if the parking will be upgraded, like the HEB on Shepherd, that has lights letting us know how many spaces area available and what spaces are open still in the garage.

There are no more questions.

Ms. Smith asks that any questions to be send to the Staff Council email and staff is also welcome to email her (Ms. Smith) or Mr. Hannan directly, they will be here as a team to help staff throughout the year.

Ms. Smith thanks everyone for joining in.

Adjourn

The meeting is called to a close by Ms. Smith at 2:22 p.m.



Staff Council Meeting August 25, 2021



University of Houston-Downtown®

FY21 Staff Council

- Meetings with President Blanchard:
 - Ombudsman
 - New Staff Council Advisor/Advisory Committee
 - Staff retention
 - Listening sessions

FY21 Staff Council

- Faculty Senate/Staff Council
 - Met with leadership
 - Soft start
 - Hybrid staff schedules

FY21 Staff Council

- Joined with FSEC requesting a stipend across the board for Faculty and Staff
 - Denied as Cares funds could not be paid retroactively

FY21 Staff Council

- Hosted two staff awards ceremonies
 - 2020/2021
 - Participated in return to work celebration

FY21 Annual Staff Survey

- The survey was initially created in FY20 and then included concerns related to COVID-19.
- The goal is to administer the survey annually to address staff concerns regularly.

FY21 Staff Concerns

- ESO/Staff Council Relationship
 - Staff are hesitant to approach Staff Council with their concerns as they fear ESO involvement
 - An objective Advisor/Advisory Board has been requested

FY21 Staff Concerns (cont.)

- High number of staff that are cautious to voice concerns out of fear of retaliation
- Morale was reported as low among staff who completed the survey
- COVID-19 and density on campus

FY21 Staff Concerns (cont.)

- Pay increases
 - Addressed with the Compensation Study
 - Staff receiving pay increases should know by August 31
 - Merit stipends will be given to those who qualify
 - September, Non-Exempt
 - October, Exempt

Staff Council FY22

- Meetings
 - Virtual until further notice
 - Possible option for hybrid later
- Call will be sent to invite speakers to present about upcoming events, topics of interest, policy concerns, etc.
 - Responses to call with drive agenda for general meetings

FY22 Staff Council Goals

- Continue to collaborate with Faculty Senate
- Advocate for an ombudsman for staff and/or Advisor/Advisory Board to provide adequate separation from ESO

FY22 Staff Council Goals (cont.)

- Campaign for permanent flexible workplace schedule and/or hybrid schedule
- Clarify bylaws and prepare set of standard practices
- Renovate Staff Council website

September General Meeting

- September 22, 10:00 am
 - Answer call for invite speakers to present about upcoming events, topics of interest, policy concerns, etc.
 - Agenda will be shared a week prior to the meeting

Upcoming Events

- GatorServe at 9/11 Day of Remembrance – Register now!
 - *Sponsored by the Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning (CCESL)*
 - When: Saturday, September 11, 2021, 8 AM – 2 PM
 - Where: Finnigan Park Community Center
4900 Providence, Houston, TX 77020

Q&A





GATORSERVE

National Day of Service

presented by UHD Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning

A UHD Tradition

GATORSERVE

at 9/11 Day of Remembrance

Saturday, September 11, 2021
8 AM - 2 PM

Finnigan Park
4900 Providence, Houston, TX 77020

Goal:
Assist with revitalization efforts at Historic
Evergreen Negro Cemetery

Register to attend!
<https://cglink.me/2fR/r1129617>



"A morsel of genuine history is a thing so rare as to be always valuable."

-Thomas Jefferson



UHD'S ACCELERATED TRANSFER
ACADEMY PRESENTS:

BOOK DONATION DRIVE

Books will be donated to K-12 children of incarcerated parents, and children impacted by poverty resulting in low graduation rates within their community.

DATE: August 16-September 10

**Drop-off Location: Accelerated Transfer
Academy S417 in the One Main Building**

**We are accepting all
kid friendly books.
*Must be in Good
Condition!**

If you have any questions or would like your donation picked up, please contact:

Courtney (832) 782-2005

or

Emily (281) 677-7117

