



STAFF SENATE

Thursday, April 10, 2025

GAC 401

Agenda

Attendees: Joe Benyish, Shannon James, Megan Raymond, Lisa Grey, Candace Henry, Tabitha Pilchard, Donna Knopf, Isabella Chow, JJ Remo, Heather Kidd, Kelly Cowger, Keaton Burke, Dave Gutoskey, Frank Bowen

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of March Meeting Minutes
 - a. Motion to approve: Kelly Cowger
 - b. Second: Candace Henry
- III. Staff Senate Reports
 - a. Staff Senate Chair – Joe
 - i. CUSS Shared Governance Survey Results
 - Generally positive for SU; request all to review results in the future
 - ii. Letter in response to Faculty Senate motions
 - Admin/Finance and President were in full support of the letter sent by Staff Senate.
 - Faculty Senate president said that letter was forwarded to the other Senators. Minimal statement made at Government Relations committee meeting acknowledging that motion caused issues.
 - Motion highlights lack of transparency when it comes to current hiring process.
 - iii. Consortium committee meetings were also a topic at the Government Relations committee meeting. Special meeting will be held by Faculty Senate next week to discuss them.
 - iv. Bylaws offline vote
 - Steve is compiling information for bylaws vote so that it can be done offline before the next meeting.
 - v. Leadership titles vote: President, Vice President, Webmaster, Secretary
 - Chose Webmaster due to the change in job responsibilities as well as the upcoming refresh of the Staff Senate website.
 - Snack & Chats and Elections will be handled by separate committees under the new bylaws, so those responsibilities will no longer be handled solely by one leadership position.
 - Motion to change titles: Candace Henry
 - Second: Frank Bowen
 - Motion passed unanimously
 - vi. Rescheduling Town Hall
 - Waiting on the President's Office to determine a time when she will be available. Will most likely not be in April.
 - b. CUSS Update
 - i. Meeting will be held next week; no meeting held since last Staff Senate meeting.
 - ii. All five BOR nominees were submitted to CUSS.
- IV. Staff Senate Liaison – Lynn Adkins
 - a. Budget Presentation
 - i. Financial Landscape



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- State facing significant financial challenges, directly impacting SU.
- Internal Factors also affecting budget, including enrollment declines and covering COLA/merit that is not funded by state.
- If we do not receive COLA/merit funding, SU will just break even (under \$100K remaining of budget).

ii. FY26 Financial Facts

- Calculated that with no changes we would need \$253 mil for personnel & operating budget. Estimate that we will have less than \$225 million for our budget (possible \$10 million cut).
 - \$4.8 mil removed from General Funds
 - \$2.7 mil on table for removal to pay for Fringe Benefits & Retirement.
 - \$3.5 mil on table for COLA/merit (only \$3.1 mil allocated to cover this)
 - 10% add'l cut to USM proposed by DLS; would equate to \$5 mil for SU.
 - \$44 mil cut to USM would equate to another \$2 mil for SU.
- Predictions are that cuts to SU will be permanent and continue into FY27 & FY28.
- We must reduce our Mission Critical Expenses (institutional aid, 01 PIN Salary & Fringe, 02/03 budget lines by \$10 mil.

iii. FAQs

- We can't use fund balance because this will not fix the long-term budget gaps.
- Can't just raise tuition and fees because we must stay within what the market can bear and be competitive with peer institutions (we are 4th highest with in-state tuition).
- Money spent on building and facilities renewal is required by USM. Projects like Blackwell renovation are not part of the same budget but are funded by capital project funds that cannot be used for anything else.
- Furloughs only offer temporary, one-time savings and are not a strong solution to a long-term challenge. Furloughs also cause operational and academic disruptions and affect moral and retention.
- Voluntary Separation Programs or incentivizing early retirement must have BOR approval and have to be reviewed on a unit-by-unit basis for their impact. If rolled out, would potentially see benefits in 2-3 years.
- Centennial Committee is mindful of the environment, but this is a once-in-a-lifetime celebration and a major marketing opportunity for the University. We have already budgeted money for this event and have engaged the community to bring in additional donations.

iv. Accountability

- Every group will be proportionally cut. Academic Affairs accounts for 60% of budget, so \$6 mil of savings will need to come from this area. \$4 mil will need to be found from non-academic units.
- Need to look to reduce 02 & 03 expenses so we do not have to take



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money from 01.

- Streamline technologies; utilize space more efficiently; reduce non-essential travel; reviewing contractual labor & restructuring when necessary; etc.

v. 01 Cost Reductions

- Hiring freeze will continue, with the centralized model, and stagger the hires of critical positions only
- Developing a strategy to reduce the number of full-time positions.
- Furloughs remain a temporary solution & lay-offs a last resort.

vi. FY26 Budget Process

- Workday Adaptive Planning/Adaptive Insights went live 3/3.
- Budget Office will be working with budget administrators to train and develop budgets. This year, Budget Office will be distributing Excel spreadsheets in the Adaptive format due that late roll-out.

vii. For departments that are already at their minimums, may need to discuss reducing services that those departments provide.

V. 11am - Special Guests – Employee Recognition Discussion

a. Robin Hoffman – Viva Engage

i. Similar to Facebook platform with being able to make posts to the group that can be commented on.

- Has a Praise function as well as a Poll function. Reports can be run on these functions that will provide information on how people engage with the content.
- Allows people to collaborate, communicate, & share things in the community without emailing it.

ii. Viva Engage can be added as an app on Teams.

- Once this has been rolled out to campus, will be able to set their notification settings for the communities you are in.
- Will eventually be able to create your own communities for your departments, committees, etc.

iii. Will be starting “Zoom to Teams” trainings in the future to transition people from using Zoom to using Teams.

b. Michael Taggart – Human Resources

i. Employee Recognition

- Currently, getting anywhere from 2 – 10 people submitted for Employee the Month in any given month. There are so many people doing so many good things – they should be recognized!
- Would like to get a better definition of what people should be nominated for – not just doing their job well but going above and beyond. Also need to revamp the qualifications for who can receive recognition.
- Because of the amount of time the process takes, people are being recognized months after their exceptional service, which can cause problems when a person may not excel in the intervening months.
- Suggest transition to a monthly luncheon with the President for those employees that were nominated instead of just having one surprise winner.



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- Add Staff Senate awards program that would be awarded during Employee Appreciation Day where nominations would be handled by Staff Senate.
- Possible recognition feature through Viva Engage to roll out in the summer? Something more informal that all staff can participate in.

VI. New Business

- a. Employee Appreciation Day Discussion – Candace
 - i. Meeting will be scheduled in the immediate future.
 - ii. Have already sent out the donation request emails and have received offers.
- b. Elections
 - i. Will be an information session for anyone interested in running for a Staff Senate position on Thursday, 4/17 1 pm.

VII. Adjournment