

Staff Senate

Minutes

1/26/2022 | 3:00 PM | UC-307

Call to Order

President Swiger calls the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. She wishes the staff senate a happy new year!

Approval of Minutes

- Meeting: 11/16/2021- Approved
- Senator Carroll approves and Senators Fisher & Senator Briones second the motion at about the same time.

Strategic Plan Update

- Next steps for Spring 2022

We are creating the pillars which will create goals and objectives including faculty and staff as well as community members. We will probably bring Dannelle back to give an official update. Let's turn this meeting over to President Licari! Thank you President Licari for your time with us today.

President's Corner

- Dr. Michael Licari

He wants to discuss expectations and what to look forward to in the spring semester. Strategic plan will be one of the main things we are working on as a campus during the spring. The committee is working on identifying the pillars so far. I like them so far but we will let the groups and committees massage them. They flow from these strategic priorities. I like the commitment to the community. I think that's huge local, state, and region. The timeline is aggressive but doable. The goal is to bring this to the board at their June meeting. Quite frankly, work will expand to the time you are given. You give it 5 months it will take 5 months similarly with a year it will be the exact same just kicked around more. I also want to get this done so we can start using this to make decisions regarding priorities and effort.

This coming Monday the Governors state of the state address will be given. This will kick off the state of things there are a few things are stake regarding the University in terms of budget money. The good news is the recommendation is a substantial increase in general funds a 10.4% increase that's not a done deal until it's a done deal. The second round of funding for the new institute for the military this was not listed as recurring funds so this is up for a decision so far. The other thing is what the recommendations will be for the tuition range as well as for raises all of this will be meshed into the inflationary pressures. Today, I feel pretty good about state funding prospects. We will be working hard to make sure I stay feeling good so far. The last thing will be a little peak at this coming fiscal year. Right now, in terms of admissions the freshman class for this fall is shaping up to be substantially larger

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which is great. We will not climb out of the admissions hole all at once but we do have to start climbing.

It will be hard to offset these losses that we have seen so we will have pretty small junior and senior classes. How the total enrollment shakes out depends on a lot of things how many new students we can get and how many students we can keep. Retention looks like it is up a few percentage points from last there are a few things that give me some encouragement and hope and we appear to be taking some steps forward in the right direction. How this impacts what the states will do and however the state's decisions will land. Inflation plays a roll too. There have really been increases to everything so that will play into some of that too. It is pretty early yet but standing here right now in front of you things look reasonably good. For any college President to be standing in front of a group of people and say I feel pretty good about a financial situation we can chalk that up to a win.

These are some of the things that will be rattling around for me. Please find ways to get involved in the strategic plan development. The SLT and myself are backing out and we don't want this to be a top down driven process. This means that you and your colleagues really need to step up and be involved. Happy to take any questions.

Past President Mitchell asks a question from the anonymous Google form:

This person would like clarification on why some staff were afforded a true snow day yet some departments not previously considered essential were required to work remotely? The staff that had to report were not given the time back where is the equity among staff members?

Dr. Licari was not aware of a difference in personnel being considered essential and HR sent out a further clarification detailing this as well. Stating that the University was closed and since the university was closed you did not have to work or take a vacation day. Most employees were not expected to work. Hopefully, you know who you are if you are essential. If not, we may have to go back and clarify per JaCenda Davidson there may be some confusion about who are essential and maybe we can work to clarify that. If you want to follow up with JaCenda and check. If you worked on that day you were to be compensated at time and a half (if you are a bi-weekly paid employee). If you worked not necessarily if you are essential but if you worked and you are bi weekly you are paid at time and a half.

Senator Sanford was under the impression they were not essential but for the snow day you are essential. She says we were not told that. JaCenda says we will clarify who is and who is not considered essential work when inclement weather arises. The time and half per policy is for anyone who worked when the university was closed if you are HOURLY. Hourly non-exempt workers only.

Senator Carroll says she worked that day. Very thankful we get snow days in inclement weather. I am so thankful because most of us thought we would have to work those days no matter what because of the covid which really changed that whole dynamic. So, I just really appreciate that. Dr. Licari says he thought long and hard about that. Covid pretty much

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showed us that snow days are a thing of the past but the thing about the switch back in March 2020 circumstances were much different. Snow days very different than covid usually a day or two for bad weather not a new normal situation. A conversation I had with Jane Semler was about the ice and a lot of times when that happens there is no power and that makes it hard to expect people to work under those conditions when there may be no power or internet.

There was also concern that I would never close the campus because I am from Minnesota that is not true. Senator Thompson said could you talk with your leadership and see if you maybe just had to work with it being the timing of the semester that caused you to have to be essential that one week. Maybe it was just timing and not necessarily every time thing for you to be considered essential.

Staff Senate President's Report

- Help an Elf - Jessica D'Alimonte

Jessica could not be here today but here is the information that she sent in regarding the help an elf project:

Staff Senate raised a total of \$695 for the four-child family we adopted! We had a couple of late donations to the tune of \$55 dollars - \$40 went to a grocery gift card for the family and \$15 was used for wrapping supplies!
We had a blast shopping and had a good bit of people show up to wrap!

Help-an-elf itself had nearly two dozen families that people from across the University adopted and donated to. I wanted to personally say thank you to all that helped in any way to help us lift spirits and do the good deeds that warm our hearts.

Treasurer's Report

- Jawaun Rogers- great to see everyone and I love the polo's they all look great.
- Starting Funds - \$2,000.00
- Expenses - \$1060.49 (Halo -Staff Senate Polos)
- Available Funds - \$939.51
- Pending deposits- None

Guest:

- **JaCenda Robinson**
 - **Assistant Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer**

She says it is nice to meet you and see everyone! It is nice to see every one today. Even if I have met you maybe I can't tell with these masks LOL. Human Resources is here for YOU. We are here to partner with you as employees here. We are here to serve. I will address two areas today one is our HR Business Partners we want to make them accessible to you. We don't want a negative connotation we don't want you to think termination or discipline as

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you grow in your career here at APSU. Our HR Business Partners are here to assist you. Once the employee is hired they have a business partner specifically for them. This will help you have a singular contact and know to call Robert Lane or Correy Emmert. If it's benefits related Robert will immediately send you to Hannah or if it's something about compensation he will get you with whoever is handling compensation. You will have one person dedicated to you. This will help us develop these relationships in case you do start to have issues with your supervisor or colleagues. We are there to help you foster better relationships with your supervisors and colleagues. Please get familiar with the HR business partner for you or for your area. One of the positions was vacant for awhile and we have since filled that. We have divvied up the different departments and colleges. We tried to do this as effectively as possible. JaCenda is always available to serve as an HR business partner.

I will always pick up the phone and work with you. Sometimes I feel like if it begins with me and ends with me you don't have anywhere to go. During my meeting with Correy and Robert I said you have my permission to work with the employee and their supervisor to resolve this and then loop me in if I need to be there. We are trying to streamline the onboarding process. Are there any new employees here? Lynn? You're not new lol well it's been a year but it's been a rough one! JaCenda says please take some time to go in and view the new employee onboarding video. We were trying to keep Hannah from having to meet with 10 people individually so we developed a video. The person facilitating the video is no longer here I think you will find its pretty helpful and please provide us some feedback we want to help new employees so take a look at that and let us know! We are just trying to make the HR office more beneficial to you as an employee. We are open to any and all feedback positive or negative. We want to be a benefit to you. Lynn just sent me an email yesterday and said wow! Yes, I was impressed it was just yesterday and I responded and said we can make it happen. Absolutely, we want to inquire, investigate, and communicate.

Are there any questions?

President Swiger says we have had a partnership with linked in for professional development courses is that still a thing? – Senator Allen, says I believe it ended. JaCenda says did we find it useful? Yes, we did I will like into the data and see if we have any numbers I will check on that.

Senator Dickens asks Jerica to repeat her question because he couldn't hear. Senator Gilbert confirms yes, this ended. All the professors give you something different now that's not nearly as helpful as the linked in. Senator Simpson says distance ed was in charge. Senator Carroll says yes it was called LinkedIn learning. Senator Carroll says distance ed pays for it. She says Senator O'Neal may know now it was a little over 40,000 a year and then the numbers not enough people used to really make that worth it. Senator Carroll says Thank you Senator O'Neal!

Senator Dickens says since we are in evaluation season is there a mechanism for us as staff to evaluate our supervisors? JaCenda says currently no we do not have that. This is just my 10th month here so some things have been a higher priority than others so I have just kind

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of let this flow but I hope some things are better and covid will not take as much time as it has been. Covid is so time consuming I kind of told Fonda if it's not broken let's do what we can get to get these evaluations done and I told Fonda today to call the Provost and yes, we will take that into consideration.

Senator on behalf of someone else, the longevity has always been included with your payroll check and this person wants to know why they can't have another separate check because it's taxed so highly. He wanted to know if this is possible? JaCenda explains the payroll office probably does not want to run separate payrolls. The taxes are going to be the taxes. He will pay the same amount of taxes. This gentleman has been here over 30 years and I tried to explain that but I figured I would check. JaCenda says we can talk to the payroll office and provide a specific answer from them. Senator Nicholson will report back to him.

Senator Thompson says in regards to professional development opportunities do you foresee the possibility of HR type of webinars for the academic year? Sometimes they had like zoom wellness ones or some cultural related ones. They were different types of opportunities. Is this part of the learn, grow, lead? One of the things I will do is ask Fonda where these webinars are whether they are ours or if we got these from some of our partners. One I would like to do and I said this when I was first hired I would love to develop some type of training calendar so that people could know these options were coming up. I don't know that I can tell you we will have anything between now and summer. We are working now to develop goals for 2022. We are going to be developing our goals and maybe we can consider having some type of training activity for this upcoming year.

Senator Briones says we are no long giving out educational increases for obtaining a degree is this true? This is not true you have to begin your degree program before Jan 1, 2021 and must be completed by Dec 31, 2028. If they didn't start by Jan 1, 2021 they are not eligible. The PC 191 will still pay for classes? Yes, you still have a fee waiver and the PC 191. Senator Fisher says it is still on the website that these increases happen. Senator Fisher says nobody told me that until last summer so I didn't enroll until Fall so I don't get an increase in my salary. On the HR website where it talks about increases it is still on there. Senator Allen says we do still have the policy. It still works for anyone who is in the degree program prior to 2021.

Senator Sanford says I want to piggyback on Senator Briones- is that going to be re-looked at or anything? JaCenda says it was a cost saving measure as it pertains to covid. So maybe not for 5 years? Senator Allen says that came from the financial planning task force and we are not completely out of the woods with that and Sondra will tell us more about that. Call me at 7179 any time.

- **Sondra Hamilton**
 - **Assistant Vice President for Budgets and Financial Planning**

Well hello, I think I know most everyone or we have talked on the phone. So, I am seeing all these names and going so that's who you are. I'm Sondra, I wanted to introduce Jacklyn who is in the budget office. If you can't get me try Jacklyn. Dr. Licari kind of gave you an overview

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and helped me out a little bit. He told you about our funding and how he feels really good and we might get some additional funding too. I feel good too. During this time, I am pretty much a facilitator. We start in November with a budget process where we are and what we looked like with enrollments start thinking about revenues and guessing what the government might send to us. We start looking at fee proposals does anyone have a fee they want to propose? We know what THEC has recommended to the Governor and we know what they recommended to us for tuition and fees. Monday is the day and we will find out what we are going to get it could be a 10% increase. If we get 6 million they may say 2 million has to be used for salaries they might say 3% but you have to come up with the rest. This is what we know we have to pay and then this is our bottom line. Going into the 2022-2023 we have a gap as a result of covid. This means we need to think about what is currently being done. Last year we didn't have any new money so let's just pay for the mandatories and be done. We will be thinking about what we are doing and maybe some re-allocations. The 8th and the 11th is coming up very soon and I think that information will be sent out.

Senator Sanford is not sure who to really ask. A coworker brought this to my attention. At one point during staff senate they had approved to put baby changing stations in Ellington. Maybe 1st floor and second floor is this maybe going to be looked at again? Sondra will pass that on to someone who can that would fall under Tom Hutchins in the physical plant. I have seen a couple. Every year Tom can look at the things that need to be done across campus and these are called plant funds. The kind of revenue that affects operating are tuition and fees or interest that is earned on accounts or state appropriations that helps us for one year. I will ask about this for Ellington. There are no baby changing stations in Ellington currently. Senator Mendoza, says if that doesn't work you can always just put a water hose outside LOL.

Senator Gilbert, asks about cost saving measures one of those were when people took early retirement those jobs would stay empty. How long were they to stay empty? Senator Gilbert says she has been doing two jobs for two years. We went under a new person and they weren't even here to stand up for my position none of that was discussed with us until we pulled and tugged. Sondra says, I think yours was isolated to printing services. A person retired and march will be two years. She retired before the voluntary retirement when the covid crisis hit that's when we formed that taskforce at that point that's the time when SLT had to take a hard look at filling those positions and there was a list developed she worked here for 34 years and that job was then just not needed?

I think there is a lot of support for doing something for you. Sondra will write that down and remind them. Senator Gilbert is doing two jobs. I feel like if there is going to be another person she needs to be heavily involved as the supervisor who knows what goes on and nobody included her. She was not included in any of the meetings at one point was told she shouldn't come so they could speak freely. That makes you feel some kind of way. Are these multiple places or just my area and isolated? There was a list of eliminated positions the others were held open if possible This position you're talking about was on a different list. The VP is no longer here there was nobody there to fight for you. JaCenda is glad she's here to hear this. Sondra was not involved in these decisions.

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Senator Fisher says not sure if you are the right person or not. Who is over the HEERFE funds? Chad and Benjie. Accounting services is working on that. There is \$18 million sitting out there they have recently formed a small task force to determine the best ways to spend this. Maybe a new key card system. Maybe printing services could use a covid something. Senator Gilbert's situation is a recurring problem. There are so many rules about this HEERFE money. This does not include the gov's money we have given to help students asks Senator Nicholson? No, this is different money. Sondra explains we have restricted funds and unrestricted funds. The foundation is different as well. Foundation restricted does not go away. Your budget is kind of like an allowance.

Senator Dickens is a director and his supervisor is a department chair who do I go through? He says my budget was cut from covid how do I go back asking for pre-1994 budget back or what I had when I was hired? Our budget model is incremental unless you got mandatory costs or initiatives. How do you request more money? Sondra says I sent to the VP's and say what are your requests and then the deans go down to your departmental level. Maybe you should just volunteer to your department chair and make your needs known and let them know what you are needed. He says I have been laughed at already and is there a more official process? Travel went away but did come back. The operating did not. We put before them the items that were taken away to see if they became a priority. Did you have a lot of money removed? If someone doesn't come to you hey reach out. Any last questions for Sondra? Thank you for coming! It was nice to be here!

Department/Division Updates

Senator Sanford asks can we make thanksgiving whole week all jeans week for that week? Wednesday is a jeans day. As long as there are no students. So, what about the rest of the week? Even though you can wear jeans you still have to get approval from your supervisor. President Swiger says I'm not going to say yes you can just do it. I don't foresee us doing it campus wide since students are on campus the supervisor does not have the authority to do that per Senator Allen. It's definitely because students are still on campus. You must follow the HR required dress code at all times.

Announcements

None

Adjournment

The meeting is adjourned at 4:07 pm

**Next Meeting
Wednesday, February 23 @ 3pm**



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