

# Staff Senate

## Minutes

09/22/2021 | 3:00 PM | UC 307

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### Call to Order

President Swiger calls the meeting to order at 3:01 pm

### Approval of Minutes

- Meeting: 08/25/2021

### Senator Gilbert motions to approve Senator Bush seconds the motion

### President's Corner

- Dr. Michael Licari

Dr. Licari shares today's overall enrollment status and explains that this is a fluid number. Overall enrollment is down 5.6%. Not super surprising since we had small incoming classes. Enrollment reduction is due entirely to those small classes of returning students. We are up in new freshman by a bit and substantially up in new graduate students. No University likes to see an overall enrollment reduction but we are beginning to climb up from that. We need to start introducing more new students. He feels good about that. Between 2018-2020 the class size fell by about 28% you won't get out of the hole in one enrollment cycle. We need to take some steps to get past that. Lots of other universities in the region and state that are not yet taking those steps so far. Other enrollment information, up 10% at FC center compared to last year. International Students rebounded to close to pre-pandemic levels. Never had super large levels of international students here but this is important to bring students here. Athletics they can be especially important. Dual enrollment numbers all rebounded. Not a whole lot of revenue there but important because they turn into APSU freshman when they are college ready. The relationship is already secured there. Pretty easy for them to become an APSU student at that point. They matriculate here at a high rate. Regarding the enrollment pipeline we are getting out of the gate for Fall 22. We are substantially up in applications from this time last and have returned to 2018-2019 levels. Enrollment is always challenging because you are constantly building that freshman class. It makes you have a sense of urgency and patience simultaneously.

In regards to Covid, our campus numbers continue to drop. Several days in a row from last week of steadily declining numbers of active cases on campus as well as those who are quarantining. Not anywhere near close to losing the masks. MOCO numbers are fluctuating. We want to see what happens on the other side of Fall Break. We have a long way to go from where we are right now to where we were in the summer when we could be mask free.

Anyone in the household of an APSU community member can use our testing services to help take pressure off MOCO resources. We will be launching the vaccine incentives

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soon. We are close to getting that out the door. Some students we are talking to are pretty excited.

Chairman O'Malley's term ended as Chair for the Board. He is no longer eligible to be the chair. The Board Elected a new Chair the new Chair is Billy Adkins and the Vice Chair is Don Jenkins. Both of whom are deeply committed to the University.

Finally, we will be leaving the OVC and joining the ASUN conference. It was time to take the next step to this new conference. We will be leveraging the strong brand that APSU has and put us in the places where the coaches will be recruiting. This will put our reputation out there where it matters more. He spoke with Amy Corlew at AP day and is excited about getting some students recruited from the Atlanta area and this is a great step forward for the university on a number of levels.

Past President Mitchell will share anonymous staff senate questions from the Google Form:

- 1.) Can we discuss the email that went out about the vaccine incentives is it enough to motivate individuals to get vaccinated and how does it impact vaccinated staff who may have low morale from already being vaccinated?

A: We cannot mandate a vaccine. Under no circumstances can we do that. It is illegal to do that. Even the incentives we are offering are kind of pushing it. We were watching what ETSU was doing. The language from Nashville has been you shouldn't be asking or providing any kind of service in exchange for being vaccinated. So, we are skating right up to the edge on things honestly. We have to tread carefully. It has been carefully designed with information from ESTU and general counsels from around the state and region about what we are able to do.

- 2.) At any point would campus shift to a remote environment and what numbers would that be? Current rates seem to have little transparency on campus and two MOCO teachers have died.

A: We aren't hiding anything, it is posted for the APSU community and the public. We are sharing every piece of information we have. There is no magic number and there never was. This is something that interfaces with the local community.

- 3.) How can staff feel supported when they face continued pandemic stress? Burnout anxiety etc?

A: Absolutely, that's a question where I would welcome suggestions from the board about this. I get it, this is absolutely exhausting. We spend a good chunk of Thursday mornings discussing strategies for the university to combat this. I meet weekly to talk about covid with SGA from the student perspective. I spent a tremendous amount of time talking about this and thinking about this. We have to pay attention

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to this and keep monitoring it. I hope that the spirit of grace and flexibility remains on campus because that's the only way to get through this.

### President's Report

- **Senator Engagement**  
Vice President Allen will address the group regarding ideas to boost morale. We have 612 staff employees and not everyone is aware of who represents them. It's important for us to bring issues to the board. We discussed at our last EC meeting about ordering shirts for us to wear to represent the board. We would have staff senate and maybe the fiscal year to designate. Let us know what kind of shirt you would like. These could be worn any time you want. President Swiger said polos feel a little more professional. Senator Gilbert says if we chose polos we could go with a men's and women's version after Senator Mallory said unisex fit isn't great on polos. Senator Varytimidis says to be careful about dating it in case people leave their position. That way we aren't limited. Senator Gaither said years ago HR used to distribute these. They gave out a nice black one a couple years ago they were nicer than that gym type material. They were a little short but they were nice. Senator Gilbert says we could look at samples at a meeting. Most of the vendors have comparable shirt prices. The polo would probably be just one sided. If Senator Bush allowed it maybe we can use the Govs Head.

Senator Johnson asked if this means we have funds this year? Yes, we do. We actually have some gifts. These were ordered for all the staff (hand sanitizer) was ordered pre-covid. We wanted to come up with something to be more visible to all of campus. Senator D'Alimonte says what if we added staff senate to our email signature? We email all day every day so we could add this to our emails to help. Senator Gilbert suggests meet the Senators. A two-hour period somewhere to meet the senators. Maybe outside so people feel more comfortable. Maybe we can have an opened-up meeting and then have some refreshments and get some facetime with people on campus. When and how often would we do it? Once a year? Once a semester? We would need to make people aware. Senator Hoza says maybe have the meetings at a different location and invite more people. We move around the location once or twice a year and invite people from that department to see what goes on here. Senator Varytimidis says we can attend events as a staff senate representation. We would wear our polos and be represented. Tailgating and booths at events. Senator Johnson suggests if we physically get a list and go introduce ourselves and pass these out. People are back now and wearing masks. If you feel comfortable visiting areas we would need an action plan and make sure you hit everyone.

Senator Swiger says these are really good ideas. Joe Mills asks how do we publicize and promote ourselves? Says he doesn't know how we are promoted. What are we doing to stand out? He says anything we can do to promote would help. Senator Gilbert says that meetings used to be on the GovSays. At least we would know the information was sent out and people are welcome to come to the meetings. Don't

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make people search for the meetings. Vice President Allen says maybe we should utilize the staff senate email. We don't currently have a staff senate social media. This would be a way to get the word out. We could highlight people on a staff senate twitter.

Vice President Allen should have more information at the next meeting about shirts. If you have an ideas please shoot me an email at [allenh@apsu.edu](mailto:allenh@apsu.edu)

- **Safe Space Line**

Prior President Mitchell talks about the Google form Kelly sent out prior to the meeting. We noticed that we were asking questions and getting crickets. Last year on zoom people could message Megan directly and have anonymous questions asked and answered. We feel like people liked that opportunity. People felt like they could freely ask what they wanted. We wanted to provide that outlet for you guys to ask these questions. One thing to be changed is asking who the question should be directed to. Whether it's Dr. Licari or the Board. Most of the questions last year were sent to Megan and she asked. Kelly will send these out each month. You are welcome to send this in before the meeting or during the actual meeting.

Are there any questions about the google form?

- **Zoom meetings/ Accommodations needs**

Let's talk about having a zoom link for staff senate. A link can be provided if you have filed accommodations with HR. We will not have regularly scheduled zoom links. Dr. Licari has indicated he would like us to meet in person as much as we can. President Swiger is happy to address any individual questions about this.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- No Report (No Budget/Funds Spent)

### **Old Business**

- No Old Business

### **New Business**

- Food Service Bid- Cecil Wilson

Cecil would like to ask for input. His email address is [wilsonct@apsu.edu](mailto:wilsonct@apsu.edu). We are coming to the end of our contract with dining. Because of the strange year last year, we just chose to extend our contract one more year until things settled down. This is the last year for that. Let's talk about what the means. The contract will be released publicly for any interested vendor to bid. We are looking for a 10-year contract. Chartwells and any interested parties will have to bid. Biggest impact will be on some of the venues. What do you want to see stay? What would you like to see leave?

One change is with meal plans. Staff has access to 2-3 different meal plans. These never expire so you can purchase it and use it as long as you want. One change we

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are asking for is transferability. If you want to transfer meals to another staff member who may have left or retired. We also want to talk about summer hours. What would you like to see open in the summer? One of the things is remodeling the old bookstore and what you would like to see there. We would like to get the bid out there by the end of October and let the vendors get the word out there. That committee will meet next week. You don't have to be on that committee to send feedback. Joe has already met with SGA we have collected feedback from students. We have seen this end of the contract coming. What do you want to see and what are you looking for? I would like to open the floor for any questions? Senator Varytimidis asks if the committee is already made up? Almost. Vice President Allen says competitive pay for the employees is really important. Yes, he says every company that will bid will focus on livable wages. Senator Johnson asked what are the ideas for the old bookstore? People are asking for some type of Asian or Asian Fusion presence. Comparable to Panda Express. Southern type cuisine comfort food. Senator Gilbert asks will the old bookstore be additional dining? Yes, that's correct. Joe Mills says there are no apsu funds being used from reserves. There is no cost to APSU or anybody. Try to have your thoughts to Cecil by next Wednesday because the committee will meet.

- COVID Incentive Plan  
President Swiger said tomorrow morning SLT will be voting on this in terms of what the actual awards or prizes will be. Can staff enter this? Yes, the overall campus community with possible exclusions. Anyone that reports directly to an SLT staff member may be excluded we need to wait and see the specific guidelines.
- Wellness Wednesday's
  - Wednesday from 11am- 1pm at the tent located outside the Art + Design Building (Free but please RSVP)- President Swiger will provide the link.

Each week they focus on something different with these. Ways to meditate, taking your blood pressure, dealing with covid. Senator Prescott asked about who we RSVP to? President Swiger will send this out.

- Annual Enrollment- Webinars began on September 15, 2021
  - [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/ae\\_vendor\\_webinars\\_flyer.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/finance/fa-benefits/documents/ae_vendor_webinars_flyer.pdf)

Not doing a typical webinar so please visit the link.

## University Standing Committee Reports

## Department/Division Updates

## Announcements

The next meeting will be October 27<sup>th</sup> at 3pm.

 **Staff Senate****Minutes**

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**Adjournment**

**Senator Allen motions to adjourn at 3:47 pm**

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