

Staff Senate Meeting Minutes  
February 12, 2025  
Willard J. Walker Hall, Room 504

I) Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Chair Roy Cordell at 1:30 PM.

II) Adoption of Agenda

- A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to adopt the February meeting agenda.

III) Roll Call

- Secretary Vince Capps conducted the roll call.

IV) Campus Updates

i. Human Resources - Amy Ochoa

a. Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Merit Increases

- Details on the COLA and merit increases will be finalized and communicated after the planning meeting on February 24th.
- COLA will close any gaps up to new pay levels. Those already brought up to market by COLA will not get an additional increase.
- Merit will be awarded centrally based on performance, but not all "exceeds expectations" ratings will receive merit. There is a set merit pool for each unit.
- Specific questions should be directed to HR after final details are released.

b. Performance Reviews

- The deadline for supervisor performance reviews to be completed in Workday is March 31st.

c. Position Upgrades, Promotions, and Job Descriptions

- Concerns were raised about the lack of clear processes for position upgrades and the updating of job descriptions after the classification and compensation project.
- Some confusion about the role of job profiles versus job descriptions in determining pay grade. Job descriptions should drive classification.
- HR will reach out to Fulbright College HR to ensure processes are clarified and communicated to all staff.

ii. Legislative Update - Karmen Boddie

a. State Legislation

- Senate Bill 3 (SB3) passed, which ends affirmative action and significantly changes state reporting requirements related to diversity.
- Other bills are being considered related to teacher/student protection and immigration enforcement.

#### b. Campus Impacts

- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has recently been active in Northwest Arkansas, with potential impacts to campus.

#### c. Potential Staff Senate Response

- Discussion about the desire for Staff Senate to release a general statement of care and support for staff in light of SB3 and other concerning legislation.
- Senators expressed the importance of acknowledging difficulties without being overtly political or drawing unwanted attention.
- Roy and Myrlinda will work on drafting a statement to be reviewed by university legal counsel before distribution.

### V. Approval of Minutes

- The January meeting minutes were approved without changes.

### VI. Treasurer's Report - Trish Watkins

#### a. Current Balances

- The current balance is \$17,161.64. The only major expense in January was a \$1,094.39 charge from Chartwells for staff appreciation.
- The available maintenance balance, which excludes already budgeted obligations, is approximately \$9,000.

#### b. Clarification on Balances

- Senators are advised to focus on the maintenance balance, as the total balance includes funds already committed, such as the chair's salary.

### VII. Committee Reports

#### i. Elections - Ruth Parcels

##### a. Nomination Results

- There was a large turnout of nominations this cycle.
- Kristen Armstrong (VCRI/VCAD) and Krista Hoover (Chancellor's Division) have won uncontested races for their division's open seats.
- Multiple potential candidates were nominated for open seats in Academic Affairs (26 nominees for 7 seats), Student Affairs, Finance & Administration, and At-Large.

- Some nominees will have to choose which race to run in if nominated in multiple categories.

#### b. Next Steps

- The Elections Committee will send out a Qualtrics survey to all nominees to confirm their interest in running and understanding of the time commitments.
- Nominees must also confirm they have their supervisor's support to serve.
  - New senators will be announced around April 1st, with officer nominations to follow.

#### ii. Employee of the Quarter/Year (EOQ/EOY) - Ashley Reeves

##### a. 2nd Quarter EOQ Winners

- Professional: Ally Sanford, Career Services
- Technical/Paraprofessional: George Holmes, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Secretarial/Clerical: Julie Rogan, College of Engineering
- Skilled Crafts/Service Maintenance: Juan Ramirez, Transit & Parking

##### b. Call for 3rd Quarter Nominations

- Nominations are now being accepted for the 3rd Quarter EOQ awards in all categories.
- The Secretarial/Clerical category especially needs more nominees.
- Winners will be announced on April 15th.

#### VIII. Old Business

##### i. Catastrophic Leave

###### a. Draft Resolution

- The Internal Affairs Committee presented a draft resolution advocating for the reinstatement of the UA System's catastrophic leave program, which is set to be phased out by the end of the calendar year.

###### b. Discussion of Timing

- The new UA System President, who started after the decision to end the program was made, was previously unaware of the issue when it was raised by campus leadership.
- Some senators expressed a desire to allow the President time to look into the matter and reasoning behind the decision before the Senate passes a resolution that could be seen as adversarial.

- Others worried that too long of a delay could lead to the issue being forgotten. The harm of waiting was weighed against the benefits of allowing leadership to handle it internally first.
- The current catastrophic leave bank has around 83,000 hours from both faculty and staff. Clarification provided that it is one combined pool, though hours are tracked separately.

#### c. Tabling of Resolution

- A motion was made and seconded to table the resolution until the March meeting to give the UA System President time to discuss the matter with chancellors and staff leadership.
- The motion passed unanimously with 26 votes in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.
- The topic will be revisited in March, with the potential for Staff Senate to proceed with a resolution if no progress has been made.

#### IX. Chair's Report - Roy Cordell

- Roy had no additional items to report beyond what was covered during the catastrophic leave discussion.

#### X. Announcements & Reminders

##### a. Next Meeting

- The next Staff Senate meeting will be held on March 12 from 1:30-3:00pm in Willard J. Walker Hall, Room 504.

##### b. March Agenda Items

- Staff morale and the A Meaningful Model of Appreciation (AMMA) survey results will be revisited at the March meeting.

#### XI. Adjournment

Attendance: Karmen Boddie, Jen Boyer, Erin Butler, Vince Capps, Becca Clifton, Roy Cordell, Michella Cupello, AnReckez Daniels, Alisha Gilbride, Kim Gillow, Lance Grigsby, John Jackson, Alli Johnson, Dani McCool, Katherine Miller, Autumn Parker, Ruth Parcels, Ben Pollock, Allen Porter, Ashley Reeves, Kaitlyn Riggan, Christopher Robinson, Jason Riley, Stephen Ritterbush, Mary Skinner, Myrlinda Soedjede, Trish Watkins, Carrie Whitmer

Absent: Chris Butler, Hershel Hartford