

Staff Senate Retreat Minutes
July 14, 2022
Arkansas World Trade Center in Rogers

- I. The meeting was called to order by chair, Roy Cordell, at 9:10 AM
- II. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adopt the agenda
- III. Roll call – Myrlinda Soedjede
- IV. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve Staff Senate June monthly minutes
- V. Treasurer’s Report – Wayne Bell
 - a. Handout for budget – approved and loaded into Workday
 - b. No expenses for FY23 yet, but food for retreat will post soon – about \$1,000
 - c. Award amounts have increased from last year
 - d. Question about Team of the Year. Wayne responded that the \$3,000 award is evenly split between the individuals in that department.
- VI. Introductions and Ice Breaker
 - a. Introductions – Senators introduced themselves, where they work, how long they’ve been with the University and Staff Senate, reasons for serving, and interesting fact(s).
 - b. Ice Breaker – Walked around and found senators who aligned with descriptions on the activity sheet.
- VII. Presentation from Chancellor Charles Robinson and Q&A/discussion
- VIII. HR Updates with Ashley Ingram
 - a. Ashley introduced herself
 - i. Goal of rejuvenating HR functions, processes, and services
 - b. What is our HR mission?
 - i. Mission: “Attract, retain, and engage our workforce to advance the mission of the University of Arkansas to foster an inclusive, healthy, and productive campus, where we can all thrive.”
 - c. HR team and organizational structure. Debbie is moving into the new role of Chief Transformation Officer. Working on backfilling her position. Debbie’s team has four directors
 - i. Ashley is the Director of Talent Development, which includes
 1. Employee leadership, learning and development
 2. Organizational development
 3. Workday training
 4. Minor protection training
 - ii. Eunice Alberson is over all HR Partners
 - iii. Lisa Milam over recruitment and workforce management: recruitment, performance management process, employee services team, and employee relations
 - iv. Melinda Allen: class/comp and benefits
 - d. Team of 50 supporting almost 5,000 full-time faculty and staff, 2,100 extra part-time/hourly staff, 1,600 graduate assistants as well as support to other units in the UA System
 - e. Major updates and milestones for FY23
 - i. Total rewards – converted payroll from monthly to semi-monthly
 - ii. Payroll has moved under finance
 - iii. 94% of healthcare plan participants won’t see an increase to healthcare premiums. The University is absorbing

- iv. 3% Salary increases and 2% lump sum merit
- v. Job classifications – 180 positions converted from classified to non-classified. 72 titles remaining, hoping to convert by July 1, 2023, pending legislative approval
 - 1. Question: difference between “classified” and “non-classified”? – Classified employees are designated by the state. We as an institution define titles and pay for non-classified.
 - 2. Question: Does conversion to non-classified affect exemption status? – No, exemption status is determined by FLSA guidelines. Exempt employees are overtime-eligible.
 - a. Classification and exemption status will be examined during the class/comp study
- vi. Open enrollment – October 31-November 14.
 - 1. Employees will go through and complete annual enrollment elections. The Benefits team plans to go around and visit all of the departments on campus. In the past, there was a Benefits Fair. This year, they will be mobile and go around to different units to speak with them directly about changes and assist with open enrollment.
- vii. Annual staff recognition banquet on October 11 in person at the Fayetteville Town Hall Center.
- viii. Performance management – 96% completion rate. 39% exceed, 44% above, 16% satisfactory
 - 1. In the fall, will develop more training that will teach employees to write self-appraisals and teach managers how to provide feedback.
- f. Talent development – a lot of development was put on hold during the pandemic
 - i. Next 2-3 years
 - 1. Elevating new employee experience
 - a. Orientation is back to in-person
 - b. Developing a full on-boarding program
 - c. 30/60/90 days/year for new employee development
 - 2. Develop and engage employees through certificate programs and new training through the EDP
 - a. Will perform a needs assessment to understand what employees need for training and development
 - 3. Growing leaders – Supervisor development program
 - a. Working to convert all or part of the program to be online so managers can do it at any time.
 - b. Question – plan to increase value in supervisor development on campus? Same scores for employees who take vs. don’t take training
 - i. Working with subject matter experts to deliver content and ensure transfer of knowledge and add training to Workday profiles so when you apply for a new internal position, reviewers can see that training was completed
 - 4. Workday training support
 - a. UAF Workday resources
 - b. Restructuring SharePoint site
 - i. Will have ability to seek security role-based training – putting employees at the center of the experience

- g. Employer of Choice Initiative
 - i. Partnering with an outside vendor to perform a classification and compensation study to understand what jobs we have as a university, the different compensation levels, and how employees can advance in their careers.
 - 1. A goal of the study is to create career pathing
 - 2. Put units on a level playing field to help retain talent
 - 3. Developing a compensation philosophy – This is how we look at how we pay and reward our employees
 - a. How is pay similar/different for the same positions across campus?
 - ii. Will examine the following questions: What work are you doing? How is it rewarding? How is the work defined? How is it structured?
 - iii. There is a website dedicated to it: <https://hr.uark.edu/news/employer-of-choice-classification-study.php>
 - iv. Internal and external pay examination
 - 1. Looking at pay within higher ed as well as across Arkansas and in Northwest Arkansas (compared with Fortune 500 companies)
 - 2. Question: Is this looking at both faculty and staff? It is primarily focused on staff and certain positions at the executive level. Starting with 2,700 positions
 - v. Milestones in project
 - 1. Sent out RFP and received proposals
 - 2. Verbal presentations have been conducted
 - 3. Requesting best and final proposal
 - 4. Will select vendor and hope to kick off in September/October. Debbie McCloud is leading the project
 - 5. Project work expected to take 18-24 months
 - vi. Partner
 - 1. Will accept recommendations but will be selective with what we implement based on our needs
 - vii. Questions
 - 1. What are the expected deliverables – the written document containing recommendations? Is there a tentative timeline for implementation?
 - a. Will depend on the partner. Different partners had different anticipated timelines.
 - b. Deliverables – What should pay and job descriptions look like for different positions? How to address positions that are out of scope
 - 2. Has this been done before at U of A?
 - a. Not to this extent and in this format. Looking to become equipped with how to design/structure positions.
 - 3. Will market research be conducted individually or with partners?
 - a. In speaking with possible vendors, discussed the kind of data we have access to and they have access to and look at how to combine for our institution
 - b. May go to individual departments to examine positions in detail
- h. General questions/discussion

- i. Some people took supervisor training several years ago, and it required a lot of work. They may not want to go through all again. Any way to just get refreshers on components if completed before?
 - 1. Updating supervisor development with refreshed content. Hope to pilot in the fall and create a refresher manager course for those who have completed it before
 - ii. Discussions about turnover and people leaving/retiring – people being placed in supervisor roles mid-year. Issues with evaluations because supervisor had an incomplete picture when completing evaluation
 - 1. Ashley looked at past reviews of staff on team and sat in on reviews. How do we define what “Satisfactory”/ “Above Satisfactory” means to increase consistency
 - iii. Leadership program – Is there opportunity for Staff Senate or anyone elsewhere on campus who is passionate about onboarding... maybe a committee who can help with formulating better training?
 - 1. Ashley would love to have some input. So far, they are benchmarking against other SEC schools. Balancing advocacy.
 - iv. Is there a process for helping hire/promote from within?
 - 1. Want to develop career paths and internal mobility for current employees. How do we educate people on creating desk manuals.
 - v. Issues regarding the search process – search committees – time commitments, lengthy hiring process, starting over when fails. Uses tremendous resources. Takes a lot of time to repost when position closes without hiring
 - 1. Looking at how to expedite processes
 - vi. Level of attrition?
 - 1. Awaiting year-end reporting
 - vii. May be helpful to have a collection of stories regarding staffing challenges
- IX. Committee Overview and Formation
 - a. Will send out a form in the Staff Senate Microsoft Teams team, allowing senators to choose 2-3 committees that they would like to serve on. Chairs briefly described their committees. <https://staffsenate.uark.edu/about/committees.php>
 - i. Awards committee is headed by Aaron Abbott
 - ii. Communications committee is headed by Rachel Gray
 - iii. Elections committee is headed by Elizabeth Miller
 - iv. Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year committee is headed by Autumn Parker
 - v. Internal Affairs committee is headed by Erin Butler
 - vi. Legislative committee is headed by Jen Boyer
 - vii. Scholarship committee is headed by Betsy Bushmiaer
 - viii. Special Events committee is headed by Chantel Moseby
 - ix. Transit, Parking, and Safety committee is headed by Michela Cupello
 - b. Questions
 - i. Do committees senators previously served on roll over? No, you have to sign up again.
- X. Elections and nominations
 - a. Campus council – Trish is chairing this year
 - i. 4 campus governing bodies on campus come together – Staff Senate, Faculty Senate, ASG, and GPSC.

- ii. Falls under the provost
- iii. There are several committees that fall under Campus Council
- iv. Typically meet once a semester, sometimes an additional meeting could be called, but it is very rare.
 - 1. Trish's goal is to have two meetings per semester rather than one and have committees provide reports to the Council
- v. Staff Senate is required to supply 16 representatives. Roy and Travis are automatically members and do not count. Trish Watkins is chair of Campus Council and doesn't count.
 - 1. Aaron Abbott
 - 2. Wayne Bell
 - 3. Karmen Boddie
 - 4. Jen Boyer
 - 5. Erin Butler
 - 6. Vince Capps
 - 7. Michela Cupello
 - 8. Chelsea Martin
 - 9. Elizabeth Miller
 - 10. Cleston Murray
 - 11. Allen Porter
 - 12. Ashley Reeves
 - 13. Kaytlin Riffin
 - 14. Amber Roth
 - 15. Myrlinda Soedjede
 - 16. Carrie Whitmer
- b. Administrative committees under the provost's office
 - i. Senators in the room signed up to fill various Staff vacancies on the [committees](#)

XI. Bylaws update

- a. Roy has asked the Internal Affairs committee to review the bylaws
- b. There are many things that are hard-coded in the bylaws that have complicated the elections process
 - i. The first paragraph defines the five divisions from which we elect senators, but those divisions no longer exist as listed.
 - 1. Last year, Denise had to pull the full list of staff members and had to make a case-by-case decision on which division people should be in. Also, people don't know which division they're in when voting.
 - 2. Roy would like for everyone to look at the bylaws and consider how we might adjust how we categorize employees
 - 3. One possible structure is using the EEO-6 classifications, which every employee has. Other campuses use this for the staff senate organizations
 - a. Employees of the quarter/year are closer to the EEO-6 classifications
 - b. Allows adequate representation of every type of employee and ensure that necessary issues are raised to Staff Senate
- c. Meeting times are also hard-coded in the bylaws, but it's become much more difficult to find space on Thursdays 9:30-11, but it may also open up participation to staff with atypical schedules to schedule at a different time

- i. There was discussion on possible spaces
 - ii. Internal Affairs looking into whether we can add flexibility on meeting times
 - d. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to send bylaws to Internal Affairs for review
- XII. Conversation on meeting format
 - a. Will continue to do hybrid meeting options because of ongoing COVID, and it's also difficult for people to get out to meet in person at times. Also, we're pushing HR and administration to allow hybrid work arrangements
 - b. Concern with limited engagement online. Would like senators to attend in person more often than not, if possible. May require senators to leave cameras on.
 - i. Discussion regarding the benefits of hybrid option and how to ensure senators are engaged during meetings
 - c. We will work to always provide hybrid options for the foreseeable future
- XIII. Employer of Choice Discussion and Activity – How do we become an employer of choice? Major goals are to attract, develop, and retain
 - a. Employers across industries are examining ways to become employers of choice
 - b. 18-24-month study on classification and compensation, hoping to kickoff in the fall
 - c. Need to focus on the employee experience – what makes employees excited to go to work. Major components of employee experience:
 - i. Comp/benefits or total rewards
 - ii. Culture of the institution and of the unit/team
 - iii. Development and engagement opportunities
 - iv. Leadership employees are working for
 - v. Meaningful work and its structure
 - vi. Work environment
 - d. Discussion on what senators think of when they consider “employee experience”
 - i. “The ways in which employees internalize and interpret their interactions in their organization as well as the context that underlines those interactions.” – Gartner
 - 1. How employees process and interpret their experience is key
 - ii. Discussion on the employee experience at the U of A specifically
 - e. Break-out discussion – ideas about what we can do to become an employer of choice
 - i. Comp/benefits or total rewards
 - 1. Free parking
 - 2. Pay in comparison with cost of living in northwest Arkansas
 - 3. Different departments have different levels of financial support for staff development
 - 4. Bump in pay when receive relevant certificate for job
 - 5. Funding for staff retreats/team bonding opportunities
 - ii. Culture of the institution and of the unit/team
 - 1. DEI – different units have DEI teams, but often very siloed
 - 2. Between different departments – lack of support and respect between teams. Need more top-down support
 - 3. Division of workload between different departments
 - 4. Culture around central administration and the expectations that we have of staff and the extent of their responsibilities
 - iii. Development and engagement opportunities
 - 1. Not a lot of encouragement to develop ourselves
 - 2. Lack of transparency on training programs

3. Centralized budget for training and staff development
 4. Inequity in wealthier departments being able to send employees to more training programs/conferences
 5. How much time do we have to develop ourselves? – 8 hours per year
 6. Not a good repository for LinkedIn Learning and other training platforms – where to find which trainings/which are most beneficial for role?
- iv. Leadership
1. Leadership should be defined and evaluated based on criteria
 2. Train supervisors to become leaders
 3. Identify leaders and hold them accountable based on evaluations
 4. 360 degree evaluations so staff can evaluate supervisors' effectiveness as supervisors
 5. Trust employees to do their work
 6. Empathy
 7. Mandatory training for all supervisors
- v. Meaningful work
1. As a worker, you want to be appreciated. People want this in various ways. Important to find out what method of appreciation is ideal
 2. Departments should have a mission statement that staff are continually reminded of and inspired to work toward each day
 3. Feeling empowered and safe if you make a mistake
- vi. Work environment
1. Culture in work environment
 - a. Developing trust in department
 - b. Leadership being engaged and aware of what's going on
 - c. Improving upon internal communications
 2. Physical environment
 - a. Acknowledge old buildings on campus – accessibility concerns
 - b. Facilities concerns not being addressed
- f. Considering doing “stay conversations,” learning about employees and their motivations. What may cause them to leave or stay.
- g. Individual reflections – senators wrote on red cards things they think the University can improve upon and on green cards things that are good about their current employee experience/what the University is doing well.
- h. Reach out to Ashley Ingram (atingram@uark.edu) with additional feedback/suggestions for improving the employee experience and helping the University become an employer of choice.

XIV. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn at 3:45.

Senators in attendance: Aaron Abbott, Wayne Bell, Karmen Boddie, Jen Boyer, Betsy Bushmiaer, Garry Butler, Chris Butler, Erin Butler, Vince Capps, Roy Cordell, Michela Cupello, Tracy Deffebaugh, Travis Hefley, Chelsea Martin, Elizabeth Miller, Chantel Moseby, Cleston Murray, Ben Pollock, Allen Porter, Kaitlyn Riggan, Amber Roth, Myrlinda Soedjede, Trish Watkins, Carrie Whitmer

Senators not in attendance: Tony Boyd, Rachel Gray, Derrick Hartberger, Alli Johnson, Autumn Parker, Ashley Reeves, Stephen Ritterbush, Amy Shell