



Employee Advisory Council
January 12-13, 2017

Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2017

The University of Texas System Administration
Ashbel Smith Hall
201 W. 7th Street, Rm 9
Austin, Texas 78701

PRESENT: Michael Aldape, Maricia Alleman, Paula Austell, Sally Bouis, Valerie Buchanan, Paige Buechley, Forrest Cain, Tara Cooper, Christian Corrales, Naomi Emmett, Jeannie Farahnak, Edward Gonzales, Joseph Gregory, Benji Hawkins, Karla Iscapa, Sonia Meinert, Maribea Merritt, Shannon Rios, James Smiley, Lisa Smith, Sally Thompson, Brenda Timmons, Frank Valiulis, Venetta Williams, Lorraine Wright

ABSENT: Kristi Ann Clifford, Leticia Longoria, Tania Secrest, Nyma Shah

GUESTS: Sarah Pekar, Dan Stewart, Faye Godwin, Catherine Ross, Susan Franzen

I. Call to Order and Welcome

- Meeting called to order at 8:30am by Chair, Jim Smiley
- Jim provided a brief welcome message
- Introductions around the table to welcome the new members from UT Rio Grande Valley

II. Review/Approval of October 2016 Minutes

- Minutes were previously disbursed to council by Sarah via e-mail
- Jim asked for a quick review and any feedback from group
- Frank Valiulis motioned to approved October 2016 minutes
- Seconded by Joe Gregory
- Unanimously approved as written
- Minutes will be turned to PDF and posted to website

III. Report on Board of Regents Meeting – Jim Smiley

- Both Regent's Outstanding Employee Award (ROEA) proposal and campus security proposal were approved by Board of Regents
- ROEA committee will continue developing procedures and policies to present
- Campus security initiative included recommendations for institutional analyses of potential security threats
- This trip was a learning experience for Jim. He recommends the council do a better job packaging our work, even when we don't have a "deliverable" request. This process will also provide a historical perspective for future Employee Advisor Councils and for local Staff Councils.



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IV. Updates from UT System – Dan Stewart

- Legislative session started January 10th and will end May 29th with a bill filing deadline of March 17th
- Approximately 7,000 bills will be presented during this session and likely 25% will become law
- House of Representatives has 95 Republican members and 55 Democrat members
- Senate has 20 republican members and 11 Democrat members
- Legislators are considering a “pay as you go” budget initiative
 - State agencies will start with a “zero” budget and will have to justify needs for budget funds
 - Texas last tried this method in the 80’s
- Last biennium legislators approved \$209 billion. This biennium, we are starting with 45% less General Revenue and 65% less tax revenue with more priorities being placed on that money
- This will be a VERY conservative legislature and will necessitate agencies being very strategic with their budget requests
- Several bills were discussed:
 - Senate Bill 56 - Information security plan must include acknowledgement that executive director, CFO, and other managers have been made aware of identified risks
 - Senate Bill 79 - Agency may respond to open records request by directing requestor to a URL at which the information is accessible
 - Senate Bill 115 will require internet broadcasting and archiving of open meetings for all state agencies
 - Senate Bill 73/House Bill 360—no emergency leave for state employees unless employee intends to return to work
- Several benefits pilots being discussed
 - Ongoing effort to develop working relationships with health institutions to provide care to system employees. Cost neutrality is key
 - Also considering an ACO plan that would provide teams of care providers for employees to choose from. Would be a competitive process and could be a plan by itself
- Update on Dan’s retirement situation
 - Dan’s last day is May 31st and his current duties will be distributed amongst several staff members
 - The new Chief Human Resources Officer will handle all HR issues
 - New Executive Director of Benefits will handle all benefits issues
 - Faye Godwin will take over Dan’s board seat with Fidelity Investments
 - EAC responsibilities will be taken over by Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness, Susan Franzen
 - She was in attendance at our meeting for observation purposes



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- Questions from the floor
 - Sally T. asked if the zero-based budget system is being used in any other TX state agencies and the answer is no. This budget model will be new to everyone, if approved
 - Frank asked about the potential dissolution of the Affordable Care Act. Legislators hope to see the effective pieces kept and the ineffective pieces reworked. We are anticipating the plan the new administration puts forward.
 - Karla asked about the potential partnership between health institutions and academic institutions for care and what happens at institutions without a health campus close. The ACO would provide the private sector the opportunity to compete for partnerships in these cases.
 - Jim asked about the recent RIF at MD Anderson. They may be the first of a pattern as the system looks at how to operate most effectively. May be part of a larger strategic alignment.

IV. Benefits Update – Faye Godwin

- Proposing clarifying language for Insurance Code, Chapter 1601 to ensure administrative efficiency.
- TRS is a defined benefit plan and not many of those are offered anymore. No significant changes we are aware of yet this session that will impact TRS.
- Medicare Part D instituted on January 1st as an upgrade plan for prescription coverage for retirees
- Living Well sponsoring 10K step per day challenge
- Annual Heart Walk coming in February
- Opened floor to questions
 - Sally T. reported employees at her institution having problems with Blue Cross Blue Shield identity protection site. Faye asked to have employees contact her office
 - Benji asked about potential site visits from TRS for individual questions and concerns. Is a difficult prospect from a manpower perspective with TRS handling all school districts as well as state public institutions. Phone appointments are available and online information requests can be made. Individual HR offices can also request TRS information sessions.
 - Jeannie asked about moving to Blue Cross Blue Shield dental plan but the system just contracted with Delta for another several years
 - Benji asked about the possibility of tiering employee plus dependents benefits. This could make benefits unaffordable for some families with many dependents. Pricing becomes more equitable and administratively feasible with a group rate.
 - Karla asked about the delay in instituting the FLSA law. Some employees were promised raises and are now being delayed due to the federal law not changing as expected.
 - Shannon asked about Staff Emergency Funds. Not all institutions offer those and some that do offer those through their HR departments or their EAPs. Faye can get



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us information on who to contact at individual institutions if anyone would like those contacts.

- Sally T. thanked Faye for leading Benefits and championing us for the system
- TRS may do some webinars but they are not typically comfortable taping presentations or offering live video presentations
- Faye offered her office for any questions or concerns about anything benefits related

V. Open Forum

- Jim asked for reports from individual institutions.
- Sally T. reported UTA officially has the largest enrollment in the UT System at over 53,000
- Lorraine reported that UT Health San Antonio has established an Employee Educational Benefit program. Also, their year-old Staff Emergency Fund had \$11,000 in SECC donations for 2015.
 - Edward requested all institutions send him their links to EEB and Staff Emergency Funds so he can put them on SharePoint for all to have access.
- Shannon reported that UTSA Staff Council doing community outreach and volunteer work.
- Paula reported UTD is going tobacco-free on June 1st.
- Brenda asked about gathering information about how institutions nominate/elect for their local Staff Councils/EACs and how system EAC representatives are nominated/chosen/elected.
- Dan suggested an ad-hoc committee to review term limits, nomination/election processes, and possible efficiency issues
- Everyone thanked Sarah for Dan's reception.
- Lisa and Michael, from RGV, gave some background on their campus. There are approximately 2,000 staff members at 2 campuses, in Brownsville and Edinburg, along with satellite campuses throughout the valley. They are accredited and on probation, but very positive about getting back to good standing quickly.

VI. Video Conference with Faculty Advisory Council Chair – Dr. Catherine Ross

- Dr. Ross is from UT Tyler and she provided some welcome remarks.
- The FAC meets 3 times per year. Their membership is the institution Faculty Senate presidents and president-elects.
- The FAC has three committees that include Academic Affairs, Governance, and Health Affairs.
 - 2 chairs for each committee and Dr. Ross guides/observes
- Shared Governance Project
 - Published a 12-page white paper with 12 best practices
 - Based on 6-point philosophy from the Chancellor
 - 4 members (two from academic and two from health institutions) are traveling with Tony Cucolo to show these documents to the institution Faculty Senates
 - Gave an open invitation to their meeting on January 19-20 to observe.
 - Jim asked if they have communication issues and Dr. Ross informed us they do pretty well.



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- The FAC has their current Chair, past Chair, and Chair-elect on board at the same time to provide continuity. The roles rotate between the academic and health institutions.
- They tend to get a lot more work done when they work directly with System Administration.
- Karla asked what work the Health Affairs committee is doing. Dr. Ross informed us that the health institutions are pressured for money and research so attrition and quality of life are issues. They are trying to write a white paper and plan a symposium to discuss and brainstorm solutions.
- Dr. Ross congratulated us on the ROEA proposal being approved.
- Dr. Ross indicated that the Governance committee is working on the role of faculty in the budget process, including more transparency and benefits.
- Dr. Ross asked who are liaison to System Administration is and Dan introduced himself as well as Susan.
- She asked about the RIFs at MD Anderson and System Administration. We said we are troubled but handling things together.
- She does feel the Chancellor is very supportive of staff and will be a proponent for getting staff into a better place across the system.

Meeting adjourned at 3:54pm.



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I. Executive Committee and Sub-Committee Chairs Meeting

- One System, One Voice – Paige reported new quarterly newsletter will be established; committee will create a list-serve for all EAC and individual institution Staff Council Chairs; Session summary will go out at end of this meeting
- Employee Satisfaction – Maribea reported discussion of various staff morale boosters at different institutions; committee wants to develop a tool to measure employee satisfaction; Dan suggested UT School of Social Work can facilitate this type of survey with actionable items and solutions
- Regents Outstanding Employee Award – Paula reported proposal approved by Regents at November meeting; next step is to talk with Dr. Daniel Deputy Chancellor about proposal and budget; Dan, Susan, and Kim Sullivan will talk with Dr. Daniel first and then Paula will get in his calendar; Committee met with Kevin Lemoine who is involved with the Regents Teaching Award to provide us with feedback and things to think about; goal of this year is working out details
- Retirement, Salary and Compensation – Jeannie reported that the committee has narrowed their focus to retirement issues; committee will develop an FAQ for all levels of employment; committee is also considering a flowchart for procedures; compiling a list of retirement perks at individual institutions; committee is treading lightly on the salary and compensation issue as the system is already looking at these issues; Dan suggested Administration could develop a video guiding folks who are close to retirement on procedures

II. Call to Order – Day 2

- Full meeting called to order by Chair, Jim, at 8:47am
- Sarah provided an update on the new Administration building
 - Inside construction is moving along quickly



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- Building is lead-certified and will have glass-top work stations and an open office concept
- The Littlefield door from Ashbel Smith Hall will be moved into the new building soon
- Construction will be finished in late summer and staff will move in the fall
- Chancellor will move first due to his current office space has been sold to Texas State University

III. Committee Status Updates

- Paula reported for ROEA.
 - Introduced committee
 - Next steps are defining details and meeting with Dr. Daniel to finalize budget
 - Vetting will be at the EAC and finalists will be forwarded to BOR
 - First award in spring 2018
 - Should NOT be a substitution for institution-specific awards
- Paige reported for OSOV.
 - Will link award information to EAC site when details are finalized
 - Creating EAC list-serv
 - Creating quarterly newsletter
 - Plan to message UT System Founder's Day to allow institutions the freedom to celebrate anytime during November
 - Developing a welcome message for new EAC representatives
- Jeannie reported for Retirement, Salary, and Compensation.
 - Narrowed focus to three items
 - Retirement FAQs and flowchart of process
 - Create list of retirement perks at system institutions
 - Provide a video detailing retirement process at a high level
 - System is looking at salary and compensation and EAC will offer any assistance
 - Asked representatives to poll at institutions for retirement FAQs
- Maribea reported for Employee Satisfaction.
 - Recommend a system-wide satisfaction survey
 - Will poll individual institutions to see if specific things are being done presently
 - UT School of Social Work will develop survey and create actionable items for solutions

IV. Session Summary and Next Steps

- Group watched EAC presentation at November BOR meeting
- Jim reminded group to keep committee work going between meetings
 - Committees should have deliverable by June meeting, in report format.
- Jim congratulated the group on doing meaningful, "meaty" work
- Session Summary presented by OSOV and feedback requested
 - Group provided some suggestions for changes and summary was updated
 - OSOV will polish document and distribute by EOB Tuesday, January 17th



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Meeting adjourned at 11:08am.

Next meeting scheduled for June 21-23, 2017, in Austin, at UT System Administration.