

University Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

Date: November 6, 2024

Location: College of Business BU 8



Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM.

Roll Call

- **Attendance:** 33 Senators present (in person and via Zoom)
- **Proxies:** 3

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- **Agenda:** Approved with unanimous consent.
- **Minutes:** The minutes of the October meeting were received and approved with unanimous consent.

Confirmations

Thomas Musselman - District 16

- Motion to confirm Thomas Musselman as Senator representing District 16. **Confirmed.**

Administration Reports

President's Office

- **Access & Engagement Working Group:** President Seidel established this group in October 2024. VP Brandon McElroy is aligning programs and activities with the new policy and ensuring students, staff, and faculty have the necessary resources to succeed.
- **Giving Day:** Successful event that surpassed previous fundraising totals.
- **Veterans Day:** They ask volunteers to read names aloud at the Veterans Roll Call event at the Veterans Service Center. All are encouraged to attend.

Academic Affairs (Mandy Gifford, Chief of Staff)

- **NextGenUSP:** The final draft is available for review. An online survey is available to collect feedback from the campus community, community college partners, and state constituents.
- **Position Updates:** Interim Provost and A&S Dean Scott Turpin are onboarding.

General Counsel (Tara Evans, VP & General Counsel)

- **Conceal Carry:** In response to Gov. Mead's directive regarding the repeal of Gun-Free Zones, the UW Trustees are reviewing a draft policy for carrying concealed firearms. The Firearms Research Center will host a webinar (Nov. 14) and a town hall (Nov. 18) for information and Q&A.
- **DEI Transition:** With the office closure, the General Counsel is reviewing Uni-Reg language to align with the new policy. Title IX, XI, and XII programs are now under Jim Osborne, Equal Opportunity Report & Response Coordinator.
- **Free Speech vs. Harassment:** Free speech, even if offensive, is protected unless it is severe and repetitive. Protests are allowed in public spaces like Prexies Pasture but not in classrooms, the Student Union, or offices.
 - **Q&A Highlights:**
 - **Hate Speech:** Targeted hate speech at tables in the Student Union is federally protected but should be reported for GC review.
 - **Public Records Management:** Employees are reminded that emails are public and subject to FOIA requests. The GC's new Next Request system tracks open and closed FOIA requests.
 - **Hostile Work Environment:** This is defined under Uni-Reg 4-2. The Equal Opportunity Report & Response (OERR) assesses complaints involving protected classes. For all others, the Ombuds office is a recommended resource for any staff with a hostile work environment or harassment concern.

Research and Economic Development Division (Nicholas Giraldo, Program Manager)

- **Grant Support:** Assisting faculty and staff with grant proposals and management. Three new hires focus on pre-award, post-award, and grant management for specific colleges.
- **Upcoming Hire:** A fourth hire is planned for the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources.

Governmental Affairs & Community Engagement (Mike Smith, VP)

- **2024 Election Update:** Minimal local changes; several new state legislators.
- **General Session:** Scheduled for January 14 to March 6, 2025. UW's supplemental budget priorities include staff and faculty salary increases.
 - **Q&A Highlights:**
 - Staff would like the admin to consider allowing more time for voting. Many districts in town had 2-3 hour wait times.
 - UW employees can engage legislators as private citizens but not university representatives. Legislators do not usually contact staff directly with questions about UW, but if this were the case, staff should contact the governor's Affairs office for support.
 - Concerns regarding custodial and maintenance staff workloads were noted. Senators are encouraged to gather constituent concerns for follow-up.

Human Resources (Bob Link, Associate VP)

- **Benefits:** Open enrollment changes can be made until the end of November. Benefits Fair planned for Nov. 7.
 - **Q&A Highlights:**
 - Salary Matrix: HR is expediting the release of the full matrix, benchmarked using data from the College and University Professional Association.

Old Business

Tuition Waiver Form Feedback:

- Discussed four changes to the form.
- Explored the possibility of allowing up to six credits or one class per semester and providing release time for classes.

New Business

Staff Senate Resolution #249 (Third and Final Reading):

- Resolution focused on dangerous weapons terminology and diversity language.
- Senators reminded that this resolution is not a regulation or law but a consensus to be shared with the administration and trustees.
- Passed with one amendment regarding the word "diversity."

Executive Reports

Staff President (Comeau)

- Engagement Working Group meets biweekly; President Comeau represents the Staff Senate.
- Office Associate interviews are ongoing, with one candidate possibly advancing to a second interview.
- Town Hall with President Seidel on October 20 had strong attendance.
- A meeting on concealed weapons regulations is scheduled for November 19, with updates to follow.

Liaison Reports

Food Security Taskforce (Senator Monahan)

- Successful Giving Day campaign.
- Ensuring campus food cabinets remain stocked for winter and holiday breaks.

Committee Reports

Recognition Committee (Senator Vogt)

- **Holiday Market:** Scheduled for December 13, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, UW Conference Center.
- **Staff Recognition Day:** April 7, 12:00 - 2:00 PM, Arena Auditorium.
- **Employee Awards:** Third quarter selections are underway; fourth quarter nominations close December 6.

Staff Relations Committee (Senator Monahan)

- The next meeting is November 12. The agenda includes the salary matrix, staff reorganization, and FLSA impacts.

Governance Committee (Senator Hand)

- Frequent meetings to revise rules and procedures. Proposed changes will be presented next month.
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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at