

## Staff Senate Minutes

May 14, 2020 via zoom at 1:30 pm

Senators Present:      Courtney Fruge              Patricia Gaspard  
                                 Ray Zorn                              Althea Jackson  
                                 April Fontenot                      Pam Veillon  
                                 Ceslie O'Brien                      Andy Gaspard  
                                 Amy Greagoff

Senators absent: Shelly Arnaud, Dillard Fair and Michelle Richard

Guests: Tina Oubre, Carey Lawson, Debbie Reaux, Nancee Sorenson, Donnie Thibodeaux, Cassie Jobe-Ganuchau, Tasha Naquin, Cory Lalonde, Paul Fowler

1. The meeting was called to order by Courtney Fruge, Chair.
  
2. New Business
  - Elections are usually held each June to elect a new Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. Also, half of our senators cycle out each year. This year, due to COVID 19, LSUE Staff Senators (with support from guests) voted to waive elections and keep all positions as is for one more year. Chair Courtney Fruge, Vice-Chair Patricia Gaspard, and Secretary Michelle Richard agreed to serve one more year.
  - Renaming the library computer lab for Denise Foret: The paperwork was submitted for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor computer lab. That is now being moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in an overhaul of the library. The request will be resubmitted to reflect the changes.
    - Carey clarified that we will still have to present the request before the Board of Supervisors. This will slow the process as the Board is not meeting in person anytime soon due to COVID 19 and this type of request is best done in person before the Board.
    - This request is next in line to be presented to the Board after the Mumphrey request.
    - Pushing the request to the board back will give us time to fundraise for the signage.
  - Patricia reminds us to encourage all of our coworkers to reach out if they are having trouble meeting immediate needs like food, shelter, utilities, etc. There are resources being brought to the forefront every day and she will try to send out those links as quickly as they are received.
  - Employees have concerns and questions about the possibility of salary reduction that was mentioned during the town hall meeting. Will the salary reduction be based on a certain threshold (like only cut the highest earners, 70k+)?
    - **Dr. Sorenson** – This is not something that we want to do. The LSUE budget is currently about \$800k in the red. We are down over 400 students in enrollment and this has a direct effect on our budget. Our budget is around 70% reliant on student enrollment funding. This combined with back to back permanent raises over the last two years have left us in a tight financial situation. We have no reserve left to cover a shortfall of this magnitude. The entire LSU system is being asked to conduct exercises to show the potential effects of a 5, 10, and 15%

budget reduction. If we cannot get our enrollment up, these exercises may become an actual cut to our budget.

- We are developing more online degrees and have been creating new ways to reach out to students. We are also rolling out a major advertising campaign in the coming months. This will take everyone working together to turn around our budget.
- The potential cut if we cannot get enrollment up enough could include salary reductions and furloughs.
- **Amy** – Based on the scenarios we were given (5, 10, 15%), we have come up with the plan that will be the most fair across the board possible at this time. Our operating budget has already been slashed to the bare minimum. We must look to the position budget to reach the cuts laid out by the state.
- Only cutting the highest earners will not get us anywhere close to what is being asked so we went back to the drawing board. To keep it as fair as possible, everyone will have ‘some skin in the game’. Classified employees will possibly see a furlough of 26 or 52 days per year. All others would have a salary reduction on a sliding scale including merits received in the last two years.
- We would also leave most vacant positions unfunded to reduce the cut to those currently employed.
- **Tina/Althea** – appreciative of the transparency over the issue of the budget.
- **Tina** – How will furlough affect retirement/benefits?
  - **Patricia** – typically, furlough will not affect benefits eligibility. However, it would affect your overall earnings which can affect your retirement. Please feel free to come to me if you any questions regarding your specific situation.
- The takeaway from the reduction discussion is that we all need to work together to boost our enrollment and do some right sizing. If reductions/cuts do come to fruition, employees will be notified in advance.
- Carey – Received notification today that Coach Michael Bari, former women’s basketball coach, has passed away from complications of COVID 19. His wife has also contracted COVID 19. Notification will go out to campus soon.
- Travis will be sending out an informative document from the Task Force to explain the reopening of campus.
- Dr. Jackson – Will the results from the Staff Survey be made public?
  - Paul Fowler verified that past administration road blocked that item in the past.
  - This request will be brought before cabinet.

### 3. Chair’s Report

- The current account balance is \$4,946.95
- Staff Senate account has officially been moved to a ‘Foundation’ account. This will aid us in future online fundraising efforts as well as spending funds on our own terms. It will also help that our account is split into two areas, one strictly for scholarship funding and one for all other projects.

### 4. Adjournment

- Ray Zorn motioned to adjourn.
- Patricia Gaspard seconded the motion.
- The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved.

