



## STAFF SENATE MINUTES

### MINUTES

FEBRUARY 11, 2015 10:00 AM

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ROOM 622

ATTENDEES	Jarrod Breithaupt, Kelli Cole, Michael Davis, Kristi Davis, Jason Dunavant, Richard Duran, Amy Estes, Russell Hollis, Shelley Johnston, Meghan Mazza, Patricia Pate, Cyndy Robertson, Lindsey Wilkerson
ABSENT (EXCUSED)	Kyle O'Neal
ABSENT	Seth Hall, Whitney Sutherland

#### Agenda topics

CALL TO ORDER	A regular meeting of the Staff Senate was held on Feb. 11, 2015 in the University Library Room 622 and called to order at 10:03 am by Michael Davis, SS President. A quorum was present.
MINUTES	Minutes of the January 2015 meeting were reviewed by the committee. The following changes were requested: - Fix Senator Johnston's name - Comma after Senator Cole and Staff Senate President Davis  Senator Dunavant moves to approve the minutes with changes; seconded by Senator Pate. Motion passed.
DISCUSSIONS	Special Guest- President Nick Bruno:  - Dr. Bruno acknowledges Senator Dunavant as young professional of the week for the News Star. Campus is continuing to do extremely well, lots of accolades. Recommends having Dr. Richters come in and discuss retention efforts. State of the University, we have to become better at retaining our students. We are losing 30-32% of our freshman class every year. We did not accept 400 students this past fall, we are being selective and not admitting just to increase enrollment figures. We want students to have a fair opportunity to make it. If they do not make it, it must be by their choice, not ours as staff and faculty. Retention has arisen to approximately 85% compared to 75% in the previous years. We will continue to strive to enhance our retention numbers, it will add up over time. One semester makes a difference, but we have to stay persistent and keep growing our retention by making the student experience the best possible. We have an obligation to students to do our very best every day. We have a great career fair going on, with over 74 companies here on campus. That is a very positive sign. Men's basketball is playing extremely well, in first place in the Sun Belt and representing this university proudly.

Softball beat La Tech last week 9-5, which makes four wins and one loss on the season. Coach Peddie is starting his first full season. Track has been doing well, and tennis is undefeated. Spring soccer season is coming up. Tomorrow night is the Mardi Gras Ball.

Big issue on everybody's mind is the budget. Single biggest thing we have been challenged by. Dr. Bruno does not believe that we will be cut to the extent that has been discussed. That much money coming from universities will wreak havoc. Some institutions will struggle; he feels confident about our position. If you read articles and editorials, people believe that it is higher education's fault for allowing what is going on. Higher education as a community is recognizing that enough is enough and realizing that we must stand together. We have made the cuts; employees have left for other opportunities. We have lost the equivalent of jobs as Angus Chemical has, it went relatively unnoticed.

Dr. Bruno urges staff, faculty, families, and greater campus community to speak to our legislatures and let them know what is going on. Enough is enough. Currently ULM, La Tech, and Grambling do not produce enough graduates for computer science to fill entry level jobs at CenturyLink. Technology companies have come to Louisiana, but we do not have the graduates for them yet. There are 43 nursing vacancies at St. Francis that they are having trouble filling. We need to be more strategic moving forward; we need this to come from the legislatures.

- **SS President**- What can this table do? **Dr. Bruno**- letter drives, phone calls, all of these will work great. Need it to be generic and high volume. Dr. Bruno urges us not to get politically active, but you can communicate with your legislature. Reality is it needs to be simple.

- **Senator Mazza**- Does the university receive any local taxes from the city? **Dr. Bruno**- Only McNeese gets local taxes from the Lake Charles hotel and occupancy tax. Legislature convinced that the people would not get taxed to step up for health care and higher education.

- **SS President**- What are chances we suspend tax credits for some of the big companies? **Dr. Bruno**- Significant possibilities, as it could save billions. We can grow; we need changes to happen from our legislature and governors.

- **Senator Wilkerson**- Dr. Rollo, the new state superintendent of higher education, how will he handle this legislative session? **Dr. Bruno**- Louisiana politics are unique and would not want to be someone from outside the state coming in and dealing with this session. He has good intentions, but looking at higher education's administration, all combined have less than 10 years of experience in the state. Almost 80% of legislatures have college degrees, which is interesting.

For a long time, this university went without recognition; now people are recognizing ULM and the great things we are doing here. Recognition is good. Awards for excellence, encourages people to participate in these. Staff Senate should be active in this. Program was put in to go over and above. Saddened that it is not taken advantage of. Amazing to have this program and the recognition it brings. We need to encourage participation in the project. Faculty have gotten involved in this process, staff needs to do the same. Sandal Hall will be done in September/October. Official move-in date will be about Christmas time. Garrett Hall will come down this fall.

- **Senator Johnston**- Where will the Garrett Hall classrooms and offices be relocated? **Dr. Bruno**- Many will move to Sandal. We will be building a new ski facility. Also looking to build sorority housing. International House will open in the coming month and it is a pretty facility. **SS President**- there will

be two commercial kitchens for international students to use.

- **Senator Johnston**- Sugar Hall renovation, there is a classroom that is down because of HVAC. Will that come back online? **Dr. Bruno**- we are working on getting a lot of problems worked on. Many of them have dragged on and we need to figure out a way to be more responsive to these issues. It can take a year or more to get a project off the ground.

- **SS President**- Why is the new location for housing down on Bon Aire? **Dr. Bruno**- The sororities wanted it to be a bit more secluded.

- **Dr. Bruno**- Does not look like there will be any more cuts this year. We are looking at ways that can be of help to us next year.

- **Senator Johnston**- Will there be future job cuts? **Dr. Bruno**- It is dependent on what they do with the budgets next year. Personnel is the only area where we can make cuts. Not a lot of money anywhere else that can be cut.

- **Senator Cole**- Can we provide a generic postcard to send to our colleagues?

**Dr. Bruno**- This can be done outside of work and not use state funds.

#### Staff Senate President's Report:

##### Unfinished Business:

- Approval of January 2015 minutes

##### New Business:

###### - Elections - Update

- Kelli Cole, Chair
- Kristi Davis
- Seth Hall
- Meghan Mazza

**Senator Davis**- Went through the breakdown of upcoming elections and how many seats will be open. Total of ten seats will be open. The committee will next meet to go over timeline. Expect nominations to begin in a couple of weeks. **SS President** notes that elections do not take place until April.

Nominations could take place in March as they have in the past. **Senator Wilkerson**- The process typically works around SGA voting. **Senator Cole**- reminds the table that everyone except Lindsey can come back on board.

**SS President** let coworkers know the importance of staff senate and push for some of them to be interested. Self-nominations are allowed. May be a big year because of budget issues coming.

###### - Staff Welfare – Handbook update

- Richard Duran, Chair
- Jarrod Breithaupt
- Russell Hollis
- Whitney Sutherland

**Senator Duran** needs to get this group together. **SS President** will be glad to help. Several updates to be made. Need to be made by the meeting in April. Faculty handbook has a date on when it is to be updated by. We should put April 1 into our handbook. Need to add staff evaluation policies as well. **SS President** has original copies. **SS President** receives calls on handbook and people want people to represent them.

###### - Staff evaluation update -

- **SS President**- Thought they were done, some final revisions need to be

made. Taking away some questions and only require comment if marked as unsatisfactory.

Open floor discussion:

- **Senator Wilkerson**- Passed out two articles which he received from the state email list. Let him know and he could get us on the list.

- **Senator Dunavant**- Northern Exposure is a good event to visit our delegates.

Adjournment:

Next Regular Meeting – March 11, 2015

CONCLUSIONS	There being no further business, <b>Senator Pate</b> made a motion to adjourn; <b>Senator Dunavant</b> seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.
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