



STAFF SENATE MINUTES

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 5, 2013 1:34 PM

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ROOM 622

ATTENDEES	Kristal Anzalone, Tresea Buckhaults, Kelli Cole, Camille Currier, Kristi Davis, Michael Davis, Larry Estess, Jeff Hendrix, Chris Ringo, Lindsey Wilkerson, Kyle O'Neal
ABSENT (EXCUSED)	Cori Smit, Robin Barton

Agenda topics

CALL TO ORDER	A regular meeting of the Staff Senate was held on February 5, 2013 in the University Library Room 622 and called to order at 1:34 pm by Lindsey Wilkerson, President. A quorum was present.
MINUTES	Minutes of the previous meeting held January 8, 2012 were reviewed by the committee. No changes were proposed. Chris Ringo moved to approve the minutes; Kristal Anzalone seconded. Motion passed.

DISCUSSIONS	<p>President's Report:</p> <p>Committee Reports</p> <p>Communication: skipped due to length of meeting</p> <p>Constitution and By-Laws: skipped due to length of meeting</p> <p>Staff Welfare: skipped due to length of meeting</p> <p>Elections: skipped due to length of meeting</p> <p>Unfinished Business: None.</p> <p>New Business: Lindsey Wilkerson greeted Dr. Pani and informed the Staff Senate that Dr. Pani would be discussing The Chronicle's "2012 Best Colleges to Work for" survey that was administered in 2012.</p> <p>Dr. Pani thanked the Staff Senate for inviting him to attend the meeting. He said that he has met with the Faculty Senate in the past but this was his first time to meet with the Staff Senate.</p> <p>Lindsey prefaced Dr. Pani's discussion by saying that the University</p>
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administration would like to figure out how to have better customer service and that the results from the survey could help us focus on that.

Dr. Pani discussed some of the relevant results with the Staff Senate and asked for everyone to discuss their concerns and questions. The main topics of discussion consisted of communication issues, the lack of a standard evaluation for unclassified staff members, and collaboration concerns.

One of the main issues was that both staff and faculty would like a more open line of communication to be established without the fear of losing their jobs. Lindsey Wilkerson commented that he has heard staff and faculty comment that they would like for “6th floor” administration to consult with them for solutions and ideas but do not feel that this is always the case. Also, there is a perception that ideas, requests, etc. have to go through too many people before it reaches the correct person. The consensus is that some staff and faculty would prefer that the individual responsible for the requests or whatever it may be should be contacted one-on-one and not have a message sent through e-mail or through too many people which may change the intent of the actual request.

Dr. Pani replied by saying that currently, the protocol for communication is to talk to the person directly above you in the chain of command before going to someone higher up (Dept. head talk to Dean before talk to Dr. Pani, etc). Dr. Pani also said that President Bruno would like a more direct and open line of communication while keeping all appropriate people involved.

It was discussed that most staff and faculty feel that we need to define what open communication is because it comes back to the financial problems that might lead people to be concerned about the longevity of their jobs. Lindsey Wilkerson said in his experience he has seen that being fearful of losing one’s job happens at a lot of universities. Dr. Pani asked if this has been exhibited among ULM staff and faculty and the answer from the majority of the present members on the Staff Senate was yes. Dr. Pani asked if there was a perception that if one has or expresses a differing opinion that that person’s job could be in jeopardy. The majority of the Staff Senate again answered yes. Both the present members of the Staff Senate and Dr. Pani agreed that ULM needs to establish a work environment that does not promote fear of being punished or losing one’s job for trying to keep an open and honest line of communication amongst each other. The group discussed if communication has always been an issue at the University? It was decided that communication has been an issue in the past. However, President Bruno has made it clear that he wants to work on this issue and change the perception that all ideas have to come from the top down. He would like to for all faculty and staff to have the opportunity to express him or herself.

The next issue discussed related to the lack of a standard evaluation for unclassified staff members. The discussion revolved around the fact the both faculty and classified employees have an evaluation system in place and the unclassified staff does not have any standard evaluation systems. Lindsey Wilkerson said that the staff welfare committee will start working on setting up a standard evaluation process for unclassified staff that would be comparable to the tenured process for faculty. It was agreed amongst the group that once an evaluation system is put in place it will be important to have proper training.

The last main issue discussed during the Staff Senate meeting with Dr. Pani related to collaboration amongst all university employees. It seems that employees are not always eager to collaborate amongst each other for various reasons. Dr. Pani asked if the group thought it would be a good idea to establish a think tank committee that would encompass a group of employees who would have the opportunity to consider the universities main issues and work together to come up with solutions. Most agreed that this would be a good idea.

Lindsey Wilkerson informed the Staff Senate that he is going to write a letter on the behalf of the Staff Senate to Dr. Sandra Woodley thanking her for meeting with the staff and faculty senates.

Kristi Davis, the Staff Senate representative for the Arts and Sciences Dean Search Committee, shared that the committee had met the previous day and that the applicants would be on campus next month in March.

Lindsey Wilkerson informed the Staff Senate that he would get the Staff Handbook approved soon.

Next Regular Meeting – Tuesday, March 12, 2013 @ 1:30 in the Academic Affairs Conference Room 640.

CONCLUSIONS There being no further business Tresea Buckhaults made a motion to adjourn; Kyle O'Neal seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.