

Tulane SPHTM Staff Council

Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2025

Present: Alisha Williams, Kayla McGruder (for Cassie Trawick), Connor Livingston, Emma Powers, Ben Bratcher, Nichole Valenzuela, Brendan Carter, Michael Fox, Libby Favrot, Farhana Chaudhry, Phillip Williams, Cristina Miller, Tom Auguston, Akhilesh Kandregula, Lisa Paterson, Daniella Fontana

Call to Order: 11:32 a.m.

Old Business

Council members received an update regarding ongoing downtown campus development and building usage planning. The conversation highlighted the excitement around creating a more welcoming and connected environment in the corridor between Hutchinson, JBJ, and Tidewater. The group expressed appreciation for efforts that prioritize staff and student community-building spaces.

New Business

Members discussed ways to enhance the day-to-day experience at Tidewater in the years leading up to the Charity move. Ideas included minor outdoor seating arrangements, greenery, and identifying a comfortable gathering area where staff can step away from their workspace. These ideas were acknowledged as meaningful even if small in scale.

Concerns were raised around the clarity and timing of building-wide notifications during flooding or sudden access limitations. Several attendees shared experiences of confusion during the most recent weather-related disruption. The group agreed on the importance of clear, timely communication that offers guidance rather than reactive updates.

Staff Council Committees

Retreat planning continued for the October 3rd event. Time was spent reviewing accessibility considerations, breakfast and lunch setup logistics, and creating opportunities for cross-department connection. The group expressed a desire to ensure that staff members feel welcomed and relaxed, especially new colleagues attending their first retreat.

Health & Wellness highlighted the importance of creating activities that meet staff where they are in terms of comfort, mobility, and schedule. The committee shared updates on ongoing wellness invitations and encouraged departments to share events widely.

Reports

Updates were provided regarding Staff Advisory Council coordination and the return-to-office policy discussions. Council members shared a sense of wanting to help staff feel supported through transitions and affirmed the value of open channels between staff and administration.

HR Announcements

Reminders were shared for annual compliance training deadlines and dependent eligibility submissions. Hiring and onboarding timelines were also reviewed to assist departments with planning.

Action Items Recap

- Explore feasibility of small-scale outdoor gathering space at Tidewater.
- Work toward a more centralized communication model for building notifications.
- Finalize retreat volunteer assignments and Staff Star nomination timeline.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meetings:

- October 2, 2025
- November 6, 2025
- December 4, 2025