

Tulane SPHTM Staff Council

Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023

Present: Ashli Baham, Susan Barrera, Therese Carter, Farhana Chaudhry, Susan Cantrell, Kathy Carneiro, Julio Diaz, Janel Fielding, Hannah Gilbert, Meryl Hahne, Anita Jobson, David Mora, Robert Palestina, Hiep Pham, Nichole Valenzuela, Phillip Williams

Absent: Donna Kulawiak

Call to Order 12:05pm

1. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from the May 2023 meeting prepared by Anita Jobson were reviewed and voted on. Minutes are approved.
2. **Human Resources Update –** Julio Diaz provided updates.
 - a. **Floating Holiday:** employees must use their floating holidays before July 1
 - b. **Emergency information:** With hurricane season now open, all employees are reminded to update their emergency contact information. Departments are also reminded to update their preparedness plans.
 - c. **Direct deposit:** Employees should check their direct deposit details in EBS. There have been a large number of inquiries to HR recently that indicate outdated settings and missed bank deposits.
 - d. **Covid policy:** Julio confirmed that the Covid vaccine is no longer a requirement for new employees.
3. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Executive Faculty –** Phillip Williams reported on the last meeting. The Executive Faculty convened a group to begin preparing the next strategic plan for the school. Units presented their goals for the future and how they will be achieved. Dean LaVeist will be following up with chairs and unit heads in the coming months to solidify a new 5-year plan. Of note to the council is that most updates included a need for more staff, highlighting our critical role in the school.
 - b. **SAC –** Guest Speaker was President Fitts: key topics included:

- University's resilience and endurance through difficult years of AY20-21 and AY21-22, including Covid response (95% student retention rate; by far best among regional institutions) and Hurricane Ida – noting evacuation of students to Houston, storm remediation efforts and subsequent student return. Ida effects contributed to University's prioritization of improved energy infrastructure (separate from City), etc., leading to Bernhard partnership and long-term plans for large-scale and immediate improvements to campus infrastructure and the construction of a 1-megawatt solar generation facility that will produce 10% of the university's total electricity needs at its uptown campus, mitigating reliance on (existing) city infrastructure.
- Advances in coming/new FY include increased (highest ever) diversity among incoming freshman, as well as most academically successful incoming class. University celebrates Cotton Bowl victory, Book fest – 'Mardi Gras for the mind', hugely successful – and establishment of Innovation Institute to further contribute to collaborative and cross-cutting research and innovation.
- Fiscal Year financial position is very strong – Endowment continues to grow, and University rating improves, despite difficulties of past few years. Research funding projected to increase by \$300K (record high). FY24 budget was in final review and expected for approval at upcoming Board Meeting.
- Future is bright – innovations continue, with further development and major capital projects well underway. Construction on uptown campus is moving along well and major renovation of Charity Hospital – to formalize and establish a more visible footprint of a 'downtown campus' – is progressing and anticipated to be completed as of 2026.

c. Academic Standards – Susan Cantrell had no report.

4. Staff Council Sub-Committees:

- a. Retreat** - Chair Janel Fielding; Farhana Chaudry, Hannah Gilbert
 - i. Janel is looking at dates for the staff retreat in the fall. Options include Oct. 24/25 or Halloween.
 - ii. Janel is checking to see if TULI can offer a session again.

- iii. It was suggested we send out a pre-retreat survey to get suggestions for activities.
- b. Service / Outreach** – Chair: Meryl Hahne; Susan Cantrell, Therese Carter
 - i. Anita reminded the group that the bead collection is ongoing in the Tidewater lobby and will need to be taken over by another member as there are still lots of beads in the box.
 - ii. It was suggested that the school could be a drop-off point for Glass Half Full glass recycling.
- c. Health and Wellness** – Co-Chairs: Susan Cantrell & Nichole Valenzuela; Meryl Hahne, Donna Kulawiak, David Mora
 - i. It was suggested that SPHTM could participate in the Bike Easy Challenge in early April.
- d. Staff Appreciation** – Chair: Phillip Williams, Ashli Baham, David Mora
 - i. Snoballs from Plum Street will be in the Tidewater lobby on June 13 to tie into election promotion.
 - ii. Susan Barrera suggested having more focus on individual staff appreciation. Ideas included quarterly awards; staff highlights in the Tidewater Times; acknowledgment of milestone work anniversaries.
- e. Staff Concerns** – Chair: TBD; Ashli Baham, Farhana Chaudry, Robert Palestina
 - i. Ideas for improving onboarding by making a standardized checklist, also an exit checklist beyond the Tulane HR exit process.

5. Old Business:

a. Elections

- i. Nominations will be June 13-23, elections June 27-July 11.
- ii. Kathy has beta tested the use of Teams for the nomination forms and ballots.
- iii. Handouts will be distributed at the snoball event, emails to the listserv, and flyers in the elevators to raise awareness.

- b. **SPHTM Organizational Chart** – Robert Palestina and Farhana Chaudhry will have this update at the July meeting as there was not enough time.
- c. **“You asked, we answered”** has been tabled until the officers meet with the Dean in August to discuss.

Meeting adjourned 1pm

Next meeting:

- July 6, 2023 – Anderson Conference room TW 24