

Tulane SPHTM Staff Council
Meeting Minutes
May 2, 2024

Present: Tom Augustson, Susan Barrera, Therese Carter, Susan Cantrell, Kathy Carneiro, Farhana Chaudhry, Janel Fielding, Marjola Hotchkiss, Donna Kulawiak, Dean Thomas LaVeist, David Mora, Robert Palestina, Avery Peterson, Ytzya Sanchez, Nichole Valenzuela, Phillip Williams, Caleb Wilson

Absent: Julio Diaz, Elizabeth Tierney, Kijuana Yarls

Call to Order 12:07 p.m.

1. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The meeting minutes from the April 2024 meeting still need to be reviewed and once approved can be uploaded to the Staff Council website.
2. **Old Business:** Per Phillip Williams Julio Diaz sent a roster and confirmed there are no changes in department numbers for staff representation on the Council: SBPS = 3; EPID = 3; Dean = 3; TRMD = 2; BIOS, ENHS, HPAM, IHSD = 1 each. The next election of members scheduled for June was discussed. Farhana Chaudhry suggested a sno-ball event to promote awareness among the staff. Since the regular Thursday meeting date in July falls on the holiday, Farhana suggested the alternate date of July 9th to which all agreed. There was some discussion of whether a member of the new RASU should be included in the Council meetings. But then should other units also be included such as Facilities, Card Services, etc. Tom Augustson expressed the opinion that this could get excessive given the number of units. Phillip said perhaps only SPHTM-affiliated units should be represented. Tom suggested determining if there is any interest among the units for representation. Phillip said he would ask the Dean in his next quarterly meeting with him. The issue is tabled until fall.
3. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Executive Faculty** – Tom said the meeting focused on APT voting and CEPH accreditation. Avery Peterson is coordinating the data for the Self-Study. It was announced that Dr. David Chae would be stepping down from the Associate Dean of Research position as of July 1st, and that Dr. Kelli Stidham Hall would be appointed the new Associate Dean with joint faculty appointments in SBPS and EPID. Farhana asked if she would also work with RASU. Tom announced that there is a new data

analyst in the Dean's office, Amatya Sonbhadra, who will be responsible for collecting data on faculty, students, etc. and analyzing trends. This should also help the development of the SPHTM organizational chart.

- b. **SAC** – Kathy Carneiro reported that the SAC had only a brief meeting since the Constitution/By-Laws restructuring meeting would be tomorrow. The goal is to get something to the administration by the end of the month so it is ready for July 1. The goal is for the Constitution to be mostly a guiding document with the “meat” being in the By-Laws which are more easily updated, and more agile in order to stay current. Another goal is to move away from organizing by districts since there is too much transition. But HR is not ready to change yet so SAC will stay with the general organization of Uptown-Downtown-Primate Center, exempt/non-exempt. The May 22nd meeting will be with President Fitts at Chapter IV and Staff Council members are invited to join.
- c. **Academic Standards** – Susan Cantrell reported that they are still waiting for feedback from the departments on a new policy handbook for the SPHTM covering transfer credit, grading scale, etc.

4. **Staff Council Sub-Committees:**

- a. **Staff Retreat** - Janel Fielding reported that the subcommittee met yesterday and a decision was made to return to the same location as last retreat, the Louisiana Cancer Research Center, but to have a shuttle to transport any staff needing it. A proposed theme is, “Creating a Culture of Wellness” focusing on work-life balance. Wellness activities suggested were “puppy yoga”, chair massage, more physical activities like the “coat-of-arms” activity to get people moving around the room, etc. The Kahoot game from the last retreat will be repeated as it was a favorite. Kathy Carneiro will create a Qualtrics survey for it. A date needs to be locked down – maybe the day of a Saints home game once their final schedule is available - when downtown staff are dismissed at 3 p.m. for traffic anyway – but before Homecoming (November 7-10, 2024). Another separate wine and cheese event was also suggested. There is a preference for 1 nice swag item rather than many small items. Janel has more T-shirts and swag available for staff who want them.
- b. **Staff Concerns** – Robert Palestina is still collecting data from departments for the SPHTM organizational chart.
- c. **Community Service** – Therese Carter reported that the Blood Donor Drive on Friday, April 19th was a success, nearly doubling past donation records with 56

donors. She will schedule other drives with The Blood Center for the Summer semester on Friday, June 21st, and for the Fall semester on Friday, October 25th, provided the Diboll Gallery is not already booked on those dates. She will check with Beverly Van Pelt for the Diboll schedule. Tom Augustson said to make sure all is cleaned up afterward as some chairs were left behind which caused a problem for the next event on Saturday.

- d. Health and Wellness:** Nichole Valenzuela shared the subcommittee's idea to create a map of healthy food options in the neighborhood.
- e. Staff Appreciation:** Kelsey Fontenot received the Staff Star Award at the Dean's Town Hall on April 23rd. It was suggested that we will need more nominations mid-semester for the next award. Joanna Baisier was the recipient of the Wave of Difference Award. The recipient's supervisors/department staff and the Dean should be notified beforehand so that they can be present, if possible, at the time their colleague's award is presented.

5. Human Resources Update:

Phillip presented the report on behalf of Julio Diaz. The President's Excellence Award nominations for individuals and teams are due Friday, May 10th. This award has been changed from fall to spring. The staff tuition waivers for the Summer semester are due July 5th. The new module 5 of the manager development program has launched and is on the HR website. Reminder: This year's floating holiday is available only until June 30, 2024. Talent Acquisition would like referrals of top candidates not chosen for positions to refer to other positions. There is also a Power of Recognition Guide on the website providing information and recommendations for departments and supervisors to promote a culture of appreciation and recognition.

6. Other Business

Nichole Valenzuela reminded everyone that we have 2 graduation ceremonies at Mahalia Jackson Theater on Saturday, May 18th, for which volunteers are still needed in 2-hour shifts. Students can also volunteer. It's "all hands on deck".

Farhana started a discussion of the University's handling of the Israel-Hamas war protests on campus and how some are not satisfied with the response: the suspension and arrests of students and outsiders. While not condoning any violence or hate speech, she requested the Council's support for a statement asking the University administration to consider not sanctioning the participants whether students or staff. It was suggested that Farhana draft such a letter to clearly state what she would propose for the Council's consideration and

send it via email. Phillip has a recording in 4 files of the April Dean's Town Hall meeting and will upload them to a private Box and send out the link to SPHTM Staff.

Janel announced that there is a new training for hiring people and a new onboarding system available which is a good resource.

Meeting adjourned 1:00 p.m.

Next meeting:

- June 6, 2024 – Anderson Conference room TW 24