

Tulane SPHTM Staff Council

Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025

Present: Tom Augustson, Susan Barrera, Amy Carreras, Kathy Carneiro, Brendan Carter, Farhana Chaudhry, Julio Diaz, Michael Fox, Carrie Moulder, Shelby Olin, Lisa Paterson, Shelby Ruiz, Elizabeth Tierney, Nichole Valenzuela, Phillip Williams, Caleb Wilson

Absent: Ben Bratcher, Marjola Hotchkiss, Avery Peterson, Kijuana Yarls

Call to Order: 11:38 a.m.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes from March 2025 were distributed for review and approval. Members were encouraged to submit any final edits promptly.

2. Old Business

Improvement of Operations Initiative Update: The committee discussed ongoing efforts with onboarding. There was a suggestion for a more structured onboarding program, which could include members from various departments with potential financial incentives (e.g., working lunches). However, no immediate actions were taken, and the idea remains under consideration.

A proposal for parklets (outdoor seating in front of the building) was declined due to logistical issues (e.g., parking concerns and city regulations). The idea of utilizing green space behind the building is still being discussed.

Staff Night Out with the Dean: Baseball Edition: The event was well-received, with 28 RSVPs and around 18–20 attendees. The Dean participated until 8:30 PM, engaging in conversations about staff experiences. Future events may include a football outing in the fall.

Spring Town Hall Debrief: Positive feedback was received, with attendees appreciating the conversational format. Some logistical improvements were suggested, such as additional microphones. There were no major concerns, and the event successfully fostered open communication between staff and leadership.

Condolence Cards: Staff Council has ordered cards with a Staff Council message and logo. A card was sent to Avery Peterson Smith following the loss of her beloved pet.

3. New Business

a. Upcoming Events:

Easter Egg Hunt (April 15, 2025): The egg stuffing event will be held on April 14, 2025, at 1:30 PM in the Anderson Conference Room. Donations of \$5–\$10 gift cards are requested for prizes.

Wave of Service (April 16, 2025): Staff are encouraged to participate in community service activities, with a larger turnout hoped for this year.

Munch & Mingle at Wave City Market (April 30, 2025): This casual lunch event will run from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.

b. Council Connections: Nichole introduced a new term for Staff Council gatherings: "Council Connections." Invitations to these events will now include this term to encourage staff participation.

c. Summer Elections: Planning for the summer elections was briefly discussed. Phillip will share further details at the May meeting.

4. Staff Council Committees

a. Health and Wellness: The Health and Wellness Committee reported on ongoing initiatives and the organization of the Easter Egg Hunt event. They also encouraged participation in the Wave of Service event.

b. Community Service/Outreach: Blood Drive: A blood drive is scheduled for April 25, 2025. **Clothing Drive:** Staff Council will support Career Services with a clothing drive aimed at helping students preparing for interviews. **Thanksgiving**

Meal Drive: Staff Council will assist with the collection of items for Thanksgiving meals for students who remain on campus.

- c. **Staff Appreciation:** Robert Palestina was awarded the Staff Star Award for April 2025. Tom Augustson is the current recipient of the Wave of Difference. Plans for future appreciation events, such as snowball stands, were also discussed.
- d. **Staff Concerns:** Ongoing projects include the organizational chart update and virtual comment box. Updates will be shared once the projects are completed. The onboarding mentorship program is also moving forward, with a mentor form being circulated to staff.

5. HR Announcements

Julio Diaz mentioned that the university's holiday calendar for 2025–2026 has been approved and will be released next week. He also reminded staff to use their floating holiday by June 30, 2025, and to check their vacation accruals.

6. Other Business

- a. **Legislative Engagement:** The idea of organizing a field trip to a legislative session was discussed, though logistical challenges and university policy concerns were noted. Staff Council will further explore opportunities for policy engagement.
- b. **Recycling Efforts:** The Sustainability Committee continues to advocate for improved recycling programs on campus, especially for downtown locations. Staff have been encouraged to use local recycling drop-off points.
- c. **Upcoming Professional Development Week (April 7–11, 2025):** Several professional development events were announced, with links for registration available in the weekly newsletter.

7. Action Items Recap

- **Phillip** will prepare information for summer elections.
- **Carrie** will follow up on a gift card donation for the Easter Egg Hunt prizes.
- **Nichole** will work with Carrie on a possibility of a day at the Legislature.
- **Brendan** will continue planning for the staff retreat.

- **Kathy** will research the potential for a new coffee machine at the campus.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:44 p.m.

Next Meeting: May 1, 2025 – Anderson Conference Room, TW24