

## UT Staff Council General Meeting

### Meeting Minutes August 20, 2020

#### Opening

The general meeting of the UT Staff Council (UTSC) was called to order at 2 p.m. on August 20, 2020 virtually on Zoom by Chair Rainbow Di Benedetto.

ASL interpreters are present and UTSC will continue to provide interpreters for future meetings. Thanks to [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) for offering UTSC this service.

#### Attendance (see pages 7-10)

#### Meeting

##### I. Chair's Report (Rainbow Di Benedetto)

UTSC didn't meet in July in order to hold the annual retreat—the first virtual retreat. Representatives heard from University leadership, oriented members, and reformed the standing committees.

##### II. Vice Chair's Report (Rhonda Cox)

###### a. Officers' Meeting with Associate VP for HR Adrienne Howarth-Moore

Meeting with Adrienne focused on translating materials for Non-English-speaking staff. University Communications has hired a person to translate into Spanish the President's messages and all messages related to health and safety, which is a good start. UT Austin is working with UT System to advocate for benefits-related information to also be available in Spanish. This may be a long process, but it is among UTSC's top priorities.

###### b. Officers' Meeting with Interim-President Hartzell

Meeting with Interim President Hartzell focused on the Staff Emergency Fund. UTSC donated \$5,000 from its operating fund—which it had in reserve due to not funding the annual in-person retreat—which the President's Office graciously matched for a total \$10,000 donation. Additionally, officers offered to collaborate with any campus entities working on diversity and inclusion issues; including an updated Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

###### c. Officers' Meeting with Senior VP/CFO Darrell Bazzell

Meeting with Darrell Bazzell focused on the same issues as discussed with Interim-President Hartzell. Binta Brown has been hired as the Director

of Diversity and Talent for Management for Facilities and Administrative Services. Binta will work on hiring and retention within the FAS portfolio.

**III. Vote to Approve Minutes (Amy Armstrong)**

Motion to vote on May and June General Meeting minutes was approved. Representatives voted during the meeting using Zoom polls and results will be disseminated once the votes have been tallied and quorum established.

**IV. Issues Update (Christie Hodge, Issues Committee Chair)**

In an effort to provide greater transparency, the monthly meetings will include—when possible—a brief overview of the type of issues staff have submitted. Christie reported that the volume of queries received over the summer has been rather small. UTSC has received queries regarding training to address racism, ways to support Black staff and faculty, the 5% budget cut mandated by the Governor, parking, parental leave, conditions for closing campus to COVID-19 outbreaks, and facilitating time off for staff to vote in the upcoming election. Some of these issues have been resolved, some have been referred to a UTSC committee, and some are pending. The Research and Issues Subcommittee on COVID (RISC) is still in existence and provides a mechanism to get queries related to the virus answered quickly by administration. Rainbow gave an overview of the issues process.

**V. Speaker: Emil Kresl and Frances Delacruz, UT Learning and Development**

[UT Learning and Development](#) is a new unit within the Office of Human Resources. Darrell Bazzell, Adrienne Howarth-Moore, and UTSC have helped bring this office into existence. The goal is to change the culture around professional development at UT and offer a model of continuous learning for all working professionals at UT. The term "working professionals" is intentional as the office serves staff, faculty, and students. The distinction between training and professional development is important. Training focuses on learning the skills and tasks necessary to do the job for which one is hired. Professional development is a higher level of exploratory learning that is future-focused and pushes people to grow professionally. Developing training is outside UTLD's scope, rather they help campus content experts develop curriculum and training to share what they know.

Some programs: Share Your Passion and learn to create a course with the support of UTLD, UT Leadership Talks featuring campus leaders, Leading with Decency, Perspectives on Empathy, and 360 Assessments. The News and Events advertises internal and external happenings and the unit is represented on many social media channels, including the LinkedIn Learning Group.

Frances gave an overview of UT's [LinkedIn Learning](#), which was an initiative that originated in UTSC. This includes an enormous library of video courses

and curated course lists. Once you take a course, the site begins recommending other courses of interest. You can also create a curated list for your unit. UTLD has created a quick-start [user guide](#).

In summary, UTLD has a three-point focus: online learning; creating their own programming through peer-led instruction, creating a one-stop-shop for all the PD opportunities available across UT, microlearning through LinkedIn Learning; and developing a culture of learning at UT. "We believe very strongly that learning is a load-bearing pillar for wellness...People need to always be learning because if we aren't learning we begin to suffer in our minds and in our bodies."

#### Questions from Representatives and Constituents

- Question about why [HDO](#) and [CPE](#) courses are so expensive for staff, even with the staff discount.  
Emil stated those are outside their portfolio, but those units are self-funding and UTLD has partnered with HDO and CPE to offer free seats via a staff lottery. There is a huge demand from staff for these courses.
- Question about Staff Tuition Assistance Program.  
You can apply as non-degree seeking, audit, or degree-seeking, but this is outside the portfolio and is part of the benefits package. The process needs to be streamlined, as it is cumbersome. There was an attempt years ago to address, but it was halted. UTLD wants to partner with the Benefits office to streamline because this is one important venue for staff professional development and they have interest in making it more accessible to staff.
- A staff member took a leadership course and it was geared to the corporate setting. How many of these courses are designed for those in academic settings?  
UTLD-developed courses are exclusively for UT staff working in an academic setting, specifically geared to or in response to the UT work culture. Leadership courses they develop are inclusive and view leadership at all levels of an organization and not just management.
- Is UTLD and LinkedIn Learning available to part-time employees and UT dependents? Do you have to be a LinkedIn member to create collections?  
These are available to all UT staff, faculty, and students. You don't have to be a member of LinkedIn, as that is actually a different service.
- How can staff represent extra training outside UTLearn on resumes, etc?  
Currently you have to download the PDF certificate or enter it into UTLearn. Badges are currently being created for UTLearn.

## VI. Speaker: Gina Magharious and Linda Dickens, Institutional Reporting

Gina offered an overview of the UT survey gauging staff, faculty, and student responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gina is available to units to offer survey support, including survey design, analysis, and reporting. If a unit plans to complete a large-scale survey, they should reach out to Gina, as she is aware of other survey efforts that might be occurring to avoid redundancy and survey fatigue, as well as the existence of data that might avoid administering an unnecessary survey.

Four interrelated surveys were administered to staff, faculty, TAs, and students over the summer to help with immediate decisions impacting summer and fall planning. The timing of each survey is really important to understanding the results. The staff survey was administered on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, before UT's fall plan was made public. The response rate was 54% (5,870 benefits-eligible staff responded); which is one of the highest recorded for a UT staff survey. Top two key concerns across all four groups was 1) the impact of the pandemic on their mental, emotional, or physical well-being and 2) Social isolation from the UT community. Staff (70%) reported finding effective ways to stay engaged with the university while working remotely as a key concern. This may be something UTSC could work to address. Additional results based on work modality (working off-site, on-site, hybrid) and supervisor status were shared.

This opportunity was used to also determine if there were any benefits to working off-site. The number one response was no commute. Benefits related to working from home are no traffic, reduced expenses related to driving and parking a vehicle on campus, flexible work hours, etc. These are additional items for UTSC to keep in mind and advocate for staff post-pandemic.

Questions related to the financial mitigation plans that had already been communicated to campus were also polled. Large numbers of staff were concerned about 1) their department's ability to function as usual during the pandemic and 2) job loss.

All four research groups were asked to rate the content of university communications about COVID-19. A majority of staff and faculty felt they were helpful to very helpful, with a minority of students feeling this way. A poll was disseminated to meeting attendees regarding current attitudes toward communications and results were similar. Feedback is requested by [Cindy Posey](#), Director of Internal University Communications.

Questions from Representatives and Constituents

- Will there be additional surveys in the future related to the current fall plans and the changing status of COVID-19 infections and will there be surveys specifically for onsite workers?

- There are plans to query if additional surveys are approved.
- What was the response to the Spanish version of the survey?  
About 16-20 people responded, but it is important to continue to make these surveys available in Spanish.
  - Are there plans to address the pushback that will ensue from staff who have already been working on campus who are now being required to do the daily symptom checks?  
It is not mandatory. Cindy Posey will check on this.
  - Will there be another survey in preparation for the spring semester?  
If people who took the original survey stated they would be willing to participate in another survey, they may be contacted if additional surveys are approved.

## VII. Questions from Attendees

- Are the answers to the staff issues submitted by constituents reported out for general viewing?  
It is not something UTSC has done, but it is an interesting idea to keep in mind. The primary reason it isn't is because often it's not a straightforward answer to a question. Sometimes UTSC receives suggestions or concerns that are specific to an individual's personal situation. If it is a question and the information is available, UTSC may simply refer the person to the location of the policy. If there isn't clear information available, UTSC advocates for the information to be made clearer.
- Can UTSC advocate for cheaper parking, as it is very expensive and shuttles aren't always available right now? There is also concern about the safety of riding on public transportation.  
There are a lot of complications with parking based on who is/isn't on campus, the PTS department has been financially burdened due to loss of revenue and had to furlough some staff. UTSC has been in contact about garage and parking waiting lists, which are pending implementation now, and the Benefits Committee will continue to work with Parking and Transportation on several issues once the fall semester is underway and there is a clearer picture of what is happening on campus. As for safety, that may be a topic the RISC can address.
- Is there a follow-up to the earlier question regarding grant-funded positions and the ability to offer those positions raises (as raises are often included in the original grant proposal)?  
UTSC will research further.
- Is there any information about using air purifiers on campus?  
Facilities has been auditing the air filtration systems in open buildings and addressing those issues. Opening windows isn't recommended or encouraged.

- There was a recommendation to put the parking and grant-funded position raises questions on the agenda for the September meeting.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Plans are already being made for the September meeting and it will include a university budget update. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. by Rainbow Di Benedetto. The next general meeting will be at 2 p.m. on September 17, 2020, virtually via Zoom.

Minutes submitted by: Amy E. Armstrong, 3 September 2020

Approved by vote on: [xxxx]

## Attendance

District	Elected Representative	8 / 20
102	Hernandez, David Michael	x
110.1	Magharios, Gina	x
110.2	Ludwick, Cameron M	x
120.1	Casarez, Adriana	ns
120.2	Rodriguez, Benjamin A	x
130.1	Korves, Elizabeth M	x
130.2	Torrez, Jodi K	x
132	Baker, Teresa M	x
140.1	Armstrong, Amy E	x
140.2	Snyder, Penny Victoria	x
150.1	Toscano, Ashley June	x
150.2	Brown, Ariel Renne	x
150.3	Abrams, Sara J	x
160.1	Hunter, Shanna	ns
160.2	Whetstone, Nicole A	x
161	Busse, Elizabeth D	x
170.1	Garza, Tino	a
170.2	Smuts, Regina A	ns
170.3	Standridge, Angela	x
172	Daugherty, Donna L	x
180.1	Barborka, Jason C	x
180.2	Claiborne, Theresa Marie	x
180.3	Miller, Elizabeth Kay	ns
180.4	Knight, Bobby M	x
190.1	Nugent, Michael L	x
190.2	VACANT	v
210.1	Greene, Phoebe A	x
210.2	Huerta, Jason Lee	x
220.1	Carr, Barbara A	x
220.2	Misselhorn, Melissa M	x
230.1	Bowman, Brett Christopher	x
230.2	O'Leary, William Francis	x
230.3	Diaz, Paloma S	x
242	Gandy, Lisa M	ns
250.1	King, Jacqueline E	x
250.2	Greenlee, Michael D	x

260.1	VACANT	v
260.2	VACANT	v
260.3	Bradford, Jessica Katheri	ns
260.4	VACANT	v
270.1	Blazevich, Laine	ns
270.2	Derry, James R	x
270.3	Konieczny, Cory	x
272	VACANT	v
280.1	Martinez, Liliana	ns
280.2	Thompson, Dory	x
280.3	Cooks, Stacie Danielle	x
280.4	Rajagopalan, Meera Priya	x
280.5	Wood, Tamara L	ns
280.6	Johnson, Harlan C II	x
280.7	Flowers, Kathryn E	x
290.1	Canedo, Yvette Trujillo	x
290.2	Faulk, Cynthia K	x
290.3	Kain, Jessica	ns
290.4	VACANT	v
292	Hartel, Katie	x
302	Cumpton, Greg Belknap	x
310.1	White, Judy S	x
322	Acosta, Ari	x
330.1	Bernier, Sara Jean	x
330.2	Hayes, Julie	x
330.3	Newman, Christopher	x
340.1	Ruffin, Sylvester L	x
340.2	McKinney, Matthew Wayne	x
350.1	Bowling, Karen Marie	x
350.2	Duran, Brianna Erin Laube	x
351	VACANT	v
362	Cook-O'Neal, Stephanie An	a
370.1	Zilligen, Eric E	x
370.2	Walker, Michael Lee	x
370.3	Blankenship, Mark Garrett	x
370.4	Charbel, Richard	x
370.5	Zieger, Kenneth A	x
370.6	Lennon, Lisa	x
370.7	Lee, John Earl	ns
380.1	VACANT	v



380.2	VACANT	v
390.1	Benar, Ross P	x
390.2	Nguyen, Tiffani	x
390.3	VACANT	v
390.4	Phillips, Weldon H	x
400.1	Atkins, Julia	x
400.2	Capps, Mary C	x
408	Di Benedetto, Rainbow D	x
410.1	Weeda, Don	x
410.2	VACANT	v
412	Matthews, Eda H	x
420.1	Cartell, Sean	x
420.2	Lazare, Rob C	ns
420.3	VACANT	v
420.4	Davis, Brian	x
430.1	Bell, Ronald Eugene II	x
430.2	VACANT	v
430.3	VACANT	v
430.4	Caponigro, Gregory	x
430.5	VACANT	v
430.6	VACANT	v
430.7	VACANT	v
430.8	VACANT	v
441	Tekal, Neelesh V	ns
450.1	Harris, Courtney Elizabet	x
450.2	Cohen-Ford, Rachel Grace	x
450.3	Lawrence, Todd H	x
450.4	Duiker-Walker, Jennifer J	x
450.5	Pearce, Christina	ns
460.1	Reyes, Deborah Ann	ns
460.2	Kent, Kelli	x
470.1	Hodge, Christie Lee	x
470.2	Huebsch, Melissa L	x
472	Bedia, Esmer	x
480.1	Barnett, Wesley William	ns
480.2	Buckenmeyer, Susan Elizab	x
999.1	Clifford, Trish Hanna-Eli	ns
999.2	Cox, Rhonda R.	x
999.3	Laforest, Mark	x
999.4	Sellers, Ann R.	x

999.5	Sloan, Casey Lauren	x
999.6	Speir, Marcus David	a
999.7	Van Riper, Beth	x

X = Attended

A = Absent with excuse

NS = No Show

W = Attended via Web  
(when in-person meetings  
are held)

V = vacant