



Meeting Minutes

Employee Advisory Council
June 22-23, 2017

June 22, 2017

The University of Texas System Administration
Ashbel Smith Hall
201 W. 7th Street, Rm 9
Austin, Texas 78701

PRESENT: Michael Aldape, Paula Austell, Sally Bouis, Valerie Buchanan, Paige Buechley, Tara Cooper, Christian Corrales, Naomi Emmett, Jeannie Farahnak, Edward Gonzales, Joseph Gregory, Benji Hawkins, Karla Iscapa, Leticia Longoria, Peggye Mahfood, Maribea Merritt, Shannon Rios, Tania Secrest, James Smiley, Lisa Smith, Julia Spesivtseva, Sally Thompson, Brenda Timmons, Frank Valiulis, Venetta Williams, Lorraine Wright, Dawn Meyer

ABSENT: Nyma Shah, KristiAnn Clifford

GUESTS: Sarah Pekar, Susan Franzen, Barry McBee, Laura Chambers, Kim Sullivan

I. Call to Order and Welcome

- Chair Jim Smiley called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.
- Representatives introduced themselves and identified if new or old.

II. Review/Approval of January 2017 Minutes

- Minutes were previously distributed to council by Sarah.
- Minutes were provided at meeting in hard copy.
- Chair Jim Smiley provided time for feedback.
- Changes were requested and made.
- Joe moved minutes be approved with suggested changes.
- Frank seconded the motion.
- Council unanimously approved January minutes with suggested changes.
- Minutes will be saved as a PDF document and posted to website.

III. Roundtable Discussion

- Chair Jim Smiley asked council to report on anything going on at our individual institutions.
- UTMB reported that MD Anderson has built a clinic on their campus which is providing exciting collaborations.
- UT Tyler (academic) has a new President and he is doing well in his first months on campus.
- UT Dallas is going through transitions and has many openings at high administrative levels.
- UT Permian Basin has new President starting August 1st and has a new Dean of Education.
- UT Health Tyler has a new building being constructed over the next 18 months. They are also collaborating with MD Anderson.
- UT Southwestern is building a new wing over the next 2 years.



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- UT Health Houston is offering a \$27,000 scholarship through their Staff Council to give employee's children for college tuition.
- UT Arlington Staff Council started giving monthly staff appreciation awards. UTSA and UTMB also give these types of awards.
- Sally T suggested we take a look at this initiative across the system to see how things are done and if there are ways to broaden this practice.
- UTSA has created a Diversity and Inclusiveness Council to increase and retain good faculty and staff.
- MD Anderson reported financial gains from their first quarter loss and are searching for a new President.
- UTSA is searching for a new President.
- Jim reported that the security assessment proposal to the Board of Regent's last November resulted in a meeting with system security folks. Director Heidingsfield has offered to come speak with EAC about what their department does and how they support the system security offices.
- UT Austin is replacing lighting in all parking garages to save money and create a safer parking environment.
- UT System building will be ready and folks moved in by September meeting.
- UT Austin is hosting next EAC meeting.

IV. EAC Guideline Changes

- The Executive Committee is concerned with the lack of formal continuity within the executive board. With a new Executive Committee elected each year, the council basically starts from scratch.
- There seems to be a need to a succession plan to provide this needed continuity in the council.
- Sally T brought up budget concerns with keeping extra people on the council but does support the effort.
- Paula also stressed the importance of enforcing the absence policy.
- Brenda share her spreadsheet of how individual institutions handle EAC appointments.
- Edward wrote down some ideas for council to consider. Council narrowed them down to having an Ex-Officio Chair position. Also suggested that the Vice-Chair attend Board of Regent's meetings along with Chair and Ex-Officio Chair.
- Paige suggested council re-visit this topic in the afternoon after representatives have had the change to think on the suggestions.

V. FAC Letter of Support for the Chancellor Discussion

- The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) submitted a letter of support for the Chancellor to the Board of Regents and the letter was shared with us.
- The FAC has asked EAC to provide a similarly worded letter of support.



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- Chair Jim Smiley asked council to read the letter and also provided some articles and information regarding the Chancellor's mission and vision for the UT System.
- Susan elaborated on the issue of the Chancellor's continued leadership after the end of his contract. System Administration has, in the past, been a caretaker of the institutions while the Chancellor has been moving System Administration toward being a leader for the institutions.
- Venetta and Valeria expressed support of this idea and of the Chancellor's leadership. Frank and Edward also rendered support of the Chancellor's leadership and forward-thinking initiatives.
- Sally T and Joe expressed support of the movement for more alignment across the system.
- Paige expressed support of the Chancellor's leadership style.
- Paige moved that EAC draft a letter of support for the Chancellor to the Board of Regents.
- Joe seconded motion.
- Approved via majority vote with UTEP abstaining.
- Letter was drafted by One System One Voice committee.
- Council will review and vote on verbiage on Friday.

VI. Legislative Update – Barry McBee

- Barry McBee, Vice Chancellor and Chief Governmental Relations Officer, provided this update.
- PP presentation provided.
- 85th Texas legislature just ended at the end of May.
 - Legislature faced a tight budget this session due to slight economic slow-down, diversion of substantial monies to highway construction (\$5 billion).
 - Also faced new leadership and inability to predict with precision what will happen over the next budget cycle.
 - Legislature also faced the VERY different ideologies of the Senate (more conservative) and House (more moderate).
- Did approved the budget. Will spend almost \$217 billion over the next budget cycle.
 - Delayed some of construction funds to help balance.
 - \$900 million from rainy day fund for one-time expenses.
 - Mandated an \$830 million savings in Medicaid spending.
 - \$10.9 billion will be left in rainy day fund.
 - Next legislature will start at a \$3 billion deficit.
 - \$20.5 billion of entire budget is for higher education.
 - Tuition revenue bonds and Higher Education Assistance Funds responsible for "increase" in higher education budget.
 - No changes to the budget structure.
 - Special items renamed "non-formula support funding." These received significant reductions.
 - Special joint legislative interim committee meeting from September to April will study funding patterns.
 - TEXAS Grant program saw increase to fund 92% of all TEXAS grant recipients.



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- Increase for Graduate Medical Ed. Expansion.
- \$300 million for new state mental health hospitals.
- TRIP decreased by \$103.1 million.
- \$15.6 million for Governor's University Research initiative.
- \$80 million in Supplemental Funding for Correctional Health Care.
- ERS cost containment rider.
- UT System did ok in this budget cycle.
 - Academic institutions saw about 3% decrease in budget.
 - Health institutions saw a less than 1% decrease.
- Legislative Accomplishments
 - TRS contribution rate did not increase.
 - State contribution for group insurance dropping from 87% to 76% of the ERS rate.
 - HB 4035 provides conformity with state law with federal law. Optional graduate student health insurance available.
 - SB 1954 tightens ORP enrollment deadlines and allows for clarity in process of switching from TRS to ORP.
 - SB 73 clarifies and tightens emergency leave policy.
 - SB 1663 and 1664 provide time limits for TRS service credit purchase and interest and late fees being assessed for contributions not made by TRS deadline.
 - HB 490 allows for better coverage for hearing aids and cochlear implants.
 - HB 1296 provides coverage for prescription drug synchronization.
 - Campus sexual misconduct was a highlight issue and resulted in a couple of bills being passed that allow for anonymous reporting online and provides amnesty for witnesses of sexual misconduct.
 - Community colleges will be allowed to grant limited Bachelor's degrees.
 - Legislation passed to allow for greater information on open source textbooks to help with textbook costs.
 - More transparency of student debt.
 - Extension of sunset date for CPRIT.
 - Expansion of telemedicine and telehealth availability.
 - State contracting received minor tweaks. Information technology security was an issue.
 - SB 4 will allow police officers to ask about immigration status for anyone they detain.
 - State foster care system got some attention.
 - Mental health initiatives were passed.
 - More stringent abortion regulations.
 - Passed a statewide ban on texting while driving.
 - Cyberbullying was addressed.
 - Inappropriate teacher-student relationships were addressed.
 - Eliminated straight ticket voting.
 - Passed legislation around buying American provisions for state projects.
 - Another Try at Voter ID
 - State Preemption of Ride-Sharing Services
 - Convention of States to Rewrite U.S. Constitution



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- Municipal Pension Reform for Dallas and Houston
- Prohibition on Contracts with Companies Boycotting Israel
- “Sandra Bland” Act
- Continued A – F Grades for Public Schools
- Alternate Pathways for High School Graduation
- Cheaper Licenses for Concealed Carry
- No “Debtor’s Prison” for Unpaid Traffic Fines
- Limits on Unpaid Tolls and Charges
- What legislature did not accomplish
 - Did not reform Hazlewood.
 - No repeal of in-state tuition for undocumented students
 - Did not re-regulate tuition.
 - No increase to THECB authority.
 - No change to tuition set-asides.
 - No changes to campus carry.
 - No alteration of the top 10% law.
 - Constitutional carry will not happen.
 - Medical marijuana will not happen.
 - Did not raise the legal smoking age.
 - Did not raise criminal age from 17 to 18.
 - No ethics reform.
 - Did not stop the sunset of the Texas Medical Board
 - Did not pass the bathroom bill.
 - Did not reform local property taxes.
 - Did not change or update school choice/voucher programs.
- Special session will start on July 18th.
- During the interim
 - continued discussions about Hazlewood and tuition.
 - Study of public retirement systems.
 - Also start positioning for 2018 elections.
- November 2017 will provide opportunity to vote on 7 additional constitutional amendments.
- 86th legislative session begins January 2019.
- Opened floor to questions.
 - Frank asked about relationship between Barry’s office and individual institutions’ GR offices.

VII. Benefits Update – Laura Chambers
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- Laura Chambers provided this update.
- Handouts provided to help explain changes to employee and retiree benefits.
- Premiums will not increase for 17-18.
- Medicare Part D rolled out to retirees with a lot of communication.



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- Long term care premiums will go up with year (95% increase over two years), which was approved by the Texas Department of Insurance. The Office of Employee Benefits is looking at other companies who offer long term care.
- Group insurance benefited from legislative session with amending the insurance code to allow UT System additional flexibility within the program.
- When counting the total years of state service to determine eligibility for insurance, we can now count service under the Texas A & M System as well as service under the Employee Retirement System, if any. 10 years of benefits eligible service is still required but can be combined from other state agencies.
- Have permission to offer graduate student employee only insurance plan.
- Can now cancel coverage back to the last full premium payment made. Also have a mechanism to require back pay of missed premiums to re-enroll in retirement benefits.
- UT Tier provider network now available to UT Select participants. MD Anderson is not participating due to the specialty nature of their practice. UT Southwestern decided to not participate and will pursue other benefit opportunities for September 1, 2018. UT RGV will not participate due to not having enough providers in a variety of specialties. UTMB tele-clinic is being used at System Administration as a pilot to determine if employees would utilize an onsite tele-medicine clinic. If successful, OEB and UTMB will discuss expansion to other institutions.
- Sally T. asked for a proton beam therapy update and 12 patients have used this therapy through the MD Anderson pilot.
- Val asked for an Insurance Advisor Council update since the reorganization of membership and received confirmation there continues to be a Benefits Advisory Committee made up of two representatives from each institution, typically in HR, Benefits, or Payroll..
- Joe asked about the potential repeal of the ACA affecting UT System benefits.

VIII. HR Update – Kim Sullivan

- Kim Sullivan, UT System CHRO, provided this update.
- PP presentation provided.
- HR processes are being centralized and reorganized for better efficiency across the system.
- HR has begun forming areas of expertise.
- Reviewed UT System HR vision, mission, proactive support, simple processed, support for mission-focused partnerships, 3-year plan timeline, goals for fiscal year 2018, OHR deliverables for fiscal year 2018, and a new talent management philosophy.
- Questions from the floor about compensation studies and employee morale.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 pm.



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ABSENT: Nyma Shah, KristiAnn Clifford

GUESTS: Sarah Pekar, Susan Franzen

I. Executive Committee and Sub-Committee Chairs Meeting

- Retirement, Compensation, Benefits Committee: Jeannie provided this update.
 - Provided handouts.
 - Filled a gap in information sharing regarding retirement.
 - Created FAQs and flow chart to help explain saving for retirement and the retirement process.
 - Jim recommended to reach out to Laura Chambers for posting to website and to modify for ORP.
 - Write up needed.
- Employee Satisfaction committee: Maribea provided this update.
 - HR is taking lead on creating system-wide satisfaction survey.
 - Committee will keep in touch with Kim Sullivan during planning process and participate as needed.
 - Write up needed.
- One System One Voice Committee: Paige provided this update.
 - Letter of support for the Chancellor drafted.
 - Newsletter for August.
 - Creating some onboarding and thank you messages for new and out-going messages.
- ROEA Committee: Paula provided this update.
 - Dan and Susan met with Dr. Daniel in the spring to discuss the proposal.
 - Award has been doubled to \$10k each to 30 employees across the system.
 - Board of Regents has to approve the budget in July.
 - One winner from each institution in the inaugural year.
 - Still tweaking final documents and rubrics.
 - Will use SharePoint for nomination packets.



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- Write up needed.

II. Call to Order – Day 2

- Chair Jim Smiley called meeting to order at 8:37 am.

III. Advisory Update – Susan Franzen

- Susan Franzen provided this update.
- PP presentation provided.
- Called for change and evolution of the EAC to improve the effectiveness of this council for the UT System
- Reviewed all executive roles and discussed some new expansions of those responsibilities.
- Suggested using metrics to help assess our recommendations and to measure results of our initiatives.
- Validated our value and our effectiveness but stressed that we need to begin to measure our successes.
- Solicited questions from the floor.
 - Paige asked about what types of things we would measure and what metrics we would use.
 - Julia mentioned that UT Southwestern already measures their Staff Council initiatives. They have a form that they use.
 - Sally T. suggested that we take up the workplace bullying issue again and follow up on the past support memo/packet that was presented to the BOR.
 - Question from the floor about differences between academic and health institutions.
 - Jim commented on Dan's legacy and thanked Susan for her new leadership.

IV. FAC Letter of Support for the Chancellor Discussion (cont.)

- Solicited feedback from the floor on verbiage of letter.
- Christian mentioned that we should take this letter back to our individual institutions to discuss with our Presidents.
- Jim mentioned that we are under a time constraint and we are the representatives for our staff. All are in agreement that we should communicate this support back to our institutional councils.
- Verbiage updated from the floor.
- Joe moved that letter be accepted. Jeannie seconded. Majority approved with UTEP abstaining.



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V. EAC Guideline Changes (cont.)

- Update section indicating that indicates UT System Liaison. Article III Section B will now read that the Deputy Chancellor instead of Executive Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs.
- Motion to approve this change made by Jeannie. Venetta seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Article II Section D will need to be edited to include “or his/her designee after President and change Chancellor to Deputy Chancellor.
- Julia moved to change and Jeannie seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Article II Section B should be updated to reflect a September 1st due date of new representatives.
- Venetta moved and Dawn seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Sarah pointed out that this date is too late for her travel purposes. Council will roll this change back to original date of June 15th. Motioned to rescind this vote. Venetta motion. Frank seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Suggestion to add “special considerations” language to Article II Section B.
- Motion to approve new addition by Sally and seconded by Venetta. Unanimously approved.
- Article II Section F will be amended to reflect a new position of Past-Chair. Verbiage written by Edward.
- Motion to approve addition by Joe. Julia seconded. Unanimously accepted.
- Article IV Section D to indicate an extension of Vice-Chair responsibilities to include attendance at BOR meetings along with other EAC members, as deemed appropriate by Chair.
- Motion to accept amendment by Frank and Maribea seconded. Unanimously approved.

VI. FY 17-18 Executive Committee Elections

- Nominations provided via e-mail for all four roles. Also solicited nominations from the floor.
 - Frank nominated Jeannie for Chair and she accepted.
 - Sally T nominated Christian for Chair and he declined the nomination.
 - Venetta nominated Naomi Emmitt for Historian and she accepted.
 - Lisa Smith withdrew her nomination for historian, nominated Michael and he accepted.
 - Sally T nominated Sally B for Vice Chair and she accepted.
 - Motion to accept slate of nominations by Joe. Benji seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Chair nominees provided group elevator speeches. Ballots cast. Majority vote for Paige Buechley.
- Opened floor to down ballot.
 - Jeannie nominated for Vice-Chair by Paige and accepted.
 - Nominees gave elevator speeches.
 - Ballots cast. Majority vote for Jeannie Farahnak.



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- Secretary nominations opened. Joe moved to accept Shannon Rios as Secretary.
- Historian nominations opened. Julia declined down ballot for historian position. Nominees provided elevator speeches. Majority vote for Michael Aldape.

VII. Committee Status Updates

- One System One Voice Committee: Paige provided this update.
 - Summary is almost complete.
 - Working on newsletter for August highlighting ROEA, legislative update, etc.
 - Working on onboarding template for new members.
 - Also drafted Chancellor letter of support.
- Employee Satisfaction Committee: Maribea provided this update.
 - Considered a system employee satisfaction assessment.
 - Collaborated with HR and Kim Sullivan and HR wants to take the lead on this effort.
 - EAC will have a voice in this initiative.
 - Also have considered building an information hub for pitching ideas that would go to a forum to consider support from the system.
 - Will see if it has enough meat to look at this year or if it is something that EAC can work on in FY 17-18.
- Retirement, Compensation, Benefits Committee: Jeannie provided this update.
 - Created a FAQ about retirement processes and a flow chart to detail retirement process and savings plans.
 - Will communicate with Laura Chambers to make sure that everything is correct and to get things posted.
- ROEA Committee: Paula provided this update.
 - Original proposal provided to Dr. Daniel through Susan and Dan.
 - Dr. Daniel raised award amount from \$5k to \$10k and number of awards to 30.
 - Award ceremony will be a luncheon with BOR and System Administration.
 - BOR has to approve the budget in July.
 - This committee will become a standing committee to initially vet nominations.
 - Entire EAC will decide on recommendations to be sent to Dr. Daniel.
 - Each campus will have one award in the first year.
- Jim gave July 31st deadline for final reports so he can get them to Sarah by August 14th.

VIII. Next Steps

- Reminder of report deadlines to Jim by July 31st.
- No other updates from anyone.
- Ready to work next year.
- Thanks to members rolling off of the council.



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Meeting adjourned at 11:14 am.

Next meeting scheduled for September 19-20, 2017, with travel on the 18th, hosted by UT Austin.