



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Minutes

Staff Alliance

Friday, March 22, 2024

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

[Zoom Recording](#) Passcode: j0Uip9!3

Empowering UA Excellence Through Staff Success.

Voting Members:

Ronnie Houchin, Past President, UAF Staff Council - Chair, Staff Alliance

Monique Musick, Vice President, System Office Staff Council - Vice Chair, Staff Alliance

Derek Bastille, President, UAF Staff Council

Tara Borland, Vice President, UAF Staff Council

Genevieve Bright, President, System Office Staff Council

Dawn Humenik, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

Brandon Mckinney, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

Peter Sommers, Acting President & Vice President, UAS Staff Council

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Adopt Agenda
 - 2.1. Dawn moved to approve the agenda, and Peter seconded the motion.
3. Approve [Minutes of the February 16, 2023 Meeting](#)
 - 3.1. Derek moved to approve the minutes, and Dawn seconded the motion.
4. Guests and Public Comment
 - 4.1. Guests
 - 4.1.1. Memry Dahl, CHRO
 - 4.1.1.1. We are moving forward in a number of areas.
 - 4.1.1.2. Found in Banner 9 self service training that one of the important “asks” of our employees has been preferred name and pronouns, and all of that is going to be able to be accomplished on one page on your

landing page, as an employee. It is wonderful when our own tools can help us meet our employee's requests.

4.1.1.2.1. Derek inquired about when the "X" code will be added to gender identity and Dawn inquired about the remote worker control agreements.

4.1.1.2.1.1. "X" code - Memry will find out when it will become active.

4.1.1.2.1.2. Remote Worker - It is being piloted and they are in the process of ensuring they get the form right. A remote work regulation has been around for a while, even prior to Covid. With all the new technology and changes that happen, we are looking at how do we improve that; how do we report appropriately; how do we make sure that we're paying correctly, and other compliance things.

4.1.2. Margo Griffith, Director of Talent Acquisition and Development

4.1.2.1 Stephanie Brown, our employee development professional, is on board and has been with us for a couple of weeks. We started listing out skills that we would like our supervisors to have, we're going to group them, and then invite stakeholders from across the UA system to give input, to see if there are any skills missing. We are going to start packaging them into different trainings.

4.1.2.2. Derek gave Margo big kudos for the assistance she provided to the Staff Affairs Committee. They were just in awe of how well you did talking to them and how well you presented stuff that has been a question to them for a long time. So thanks, and you did a great job.

4.1.2.3. [Open Enrollment Events](#)

4.2. [Public Comment Form](#)

5. Executive Update(s)/Meeting(s)

5.1. Monthly with President Pitney & CHRO Dahl: March 7, 2024

5.1.1. Empower Alaska framework was passed but how do we connect our work with that framework? Memry would bring items that can tie the work to our goals and measures and really connect those goals with what we're doing and why we're doing it.

5.1.2. We discussed the Ad Hoc Staff Total Compensation Advisory Committee, and one thing that's really coming to light, that has been a long time request, has been the recognition policy and looking at the ease of use of the recognition policy, spot bonuses, and time off for recognition. If supervisors

don't know that they can give their employees an extra day off as a bonus and that it's easy to request that, then not everybody is doing it equally. That is one of the recommendations that comes out of that compensation group.

5.1.3. We talked about the employee experience survey and what's next. We have to recognize in our processes the impact on the people doing the job and focus on two-way communication. For example, Banner users. Everybody involved in the banner upgrade will need to learn new processes. How do we show employees that we are responding to their input? How do we open that communication? That's one of the focuses of the response and the other was coming up with talking points for supervisors to address the goals and measures.

5.2. System Governance Council: March 21, 2024

5.2.1. We talked about the constitution and discussed the purpose of the council and what kind of topics should be addressed. An example of an issue that the system governance contributed to in the past when the campuses went tobacco free. By the rules of the constitution, it needs to impact at least 2 of the groups to be a topic for the System Governance Council. Jennie Carroll, with the Faculty Alliance, is going to act as chair for at least through the end of this year, but we are not pushing to have the chair come on the BoR meetings until the council is back and functioning.

5.2.2. As the group collectively looked at the constitution, the position of Executive Governance Officer was discussed. It was stated how we have great staff which supports the Governance Groups as an impartial member. It's not the same as having a dedicated governance officer. It was suggested that we look at this position again.

5.2.3. The student representative brought up the mental health group, and they make connections with an entity that offers mental health support for students and recognizing that it is a great need across all of our campuses.

5.2.4. Another topic that concerns everybody are the minors on campus, especially since we have a lot of middle college students on campus. How do we update our policies and address all of the concerns overall for minors on campus. Balancing the need for integrated life with protecting minors. This is definitely another one of those issues that rises to the top.

6. New Business

6.1. FY25 Budget - [Advocacy](#) – [Capitol Report](#) (first of 2024 released Jan 19)

6.1.1. The amendments are happening this coming week but there's nothing official yet

- 6.2. Special Meeting of the Board of Regents' Facilities & Land Management Committee - Held on March 21, 2024
- 6.3. Special meeting regarding the three-year financial review is confirmed for Monday, April 29, 10:30a - 12:30p.

7. Ongoing Business

7.1. Employee Experience Survey

7.1.1. What questions does the Staff Alliance have? What are the next steps for us, or next steps that you've talked with you councils in terms of additional questions? The chancellors and vice chancellors is using the data from the survey results and the different universities, with some good directions and some that are not necessarily good. It'll be interesting to see what changes are made and how they benefit the employees.

7.1.2. President Pitney stated, in the system office employee town hall invitation, the 3 things that she is going to focus on from a system perspective is: 1) open and honest 2-way communication between staff and leadership; 2) compensation and benefits; and 3) internal processes.

7.2. Staff Make Students Count Award

7.2.1. [SMSC 2024 Timeline](#) & Nomination Check-In

7.2.1.1. System Office had 0 but 1 was in process of by the end of the meeting; UAA has 2; UAS has 2; and UAF has 1.

7.2.1.2. Extended deadline to April 5th, and will get communications out.

7.3. Supervisor Training

7.3.1. We had put together a group that met once, before the break, because we wanted to be proactive about giving suggestions to Margo and her team about what we would like to see in regards to supervisor training. This has kind of fallen off our radar a little bit and wanted to do a check in to see how we want to proceed, do we want to try to get together again to brainstorm some ideas to share with HR, or do we want to let Margo and her team see what they come up with and provide feedback after the fact.

7.3.1.1. Monique added that's been a pretty major outcome from the discussions within the compensation benefits committee and Heather is making an ongoing list of items we have been asking for, that are not so much of a policy item but a training item. So, because of that whole discussion, we are coming up with a pretty good list of supervisor training topics.

7.3.1.2. Derek commented that was one of the outcomes from their staff affairs meeting. They talked a little bit about the supervisor training. One of the comments that Margo had said to them was, don't look at

LinkedIn as we're gonna say, go to LinkedIn and go do stuff, but that the university will be able to put courses up on LinkedIn for people to view. The idea that they have a training course up there of a series of topics that you can study in order to go through for supervisor training. In addition to other types of resources, for example, in person and other courses like that. So, it looks like HR is trying to come up with a more comprehensive package for supervisor training and with LinkedIn being one central part that everybody can get to in order to do that. So, I'm more encouraged by that now, now that I've heard that's more along the lines of what's happening with supervisor training.

7.3.1.3. For the time being, with all the efforts going on around this topic, we could possibly take this off of our radar, and bring it back once some things start rolling out or if we have a formal feedback we want to give, we can do that.

8. Committee Reports

8.1. Joint Healthcare Committee (JHCC)/Staff Healthcare Committee (SHC)

8.1.1. Update - From the staff perspective, it was a very exciting meeting. To recap, so of the issues that were brought up that led to the vote last month: how rebates were paid; efficacy of the wellness programs; the points and structure; the vendor; etc. Although the committee voted 6-4 to eliminate the points and the incentive and removing that from employee contributions, HR came back with counter, that the incentives (formerly rebates) is built into the accounting for wellness in the same way as everything else, which is 82% is covered by the university, and 18% is distributed amongst the various health plans. The rates we'll be looking for at open enrollment, to some varying degrees, have mostly decreased as a result of the university picking up 82% of the cost of the incentive. Most of the groups are going down, and if it is going up, it is going to be relatively minor. Wellness programs are expected in a modern employee compensation package, which is part of our attractiveness as an employer. We also know that they are not as effective without some kind of incentive.

8.1.1.1. The RFP for a new vendor for the wellness program is just about finished.

8.1.1.2. I asked specifically that the communications on the wellness program be as transparent as possible.

8.1.1.3. The committee did look at our bylaws and those got adopted in the January meeting. However, things out there are still a point of contention: labor committee vs advisory committee since staff is on it;

can we get a breakdown of how many people of which group are on this plan; we think that we represent a huge amount of staff on a plan, but we have less of a vote here. Here are 2 thoughts about it: 1) we always had a SHC, in addition to the JHCC because of that disparity, but our SHC hasn't functioned as an advocacy voice for staff in ages; 2) or it's on us to actually turn the SHC into something that does more to advocate for staff. It has been proven to us that when we speak up we can be heard.

8.1.2. Response from HR, Open Enrollment

8.1.2.1. Peter commented that last year it wasn't very clear what the monthly cost was going to be, it was kind of like, wait to see what your deduction is on your pay stub. Is there going to be a calculator or something a little bit clearer about what these costs are actually going to be.

8.1.2.1.1. Memry responded that she is unsure that there will be a calculator. However, unless you are making changes, it will be what is called a passive open enrollment. You will be able to see what the bi-weekly rate is and then you will be able to look at that and not have to do anything. If you are participating in a health reimbursement account or health savings account there is an active piece to authorize that. Basically, if you are making any changes to your benefits you need to make sure that you participate in the open enrollment process. Last year, with all of the changes it was 100%, everybody had to be in open enrollment. This year. If you have no changes, you don't so that's another change.

8.1.2.2. This year you will see that there's increased communication going out in the form of a newsletter, but there's also going to be weekly sessions for in person Zoom level interactions on your benefit enrollment. Hopefully that experience is better.

8.2. [Compensation Philosophy Committee](#) - Ad Hoc Staff Total Compensation Advisory Committee

8.2.1. We have created a guiding document that has listed all of the historical alliance asks, and we are starting to go through different items each time we meet and talk through what is going on. The topics vary from supervisor training, another personal holiday, to parental leave, etc. Each and every item that we've been talking about for years, we've been looking at and re-talking, rediscussing. What was the reason for it being denied or accepted in the first place? Or what are we really asking for and some of this

is just copying. What was the response that was given to us before? Where we wanted to really get down to FY25. One of our most recent topics that we were discussing was professional development. It is noted somebody was asked about, is the funding actually for compensation? Memry said that they plan to maintain the funding level for FY 25.

8.3. [Staff Development Fund Committee](#)

8.4. Employee Feedback & Assessment Committee

9. Old Business and/or Items of Reference

9.1. State of the University Address - Mar 11, 2024

9.2. Faculty Alliance Thought Leaders Forum – AI in universities March 28 - 29

9.3. Retreat Recap

9.3.1. [Notes and Results from Jonathan King](#)

10. Staff Council Reports

10.1. UAA

10.2. [UAF](#)

10.3. UAS - Peter has put out multiple requests for someone to serve for 2 months as president/vice-president and so far he hasn't had any responses. He will be leaving sometime in April and is unsure if UAS will have anyone to serve on this committee.

10.4. SO

11. Agenda Items or Guests for the April 19, 2024 meeting

12. Announcements

12.1.

13. Executive Session

14. Adjourn

14.1. Pete moved to adjourn.