

Tulane SPHTM Staff Council
Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2023

Present: Ashli Baham, Susan Barrera, Therese Carter, Farhana Chaudhry, Susan Cantrell, Kathy Carneiro, Julio Diaz, Ytzya Diaz, Janel Fielding, Alex Jaouiche, Kijuana Jarls, Donna Kulawiak, David Mora, Avery Peterson, Nichole Valenzuela, Phillip Williams, Caleb Wilson

Absent: Marjola Hotchkiss, Robert Palestina

Call to Order 12:03 p.m.

1. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Minutes from the August, September and October 2023 meetings were approved.
2. **Old Business:** There was no old business.
3. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **Executive Faculty** – Phillip Williams reported that the meeting focused on **Faculty 180s**. The next meeting will be a rare in-person meeting with the **VP for Research Administration** about research administration service units and how to move that plan forward for the SPHTM. These have already been staffed for the Primate Center and Uptown so we will have a model. Phillip will raise questions about how that will impact our research staff personnel and what the reporting structure will be and will report details in the next Staff Council meeting. Julio Diaz asked to be included in any email regarding this. There will be 15 individuals working in that unit assigned to the SPHTM and Social Work.
 - b. **SAC** – Kathy Carneiro reported that the Tulane Football game discounted for staff (tickets are \$7.83 including 2 guests) will be on 11/11 starting at 11 a.m. on the **Capital One deck**, first come, first served. There will be food and drinks, prize raffles and **President Fitts** should pay a visit too. Check in with SAC for access. SAC's priority for the immediate future is forming a committee of staff and leadership to review and update the by-laws and council rules for the first time since SAC was created ~40 years ago to ensure

alignment with current University structures. In particular, the committee will consider the handling of remote and other responsibilities across other University units and SAC structural fit University wide. Anton Young from SAC will lead and include individuals from the President's office. Kathy will participate in a non-voting role and report progress to the Council. Kathy also encouraged all to take advantage of the Staff Appreciation activities next week.

- c. **Academic Standards** – Susan Cantrell reported that the faculty have been working on the updated academic policies and presenting them to their departments for feedback and approval.

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

- a. **Community Service** – David Mora will resign as chair and Avery Peterson “volunteered” to be the new chair. David and his co-worker Stacey have been working on a loop video at **ARCGNO** to show and tell how donations help the organization. Alex Jaouiche requested to read a joint statement from the **United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Program, Unicef and the World Health Organization** regarding the need for a humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict which is appended below. Susan Barrera explained that, while she does not disagree, the University must take the lead on such a response. The majority of members present agreed to forward the statement to **Dean LaVeist** for public support from the SPHMTM not unlike when the University condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine. Phillip Williams will follow up with the Dean.
- b. **Staff Retreat** - Janel Fielding and Phillip Williams thanked everyone and they and other members commented on the overall success of the Staff Retreat, and, in general, what worked and what didn't, what activities to keep or not in future retreats. It was suggested to schedule a “coffee and donuts” event if budget allows on a day the Dean is in the office to bring people up to the Dean's office to combat the “principal's office” perception. All agreed the

LCRC space was an improvement on location, the food was very good but the order should be decreased (83 RSVPed but only 72 checked in and there was some attrition between the a.m. and p.m. activities), having faculty greeters was a great idea, the **Kahoot** game was excellent, that the **Team Charter** activity was preferred over **Restorative Practices** (although good, it was too long) since time is limited and more time should be spent on the staff **Initiative Challenge**, perhaps moving it to the morning, lunch should just be lunch and socializing/networking among staff who may not have met before prioritized. University communications should be included in the future to relieve SPHTM staff from photographer duties. Some discussion was had about whether photography should be permitted or not. It was suggested that all Staff Council members be brought to the front together for better introductions and announcing department affiliations so that all staff will know who their department representatives are. It was agreed that the staff retreat should be an annual event perhaps best scheduled during Fall Break in the future with a “wine and cheese” afterwards. It was decided by the group to debrief in detail with Qualtrics survey results and initiative notes in a separate future planning meeting. The subcommittee will schedule a monthly 30-minute Zoom meeting.

- c. **Health and Wellness:** Therese Carter agreed to represent the SPHTM Staff Council regarding the provision of healthier and affordable food choices on the Downtown Campus (as was identified as a significant problem by several staff at the retreat) at the next SAC meeting where Campus Services is expected to attend. Nichole Valenzuela explained the details of the **Art Walk Challenge** which will be promoted to all staff during the entire month of November. A prize drawing will be held on December 1st.
- d. **Staff Appreciation:** Again a 24th floor “coffee and donuts” at the Gratitude Wall was proposed. There will be a holiday celebration in December. Next week, there will be a gallery reception after the Deans’ Talk. Nichole reported that the **Wave of Difference** traveling award will kick off next week with its first 3-week rotation. All agreed that this year’s recipient of the **Star Staff**

Award, Jenny Windstrup should make the first Wave of Difference award. Since gift cards cannot be awarded, Tulane SWAG was elected as the best choice for recognition.

- e. **Staff Concerns** –There is a need for a meeting on completing the SPHTM Organizational Chart project as well as the staff initiatives brought forth at the retreat (Farhana Chaudhry and Therese Carter agreed to share their notes).

5. Human Resources Update:

- a. **Annual Benefit Enrollment:** Julio Diaz reminded all that the deadline for elections is November 17th, and all benefits can be automatic with the exception of the FSA . Julio clarified that every benefit is stand-alone, e.g., an employee may have health insurance from elsewhere through their spouse but still be eligible for dental insurance through Tulane.
- b. **Employee Appreciation Week:** November 6-10, 2023. There is a raffle with great prizes this year.
- c. **President’s Excellence Award:** Today is the last day to submit nominations.
- d. **Staff Recognition Socials:** 10 years + service: December 12, 2023; 5-10 years’ service: January 11, 2024. These events will encompass celebrations for staff over the last 2 years.

6. New Business

- a. **Staff Council By-Laws:** Phillip Williams requested that all members review the items in the By-Laws that pertain to the date of annual elections to the Council and nominees for membership. It was decided that elections should be held at the end of the fiscal year in June with newly elected members attending their first meeting in July along with outgoing members to ease the transition. Regarding remote staff (Susan Barrera estimated there are fewer than 5 “official” remote staff), they may attend meetings but voting representatives of departments should be full-time, non-remote staff having passed the six-month probation period. Members serve on the Council for a

period of 2 years and officers for 1 year. All staff are encouraged to participate in sub-committee work.

b. Other issues: Phillip asked that members email him.

Meeting adjourned 1:06 p.m.

Next meeting:

- December 7, 2023 – Anderson Conference room TW 24

Appendix

Humanitarian Ceasefire Statement:

On October 21st, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Program, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization published a joint statement calling for a humanitarian ceasefire from Israel along with immediate, unrestricted humanitarian access throughout Gaza to save lives and prevent further human suffering. These are all organizations that we as public health professionals have supported, cited, and looked to for guidance in the past.

They called for safe and sustained access to water, food, health, and fuel, the protection of all civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including healthcare facilities, the protection of humanitarian workers in Gaza, and they called for the utmost respect of international humanitarian law by all parties.

Notes from Feedback and Initiative Challenge at Staff Retreat (10/19/2023)

1. Better onboarding (orientation)
2. Staff Lounge
3. Buddy Program (also part of onboarding)
4. Cheat sheet of administration/guide (org chart?)
5. Career paths: professional development, how to help staff advance, get raises to keep up with cost-of-living, “climb the ladder”
6. Downtown onboarding – Downtown vs. Uptown – Downtown always second class
7. Better nutritional options
8. State of Tidewater: windows, HVAC, ceilings, elevators
9. Update the website
10. Reilly discount – is more expensive than any gym
11. Green or mental health spaces – general health focus for SPHTM – prioritize health overall
12. Better visibility of EDI initiatives in SPHTM
13. Better access to therapy (EAP maxes out at 3 sessions)
14. Rental car coverage for staff who have to travel in the exercise of their duties (rather than use personal vehicles)
15. Food – better options – perhaps replace credit union with public facing dining services
16. Communication/information sharing improvements – currently is all “top-down” - do pilot study to find out how information is being shared and how to improve
17. Security – building and parking lots
18. Undergraduates are forgotten
19. Remote work clarity – official policy
20. Employee wellness (nap pod, lounge spaces)
21. AI training