

TEXAS  STATE<sup>®</sup>  
STAFF COUNCIL

**AGENDA**

September 8, 2020  
10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.  
ZOOM Meeting

*Staff Council Meetings are available via*

**Zoom:** <https://txstate.zoom.us/j/569017978>; Passcode: Council

*The mission of the Texas State University Staff Council shall be to promote and enhance the status of university staff, ensure the effective contribution of staff expertise toward university goals, and act as the liaison between the university president and staff.*

*The Council shall represent the collective body of the staff and shall report directly to the university president.*

**Note:** Minutes for previous Staff Council meetings are available at [staffcouncil.txstate.edu/meetings/minutes](http://staffcouncil.txstate.edu/meetings/minutes).

**ACTION**  
(10:00)

**Call to Order**  
Noel Fuller, Chair

**ACTION**  
(10:01)

**Roll Call**  
Noel Fuller, Chair  
*Members in attendance: Katie Alonzo, Harlan Ballard, Steve Blank, Jayme Blaschke, Zachary Collins, Stephanie Daniels, Natalie Davis, Veronica Fernandez, Anita Ford, Noel Fuller, Amy Jiang, Heather Kristoff, Brandi Martinez, Mayra Mejia, Raidah Murshed, Anthony Padilla, Jennifer Small, Bailey Verschoyle, Illona Weber, Melissa Yip-Santellana, Martin Zavala*

*Members Not in Attendance: Robert Garcia, Rachael Weldon-Caron, Jorden Zuniga*

**SPEAKER**  
(10:01)

**Item 1: Dr. Denise M. Trauth, President, Texas State University**

I am glad to have this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate the work that you all do. Every year I say that, but I don't think anyone could have predicted the amount and kind of work our faculty and staff are being called on to do this year as we deal with this pandemic. I am so proud of everything I have seen. You (Staff Council) are a very important voice for our staff and the issues you bring to the forefront are important issues. When you raise issues, we take those very seriously because it does make our university a better place. Day in and day out, I see people doing extraordinary things from the way you all responded since March, moving the majority of the university to remote delivery of services and classes, the extraordinary effort that went in to making that change was just remarkable. Just a few examples of this: the registrar moving students one by one, after decisions were made about course modality; the admissions office working around the clock processing applications and to answer questions our students have; our technology department moving us forward during this time; custodial staff taking on additional and different responsibilities; the staff in Athletics who have worked all summer preparing and hoping for fall sports without knowing if it would happen. Staff across the university has stepped up. One of the most important aspects of what you are doing is listening to our students and parents. People are scared, and that's a normal response, but being able to just listen to people is so very important. I want to share with you five brief messages that I've received from students that shows the importance and value of what you are doing:

- 1) I'd like to thank Financial Aid for the clear and easy process which enabled students like myself to receive Bobcat Cares funds. Since joining Texas State, I have been consistently met with an environment that educates and uplifts me.
- 2) In light of current events, and the grace with which things have been handled, I am full of pride to be a Bobcat. Please pass on my praise to the many staff that participated in this enormous task. It is well deserved.
- 3) Another student who got Cares funds: Thank you so much. It is so appreciated especially since my job has reduced my salary due to the entire Covid circumstances. I am very appreciative.
- 4) I cannot begin to imagine how much work you all are putting into helping students and I want to make sure that everyone involved knows that the effort does not go unnoticed
- 5) I can't thank you enough to express how fortunate I feel that Texas State really cares about students. Please pass along my thanks to any that need to hear it.

Your work gets noticed by students. They understand how you are stepping up. The most recent example of this was when we were asked to accept students and staff from Lamar University because of Hurricane Laura. I got the call at 9:30 Monday night and they were here Tuesday

evening through Saturday. They were grateful for all the work our staff put into giving them access to rooms, food, internet, tech support, everything they needed while they were here. I am very grateful for that and I know that people at Lamar University and the Systems office are also grateful. I realize that we don't always voice how grateful we are to our hardworking staff. However, times like this when we are challenged in terms of our budget, I want to say to you that even though we go through these fiscal challenges, preserving positions and student success are our twin priorities. We want to get our students to graduation and we realize we can't do that without committed staff/faculty to do this. I wish we had the money to give raises, but we can't. I hope to continue to dialogue about things we can do so staff sees appreciation for what they do. If you have recommendations for things that we can do to show appreciation, please feed those ideas to Dr. Lisa Lloyd. We have another way to share ideas. This summer we convened the Employee Morale work group. One of the recommendations from this work group was to afford the opportunity for faculty and staff to provide feedback. Our first survey launched on August 14, with recommendations going to Cabinet on September 2. The recommendation to come out from this survey is to reconvene the Continuity of Education work group this fall to examine how online learning is working this fall. The 2<sup>nd</sup> survey went out on August 28. The feedback is being compiled to go to Cabinet soon. The third survey will launch on September 11. We do pay attention to what you say. I'm also asking you to take care of yourself. We have a lot of services that we offer (Well Cats, Bobcat Balance, Employee Assistance Program), please take care of yourself so that you can take care of our students and each other. During my annual convocation, the theme "Finding Certainty in Uncertain Times" was because one of the things I recognize is that we are living in uncertain times. There is no playbook for what we are dealing with. We've never been in a time or place like this before. That is why starting in April the Cabinet began to plan and we have planned every week since. The cabinet has done an incredible job paying attention to research and following the leadership of Dr. Carranco. I probably talk to him four times across the week. I can assure you that we are taking planning very seriously. The other thing I know is that our students need us now more than ever. They too haven't been in a situation like this. Many of them are in a family situation that has been impacted during these times. Our students are dealing with these layers of issues, they need us now more than ever. Our students know that we (Texas State) are known for our personal engagement with our students. I am so proud of everyone who has been working with our first-year students. They are starting college in an environment completely different than anyone would have expected. This fall about 42% of classes are online; 38% in hybrid format; 20% are face-to-face (social distance, reduction of density); people across university have worked to make this happen. Counseling and Advising services have been delivered remotely

and from what I can tell we haven't missed a step. Student Health Center has been working overtime delivering to students the best care that medicine and science are telling us we need to deliver. The proof of planning is in the pudding. As we planned for this fall, we planned for an 8% school credit hour decrease. This morning that decline is 2.5%. More than any other statistic, I think that's a tribute to our staff and faculty. As we go through this fall semester I know that there will be many moments when we are going to have to look hard at what's happening and change some of our processes and procedures, but right now, I think we are in a great place. I spent the first week of classes walking around campus, from what I saw, every place I went, I saw face masks! More and more of what science tells us is that the most important thing we can do is wear face masks, and I think that what we are seeing in Texas the decrease is largely attributed to people wearing face masks. I even saw them when outside when students were by themselves. We are ramping up our testing and contact tracing capability. We purchased five rapid-testing machines that will allow us to do up to 150 tests in a day. We are hiring more contact tracing people and training them in the Johns Hopkins protocol. Even with all of that, I recognize that there is still a great deal of uncertainty. Employees are dealing with issues not just at university level but outside of work as well; K-12 schools being online, daycare centers still closed, all kinds of family issues. We are trying to be as flexible as we possibly can by trying to work individually with our employees at this time. From a budget perspective, what we should all be happy about is that four years ago, when we went through an academic planning process, we identified 19 new degrees we needed to add that addressed the needs of our students and the state of Texas. That has paid off. We added Bachelor of Civil Engineering, that opened with 160 students in 2019 and this fall has over 232. We started a Bachelor of Health Sciences that had 282 students last fall and 671 students registered in the program this fall. Additionally, we added several masters programs, and the enrollment data shows a 23% increase in new masters students from this fall over last fall, a lot of this due to the new masters programs. 2/5 of the increased enrollment alone comes from new students in these programs. So, a big thank you to everyone who had any role in that academic planning process; it has really paid off. The third crisis during this time is social injustice and racial inequality. Texas State has been doing things for many years now to address diversity and inclusion. We've gone through a reorganization recently and I want thank all of the people who have worked on this. We've also done a lot with the police department because we know this is a place where a lot of the social injustice movement has been focused. One of the things we are going to be doing, I'm asking the question, "Should we make mandatory diversity training as something required of all faculty and staff at the university?" We have a great deal of diversity training, and the vast majority of faculty and staff have experienced it in one way or another,

but it's not the same as making it mandatory. I'm putting together a working group to address this question and if the answer is "yes", this group will work to address how we accomplish this. I would like a representative from Staff Council. At the same time, a lot of initiatives are being undertaken at the university. UPD is hosting monthly virtual forums to maintain engagement and to get feedback from the community. The first one focused on procedural justice, it was truly insightful. I hope those of you who are able can participate. We are talking to and training people to participate in intentional conversations. We need to be a place that others outside of our community look to and says, "they've built bridges." The election taskforce has been working to proactively get our community engaged in constructive interactions and to promote registering to vote. We have moved voting from LBJSC, because of social distancing, to the Performing Arts Center where we have big lobbies and can social distance. What goes on in classroom is important, but some would argue what goes on outside of the classroom is even more important. It is my sincere hope that all of you know how much you are valued and you contribute to our students' education. Your work is very important.

**CEREMONY**

(10:30)

**Item 2: Recognition of 2020-2021 Staff Council Scholarships and Awards Recipients**

Noel Fuller, Chair

Award recipients and scholarship recipients were acknowledged and given opportunity to say a few words.

**ACTION**

(10:40)

**Item 3: Officer Elections (handout)**

Noel Fuller, Chair

- a) Vice-Chair
- b) Treasurer
- c) Member-At-Large

d) Parliamentarian (1-year)

We have two sets of officers that serve on staggered terms so that all leadership isn't lost at one time. Brief description of what Executive Committee and each position entails given. We have received different nominations for these positions; each nominee given the opportunity to accept or decline the position. If we need to have a formal elections we will vote anonymously via Qualtrics following the meeting.

Jenni Small accepted Vice-Chair – she was unopposed

Natalie David accepted Treasurer – she was unopposed

Katie Alonzo and Steve Blank accepted the nomination for Member-At-Large. However, following the meeting Steve withdrew from consideration. Katie will fill the MAL position.

Katie Alonzo and Stephanie Daniels accepted the nomination for Parliamentarian. Following the meeting, due to Katie's acceptance of MAL there was no need for a vote. Stephanie will fill the Parliamentarian office.

**DISCUSSION**  
(10:50)

**Item 4: Internal/External Committees (handout)**

Noel Fuller, Chair

See handout for standing committee rosters. Recruited volunteers for Chairs and co-Chairs for committees. Reviewed list of external committees and Staff Council members assigned to each.

**ACTION**  
(11:00)

**Item 5: Elections – Appointment of At-Large Positions (handout)**

Noel Fuller, Chair

Council Effectiveness Committee Drafted language to help govern at-large positions needed to complete a full roster for Staff Council

Discussion: We need to fill 3 open positions for the current year.

Additional question asked of using this process to fill open positions in the event a staff member must step down.

Stephanie Daniels moved to approve the language drafted by Council Effectiveness with slight modification to add information regarding filling open position due to member stepping down for by-law revision and to suspend current by-law revisions so that we can fill while waiting approval from Dr. Trauth. Natalie Davis second; motion passed – no opposition.

**ACTION**  
(11:10)

**Item 6: Treasurer's Report (handout)**

Natalie Davis, Treasurer

a) Standing Budget Approval FY21

Itemized list of standing budget items from year to year submitted. Even though we do not anticipate some of these expenses in FY21, they are still on the approval list with the assumption we will be back to more normal face-to-face interactions for FY22.

Anita Ford motioned to approve the standing budget items. Melissa Yip-Santellana second; motion passed – no opposition.

b) Update on current status of accounts

Encumbrance for plaques – won't show until bill posts. In good shape in fundraising account; only change in the scholarship account is just revenue augmenting added.

**DISCUSSION**  
(11:20)

**Item 7: Responses from University Administration – Staff Concerns (handout)**

Noel Fuller, Chair

We continue to work on your behalf. We do submit your concerns and work to get answers for you. Please continue to submit as you have concerns/questions.

**SPEAKER**  
(11:30)

**Item 8: Fernando Rojas, ADA Compliance Coordinator**

His position has moved into the institutional compliance office. Assists employees who have a need for workplace modifications. The goal is to maintain an accessible environment on campus. If you have any issues, please reach out to him. It's the ADA's 30th anniversary this year. A lot of work recently has gone into setting up workplace modifications and Fernando would like to say he appreciates everyone's patience and positive feedback. "When discussing ADA issues with your staff, I understand people can get nervous talking about this, but ask yourself, 'are there any barriers in your physical or digital workspace?'" There are a lot of digital resources on the Texas State website including a web accessibility user guide. Regarding tips on ADA-friendly emails: include alt text on images, be careful coloring with letters, event communications should include disability contact person in your office, and if maps are provided they should include accessibility items like ramps, bathrooms, etc. Fernando does have public ADA checklist available on request, email him. They are currently working on 504/ADA steering committee for the current fall, target date is October 29. This committee serves as a clearing house for concerns. Their office is planning to implement lots of trainings to spread awareness to the community. Some of these trainings include: making documents more accessible; developing an ADA training that he hopes to get out this semester or next semester about the civil rights history of the law. They are also working to get existing required trainings on Canvas which is more screen reader friendly and on recorded trainings for supervisors. Best way to contact him: available via Teams 408-1201 or by email at [adacoordinator@txstate.edu](mailto:adacoordinator@txstate.edu)

Questions: Do you have recommendation or tips for virtual meetings? Recommends captioning (both Teams and Zoom have captioning available); meeting virtually helps solve many of the current issues with pandemic, like for some of our hard of hearing employees who read lips. What's the difference in your office and the Office of Disability Services? He generally helps with faculty and staff who request workplace accommodations; ODS does a lot of the similar things but on the academic side (for students).

Do you have any recommendations for PDF docs? You can reach out to him if you would like assistance on a document. They are hoping to host some trainings on this topic soon. Word and Adobe have built-in features to review documents for accessibility – they aren't 100% but they are a decent start.

When there is a recording of a meeting, do we need to have a copy of the transcription to post with it or just use closed captioning? It's not required unless you have an employee who needs it. We do encourage the use of captions.

What has the Covid -related requests/process looked like? Volume has been very high; it's one-man ship and we've had over 550 requests since the beginning. Number 1 priority being to secure everyone's confidential information. The published form on the website was submitted directly to



him. He reviewed the request and the verification documentation. All information filtered through him and all documents are secured in his office under lock and key. He would send his recommendations to the staff members. He did have 3 team members who assisted with the coordination of getting approvals from employees, supervisor and dept. head. The team members only received the recommended modifications and only to assist with the approval process.

Has there been a review of the physical spaces on campus? In 2010, the university reached out to an outside company to report on our physical spaces. He is revisiting the report to see where we are. This will likely be review in 504/ADA Steering committee.

**UPDATE**  
(11:45)

**Item 9: Additional Staff Concerns (see attached)**

Noel Fuller, Chair

- a) Low Participation from UA/President's Office and Athletics in Family Campaign

Discussion: It would be nice to find a way to capture non-monetary contributions to the university (time, volunteering, etc.). It can feel in some departments that you are "shaming" employees into donating instead of it being a truly voluntary thing.

- b) Library Access Protocols

The swiping of ID's started before the pandemic due to security concerns. There is still some control (i.e. ID access) starting about 7 p.m.

- c) Parking Permit Inquiries
- d) Remote Work and Overtime
- e) Meal for Commencement Volunteers

**DISCUSSION**  
(11:55)

**Item 10: Announcements**

Noel Fuller, Chair

- a) 2020 Census Reminder (**handout**)

Please share with families, friends, students – San Marcos is only at about 46% completion – it takes less than 10 minutes. Deadline is Sept. 30, 2020

- b) Staff Shout Out: Financial Aid Customer Service Team, Financial Aid and Scholarships
- c) Staff Shout Out: Kevin McCarty, Director, Student Affairs Technology
- d) Staff Shout Out: Chris Lehman, Associate Director, Student Affairs Technology
- e) Staff Schout Out: Leah Brown, Talent Acquisition Coordinator, Human Resources

**DISCUSSION**  
(11:58)

**Item 11: Review Pending Items**

Noel Fuller, Chair

- a) Social Media for Staff Council – Marketing
- b) Staff Concern: 10% Salary Increase approvals by President
- c) Staff Concern: Institutional Comparisons for Staff
- d) Staff Concern: Lunch/Break UPPS 04.04.01
- e) Staff Concern: Rodent/Pest Issue
- f) Staff Concern: Maternity/Paternity Leave
- g) Staff Concern: Faculty/Staff Retirement Announcements
- h) Staff Concern: Christmas Break Language
- i) Staff Concern: Energy Conservation and Time Use

**ACTION**  
(12:00)

**Adjournment**

Noel Fuller, Chair

Natalie Davis motioned to adjourn meeting. Stephanie Daniels second; motion passed – no opposition.

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Texas State staff are welcome to attend any Staff Council meeting. The list of meeting dates and locations can be found at <https://www.staffcouncil.txstate.edu/meetings/minutes.html>.

If there is a specific issue or concern you would like Council to address, please complete the form at [www.staffcouncil.txstate.edu/Staff-Concerns](http://www.staffcouncil.txstate.edu/Staff-Concerns). When submitting the form, you can remain anonymous if that is your preference.

All statements made during meetings of the Staff Council shall be privileged communication and remain confidential. Members and guests shall not be subject to retaliation or disciplinary action as a result of expressing their views at Council meetings.