

HSU Staff Senate

Minutes

September 09 , 2020

Members Present: Amber Brownlee, Ashely Childs, Benjamin Schultz, Beverly Quillin, Bobbie Lee, Brenda Driggers, Carrie Burt, Catherine Leach, Chelsea Goza, Cheryl Massey, Christi Davis, Christopher Adams, Christopher Golston, Cody Hooton, Connie Loy, Connie Phelps, Deborah Collins, Denise Cordova, Donna Hogan, Emily Todd, Ermatine Johnson, Flora Weeks, George Finkle, Holly Schultz, Jacob Mills, Dr. Jim Borsig, Jarrod Bray, Jennifer Holbrook, Jim Wilhelm, Karen Herrin, Karen Spradlin, Katie Brown, Kelci Martinez, Kelly Stewart, Kenneth Angell, Kristopher Dunn, Leah Sexton, Lecia Franklin, Lenette Jones, Lisa Ann Buck, Lisa Carpenter, Mackenzie Echols, Martha Bryant, Mindy Daniels, Nikki Laird, Patricia Sindelar, Phil Mcdaniel, Phyllis Cogburn, Ricki Rebollar, Rita Fleming, Rory Mckinney, Tim Jones, Tonia Mcbay, Troy Hogue, Victoria Mirocke, William Holt, Willica Morgan, Wrennett Tedder, Talisha Givan and Tina Hall

- I. Call to Order at 10 AM
- II. Approval of Minutes (May & August 2020) Bobbie Lee and Kelly Stewart - All Approved
- III. President's Report - meeting with Dr Borsig is in the process of being set up
- IV. Treasurer's Report - Ms. Ermatine, \$100 book scholarship we have the receipt but I will have to get with the IT Dept in regards to having permission to enter.
- V. Secretary Report - Ms. Kelly Stewart, we do not have anything new at this time.
- VI. Faculty Representative: Cathryn Leach - Faculty Senate met on the first Wednesday of this month and our guest speaker was Dr. Jim Borsig. It was our first meeting of the Fall Semester.
- VII. TextBook Scholarship Report - Mackenzie Echols - Mindy Danials was the winner of the Fall 2020 Term Text Book Scholarship and I went to the bookstore this morning and picked up the receipt for the scholarship and submitted it to Ms. Ermatine.
- VIII. Old Business - We do not have any at this time
- IX. New Business - We do not have any at this time
- X. Announcements: Student Engagement - if you see students that do not have the Red Reddie Facemask, please encourage them to come to the HSU Student Engagement and see either myself and Dr. Salazar and we will assist them in receiving their Red Reddie Facemask.
- XI. **Guest Speaker:** Dr Jim Borsig

Thank You for letting me have a few minutes at the beginning of the Staff Senate Meeting. One thing that I wanted to start with today, is to be a regular attendee of the Staff Senate Meeting and I also want to attend the Faculty Meeting as well. I am here today to make sure that everything is being tied together, with moving parts and with the work we are doing, I can be absolutely sure of

one thing today but the next day, I know something different with congress and where we are as a University. I am meeting also with the Faculty Senate President soon and also with you Ricki and I look forward to each meeting. Good information and laying a good foundation is essential for every university and something that I want to see us continue as we join the ASU System. One thing I do want to address about the email from last week, we have work to do and we are in the process of estimating revenues. We are in the process of closing out the last fiscal year and also we are working on revenues for fiscal year 20/21. We are still waiting to hear about the stimulus package from the federal government, it is not a solution around our financial stability. Priority number one - we need to balance the current year and the second priority is that we need to move the operations of the university inside the available revenue. Efficiency(s) moving our current system that is older to Banner. Decreasing paperwork and making some organizational structures but that doesn't mean that some jobs will not be needed but more of moving forward and people moving and restructuring. We have an opportunity to grow this university, enrollment growth, retention of current students. When it comes to growth we have to recruit students, retain students and more importantly than that we have to devalue our tuition rate. High school students in Arkansas are not the only students that we need to recruit. There are those that want to learn online, people who work, etc. Those that are adults and have a family and want to earn a four year degree. Competition within the state of Arkansas graduates to attend your university will increase. Everyone around the state will recruit and work will have to be done: academic programs that we offer and how we offer them. On the sustainability side, we have to face this first and without knowing what the federal government actually does for us, if it does anything. I am going to continue to do the Friday Emails, even if I don't have anything new to say.

The Covid 19 plan for the campus was to spread students out in the classroom and provide accommodations that are needed to faculty and staff. I am confident that all of those were granted. We have 47% of our credit hours this Fall being taught online, this is more than in the past but I think that this is a sign of success with the Covid 19 Plan. We are going to work quickly to work to a bottom line plan and I will continue to give you weekly updates. I don't want to speculate and anything right now would be. I want us to deal with evidence that we can bank on. Shared Governance working together, sharing information and building processes that engage and provide advice to help with move forward. Decisions will be made more in weeks and months rather than semesters and years to help us as a university. Thank You for the opportunity to attend today and I am opening to questions:

Question/Answer: As moving forward and making decisions, how will this look for staff? I am at this time and I am going to have to defer answering this question. With different people around campus having to experience furloughs to balance the budget. Equity and Fairness as to be a part of this, I know that has been done to balance the budget. We have to pay attention to treating everyone with fairness.

Thank You for working with and teaching students each day. Thank You for telling students to pull their mask up and all of these things are not happening and are not an accident. Our Covid information is out on the website and please continue to encourage everyone to follow the plan. This is a teachable moment and not the only hard thing that each student will face. I am grateful for everything and thank you for everything. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Guest Speaker: Rita Fleming

Contracts: Penny was out yesterday but she is working to make sure those are in the President's Office and those should be out by next week.

DWS: I have formulated a plan to send to the Executive Counsel. They are meeting this morning but I am not sure what time they were meeting. To be honest, I am not hopeful for any good

resolution from DWS. I think that they have gone through their review, the appeals for those who filed. I want to put forth what I feel that this may solve this issue but also recognize that it puts us back in a situation that we are already in - allow those employees that were denied unemployment, that you would be able to restore those hours (up to 80 hours) by using Annual Leave. If you were successful in your appeal then you wouldn't want to do this. Only for those that were denied unemployment to be about to use the Annual Hours for repayment. In HR, we will have a sheet/form to use for matching DWS and what they are asking for on repayment. Different people are at different pay levels, so not everyone is in the same situation. It has come to my attention that the Foundation has funds that were donated to assist employees, if needed for the difference from hours (80) to pay back. Everyone has received different amounts of payments before they received a letter that they owed anything back.

Question/Answer: If we receive a denial letter are we to give it Connie? No, what I am going to do is send out a request with a leave sheet and please fill it out based on furlough and the letter stating what is due to payback. Then signing off on the Annual Leave Sheet you are agreeing to use X number of hours and we will compare that to the letter (that you supply us) to know how much you need to pay back DWS. We don't receive a letter requesting for you to pay back, so you will need to provide a copy of the letter via email with the Leave Sheet. You can drop it off in person if you want due to Social Security Numbers. Not everyone has received a letter but I wouldn't fill out a leave sheet request till I received a letter from DWS. This is going to be an ongoing process due to when everyone receives their information at different times.

Question/Answer: Title resolution..? I have never received a response to that, Shane has talked to them. The only response is the letters of denials and request to repay money. Are conversations being had in regards to this matter. Do we need to reach out to him ourselves? I think that he is really busy and I highly recommend that you do not contact him individually. He knows the situation that we are in as a university. With legislative meetings, the day is not your own and you are on their timeline.

Question/Answer: We are looking for a positive resolution and at this point we have only received negative ones. You are free to call/email if you want, I would never tell anyone not to as an individual, I just don't think that it will add to Shane's knowledge. I feel that he knows exactly where we are as a university in this situation. I wouldn't fill out a Leave Sheet unless you have received a denial/repayment letter. We should have an answer from Shane before we even get to the step of completing the Leave Sheets/Denial Letter process.

Question/Answer: Was there any other program that we could have taken? (unemployment, etc.) and on the 80 hours of Annual Leave, are we going to pay up to the amount we need or can we go to receive all the up hours? Rita: We would pay you your hourly rate for the number of hours that you want. I would recommend that you take the 80 hours. Let me rephrase that - you have the option to take up to 80 hours and at your hourly rate. The number of hours is one thing and the number of hours you owe back is another thing. Your first question: There were different options but when I talked to DWS, we could go into the Shared Work Program and what they had told us not to check the box on Educational Institutions. They gave us the directions to follow for this and when I asked questions, based on the information or lack of not answering (I assumed) from not hearing from them that this was the option to take. But from hearing from both sides, we are everywhere on the board. The Shared Work seemed like a better option, in some cases some people were received more in two weeks than in month. If I knew then what I know now, I would have been ALL for the across the board pay cut. Because that would have been straightforward and for everyone and a gradual out and not all in one month. Individual filing and filing as a group is different. I made the assumption that everyone that I was filing for was eligible but that was not the case. Yes, we did have alternatives but looking back, I would have done the pay cuts.

Question/Answer: Were we misled by DWS after reading the email that we had already received? This is a failure on my part, I am up here 12 hours a day and I have not gone back and reread emails to try pursue a case against DWS. I don't think that they deliberately misled me. They are working weekends and long hours, I was receiving email at crazy times and weekends. I think that they were way busy with not just us but a lot of people. So, I don't think that they deliberately misled me. This was not going through a local agency but with the state. I accept responsibility for this and if I ever hear Share Work again, I can guarantee that I will not recommend that again. I accept full responsibility for this and it is what it is and we just have to deal with it. Everyone is at a different point and some can pay it back and others will need to use vacation time to pay this back.

Question/Answer: Can sick leave be used if someone does not have the Annual time? And to clarify, the foundation will provide assistance through the Heart Fund after the hours have been subtracted. Rita: We can not use sick leave to cover, we can only use annual leave. After the annual leave is used then that is when we will contact the foundation for a request to the Heart Fund for the remainder of hours needed. We don't know everyone's tax rate, so that will be a standard rate deduction. There will be dedications made, for retirement etc.

Question/Answer: Search for a new HR Director? Rita: Emails have been sent and interviews will start on Monday after noon and end on the following Monday. Then, we will make recommendations to the Executive Council, so hopefully we will have someone within the first two weeks of October. With state reports that are due, Phyllis and Penny are doing a great job and in a timely fashion.

Question/Answer: What happens next time, if we have to furlough again? Rita: We don't know that we are again going to have to furlough again, so with those decisions not being made yet. Everything will be looked at when making decisions on what will need to be done in the future.

Question/Answer: Could someone have to repay that was approved? That is a question for DWS? They received all payments and were afraid that they may have to pay everything back.

Request: Ricki Rebolgar, Staff Senate President requested more time be invested into the DWS resolution for all employees that are involved in this situation with filing/denial letters and repayment of funds received.

VIII. Adjournment at 11:28 AM

IX. Next meeting will be held on October 14th, 2020 at 10 AM via Google Meeting.