

UW Staff Senate Full Meeting

Agenda

March 3, 2021 1:15 p.m.

Zoom



- I) Roll Call
- II) Approve February minutes
 - A) Minutes approved as circulated.
- III) Approve March agenda
 - A) Agenda approved as circulated.
- IV) Special Business
 - A) President Seidel
 - i) Thank you to everyone in these tough times.
 - (1) Hoping to find ways to open up socializing on campus.
 - (2) Infection rates are down, and vaccinations are increasing.
 - ii) Strategic planning process
 - iii) Budget cut process
 - iv) All academic programs being reviewed
 - (1) Quality of program
 - (2) Enrollment
 - (3) Research output
 - (4) Perceived relevance to the state
 - v) Optimistic about long-term growth of the university
 - (1) Lots of searches (deans, Provost)
 - (2) Increased research capacity through partnerships with external organizations
 - (a) Generous state support has meant not pursuing those partnerships previously
 - vi) Wyoming Innovation Network
 - (1) Requested by Governor Gordon
 - (2) Includes UW and seven community colleges to work cooperatively to build comprehensive programs
 - (a) Software engineering program
 - vii) Questions
 - (1) Hunter Swilling – Advising is facing a large revenue deficit – are there any changes happening there?
 - (a) He is not directly involved in that area, but advising is a key part of retention and is thus an important investment.
 - (b) AVP Helfgott – She does not have the details, but they are working on a budget plan.
 - (2) Senator Vick - How do we get staff representation on the strategic planning groups? She didn't see any classified staff, only those at will or director level.
 - (3) Senator Traver – How do we get staff representation on the strategic planning groups?
 - (a) There are staff members on the committees. The Provost is the overall chair, and the other chairs have been publicized. Check with them or attend the listening sessions.

- (4) Senator Keto – We worked with President Nichols to define “staff representation” on these committees – we are talking about classified staff and need staff representing staff as a whole, not those representing a specific department. At ASUW, you mentioned growing our research portfolio – we need to be conscientious and specific how we do that to make sure the money goes to the right places. In the past, a lot of listening sessions have been during work hours, which is much easier than when they’re after hours. Please continue to have those when faculty and staff can attend. Economic development is a big focus; why do those committees not have representation from Extension and SBDC?
- (a) Extension personnel should be more heavily involved in economic development. Regarding classified staff presence on committees, it seems to have been overlooked and he will speak to the Provost about that. Regarding our research portfolio, overhead rates are fairly low here compared to other institutions. It is also true that a growing portfolio provides more support for graduate students and programs. It’s something we need to focus on. Regarding listening sessions, he will take those concerns to the appropriate groups.
- (5) Senator Traver – Staff are concerned about the high turnover rate for deans – how can the administration keep people or groom those already here?
- (a) It is a very important and pressing concern – stable leadership is very important for the whole of the organization. He’s seen the impacts of high turnover at other institutions. We need to look at programs for growing leaders from our current community.
- (6) Senator Moen - She believes that distance education is a missed opportunity for new revenue for the University of Wyoming. How does our program fit into the new Strategic Plan?
- (a) This will be more of an action plan than just a document. We need to provide better online offerings, including distance education. There are groups looking into how to create programs that are unique and will provide revenue.
- (7) Senator Keto – He's curious about how these committees progress and budget cuts are solidified, and relating to classified staff, will the decisions be made at the unit level or higher up?
- (a) They’re looking at every avenue – they would like to spread cuts across academic and staff sides. There is a lot to be done with centralization of services, which would impact groups across campus in both savings and reduction in staff. Decisions will be made across the spectrum, from the top to the college level.
- (i) SVP Theobald – It will a mix of both levels. This week, they have allocated \$4 million cuts to units that will be implemented over the next year. In the long run, program reviews will be critical. We’ve started with the units, moved up to University-wide, then will go back down to units.
- B) Jeremy Davis, Director, Center for Student Involvement & Leadership
- i) The Center integrates student events and services across campus.
- ii) Have received feedback last year that nothing was happening on campus even though they had several in person and virtual events.
- (1) Recognized the lack of awareness of these events
- iii) Created a dashboard of events around campus that marketing directors from across campus and departments can add to
- (1) Had 35 in person events last month, and 34 this month
- (2) Has increased ability of long-distance students to participate in these events virtually
- (3) Broadcasting events in new ways
- (a) Previously – posterboards, social media
- (b) Now – weekly advertisements at COVID testing sites for events and how to access them

(4) Can still host in person events after Spring Break for those students who are stuck here

(5) UW gathering guidelines - age/events

(6) <https://www.uwyo.edu/alerts/campus-return/gathering-guidelines.html>

V) Administration reports

A) Division of Administration - Senior Vice President Neil Theobald

i) Legislative and budget session started Monday

(1) Governor Gordon has proposed a supplemental budget

(a) For UW – the proposal is to cut another \$10.1 million beyond current cuts (\$42 million, already addressed)

ii) Fall student enrollment

(1) 700 students dropped between fall and spring semesters, with a dramatic drop in revenue

(2) Paying very close attention to fall 2021 registration and retention

(3) Will have a big impact on our budget

iii) Biden COVID bill

(1) Passed the House of Representatives and Is now before Senate

(2) Education funding, projects that might be able to be accomplished with more money

(3) Should know more by the end of March

iv) Budget

(1) Cut an additional \$2 million (above the \$42 million)

(2) \$42 million budget cuts

(a) Distributed to schools and administrative units

(3) This round, they sent out \$4 million in cuts based on size of units

(a) Cuts don't need to be made now but want plans for how to accomplish them

(b) Will result in a \$6 million shortfall, which will hopefully be all we need to do

v) Questions

(1) Senator Casey – She's received emails from the Dean of Students about the students who had left the university – what became of the data from that survey? A lot of her constituents are assuming that students will return after COVID, but are there other factors that we need to address?

(a) He hasn't seen the results, but that data is very important. He agrees that it's very important and we need to address it.

(b) AVP Helfgott – They are processing the results of that survey. Every student who hadn't registered for Spring 2021 was contacted.

(2) Senator Vick – Her daughter is a high school senior who will be attending UW in the fall; the letter she received after she applied from UW was very scattered and unorganized. The little things make big differences.

(a) He will follow up on that, because we need to address those points and make sure students feel welcome. If she can pass that on, he'll look into it.

(3) Senator Casey – This has been an ongoing issue, especially for students that need to apply to specific programs and can't really figure out what the letters they receive mean. It's not pandemic related and could be impacting enrollment.

(a) He definitely believes it impacts enrollment and communications should be very clear and welcoming.

(b) AVP Helfgott – They have a new hire (Matt McDermitt) that will be focusing on this exact issue, for every applicant or even interested party.

- (4) Senator Moen - Some cuts are being made by not filling vacant positions; do you know what those positions are and how it will impact staff?
 - (a) Regarding the cuts for this year, there are vacant positions around the university that not filling will help us meet the cut targets. Over the next 15 months, every unit needs to figure out how to either cut money or increase revenue to meet the target for their unit – you can lower spending (e.g., don't fill a position right away) in a variety of ways to let the impacted units be more creative and involved.
- B) Human Resources
- i) No representative present.
- C) Academic Affairs - Interim Associate Vice Provost Isadora Helfgott
- i) Strategic Planning listening sessions
 - (1) She will take Senator Keto's suggestions from above (timing and classified staff presence) back to the Provost's office
 - ii) Weekly communications from the Provost's Office
 - (1) Will also contain information relevant to staff
 - iii) Vaccination schedule
 - (1) Announcement yesterday that category Ib-10 is open
 - (2) Pole Mountain Pharmacy hosting a large-scale event tonight through Friday
 - (3) Walgreens is also helping out
 - (4) Hoping to get as many qualified people vaccinated as possible
 - iv) Mandy Gifford left Academic Affairs for the President's Office (Special Assistant)
 - (1) Her position will be filled once the HCM system switches over next week
 - v) Regarding outreach education, Ben Cook is the Interim Associate Vice Provost to address online digital and distance offerings.
 - (1) He will be at a future Staff Senate meeting
 - (2) He'll be looking at what that office and position will look like in the future
 - vi) Global Engagement
 - (1) Planning for post-COVID travel policies for courses and individuals
 - (2) Renewed J1 visa program
 - (3) Working with departments and advisors for study abroad and international students getting the correct credit for that work
 - (4) Had a socially distanced welcome event
 - vii) Questions
 - (1) Senator Casey - Respectfully, in regard to the listening sessions I don't think most staff would consider noon a work hour. If there could be an early/midafternoon time, I'm sure many of us would appreciate that in the future.
 - (a) She'll take that back to the Provost's Office.
 - (2) Senator Casey – Is there an update on changes to fall schedule or registration, particularly for plans for freshman orientation? Last year, changes were happening all the time, so if orientation could happen after that, it would be helpful.
 - (a) She's not sure about freshman orientation. Regarding fall classes, they will revisit that in mid-June based on various metrics, but no changes have been made yet. She will pass that concern on to the right office. They're hoping the upcoming schedule will stay the same.
 - (b) Senator Taylor – Freshman orientation will be online.

- (3) Senator Taylor – She has heard orientation will be completely online and will start later in the summer. They haven't figured out how to prioritize advising yet, but they are working on it. There should be similarities to last year.

VI) Old Business

VII) Liaison Reports

A) ASUW - Hunter Swilling, Chief of Legislative Affairs

- i) Response to racist statements during Zoom event
 - (1) Changing finance policy such that they will not fund student events that marginalize specific groups of students/people
 - (2) Working on an actionable and endowed fund for marginalized students
 - (3) President and Vice President met with President Seidel regarding administration's response and actions regarding these events
- ii) President Seidel attended a recent meeting and answered students' questions
 - (1) Will attend another meeting later this month
- iii) Reviewed COVID policies
- iv) ASUW applications for representatives are open until March 12th, when campaigning begins.
- v) Filled several student representative slots on Strategic Planning committees
- vi) Several scholarships are open or being dispersed
- vii) Passed budget for fiscal year 2022
- viii) Filled Student Legal Services position
- ix) Thanks to custodial staff on expanding free menstrual product program to most of campus

B) Faculty Senate

- i) No representative present.

C) Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Senator needed)

D) Athletics Planning Committee (Cathy Moen)

- i) Will meet next week and will have a report after that.

E) Enterprise Risk Management Advisory Committee (Chris Maki)

- i) Sent presentation to full Senate
 - (1) After COVID, what risks should we focus on?
 - (a) COVID polices
 - (b) Digital security and technology (cyber threats)
 - (c) Regulatory changes
 - (d) Student enrollment
 - (2) Staff Senators are being asked for input – link to survey in email

F) Food Security Taskforce (Chris Stratton)

- i) Will meet tomorrow and have a report after that.

G) No More Committee (Senator needed)

- i) Please let Senator Traver know if you're interested in joining.

H) Public Art Committee (Senator needed)

I) Student Media Board (Emily Edgar)

- i) Approved budget for next year – had to cut 5% because of lack of student fees
- ii) New studio in progress

J) USP Update Working Group (Richard Raridon)

VIII) Officer Updates

- ##### A) President, Chris Stratton

- i) Vaccine Taskforce – improvements on getting employees vaccinated
 - ii) Strategic Planning Committee – listening sessions in process
- B) Vice President, Elizabeth Traver
 - i) Food Drive started Monday
 - (1) More locations – will update the website
 - (2) Needs help collecting and distributing boxes after March 25th
 - (3) Let her know if you have new locations or need the flyer
 - (4) Nominate staff and their families
- IX) New Business
- X) Committee Reports
 - A) Communications Committee – Senator Moen
 - i) Meeting – March 4, 9:00am, Zoom
 - ii) Food Drive announcements, newsletter
 - B) Credentials and Elections Committee – Senator Keto
 - i) Meeting – TBA
 - ii) Several vacancies (19) – encourage people to join
 - (1) New Senator nominations open March 17th through April 21st
 - (2) Elections following that
 - iii) Will contact Senators regarding term limits
 - iv) Officer nominations open after this meeting until March 31st
 - (1) President position includes a time buyout – half of your salary is paid by Senate for the year
 - (2) Electronic elections open April 7th for one week
 - v) Constituent list is due for an update, but he is in touch with Human Resources
 - vi) Questions
 - (1) Senator Sullivan – We do not have to vote on the removal of a Senator.
 - (2) Senator Moen – Are you quitting Communications?
 - (a) Nope!
 - C) Finance Committee – Senator Gonzales
 - i) Meeting – March 17, 8:30am, Zoom
 - D) Recognition Committee – Senator Vick
 - i) Meeting – March 18, 9:00am, Zoom
 - ii) Staff Recognition Day
 - (1) Are doing Employee of the Quarter and Year Friday with UniWyo and Pepsi
 - (a) Will record it for incorporation into Recognition Day video that is also in process
 - iii) Please contact her if you'd like to co-chair or help with the committee
 - iv) Questions
 - (1) President Stratton – What format should the video be in?
 - (a) That information is in the instructions she sent to participants.
 - E) Staff Relations Committee – Senator Czech
 - i) Meeting – March 23rd, 2:00pm, Zoom
 - ii) Minutes sent to full Senate
 - (1) Lack of exit interviews for all employees
 - (a) Only 10 exit interviews last year

- (b) AVP Koczara will be instituting a new process using HCM
 - (i) Is making that a goal for 2021 the employee in charge of exit interviews
- (2) Performance evaluations – why bother when there are no raises?
 - (a) We still want to recognize when people have good years, or to document any concerns with employees
- (3) DHRs do not have access to employee screenings
 - (a) Is looking at steps involved
- iii) Email her any questions for the next meeting's agenda
- iv) AVP is very responsive to concerns
- v) Questions
 - (1) Senator Keto – He had a constituent who has been trying to use our Employee Assistance Program for counseling and mentioned that the process has become much more cumbersome. They also heard concern about counselors getting approved as providers for Deer Oaks. Staff Senate has publicized this quite a bit and we'd like it to work better. Also, we've previously used surveys to get a read on staff concerns and haven't done one recently. Would this be a topic for a survey?
 - (a) She will bring all that forward. AVP Koczara has reported that Deer Oaks is willing to be proactive in their service, so this is great information. She's willing to talk directly to the constituent if they'd like.
 - (b) Senator Edgar - Additionally, if you have questions or concerns with Deer Oaks, contact Cherise Laud the Benefits & Retirement Specialist. 766-2437 or claud@uwyo.edu.

XI) Open forum

Meeting adjourned at 3:11PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer McKenna
Staff Senate Secretary