

# Seattle University Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 1:00 PM PT – 3:00 PM PT

**Location:** Remote using Zoom

**Present:** Kit Morse, Kari Langsea, Andrea Ross, Angie Jenkins, Carly Darcher, Christina Juarez, Chuy Garcia, Corey Belser, Dario Ogaz, Dawn Madore, Eunice MacGill, Jenna Isakson, Jessica Allen, Julie Schwabe, Laura Hauck-Vixie, Matt Burton, Stephanie Lewis

**Minutes:** Laura Hauck-Vixie | **Edits:** Chelsea Lien, SUSC Secretary/Treasurer

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## Welcome

- Introductions including our newest SUSC member, Jessica Allen (Structural Focus NE), Land acknowledgement from SU Indigenous Peoples Institute, Group norms, SUSC Check-in

## Cabinet Report: Timothy Leary, Executive Vice President

- Commencement location and date are currently being discussed but will happen between June 12<sup>th</sup> and June 14<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for more [details](#).
- Three separate VP searches underway.
  - VP Advancement – 3-candidates in person in next few weeks.
  - VP HR – Interviews first week Feb.
  - VP Mission Integrity – Starting soon. Hope for opportunities for lots of feedback.
- HR Discussions ongoing
  - Flexwork pilot survey conducted. Will carefully review results. At end of winter quarter, assess how well we are doing before a final flexwork plan decided.
- Currently there are 4-active COVID cases at SU. Concerned about new variant. Question on the table: whether or not to require booster. Current stance: strongly encourage people to get it.
  - On campus vaccine clinic – recommend that it continue to be offered.
- Staff Professional Formation working group identified 5 areas of focus: 1) onboarding/first year experience of new staff, 2) training/skill development 3) professional development 4) promotion and recognition 5) work life balance. Clear commitment to looking at staff and faculty compensation and benefits, but is not the work of this subcommittee. Compensation evaluation will be run by HR.
- Reorganization announcement – President really focusing on Strategic Planning Implementation and ITS issues.
- Chris Van Liew – Strategic Directions, today there will be a message from president Peñalver.
  - Brand new website.
  - Launch event Jan 25.
  - Currently working on structure, communications and change management initiatives.

## Inclusion & Community Report: Athletics and Student Athlete Experience with Shaney Fink, Director of Athletics

- Nov 12 statement announcing resignation of MBB Coach Hayford – did not mention details. Media outlets later revealed racist language.
- Disappointment in university response, missed opportunity to denounce acts of racism.
- Staff concern about student athlete experiences.
- Personnel issue means limited information can be shared.
- Issue brought to Shaney from the coach, and she then opened the dialog with student athletes.
- Impressed by the unity and connection between diverse student athletes and their thoughtful response.
- Education efforts on the part of the athletic staff over the past 20-months spurred by a racial equity working group.
  - Aim for enhanced confidence and competence in engaging in conversation so that when there are issues, they are discussed
  - Every full time staff member has taken part in a 6-hour training and monthly sessions
  - Still work to do to create an inclusive environment
  - Context: happened right before the start of the MBB season

- Shaney shared the Nov 12 statement with student athletes before it was sent; recognize power dynamics
- Met with other teams
- OIE review going on to ensure there are no other issues
- Feedback from the team: change in leadership was very important; how to ensure the work continues and the student athletes still feel supported
- Coaches committed to ongoing conversations and training
- Listening sessions with student athletes will continue
- Create an environment where student athletes are comfortable bringing the issue up (whether that be student athletic advisory board or OMA or the racial equity working group). OIE or compliance reporting line for anonymous feedback.
- Acknowledged they could not write what they wanted to in the university statement due to personnel issue
- Student athletes cannot lose their scholarships for speaking out
- Call to create an anonymous reporting tool for all of the university
- Opportunity and training could be done on a broader level without additional cost, help each other grow through in house education
- LiftSU – Work together at the university level on prevention efforts and response when issues arise
- Silo acknowledged between student facing staff/faculty roles and coaching staff
  - Understanding balance between athletics expectations and academic expectations
  - Greater campus cohesion and engagement is needed
- Hiring the next coach will involve students and student input. There is a level of privacy that is needed up to a certain point.
- Upcoming games – Remember you get free tickets as an SU employee
- Shaney Fink also addressed this with Aca

### Academic Assembly (ACA) Report: Angie Jenkins

- Overall Revenue – You may refer to budget office website for the most current info, <https://www.seattleu.edu/university-budget-office/budget-updates/>, but the overall undergrad revenue is behind the goal. Despite the higher enrollment numbers, there is a higher financial aid need.
- Retirement contribution changing to 8% in Jan 2022; not yet decided whether it will be biannual disbursement or will be monthly
- Grading accommodation – CR grade reinstated for CAS and UCOR classes only for fall 2021. Students can request this grading option after grades post, up until Jan 31 through their advising center. All faculty asked to be more forgiving on grading. <https://www.seattleu.edu/media/redhawk-service-center/registrar/registrar-forms/Petition-to-Change-to-CR-Grade---21FQ-CAS-and-UCOR-Courses.pdf>.
- Ombudsperson job description and reporting structure is being discussed. Next step request for proposal for a search firm to lead the process.

### Other Reports:

- Campus Ministry Students of Color retreat Jan 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> in Federal Way. Please refer students.

### Human Resources Address of Staff Concerns: Matthew Philip and Ellen Huelmann

- Review, Benefits, and Compensation (RBC) SUSC Committee requests to have a representative from HR in attendance for their regular monthly meetings. Both Jeff Pixler and Matthew Philip will join next week's meeting. Today's discussion will frame the work of RBC moving forward in prioritizing topics of importance to staff.
- SUSC has asked HR to consider these topics as the main concerns for staff:
  - Review Process
  - MRRs
  - Exit Interviews
  - Retirement Contributions
  - Promotions
  - Flex Work
- Annual Performance Review for Jan-Dec 2021
  - Can start now on the optional [self-assessment planning form](#).
  - Full overview: <https://www.seattleu.edu/hr/employee-resources/annual-staff-performance-review/>

- EngageSU will be activated around January 5<sup>th</sup>. HR is currently validating that the leadership reporting information is accurate.
- New hires since October 1<sup>st</sup> will not be asked to do a formal review, but should have conversations with supervisor.
- Questions were modified based on feedback this year.
- Conversation should happen no later than the middle of March.
- Removed numeric scale – now scale centers on meets/exceeds expectations etc.
- Pay planning in the spring.
- Most important HR objective currently is reviews. This gives staff the opportunity for self-assessment and opens the door for conversation. This can be a key time for relationship strengthening between supervisor and the staff member. The review should be directed to the staff member and HR/leadership will review it as well.
- Feedback for HR: goal setting should be separate from performance rating. Also needs to be a way that the staff person can identify the resources needed to support them in their current position and future goals.
- Pay: no discussion around removing the merit system this year and instead implementing cost of living increase. Working with faculty compensation and review planning as well. Performance management should feed into pay decisions.
- Tension: cost of living in Seattle. We still don't know the pool of pay. Can still differentiate pay even with merit pay but it depends on how large/small the pool is.
- How can we help staff create career paths and help them reach their development goals?
  - Strategic Directions Professional Formation
  - Keep great people at SU
  - Create structures that do not exist today
  - This work takes time
- What are the unique obstacles to promotion that we should be addressing?
- Do we incentivize internal applicants?
- Academic areas, there is an opportunity to improve
- Hearing a lot of concerns about MRRs
  - Staff not knowing how to find which MRR their position belongs
  - Growing interest in transparency around salary – differences across divisions and equity issues – want to see scatter plots
  - Encourage staff to talk with supervisor about why they are at a certain point in the range – important to have this dialogue
- Want the university administration to consider the importance of compensation to retention and to really take immediate action toward funding a larger pool for merit increases this year. The cost of living in Seattle and inflation rates are a huge concerns.
  - Key senior leaders talk about the priority of pay
  - Pay structure in light of the market – need to respond to the market. Current definition of market is the Puget Sound area.
- WA Labor Law will affect around 59-staff members starting January 2022. Our plan is to raise salaries to that threshold, working with leaders and plan to communicate with the affected individuals before holiday closure. 2023 likely will be converting some staff to non-exempt.
- Flex Work task force continuing –
  - Concerns why some are participating in flex and some are not
- Chat questions we were not able to address:
  - It is unclear how the MRR's are developed or the source
  - What does it mean to be at an MRR of 5 vs. 9, etc.
- Ellen will be attending Staff Council meetings moving forward

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**Next SUSC meeting: Wednesday, January 12, 2021, 1:00-3:00pm PDT on Zoom**