



## STAFF SENATE

### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

2:00 pm | WebEx

**Attendees:** Elaine Almanza-Ortega, Ana Clamont, Erika Cantu, Anna D. Garza, Claudia Martinez, Vanessa F. Martinez, Josefina Molina, Melinda Elizondo, Miguel Olivas, Gladys Perez, Daniela Rodriguez, Christine Riojas, Marycarmen Salinas, Edelmiro Santos Jr, Taryn Shehab, Jessica Tamez, San Juanita Vela, Aileen Espinoza, Andrea D. Beattie, Daniel Berndt, Maria Blasco, Carmen, Christa Elizondo, Lorissa Cortez, Leti Cruz, Elizabeth Martinez, Elsa Real, Samuel Flores, Gerardo Gonzalez. Guillermo Gonzalez, Andria Hernandez, Anette F. Lara, Julio Medrano, Sofia C. Maldonado, Maria Mancha, Norma Cortez, Amy Palacios, Rene Prado, Roland Ortegon, Blanca Ramos, Luis Vazquez, Sandra Villanueva, Jessica Acosta-Lopez, Ana Gonzalez, Armandina Ramos, Michelle A. Begwin, Celina Calderon, Rebecca Delgado, Melissa Dominguez, Laura Elizondo , Zoila Franco Hinojosa, Selina Gonzalez, Franz Gordillo, Alba Hernandez, Yelitza Howard, Veronica Juarez, Leonela Preciado, Madison Guerra, Ana Manrique, Maria Elena Hernandez, Maria Julia Pena, Elena M Martinez, Monica Mancha, Arianna V. Perez, Nancy Ramos, Anabelly Sanchez, Klarissa E Tamez, Airam Bernal, Carmen Aquino, Daniela Ortiz, Susan Foster, Priscilla Munoz, Rosie Dickinson, Anissa Aguilar, Bernardo Hernandez, Cesar Caballero, Stephanie Martinez, David Pina, Kristina Valenciano, Alice Arce, Ashley Carey, Virginia Lopez, Denisse Garza, Hilda Dennis, Laura Echandy, Mariana Rodriguez, Becky Litman, Adriana Rodriguez, Brenda Diaz

**Executive Board:** Cihlalli Perez, Jessica Trevino, Amy Cortina, Alejandra Eligio, Vanessa Almaraz, Ana Vargas, Patsy Lopez & Lisa Salazar

- I. **Welcome:** Staff Senate President Cihlalli Perez called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.
- II. **Review of November 2021 Staff Senate Meeting Minutes**  
Motion to approve November 2021 Meeting Minutes:  
Leti Cruz 1<sup>st</sup> Motion  
Ana M. Vargas 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion
- III. **Treasurer's Report:** \$5,569.07

#### IV. Speaker / Presentation

Laura Elizondo; Director of Financial Aid: *Learn More about Public Service Loan Forgiveness*

- COVID 19 Emergency Pause ends January 31, 2022. Employees of TAMIU qualify to apply for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF)
- **What is the PSLF?** The PSLF forgives the remaining balance on Direct Loans after having made 120 qualifying payments while working full-time for a qualifying employer. Only good for students who are repaying under a specific repayment plan. If you are under a standard payment plan, you may not qualify. The standard plan is for ten years or 120 payments.
- **What loans can be forgiven?** Only Federal Direct Loan Programs. To find out what type of loan you have, log in to your "[Aid Summary](#)" using your FSA ID username and password.
- **What counts as a qualifying employer?** Government employers and many not-for-profit organizations. Any U.S. Federal, State, or Tribal government agency or Peace Corps or AmeriCorps.
- **Which not-for-profit organizations qualify?** Tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. An organization that is not tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code but provides a qualifying service. If an organization is a labor union or a partisan political organization, it is not an eligible PSLF employer.
- **Limited PSLF Waiver:** On October 6, 2021 the U.S. Department of Education announced a temporary period during which borrowers may receive credit for payment that previously did not qualify for PSLF or TEPSLF. If you do not qualify under the general provisions, visit the website to learn if you qualify under the limited provision to ensure you consolidate your loans before the October 2022 deadline.
- **Who should complete the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) form?** All student loan borrowers.
- **How long will it take?** Most people complete the form in 30 minutes. The form must be completed in one session.
- **What do I need?** Your most recent W2 from your employer or your employers Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) TAMIU EIN 74-1761398
- Even if you have not made any payments during this period, you are considered as having made payments on time.
- If you qualify for this program, you are required to print out the form and send it to Human Resources for them to fill out certifying your employment. Typed signatures or security-based signatures are not accepted. You must apply every year for this program.

- Visit <https://studentaid.gov/pslf/> for more information
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF): <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>
- <https://studentaid.gov/pslf>
- <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/pslf-limited-waiver>

## V. Staff Senate News

- **Employee Educational Program Information:** A&M Chancellor has approved a new program that will allow full-time faculty and staff who have master's degrees to be reimbursed for all tuition and fees for approved doctoral programs in the A&M system universities. This initiative will start in Spring 2022, and there are guidelines and information that will be made available in January. Employees must be full-time budgeted staff who have been employed for twelve months. You must have a master's degree, and you must be employed full-time for each semester you are in the Ph.D. program. Enrollment may be in any A&M System school, not limited to TAMIU. The program you are in or want to be enrolled in needs to be consistent with the mission of the office in which you are employed now.
- **Slice of Thanks Recap: The event was a big success. Thank you!**
- **Holiday Gala** pictures are available for viewing on the TAMIU Employee Newsletter.
- January Fundraiser will be held on January 12, 2022, at Chili. If you dine-in or order take-out, a portion of the money raised will be donated to Staff Senate and used for educational programs and prizes for events hosted by Staff Senate. The event is open to all Laredo Community, mention that purchase is to support TAMIU Staff Senate.
- HealthyU is hosting a Holiday Painting Event on December 20, 2021, at 6:00 pm. Wear your holiday attire.
- A new SAP (Standard Administrative Procedure) was recently approved. SAP outlines procedures for contributing to or withdrawing hours from the TAMIU Family Leave Pool. The leave pool is administered by Human Resources.  
<https://www.tamtu.edu/compliance/documents/Rules%20and%20SAPs/31.06.03.10.01familyleavepooladministrationprocedures.pdf>
  - Questions about Family Leave Pool can be directed to Jan Aspelund. [jan.aspelund@tamtu.edu](mailto:jan.aspelund@tamtu.edu), or ext. 2361
- **COVID Updates:** Testing will be required when returning from the holiday break in January; information will be sent out via email.
  - Vaccines are still available on campus. They will be available every Wednesday until March 30.

- Regular COVID testing will be available during the holiday in the Curative kiosk that has been relocated to the University Village from December 15 to January 3. The kiosk will be closed on December 24.
- **Be a Champ Drawing** was held Monday, December 13. Check your email to see if you are a winner. If you did not submit your information, you're still able to participate in next semester's drawings. If you have not submitted your information, visit:  
<https://go.tamtu.edu/employeeestogether>
- **Marketing Updates Presented by Amy Cortina, Staff Senate Vice President of Marketing & Communications:** There is a new logo for Staff Senate and Website. The website is not available yet but will be up and running soon with updates to make the site user-friendly.

## VI. TAMTU News

- Congratulations to all TAMTU employees who graduated this semester.
- **Continuing Education Courses** offered during the Spring Semester:
  1. The History of Laredo from February 12 – April 30.
  2. Let's Learn Japanese from January 17- March 22.
- **Green Dot training** will take place on December 16, hosted by the Office of Compliance. The training session is for faculty and staff.
- **TAMTU CARES Grant** will be opening up for the Spring Semester on January 10 and closes on February 12. The website will be updated as soon as the application is made available. <https://www.tamtu.edu/cares>
- **Information on becoming a VITA volunteer.** Vita is an income tax assistance program where IRS certified volunteers assist in preparing income taxes for those who qualify. <https://vitalaredo.org/volunteer/>
- **Laredo Holiday Events:**
  - December 15: Christmas in the Park activities and a movie from 5 pm – 9 pm
  - December 16: Christmas Market at Canseco House with arts and crafts and pictures with Santa
  - December 17: Grinchmas at Fasken Elementary School. There will be a movie, music, and food. They will also be administering COVID vaccines.
- **TAMTU Holiday Break** will be from December 24 – January 2, and the university will open again on January 3.

## VII. Open Floor

- **Yelitza Howard from Career Services:** Welcomed two new career advisors, Michelle Begwin and Anissa Aguilar.

- **Marycarmen Salinas from Student Health Services:** Reminder that there will be mandatory COVID testing before returning to TAMIU. Check TAMIU email informing you of the time you will need to report for your mandatory test. Testing will be held at the Student Center Ballroom.
  - Student employees will need to also be checking their email for their designated day and time for testing.
- **Congratulations to Sandra Villanueva on her retirement.**

**VIII. Door Prizes – As a special treat, Ale and Amy, Staff Senate officers, have donated an Alexa for the final basket**

1. Andrea Beattie
2. Franz Gordillo
3. Vanessa F. Martinez
4. Jessica Tamez
5. Alejandra Eligio

**On behalf of the TAMIU Staff Senate, we wish you and your family a safe and restful holiday season, and we look forward to seeing you in 2022.**

**IX. Motion to adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 2:52 pm.

- Leti Cruz 1<sup>st</sup> motion
- Ana Vargas 2<sup>nd</sup> motion