



STAFF SENATE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

2:00 p.m. | WebEx

Attendees: Josefina Molina, Aquiles Barrera, Virginia A Morales, Miguel Olivas, Gladys D Perez, Anna Garza, Jessica Acosta Lopez, Elaine Almanza-Ortega, Maria Blasco, Cristina Calderon, Joselyn Ortegon, Vanessa Martinez, Melissa Morin, Klarissa Tamez, Andrea Beattie, Leonela Preciado, Marycarmen Salinas, Samuel Flores, Maria D Mancha, Andria Hernandez, Juliana Medrano, Anabelly Sanchez, Cristine Perez, Jonathan Serna, Luis D Vasquez, Juana E Villagran, Anissa M Aguilar, Ana M Gonzalez, Armandina Ramos, Michelle A Begwin, Mariana Barberena Asiain, Heather Benavides, Ashley Carey, Ana P Clamont, Athena V Cortez, Lorissa M Cortez, Leti Cruz, Cynthia Martinez, Daniela M. Ortiz, Daniela Maldonado, Rosie Dickinson, Elizabeth Martinez, Christa L Elizondo, Erika Cantu, Marta E Esparza, Scheiby Fisher Gonzalez, Margaret D. Gonzalez, Selina Gonzalez, Karla Leal, Ledith Ramirez, Sofia C Maldonado, Ana K Manrique, Maria Elena Hernandez, Maria Julia Pena, Elena M Martinez, Martha L Medina, Norma Cortez, Amy Palacios, Sharma Ali, Ana Gonzalez, Rosario Benavides, Carmen Aquino, Mariana Gonzalez, Franz Gordillo, Julia Rawlins, Claudia Martinez, Blanca Ramos, Julio Reyes Jr., Priscilla Pena, Amy Rodriguez, Maria I Salazar, Taryn Shehab, Mirasol Tabarez, Merari T Teran, Kristina Valenciano, Aileen Espinoza, Susan Foster, Carlos Bella, Christine Rojas, Arianna Perez, Daniel Salazar, Rocio Garcia, Julio Medina, David L Pina, San Juanita Vela

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

- I. **Welcome:** Staff Senate President Cihtlalli Perez called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.
- II. **Review of December 2021 Staff Senate Meeting Minutes**
Motion to approve December 2021 Meeting Minutes:
Leti Cruz 1st Motion
Vanessa Martinez 2nd Motion
- III. **Treasurer's Report:** \$3,494.83

IV. Speaker / Presentation

- **University Updates – Dr. Pablo Arenaz**

- Welcomed TAMIU Staff.
- Reminded that students will be back on Tuesday and faculty will be tested on Tuesday morning when they return to campus. Only faculty will be tested Tuesday morning.
- EOC (Emergency Operations Center) Meeting with the City of Laredo, last week showed COVID numbers were modest. TAMIU will continue to monitor and adjust as needed.
- TAMIU will continue to do surveillance testing; including faculty, students, and staff.
- Protocol for working with COVID has changed, TAMIU will be following the City of Laredo recommendations.
 - If you are COVID positive you will be asked to isolate for 10 days.
 - If you are fully vaccinated (fully vaccinated is defined as having both doses within 6 months or if you are beyond the 6 months with both doses and have had your booster shot.), you may request an alternative work location after 5 days, to work remotely during last days of isolation. This will help those who are asymptomatic by limiting the number of sick days they must use.
 - Employees are not required to work from home after 5 days. If they feel they need the full time to recuperate then it is allowed. Working from home needs to be requested and approved by the supervisor.

Q&A with the President

- **Why does the new rule [alternative work request] apply only to those with the full vaccination status?** That is part of the CDC guidelines. For not fully vaccinated individuals, there is a certain set of isolation processes they would have to go through. This is following what the CDC is recommending.
- **Will students be required to test?** Students are not required to test but are highly encouraged to test. Students have been coming in on their own to test. Some groups will be required to test.
- **Will random testing continue this semester?** Yes.
- **Are there any changes to in-person student event capacities?** TAMIU is requiring social distancing, 3 feet distancing for events. We will continue to do what was done in the fall.
- **Is isolation required for close contact if you are vaccinated?** Quarantine and monitor, continue to do was done in the fall. Contact HR for more details.

- **Where can we find the protocol for COVID?** They can be found on the COVID website: <https://www.tamtu.edu/coronavirus/>
- **Therapy Assistance Online (TAO) free for TAMTU Employees and Students - Jonathan Serna**
 - Therapy Assistance Online (TAO), is a self-help mental service: <https://us.taconnect.org/register>
 - Similar to counseling but instead of seeing a counselor in person you can have access on your phone computer or tablet (through app or website).
 - Service for both students and TAMTU employees. The site has journals, responsive feedback, messaging systems, as well as modules for anxieties, depression, and other items.
 - When employees register, they must use their work email and students will need to use their dusty email.
 - The website is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For follow up questions, contact: Office of Student Counseling Services Student Center 128 | Phone: (956) 326-2230 | Fax: (956) 326-2231 Email: counseling@tamtu.edu

V. Staff Senate News

- During December's meeting, information was shared regarding student loans. At that time the student loan pause was to end in January. The payment pause has been extended to May 1, 2022.
- A reminder of *Protocol and Certification for System Member Employees' Training* is due January 16th. The training was added to reduce the spread of Coronavirus disease and to preserve the safety and well-being of our employees.
- Staff Senate is hosting the first fundraiser of the semester – Chili's Give Back Event on Wednesday, January 12, 2022. You can dine-in or carry out between 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Chili's north location. When ordering, mention Staff Senate and we will receive a portion of the total amount spent, which benefits our employee assistance programs and events.
- Second Fundraiser: We will have a Valentine's Day or Pal-engines Day Candy Gram Fundraiser. Information will be sent out via email around January 24th.
- The Staff Senate Book Scholarship will open Tuesday, February 8, 2022. Due to the TAMTU Books Included initiative, the scholarship can be applied for tuition payment. Visit TAMTU Staff Senate website for scholarship eligibility requirements: <https://www.tamtu.edu/staffsenate/bookscholarship.shtml>

- Updates to the Staff Senate Website is complete:
<https://www.tamtu.edu/staffsenate/>
- COVID Updates –
 - Mandatory COVID testing will continue in the spring semester, starting the second week of classes.
 - Vaccines will continue to be available in the Student Center every Wednesday till March 30th. No appointment is needed.
 - Be a Champ will continue this semester. If you have not submitted your information, you still have time to participate. If you have already submitted your information, do not submit it again as that may disqualify you.
 - The City of Laredo is opening 3 new Curative Testing sites. Locations are by the Fire Station #5, Northeast Hillside Rec Center, and North Central Park. You can find their locations on the City of Laredo Instagram or Facebook page.

VI. TAMIU News

- The TAMIU Cares Grant application opened on January 10 and will close on February 21, 2022. Share with TAMIU students.
- Save the Date for Discover TAMIU – Discover TAMIU provides students of all ages their families and all community members an opportunity to experience TAMIU. This is a one-day event packed with hands-on activities, performances, and informative sessions. Scheduled on Saturday, February 26, 2022, from 11 am – 3 pm. Departments that would like to participate may submit an activity:
<https://tamtu.campuslabs.com/engage/submitter/form/step/1?Guid=0a396d0b-767e-442f-bc0c-413fac8bb4ec>
- Upcoming important dates:
 - Friday, January 14, 2022, Spring and Sub Term tuition and fees are due.
 - Monday, January 17, 2022, Martin Luther King Day University Closed
 - January 18th First day of Spring semester and Sub term 1
 - Thursday, January 20, 2022, Sub Term – Final late registration Day.
 - Monday, January 24 Spring 2022. Final Day of Late Registration
 - Monday, February 7, 2022, Spring 2022 Flex Entry First Class Day

VII. Open Floor

- Leonela Preciado – shared info on USTEM Program for High School seniors who are STEM majors joining TAMIU. Info on Instagram:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CYjw9F0r711/>
- Kristina Valenciano - Catapult visits will be on our campus on Feb 15 & 16. A wellness exam is part of our two-step process for the university. Please call if you have questions at ext. 2930

- Jessica Trevino – The Office of Recruitment will be reintroducing 2 new recruiters in the Rio Grande Valley starting next week. They will be stationed in the McAllen area.
- Michelle Begwin- Career Services will kick off their Coffee House Events. Students and alumni can RSVP via Handshake at <https://go.tamui.edu/handshake-rsvp>
 - Wednesday, February 2: Alaster Love
 - Wednesday, February 9: Gabriel Rodriguez
 - Wednesday, February 16: Doreen Hale.
- Scheiby Fisher Gonzalez–
 - Applications are now being accepted for Loaner Laptop Program: <https://go.tamui.edu/laptop>
 - Reskilling Grant is available for students returning to school, whether they stopped attending and want to come back or if they received their undergraduate degree and are potentially pursuing a master’s degree and have a break in enrollment Scholarships are available for up to \$2,500. For more info, email outreach@tamui.edu
- Office of International Engagement is looking for student applicants for 2 positions in their office. One is for a Federal College Work-study and the other is a student worker position.

VIII. Door Prizes

- Heather Benavides
- Virginia Morales
- Patsy Lopez
- Scheiby Fisher Gonzalez

IX. Motion to adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

- Leti Cruz 1st motion
- Heather Benavides 2nd motion