



## STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

# Staff Advisory Council General Meeting Minutes

Staff Advisory Council met on

**March 12, 2025 @ 1:15pm** at

**412 Student Union (Council Room).**

*All meetings are open to the public. Virtual attendance links are available upon request.*

- A. **Call to Order:** Sam Morse
  
- B. **Roll Call:** Sam Cypert
  - a. Members (In-Person): Aaron Lively, Angie Duckworth, Justin Worley, Kala Davis, Kegan Herrick, Kim Howerton, Kimberly Meints, Michelle Stewart, Nicole Hendricks, Ramitha Raja, Roxanne Maynard, Sam Morse, Sam Cypert, Sherri Buntin.
  - b. Members (Virtual): Amy Phipps, Janell Hamilton, Robert Raab, Suni Hertz, Victoria Gandy, **Emily Billings**.
  - c. Guests (In-Person): Christa Louthan, Blaine Gulick.
  - d. Guests (Virtual): Robert Sloan, Imani Jennings.
  - e. Regrets: Emily Billings, Joshua Hawkins, Kaitlin Little, Natalie Noles.
  
- C. **Approval of the Minutes:** Sam Morse
  - a. Motioned by Justin Worley.
  - b. Seconded by Kim Howerton.
  - c. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
  
- D. **Approval of the Agenda:** Sam Morse
  - a. Moved by Justin Worley.
  - b. Seconded by Kim Howerton.
  - c. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
  
- E. **Special Guest Speaker(s):** Christa Louthan, OSU-HR
  - a. HR Updates
    - i. Department of Labor has appealed the court injunction on the Fair Labor Standards Act.
    - ii. Structural Changes at OSU
      - 1. Focus is on the student experience. This is a key priority for Dr. Hess.
      - 2. Shuffling has occurred on the research side of OSU. Dr. Sewell now reports to Dr. Hess.
        - a. Hamm Institute, OAIRE,
      - 3. Reduction in Force

- a. This did go into effect on Monday, which did affect a number of employees on campus.

**b. Q&A**

- i. Justin Worley: Question regarding reduction in force. Between the layoff and working with HR Placement Services, what does this logistically look like for them?
  - 1. Christa Louthan: OSU undergoes layoffs on a routine basis. Generally 1-2 people are laid off every fiscal year. This is largely due to program closures, grant closures, funding closures, etc. When this happens, departments are required to exhaust other opportunities of funding and/or placement options when this occurs. The first thing HR does is find a nearly identical position that is open in another area of campus. When a layoff occurs, notes must be made on why the layoff occurred as well as HR actions. All layoffs must be approved by the division's Vice President. VP and HR review layoff to ensure compliance and that all options are reviewed. At this point, staff are given a notice period (typically 30-60 days).
    - a. Staff have the option to continue working or going onto annual/administrative leave to help the staff member focus on job searching.
- ii. Justin Worley: What will future state appropriations look like?
  - 1. Christa: Right now, over the last several years state appropriations remain flat. This may always be subject to change in the future, but as of now OSU-HR has not heard of anything.
- iii. Sherri Buntin: What is the status of the Presidential search, and do we have an idea who might be candidates for the role?
  - 1. There is not a candidate at this moment and there is not a current search for OSU's next president. The current priority is bringing stability to the institution and preparing for the next academic year.
- iv. Justin Worley: From this standpoint, what could you advise us to tell staff members when the time comes for the Presidential search? How/who will listen to their voice in the event staff have a concern about specific candidates?
  - 1. Christa Louthan: There is always the ability to directly message the President's Office. Staff members need to ensure they are conducting a professional reach-out. From here, we are unsure what the search committee process will look like.
  - 2. Sam Morse: To jump in, I have had an ongoing conversation regarding this. Sherri presented documentation as to what previous searches have looked like. We're unsure what this

search process will look like, but we are working to see how SAC can have a place on the search committee.

- v. Victoria Gandy: I work for the Trio Grants division in Access and Community Impact. Is there any outlook on whether we will be affected, or have layoffs been isolated to the Innovation Foundation.
  - 1. Layoffs are isolated to the Innovation Foundation. We are having conversations with Grants and Contracts as to what a loss in federal funding may look like. With that being said, HR will follow the same layoff procedures if this were to occur.
- vi. Justin Worley: On that note, have there been any discussions among upper leadership about the possible presence of Immigration & Customs Enforcement on campus?
  - 1. There are HR organizations that have put out guidance on how to work with ICE across multiple industries. Given the restricted employment information pertaining to higher education and systems in place, OSU-HR is not highly concerned about this becoming a possibility. The most likely scenario of ICE coming to OSU would be to audit I-9s to ensure immigration employment paperwork was properly completed.
  - 2. There is one thing SAC can do for HR. Because there are a lot of emotionally-charged topics and fearful people in the community, if we are comfortable in doing so, please continue to listen to them and maintain professional boundaries with those concerns. Provide EAP guidance resources materials for those worried, and remind them that it covers all members of the household.

#### **F. Officer Reports:**

##### **a. Treasurer's Report: Molly Battershell**

- i. February's report has been sent out. Only one transaction came through from Dearingers. Additionally, my last day at OSU is this coming Friday and I will no longer be part of the Council. I am unsure how we will transition treasurer responsibilities before elections in April, but that is something that will need to be discussed.

##### **b. Secretary: Sam Cypert**

- i. Apology for sending out the agenda and minutes so close to the meeting itself.

##### **c. Vice-Chair: Kimberly Meints**

- i. STAR Awards
  - 1. March 2025
    - a. Brendan Budnik
    - b. Nate Covington

- c. Alysia Ropp
- d. Leslie Dady
- e. Sam Ball
- f. Dakota Ard
- g. Aaron Hardin
- h. Adrian Hilton
- i. Sandra Arnold
- j. Shannon Hansen
- k. Salome Charron
- l. Vanessa Floyd
- m. Nicole Tracy
- n. Errick Anderson
- o. London Van Pelt

**2. February 2025**

- a. Davis Saunders
- b. Logan Moser
- c. Kaitlyn Birkhead
- d. Timothy Grischkowsky
- e. Jennifer Willson
- f. Josh Luethy
- g. Wes Kinsler
- h. Gwen Budzene
- i. Nicole White
- j. Beth Powers
- k. Janey Gordon
- l. Joanna Self
- m. Ciara Speight
- n. Erica Fleming
- o. Chesley Comstock

**d. Chair: Sam Morse**

- i.** It is natural to have anxieties surrounding the Presidential search and other items happening outside the scope of OSU's control, be sure to keep your ears to the ground to ensure we're doing our best to hear concerns of staff members and bring this to upper administration. We are the main body in which this dialogue is able to happen. Feel free to email Sam Morse, call, or reach out in another way to ensure we have spaces for larger conversations moving forward so we can ensure that information is not just a few stories and rumors circulating.
- ii.** Christa announced the structural changes, but one item to highlight is Dr. Kuwitski as the VP of Admin & Finance. He brings a plethora of experience serving at Langston and OU,

and we are going to reach out to him to see if he can be a guest speaker at a future meeting.

- iii. Next month, Steve Spradling, Director of Parking and Transportation, will serve as our guest speaker. Sam will be sending out a form for Council Members to send questions in advance so Director Spradling can prepare information in advance. As a heads-up, our presentation with Dir. Spradling is one day before the *Boys from Oklahoma* concert here in Stillwater. We could also get some actionable answers in preparation. There are a lot of questions in CEAT and Spears, who are experiencing major parking shutdowns to accommodate the concert.
- iv. In May, OSU Chief of Police Mike Beckner will be coming to speak. Sam has also reached out to Dr. Hess' office for a guest speaking engagement. They have initially scheduled for October, but SAC leadership will be going to see if we can move this up to May and have both President Hess and Chief Beckner as dual guest speakers.
- v. The next topic to discuss are vacancies. We have a total of four vacancies that are going to be open after Molly's departure on Friday. These vacancies are due to a variety of reasons, including taking positions elsewhere. We will discuss more in the near future on how to fill these vacancies. Some are terming out this April, others are multi-year appointments. The big impacts aside from the vacancies are (1) meaning we now have an open space for the Access and Community Engagement chair. A new Treasurer will also need to be elected. Traditionally, this is through a nomination process, but we do have a backup plan if we do not have any nominations today.
- vi. Staff Satisfaction Survey: With the group of individuals sent SAC's way regarding feedback and areas to explore, we realized that we do not have the people power or the capacity to conduct this survey at this time. SAC has created a form with stakeholders across campus to identify priorities when conducting this survey.

## **G. Reports of Standing Committees:**

### **a. Rules, Policy, and Procedures: Justin Worley**

- i. The RPP Committee has a formal policy recommendation today to pass toward a vote.
- ii. The RPP Committee has discussed elections. The dates for nominations and elections are as follows:
  - 1. Nominations open April 1.

2. Nominations will close April 15.
  3. There must be a two-week period at the end of nominations and the beginning of voting.
  4. April 29 – voting begins.
  5. May 13 – voting closes.
  6. After this period, the Council will convene to elect members.
- iii. Elections Policies
1. The RPP Committee would like to make recommendations for appointments for staff whose terms end in the future years.
  2. The thought was to fill positions that extend beyond the two months. For seats that term out this April, we would fulfill them at general elections.
    - a. Kimberly Meints: As a counterpoint, it feels difficult appointing people at the same time we're attempting to recruit for new members as well.
    - b. Sam Morse: SAC will need to identify a timespan. When voting opens, vacancies should likely be a part of this.

**b. Communications Committee:** Kaitlin Little

- i. No report.

**c. Awards and Recognition Committee:** Sherri Buntin for Natalie Noles

- i. Scholarship applications are closing this Friday and committee reviews of applicants will begin next week.

**d. Events Committee:** Ramitha Raja

- i. The committee is finalizing the food vendor for Staff Celebration Day.

**e. Access, Community, and Engagement:** Chair Vacancy.

- i. No report.

**H. Branch Campus Reports:**

**a. OSU-Tulsa:** Imani Jennings.

- i. No report.

**b. OSU-CHS (Center for Health Sciences):**

- i. No report.

**c. OSU-OKC (Oklahoma City):**

- i. No report.

**d. OSUIT-Okmulgee (Institute of Technology):** Robert Sloan

- i. OSU-IT has been working on several initiatives to get the campus more in alignment with other campuses. OSU-IT is conducting Employee of the Year awards. The campus also completed voting on a staff health initiative that partners with the YMCA to help with community activities.

**I. Reports of University Committees:**

**a. Faculty Council:** Kimberly Meints for March meeting

- i. Police Chief Beckner was introduced and shared his background and philosophy. He will be joining us in May.
- ii. A task force of Faculty members presented on faculty salary and compensation and the structural and compression issues that work together to keep OSU salaries below Big XII averages in many departments. They presented several strategies to address the issue and passed a resolution on to administration to consider.
- iii. Interim President Dr. Hess spoke on the how the perceived value of higher education has material consequences on our bottom line and the need for us to better tell the story of our contributions to the state.
- iv. He highly values transparency in the budget process.
- v. He wants to identify concrete goals where we know we can execute and deliver on our promises.
- vi. He and the First Cowgirl are committed to supporting the mental health of staff, faculty, and students.
- vii. Dr. Mendez confirmed that the interviews are now complete for the VP of Student Affairs. They hope to make an offer in the near future.

**b. Human Resources:** N/A; Monthly Guest Speaker

**c. GPSGA:** Sam Cypert for Melisa Echols

**d. Department of Wellness:**

- i. No report.

**e. Student Government Association:** Sam Cypert for Melisa Echols

- i. CowboyThon- OSU's Dance Marathon supporting Children's Health Foundation and OSU Medicine main event is on March 29th in the Colvin Center Annex! 12-6 pm.

**J. Unfinished Business:**

**a. RPP Committee – Policy Amendments**

- i. Changes to name of the policy itself.

- ii. Changes to the timeline of a university response after a grievance is filed.
- iii. RPP-2025-1, “Recommendation to Approve Changes of Policy “ and that the Council
  - 1. Motioned by Justin Worley.
  - 2. Seconded by Sherri Buntin.
  - 3. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

**K. New Business:**

- a. Nominations for Treasurer
  - i. Justin Worley would like to nominate Sherri Buntin to cover the Treasurer role until the next annual SAC election.
  - ii. Motioned by Justin Worley.
  - iii. Seconded by Michelle Stewart.
  - iv. The motion passed with unanimous consent.
- b. Salary/Wage Resolution Proposal
  - i. Talk with RPP Committee so the team can help craft a recommendation to bring this forward.
- c. Motion to formulate a temporary committee to look into staff salary recommendations to take to upper administration.
  - i. Sam can reach out to Dr. Slavich, chair of Faculty Council to gather their process.
  - ii. Angie: It may be worth to contact HR regarding this.
    - 1. CDP plans – have gone out to see the area and cross-compare to other similar roles. HR takes a median and does this.
  - iii. Moved by Sam Cypert
  - iv. Seconded by Ramitha Raja.
  - v. Amendment motioned by Sam Cypert.
  - vi. Seconded by Justin Worley.
    - 1. New time period: June 2025 – June 2025
  - vii. Motioned by Michelle Stewart to table until the next monthly SAC meeting.
    - 1. Seconded by Ramitha Raja.

**L. Announcements:**

- a. **Next Meeting:**
  - i. **Date:** April 9, 2025; 1:15 – 3:30 p.m.
  - ii. **Location:** 412 Student Union (Council Room)
- b. Kala Davis: Mid-South will be occurring this weekend. Be on the lookout for safety reasons.

**M. Adjournment**

- a. Motioned by Michelle Stewart.
- b. Seconded by Sherri Buntin.