



Staff Advisory Council General Meeting Minutes

Staff Advisory Council will meet on

February 11, 2026 @ 1:15pm | ITLE Building, Room 126

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

STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

A. **Call to Order:** Sam Morse

B. **Roll Call:** Kimberly Howerton

In Person: Adam Barnes, Melanie Bayles (started in TEAMS), Sam Cypert-Worley, Justin Cypert-Worley, Austin Hayes, Nicole Hendricks, Kimberly Howerton, Olivia Long, Roxanne Maynard, Kimberly Meints, Samuel Morse, Natalie Noles, Shawn Parli, Amy Phipps, Robert Raab,

TEAMS: Emily Billings, Sherri Buntin, Angie Duckworth, Peyton Duncan, Joshua Hawkins, Aaron Lively

Guests: Rob Henry, Jess Blevins, Ju Hee Lim

C. **Approval of the Minutes:** Sam Morse,

Justin Cypert-Worley, moved to approve by acclimation; seconded Sam Cypert-Worley; approved by council

Approval of the Agenda: Sam Morse Justin Cypert-Worley, motioned to approve; seconded Sam Cypert-Worley; approved by council

D. **Special Guest Speaker(s):**

None

E. **Officer Reports:**

a. **Treasurer:** Natalie Noles; presented November to January budget presented to the council.

b. **Secretary:** Kimberly Howerton; guests were requested to please check in with the secretary before leaving the meeting.

c. **Vice-Chair:** Sam Cypert-Worley; STARS February star award recipients

- Raigen Leal
- Abby Johnson
- Elizabeth Rogers
- Ellie Piper

- Scott Marlow
- Mitchell Alcala
- Stephanie Little
- Gem Elmore
- Phil Comeaux
- Shannon Ramsey
- Hoyt Nebgen
- Danesha Harper
- Em Cunningham

d. Chair: Sam Morse

The latest newsletter includes a letter from President Hess addressed to the staff. It highlights ongoing efforts to address code calls, updates from the OSU Foundation, and plans to increase staff awareness of upcoming initiatives. Sam has requested feedback on the newsletter, particularly regarding any communication or concerns received from other staff members. The President's Office will continue to share information and collaborate with the Staff Advisory Council (SAC).

Recent news addressed the circulation of rumors, emphasizing the importance of accurate communication. Questions have been raised about facility fees appearing on Stillwater Medical bills, and confirmation has been provided that these fees will not be included moving forward. If individuals encounter issues related to this in the future, they should redact any HIPAA-protected information and forward the details to the President's team.

During the recent Faculty Council meeting, the President discussed a new exploratory idea directly related to staff. His team is considering the possibility of collaborating with various Stillwater entities—such as Stillwater Medical and the City of Stillwater—that use similar systems to those of Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Because OSU represents a medium-sized risk pool and Stillwater Medical represents a smaller one, combining resources could create a larger pool and potentially lower insurance premiums. This concept is still in the very early exploratory phase and would require navigating significant complexities related to cost structures and legal considerations. While the idea is highly innovative and potentially cost-saving without reducing internal programs, staff were advised not to become overly excited or concerned at this stage, as the process will be lengthy and uncertain.

Another rumor addressed recently concerns alleged official measures taken against employees moving between departments. Leadership clarified that these situations are usually the result of specific circumstances rather than broad policy changes. While the institution discourages active poaching, some employees are naturally seeking new opportunities. Each situation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and there is no single rule or blanket decision that applies universally.

Regarding strategic planning, forms have been submitted and an initial meeting was held for the presentation. Some of this information has already been shared in the newsletter. Committees and working groups are now being organized. Sam was asked to appoint one participant and was also invited to serve on another strategic planning committee. A wider call for volunteers was not issued in order to prevent overlap with other groups. Kimberly and Robert will serve on the Student Success Committee, Aaron Lively has been appointed to the Finance Committee, and Sam will participate in the committee focused on campus culture and image.

F. Reports of Standing Committees:

a. Rules, Policy, and Procedures: Justin Cypert-Worley

- i. International travel for staff has had some changes; not anything really need to discuss; hope have recommendations in March
- ii. Finished the drafting of tuition policy revision; next step, get with Christa to discuss and they will add HR perspective and then bring to full SAC

b. Communications Committee: Aaron Lively & Monica Santillan

- i. Neither present; gave report to Chair; have a variety of things in the works
- ii. Largely able to edit website/parts of website not able to update for awhile with changes in our IT runs; need to get past year of minutes up on the website; just unable to do so without access
- iii. If anyone has news they want in the newsletter, send to Monica or Aaron by February 20th

c. Awards and Recognition Committee: Sherri Buntin & Angie Duckworth

- i. Been meeting together; have seven applications for scholarships so far so get the word out there it is open until March 13

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d. Events Committee: Peyton Duncan & Roxanne Maynard

- i. Peyton: don't have any solid updates; waiting to schedule a tasting; going with Fuzzy's they meet the minimum requirements for vegan and gluten free
- ii. Nicole added, they do not do taste testing at Fuzzy's

- e. **Access, Community, and Engagement:** Kimberly Meints
 - i. No report this month

- f. **Staff Salaries:** Robert Raab
 - i. Will have discussions later

G. Branch Campus Reports:

- a. **OSU-Tulsa:**
No report

- b. **OSU-CHS (Center for Health Sciences):**
No report

- c. **OSU-OKC (Oklahoma City):**
No report

- d. **OSUIT-Okmulgee (Institute of Technology):**
No report

H. Reports of University Committees:

- a. **Faculty Council:** Sam Morse reporting
 - i. A major portion of the conversation centered on the **future of higher education**, including research on students and the evolving landscape of how this research is conducted. The discussion covered student affairs, faculty roles, and questions about where value in higher education is derived. Participants examined how skill development influences student competitiveness and explored ways institutions might need to realign skills to better prepare graduates.
 - ii. Analysis was shared regarding the **impact of degrees on student outcomes**, particularly employment. Although historical data showed varying unemployment rates among different educational groups, more recent pre-COVID data indicated a shift: recent graduates had become slightly more likely to be unemployed than before, though non-degree holders still showed overall higher unemployment. The group noted that earlier evidence traditionally used to support degree value may now be less reliable, prompting discussion on how to address this shift. A speaker session related to this topic is planned and will be open to participants, with particular emphasis on faculty involvement as part of the strategic planning consultancy.
 - iii. The next major topic was **artificial intelligence (AI)**. Discussion focused on AI's effects on entry-level jobs, employment opportunities, and the broader job market. While both positive and negative possibilities were

acknowledged, the group emphasized that AI is most likely to have **negative impacts on entry-level positions**.

- iv. Clarification was provided that all data referenced in the discussion was **national** and not specific to OSU. No comparison of OSU's position relative to other universities was presented.
- v. A recommendation was shared regarding **allowing tenured faculty to pursue doctorates in other fields**, broadening opportunities for interdisciplinary development.

b. Human Resources:

Christa Louthan

- Have a benefit broker consultant negotiations this year
- March Staff development day is coming soon, March 24

c. GPSGA:

- President-each semester they hold four general assembly to invite all departments to attend, to apply for travel assistance; if students attending conference, they can apply for travel assistance.
- Meetings are the last Wednesday of each month between 5:30-7 p.m..
- Phoenix award still open, graduates and professional body review students accomplishments over the years and announced at graduate college ceremony
- Doctor and master's and graduate teaching assistants are eligible for phoenix awards

d. Department of Wellness:

Nina Rankin, Wellness Coordinator, OSU Wellness Dept will be attending for the Wellness Department in the future.

e. Student Government Association:

No report

I. Discussion

a. Robert Raab

Discussion guide attached to minutes

Requesting feedback on the plan as proposed in the next two weeks; want to get this in the administration before end of fiscal year; answered questions from the council members

J. Unfinished Business:

None

K. New Business:

None

L. Announcements:

a. Next Meeting:

i. **Date:** March 11, 2026; 1:15 – 3 p.m.

ii. **Location:** Room 126, ITLE

b. When you receive an email from Justin, do you want to continue to be a part of SAC, please respond, need to know if those up for reelection want to run; know that those not eligible, please respond to him when get the email

M. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Melanie Bayles; Justin Cypert-Worley made the second to the motion; motion carries