



UNIVERSITY OF  
**CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS™**

STAFF  
SENATE

**August 12, 2020**

## **Meeting Minutes**

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**Senators Present:** Angela Haynie, Angela Jackson, Ashley Isom, Ashton Hankins, Audreka Peten, Carlos Herrera, Deloise Mowdy, Dierre Littleton, Elizabeth Gayfield, Garth Clayborn, Gunnar Bartlett, Henry Smiley, Hunter Roberts, Jason Cole, Julia Robison, Kimberly Klotz, Kyana Smith, Melanie Watson, Michael Hopper, Nadia Eslinger, Natalie Shock, Richard Hammond, Shad Foley, Shelby Fiegel, Steven Shook, Susan Peterson, Taylor Ingram,

**Senators Absent:** Jason Davis, Jennifer Day, Kristin Jetts, Paul Dielmann, Thomas McDaniel

### **I. Call to Order**

- A. President Shook called the Staff Senate to order at 10:07 a.m. on Zoom.

### **II. Approval of July 29, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

- A. The minutes from the July 29, 2020 meeting were reviewed via email and approved electronically.

### **III. Officer Reports**

- A. President, Steven Shook

1. Guests: President Davis will be attending the September 9, 2020 Staff Senate Meeting, and Moriah Bruner with BeWell will be attending the August 26, 2020 meeting.
2. Faculty/Staff Convocation will be held on August 19 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. It will now be held virtual with no in-person attendance.
3. A Board of Trustees meeting will be held on August 14, 2020 at 10:00 am. It will be offered both on Zoom and in-person, but capacity will be limited in-person.

4. The President's Office has sent out a UCA Student Guide to Returning to Campus to students, faculty, and staff via email. This document outlines expectations and procedures for students while on campus this semester.

B. Vice President, Nadia Eslinger

1. Senator Tabitha Hasson has resigned from Staff Senate. Maree Herring from the College of Education Dean's Office will be serving in her place now, as a Senator-At-Large for Academic Affairs.
2. Committee appointments have been made and sent out to senators via email. There are two lists: one for Staff Senate committees and one for University committees. If senators have a true conflict with one of their assignments, please reach out.

C. Treasurer, Carlos Herrera

1. With committee membership set, a proposed budget will be sent to committee chairs and co-chairs to be voted on by the full senate hopefully next meeting.

D. Secretary, Ashton Hankins

1. Secretary Hankins reported that she had resigned from the University, thus stepping down from Staff Senate. Staff Senate is encouraged to continue to advocate for staff members who need accommodations this semester due to personal or family health reasons.

E. Parliamentarian/Historian, Elizabeth Gayfield

1. Reminder to all senators to be respectful and allow everyone a chance to speak. Motions should also be made in the positive, not the negative, to avoid confusion. Example: Say, "I move to donate..." rather than "I move we do not donate..." If senators do not support a motion, they should vote against it rather than making a motion in the negative.

F. Ex Officio, Kimberly Klotz

1. No report.

#### **IV. Senate Committee Report/Highlights**

- A. No report.

## **V. University Committee Reports**

- A. No report.

## **VI. Campus Q&A**

- A. None.

## **VII. Constituent Concerns**

- A. President Shook shared several constituent concerns that he and Staff Senate have received. (Some questions and responses have been edited for length and clarity.)
- B. Some employees in the Physical Plant are concerned about being required to work on weekends outside of their regular schedules.
  - 1. Larry Lawrence is working with Graham Gills in Human Resources to develop a policy proposal speaking to mandatory work days. The Physical Plant is currently operating with a very reduced workforce, and some hours/days are required to meet the needs of the University before the Fall semester begins. While also being down 55 employees, the workload of the Physical Plant has increased due to additional cleaning and sanitization of areas. Many staff are being pulled to work in other areas to meet those needs.
- C. An employee from the Physical Plant recently passed away, and employees are concerned it was due to COVID-19. There is a strong desire among many staff members to be informed when someone on campus, specifically in their area, contracts COVID-19. They feel it's possible to still share important information about where the individual worked, when the virus was contracted, and the outcome while not sharing the individual's name.
  - 1. A person's health information is protected by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), and UCA must adhere to the laws and policies regarding sharing protected health information. Only individuals who are a close contact of the person testing positive will be contacted. The Arkansas Department of Health and CDC recommend only sharing information that will directly impact on slowing down the transmission or protecting people. ([See COVID-19 Asked & Answered for more information.](#))

- D. There was a request to share the open letter sent by some faculty members to Staff senators. That letter can be viewed here: [Open Letter for Fall 2020 Delivery of Instruction](#).
- E. What is the expectation of individual offices regarding returning to campus? Specifically, if supervisors feel their entire team can work remotely, is it necessary to have the full staff in the office at all times? Are there any benefits to requiring the full staff to return to campus full time or any consequences of not doing so?
1. It's encouraged for supervisors to allow remote work when possible while still staffing the office. For example, offices can utilize staggered schedules where only a portion of the team is physically in the office at a given time. Accommodations can be used as long as the office is still able to provide the resources and services to students, faculty, and staff. There are no benefits or consequences regarding this matter. Any department wishing to do alternate schedules must have staff members complete the [Alternate Work Arrangement Policy](#). For specific concerns, please speak to your supervisor or vice-president.
- F. If an employee requires a mask exemption, how is that process handled?
1. Human Resources will be sending out more information soon regarding this situation soon.
- G. With TIAA, UCA's current plan does not allow employees to withdraw funds from their retirement accounts without a penalty unless it meets certain criteria. During the pandemic it would be helpful if people could withdraw from their retirement account without needing to hit one of the very specific exemptions that have to be documented.
1. UCA chose not to adopt the CARES Act retirement provisions allowing employees to withdraw funds without a penalty due to concern that employees would deplete their retirement savings. UCA was not alone in this decision as ASU and UofA also did not allow this.
  2. There are options for employees, though. If an employee is 59.5 yrs old, they can take an in-service withdrawal from their contributions. There are tax implications in doing this, so employees are advised to visit their TIAA representative. Additionally, employees still have the opportunity to secure a loan of up to \$50,000 depending on their retirement account balance.
- H. Will staff members who cannot work remotely be required to physically return to campus Nov. 30 - Dec. 23, 2020?

1. The decision about which individuals transition to remote work at Thanksgiving will be up to supervisors and vice-presidents. Things could change before November, so there's no additional guidance being provided at this time. ([See COVID-19 Asked & Answered for more information.](#))

## **VIII. Old Business**

### **A. Spring Picnic Name Change**

1. Senator Fiegel motioned for Staff senators to share name suggestions to replace "Spring Picnic" during the meeting and complete an electronic poll to indicate senators' preferences. Results of the poll will be shared at the next meeting, and a new name will be adopted. Senator Bartlett seconded the motion.
2. Suggested names: Spring Soiree, Spring Luncheon, Spring Feast, Spring Social, Spring Fest, Spring Fling, Spring Cookout, Spring Gathering, Spring Foodward.

## **IX. New Business**

- A. None

## **X. Good and Welfare**

- A. None

## **XI. Adjournment**

- A. Secretary Hankins motioned to adjourn, and Treasurer Herrera seconded. Motion carried.