



April 14, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Senators Present: Angela Haynie, Angela Jackson, Ashley Isom, Audreka Peten, Carlos Herrera, Deloise Mowdy, Elizabeth Gayfield, Garth Clayborn, Gunnar Bartlett, Henry Smiley, Hunter Roberts, Jason Cole, Jason Davis, Julia Robison, Kimberly Klotz, Kristin Jetts, Kyana Smith, Lynetta Morris, Maree Herring, Michael Hopper, Melanie Watson, Nadia Eslinger,, Natalie Shock, Paul Dielmann, Richard Hammond, Shad Foley, Shelby Fiegel, Steven Shook, Susan Peterson, Thomas McDaniel

Senators Absent: Jennifer Day, Taylor Ingram

I. Call to Order

- A. President Shook called the Staff Senate meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. on Zoom.

II. Approval of March 31, 2021 Meeting Minutes

- A. The minutes from the March 31, 2021 meeting were reviewed via email and approved electronically.

III. Officer Reports

- A. President, Steven Shook

1. [COVID-19](#)
2. We want to give a shout-out to the Physical Plant for doing an awesome job with the flowers, landscaping, and beautiful groundskeeping work!
3. There will be a Board Meeting on April 22nd to go over 3 contracts. One of the items they will be discussing is our Zoom licensing.

4. Relay for Life will be held on April 16th. The theme is Disney. There will be a costume contest, showing of Disney short films, a Luminaria Ceremony, and will feature Dr. Poulter, Ronnie Williams, and more!

B. Vice-President, Nadia Eslinger

1. Election ballots were sent out on Monday. You do have to be logged on with your UCA credentials to access the form. This is not to monitor who you are voting for, but to ensure that each person is only voting once. Some users have reported problems with the form while using specific browsers. If you have any issues, please change your browser. April 23rd is the last day anyone can submit their vote.

C. Treasurer, Carlos Herrera

1. The basketball money has been transferred to the Agency account; ushers brought in \$2,610.00.
2. We are still waiting on 7 responses to the poll that was sent out on Monday in regards to potential promo items.
3. A deposit of \$2,500 has been paid to Adam's Catfish for the Spring Social.
4. Reimbursement of \$57.53 has been made to Susan Peterson for Employee of the Quarter supplies.
5. Reimbursement for the Courtesy Committee has been submitted for \$37.99 and is pending at the moment.
6. Professional Development reimbursements for Quarter 3 and 4 are underway, currently \$3124.00 has been sent back to departments with roughly \$3000 pending to be reimbursed.
7. An email has been sent to Amy Whitehead in regards to Academic Impressions, highlighting the costs and advantages of AI. We are hoping to potentially get assistance from the President's Office to offset the cost.
8. Just a reminder for the Employee Recognition Committee: We need to get names for plaques to Billy's Trophy and awards by April 21.

D. Secretary, Ashley Isom

1. No report.

E. Parliamentarian/Historian, Elizabeth Gayfield

1. No report.

F. Ex Officio, Kimberly Klotz

1. No report.

IV. Senate Committee Report/Highlights

- A. Courtesy Committee: No cards have been sent out this week, but if you need any cards sent out please contact Senator Peterson.
- B. Spring Social Committee: The committee has been meeting and has sent out communications regarding the Pie in the Face fundraiser and the Bear Hunt. Please encourage your constituents to donate and save their favorite tribute from getting pied. All donations will go to worthy causes on campus.
uca.edu/go/pieintheface
- C. Reynolds Committee: There are three shows left for this season. Please sign up if you are interested!
- D. Professional Development: The committee has been approving applications on a rolling basis. If you have any professional development opportunities you need help funding, please apply!

V. University Committee Reports

- A. Academic Adjustments and Appeals Committee: The committee met and approved two appeals.
- B. Lactation Suite Committee: The committee discussed the Mamava Pods, but unfortunately they will not be able to move forward with the initiative. Instead, they will be working on finding other areas on campus where existing spaces can be converted into lactation suites.
- C. Academic Integrity Committee: The committee met and voted on a student appeal.
- D. Search Committee: For the next couple of weeks the search committee will be busy with the interview processes for the candidates for the Vice President of Student Affairs. There will be campus forums that will open for all employees of campus to attend. Other meetings on the candidate agendas will be closed meetings.
- E. If you are interested in running for Staff Senate executive staff, feel free to reach out to any of those current members to get more details on what the positions entail.

VI. Campus Q&A

A. None.

VII. Constituent Concerns

A. Concern 1:

I am concerned about the email that came from President Davis late last week that included a return to work date of May 16, 2021. My concern is that there was no acknowledgment of the work people have done over the last year and a half, oftentimes working their tails off while also taking care of their kids and families at home, and making sacrifices in order to ensure UCA's students and faculty are also given the resources they need to succeed. There were no caveats or room for supervisor approval of unique situations. It came across as a very hard and fast rule.

There are many lessons to be learned from this pandemic, and the biggest one I've experienced is the ability to be flexible. Staff and faculty at UCA were asked to be tremendously flexible over the last year, and most rose to that challenge! However, this particular email made it seem as if we are back to the status quo, as if no pandemic ever existed, as if 2020 was just a blip on the radar. However, that is not the message being given to faculty, as they are being encouraged to primarily teach online this summer. (Which, by the way, I do not have a problem with.) It would be nice to acknowledge that some staff members and staff positions can also effectively meet productivity goals from any working location. What's more, to be learned from the last year is the vast importance of strong leadership skills in the people occupying supervisory roles. Decisions regarding flexibility should be made between the staff/faculty member and their supervisor. No one knows the individual or the role they play in the department as well as the supervisor. They should be the primary people to make any remote work scheduling decisions. (Granted, a lack of communication skills and boundary setting among leaders can result in difficult scenarios. But these should also be handled on an individual basis. And if someone is not effective in their leadership role, find a better seat for them on the bus, metaphorically speaking.)

I have a two-fold recommendation that I would like to propose for consideration:

- 1) Move the return to campus date forward a couple of weeks to allow parents of school-aged kids who are taking fully- or partially online courses and who do not currently have childcare arrangements already in place to continue with their current schedule/system they have already arranged with their supervisors until public schools are dismissed for the summer and students can enroll in summer

care programs. A quick Google search let me know that other universities in the state are setting their own timeframes for requiring all staff to return to campus, and the ones I have seen are well into June.

2) Work quickly toward policy updates for a longer-term solution and communicate this is being deliberated. I looked at the Staff Handbook again and there is a policy allowing for flexible schedules, per supervisor approval. However, there is no mention of remote work arrangements currently. Prior to 2020, there was very little precedent for it, so that makes sense. However, the time has come to make a change because our full society has changed in its expectations. Consider if remote work needs to become its own policy or if it can be lumped into the existing flex-schedule policy to become an encompassing flexible working arrangements policy. UCA would be a more welcoming and competitive workforce if the policy allowed for flexibility with supervisor approval. (I wish I could bold the caveat WITH SUPERVISOR APPROVAL because there absolutely would be times when supervisors should say yes and with other situations, the answer remains no.) There are a variety of situations where this could open the door for working parents, caretakers, those with lower socioeconomic status, and more to become active members of our workforce without sacrificing their family's needs in order to do so.

I humbly submit this request to the Staff Senate asking you to be the voice of our staff body. I'm personally working primarily on campus already, so the current change (5/16) doesn't affect me directly. But I am seeing the negative impact it is having on other working moms and colleagues who have been valuable assets to the UCA community before and during this season. I remain hopeful that it's not beyond repair yet...there is still time to make changes based on feedback from the UCA community. Employees who feel valued and supported (flexibility and autonomy being among the highest indicators of worth) will give more, be more, and do more for their employers than those who feel managed. Let's be among the first group!

Concern 2:

Writing with a concern about the return to work date of May 17th. This date is two weeks before the end of the public K-12 school year. Families that have elected for virtual instruction for their children due to various reasons (often underlying health conditions that put their children at risk for severe Covid) are now being forced to make difficult decisions before the end of the school year and before a vaccine is available for children younger than 16. A return to work date of June 1 would make a lot more sense. This allows families to finish the school year with their chosen method of instruction and provides adequate time to set up care for the summer that these families are comfortable with. In June, summer child care options are more readily available (i.e., summer day camps,

high school babysitters, teachers who take summer childcare positions, etc.). Many childcare facilities have closed or reduced their capacity due to the pandemic. Finding quality and affordable summer care was challenging prior to the pandemic and this summer poses an even bigger challenge. Let's give these families an extra couple of weeks to figure it out. Thank you.

Reply from Amy Whitehead

As President Davis mentioned in his last campus email regarding the May 17th date, more information is forthcoming from our office. We are going to start working on that email that will provide additional guidance to employees and supervisors, and we are actively discussing these concerns that you have shared with me.

VIII. Old Business

- A. None.

IX. New Business

- A. None.

X. Good and Welfare

- A. Senator Shock: We just competed in the Governor's I-40 Showdown. We won overall with a score of 23-15!
- B. Senator Robison: Senator Robison will be a grandma for the second time! Her next grandchild is due in August!
- C. Senator Bartlett: Thank you to everyone who came out to Advancement's Capital Campaign events. We have received almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of our \$100 million goal.
- D. Vice President Eslinger: Thank you to all of the Senators who came out and volunteered for the UCA Now event on Friday!
- E. President Shook: President Shook has been meeting with Britni Elder, Charlotte Strickland, and Dr. Amy Hawkins. On June 29th, 2021 they will be starting an annual Staff-Faculty Leadership Conference on campus. Since we have not been able to attend professional development opportunities like we usually do, we will be bringing in speakers and having a one-day conference. This event will have a flipped schedule, meaning the program will be done once in the morning and

then repeated in the afternoon. Harvard Professor and author of the book *True North*, Bill George will be speaking at the event as well as others from the surrounding community and state. There will be live music, lunch, and activities between the morning and afternoon sessions which we want everyone on campus to be able to attend.

Don't forget to volunteer for graduation! It is a wonderful opportunity to witness an unforgettable moment in our student's lives! [Volunteer Here!](#)

XI. Adjournment

- A. Senator Bartlett motioned to adjourn. Senator Smiley seconded. Motion carried.