



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA
Many Traditions One Alaska

Minutes

Staff Alliance

Friday, December 15, 2023

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Voting Members:

Ronnie Houchin, Past President, UAF Staff Council, Chair, Staff Alliance

DeAnne Ruiz, Co-President, UAA Staff Council, Vice Chair, Staff Alliance

Tara Borland, Vice President, UAF Staff Council

Genevieve Bright, President, System Office Staff Council

Dawn Humenik, Co-President, UAA Staff Council

~~Jonathan Lasinski~~, ~~President, UAS Staff Council~~ (Temporary excused absence)

Monique Musick, Vice President, System Office Staff Council

Peter Sommers, Acting President & Vice President, UAS Staff Council

Derek Bastille, President, UAF Staff Council

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Adopt Agenda

Dawn made a motion to approve and Tara seconded.

3. Approve Minutes of the [November 17, 2023](#) Meeting

Dawn made a motion to approve and Genevieve seconded.

4. Guests and Public Comment

4.1. Guests

4.1.1. Memry Dahl, CHRO

Memry is thrilled to be able to be a part of the staff alliance in a larger way. There is a lot of HR information that can be communicated to the staff alliance, so that a common understanding can be reached. Even if not in agreement, it is the ability to understand and hear what each other has to say, including what are priorities to each of the groups, that make this idea exciting.

4.1.2. Kristel Komakhuk, [Senior Director of Alaska Native Success and Partnerships](#)

4.1.2.a. Memry introduced Kristel to the group, stating how she will bring immediate value to the university and that in her first 10 days Kristel has met with a ton of folks.

4.1.2.b. Kristel spoke about her history at ANTHC (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium) and APU (Alaska Pacific University), which led to her transition to the university system. She looks forward to working on advancing the success of native staff, students, and faculty.

4.1.3. Lauren Hartman, Staff Development Funds

4.1.3.a. The committee consists of Lauren, Matthew Mund (UAF), Justine Nelson (UAA), and Jessica Driscoll (UAS). There are \$120,000 available funds, which will be split into two (2) programs. \$70,000 will go toward the \$250 class fee support, and \$50,000 will go toward the \$500 professional development support. For this year, the professional development support period will be spread throughout the year. Currently wrapping up the awards for the second review period, and the last 2 are February 1st and April 1st. For the fall semester, 154 staff received class fee support and currently 50 professional development funds awarded. The Spring Semester class fee support application has launched with 52 submissions already received. Reminder to use the link to take advantage of the LinkedIn learning sessions, which HR manages the licenses for. Thinking of requesting more funds for next year, especially since they have been getting more submissions that they have funding for.

4.1.3.b. Question was brought up regarding the divisions of funds across the system, for example UAA vs. UAF. Awards have been distributed proportionally based on the number of staff. However, UAA was the only one that did not have enough applicants for the \$500 awards (they are on hold in hope there will be more UAA applicants), so please encourage UAA members to apply.

4.1.4. Ronnie asked for everyone to take a moment and introduce themselves for the new “faces” in the group.

4.2. [Public Comment Form](#)

4.2.1. UAA Feedback Form, comment received 12/14/23: “I was unable to make it to the recent Procurement meet & greet event, but some of our other fiscal staff were able to attend, and they had a really great experience! Our whole team (whether or not we were able to attend) agreed it was a great opportunity to connect with the folks we regularly work and see the real people behind the email addresses, and we'd love to see more of these types of events. Having opportunities to meet and network not as a huge or unfocused general group, but with folks on the fiscal side of the house (both our

counterparts in other units and the central administrative staff that support us) is a huge benefit.

Side note: I also personally miss the all-campus, day-long fiscal meetings where we could get policy reviews and refreshers or deep dive into topics like representational expenses, export controls, or PCI compliance. This is a much bigger deal to organize and pay for than a meet & greet, but these were also the most meaningful training and development opportunities I've ever had at the University.

I thought I'd pass this feedback along in case doing more of this is something that Staff Council can promote, support, or even just give a shout out to the Procurement team for hosting such a successful meet & greet and let them know it was noticed and appreciated!"

5. Executive Update(s)/Meeting(s)

5.1. Monthly with President Pitney & CHRO Dahl: last: Dec. 5; next: Jan. 10

5.1.1. Discussion took place regarding the Employee Experience Survey and what is happening with JHCC, both will be covered farther along in the meeting.

5.1.2. The Compensation Memo was also briefly discussed. The

5.1.3. HR has been given 3 tasks for 2024: modernizing the processes and making them more efficient; Banner 8 to 9, using that tool to its greatest potential; and taking an in depth look at compensation from a framework perspective than a program perspective.

5.2. System Governance Council: last - 9 May 23, next - TBD

6. New Business

6.1. Joint Health Care Committee

6.1.1. The committee will have a discussion on wellness and the wellness program at their next meeting (Monday, December 18). The intent is to keep the rebate initiative. A wellness program is a benchmark benefit across other higher education organizations, so removing a benefit such as this one would be wrong. A wellness program sets up habits and behaviors that ultimately lead to more wellness and also early detection of other health concerns.

6.1.2. HR will get the results of the Spring and Fall benefit surveys posted to the benefits web page so everyone can see what the data says. It was suggested to cross link that with the Employee Experience survey web page.

6.2. Employee Experience Survey

6.2.1. There was approximately a 50% response rate across the system, the most, 60%, came from the system office, with UAS above 50%, and UAF/UAA over 30%. Overall these are better percentages than with the morale survey.

6.2.2. The committee is working with the vendor to build the dashboards and reports to ensure they are easy to read so the information is easy to find.

6.2.3. Will look at indicators to answer questions such as: do we have a turnover issue and are we on the verge of a crisis or not; and what are important things we can do.

6.3. Compensation Memo

6.3.1. The question of whether or not the memo is an effective tool was brought up during the meeting with President Pitney, and her feedback was basically it is not.

6.3.2. A question for discussion was: given what the President said, what are some of the feelings about challenges and opportunities?

6.3.2.a. Direct back and forth communications are needed; the process can sometimes end up more harmful than helpful; opportunity to have some negotiations; and work more closely with the Compensation Philosophy Committee instead of using a Compensation Memo.

6.4. Staff Make Students Count Award Timeline

6.4.1. Make it more inclusive, so that staff behind the scenes that students don't necessarily see or directly work with, can be recognized as well. Possible solution is to change the scoring weight of a student letter, so that any nomination letter, including from colleagues, has the same weight as one from a student.

6.4.2. To help garner more nominations from a broader pool, we need to review announcements, application, and language, so that it is clear that every staff member supports students via the educational mission of our universities and the system.

6.4.3. Motion made by Dawn to create an Ad Hoc committee to look at the award process, application, etc. and Monique seconded the motion. Discussion: How many should be on the committee? Recommendation: One person from each entity. The motion passed unanimously. Dawn and Genevieve volunteered to be on the committee and get things started.

6.4.4. The recommendation is for an Ad Hoc committee meeting in January, nominations from February to March (committee can propose exact dates), and awards in May.

6.5. FY25 Budget - [Advocacy](#)

6.5.1. Governor Dunleavy released his proposed budget on Thursday, December 14, 2023 and President Pitney sent out an email later that day summarizing how that impacts UA.

6.5.2. Monique shared her screen of the advocacy site. Information was updated or materials that were drafted were posted to the site. The site provides resources, for example, budget talking points that will be helpful when meeting

with Legislators. You are encouraged to share this information with your councils for broader distribution.

7. Ongoing Business

7.1. Staff Alliance Mission (Retreat Follow-up)

7.1.1. Reviewed drafts and discussed a variety of mission statements.

7.1.2. New mission statement adopted by a unanimous vote: Empowering UA Excellence Through Staff Success.

7.2. [Compensation Philosophy Committee](#)

7.2.1. The committee will be working on the compensation philosophy: what is our philosophy; do we lead the market; do we meet the market; how does that look; and how does compensation equate to total rewards.

7.2.2. It was noted that there are not any Staff Alliance members on the committee, and that it would be helpful to have someone in order to carry back information. DeAnne volunteered to join the committee.

7.3. [Roadmap to Empower Alaska](#) - Mary to reach out to Paul to confirm if he was looking for feedback and if yes, what is the timeline.

7.3.1. [Draft Roadmap to Empower Alaska](#)

7.3.2. [Visual](#)

7.4. Longevity

7.4.1 There seems to be a consensus around finding a way to recognize the sum total of a person's affiliation with the university is something that alliance has advocated for but not formally. Alliance will check back in on this in the future.

7.5. Compensation Memo Response

7.5.1. It was discussed that a formal response is not necessary, especially considering: Memry is now attending alliance meetings so there will be better communications regarding the compensation topic; plus Deanne will be serving on the Ad Hoc Compensation Committee.

8. Committee Reports

8.1. Joint Healthcare Committee/Staff Healthcare Committee

8.2. [Staff Development Fund Committee](#)

8.3. Employee Feedback & Assessment Committee

9. Old Business and/or Items of Reference

9.1. Retreat Recap

9.1.1. [Notes and Results from Jonathan King](#)

10. Staff Council Reports

10.1. UAA

10.1.1. We have a Gratitude Wall up. The Staff Development day is going to be called Peaks on January 19th, with the possibility of other groups being able to join into some of the webinars if they desire to. We had really fabulous meetings with our Chancellor, especially surrounding workforce workload and what that looks like moving forward.

10.2. UAF

10.3. UAS

10.3.1. A couple of executive positions are going through the process. Last week we finished in person reviews for the Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services at UAS. In the spring, we will know whether or not Jon will be joining us back or not.

10.4. SO

11. Agenda Items or Guests for the January 19, 2024 meeting

11.1 An invite has been sent to Margo Griffith, in order to give a preview of some of the Employee Experience Survey.

12. Announcements

12.1 Paul responded to the email Mary sent out and he stated that he would like feedback by January 15 so that it can be incorporated into our board presentation (reference 7.3 [Roadmap to Empower Alaska](#)).

13. Adjourn

Motion made by Memry.