Your University Staff Council (USC) at Work

The Texas A&M University Staff Council (USC) meets each third Tuesday of the month. All staff are welcome and encouraged to attend monthly meetings. For details on upcoming meetings, please visit http://staff.tamu.edu.

Below are briefs from the March 8th meeting:

Absent from the meeting were Deb Barnett (TAMU School of Law), Lisa Blum (Ex-Officio), Laura Jakubik (College of Nursing), Elizabeth Scanlin (Veterinary College), and Julie Zercher (College of Science).

Presentations

STEP IN STAND UP: Ms. Rebecca Watts introduced the Step In Stand Up Campaign. Step In Stand Up has been created by the faculty, staff and student leaders of Texas A&M University. This campaign shows survivors that we stand with them and asks others to do the same. Their goal is to eliminate sexual assault on our campus, and stand up against sexual violence by starting courageous conversations and sharing information. The group is coordinating with Live the Green Dot for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. More information can be found at http://stepinstandup.tamu.edu.

SICK LEAVE DIRECT DONATION: Ms. Sarah Tobola, Assistant Director for HR Benefits gave an overview of the new sick leave direct donations. Per HB 1771, individual employees may voluntarily donate sick leave hours to another employee. General information, forms, and resources can be found at http://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/leave/sick-leave-direct-donation/ or by contacting benefits@tamu.edu.

Chairperson’s Report

The USC Chair and Vice Chair met with Janelle Ramirez, Interim Vice President for HR:

- Tuition Assistance no formal update at this time
- Shared a listing of Fall Forum questions to present at the forum in April and discussed the possibility of a different site for the April Forum
- Updated on Leadership Development for USC representatives; still seeking a facilitator to help with developing a program for USC members

Committee Reports

Communication Committee:
- Committee members are scheduled for a website training session with Kentico
- Banner images on website homepage are updated and the committee requested that members submit additional photos to vsprayberry@mays.tamu.edu. The photos need to be landscape-oriented and high-quality, size 1170 px X 428 px; if possible, please crop photos to appropriate size before submitting and include information that identifies college/unit.
  - Outreach: requested suggestions from members for future presentations

Elections-2016-2017 Elections will soon kick off and members whose terms are ending will coordinate the election for their replacement. If any current USC members are interested in an Executive Officer position please review the information on these offices; EO elections will be completed by the end of May.

Staff Appreciation Week – Staff Appreciation Week was a success. All USC members are encouraged to complete and share the survey request that went out; the feedback will assist with the planning for SAW 2017.

Staff Emergency Fund – account balance is $6,805.00. The process is working well and the committee is still meeting weekly as needed.

Staff Scholarships – Reviewed the process for scoring of applications. For incoming applications, committee chair will redact all personal information.
Keystones

- QUESTION: As a university priding itself on leadership and community service, can more be done to encourage staff to participate in volunteering in the community? RESPONSE: forthcoming
- QUESTION: Are Dean's offices required to stay open over the lunch hour? If so, is there anything that can be done to allow offices to obtain permission to close during the lunch hour or for special events? RESPONSE: There is some information about office hours under Flex Time Work Schedules 33.06.01.M0.03. --- General 1.1.1. Still seeking additional information.

New Business

- Esteemed Staff Nomination: Granted to Paula Bender from College of Architecture

Old Business

- Staff input on selection/retention of Department Heads, Deans, and Provosts; submitted the proposal, Faculty Senate Executive Committee has requested additional changes and more time to review the document.
- Staff Tuition Assistance – still under review
- President’s Spring Forum is April 20, 2016

Next USC Meeting: April 19, 2016 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm ETB, Room 3002