

Seattle University Staff Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 12th, 2022, 1:00 PM PT – 3:00 PM PT

Location: Remote using Zoom

Present: Kit Morse, Kari Langsea, Chelsea Lien, Andrea Ross, Angie Jenkins, Carly Darcher, Christina Juarez, Chuy Garcia, Corey Belser, Dario Ogaz, Dawn Madore, Eunice MacGill, Jenna Isakson, Jessica Allen, Julie Schwabe, Laura Hauck-Vixie, Matt Burton, Stephanie Lewis

Minutes: Chelsea Lien, SUSC Secretary/Treasurer | **Edits:** Dario Ogaz, SUSC Communications Committee Member

Welcome

- Introductions, Land acknowledgement, Group norms, SUSC Check-in, SUSC email report
- SUSC email (Kari) – Immediate working conditions, ORCA parking (now 30-day free with ORCA card extended), virtual reopening

Cabinet Report: Timothy Leary, Executive Vice President

- Employee turnover: 42% new to SU within the last 2.5- to 3-years
- COVID protocol – Topic on everyone’s mind and is tracked daily, <https://www.seattleu.edu/coronavirus/confirmed-cases/>. May be less than a week away from the peak. We are right in the middle of this spike in COVID. Isolation space on campus is currently full, and some students are isolating in place. No serious infections currently. Most are asymptomatic and others have a light symptoms. Impacts to staff may be greater than students due to underlying health conditions. There is a testing site on campus, Curative. SU members have first priority for testing and should go to <https://book.curative.com/sites/33083> to schedule a test if you are staff or faculty. There is also a sign at the site that states if SU personnel, you can walk in for testing. It takes 2- to 3-days to get the results. Student can schedule at <https://book.curative.com/sites/33028>, but can also go to the student health center. Getting mixed feedback from parents. Some are thrilled we went online and others are not supportive. This is a constantly changing and evolving virus.
- Parking – Change back to 30 free days of parking on campus for those with an ORCA card. SUSC pushed for this and public safely responded with this change as we work through this peak time of high COVID rates.
- Search committees
 - VP University Advancement – group heading search on campus a week and a half from now
 - VP HR – is right behind the VP University Advancement. Interviews should begin mid-February
 - VP Mission Integration – search process started
 - Dean of Science and Engineering and Dean of Law School are on campus as we speak.
 - DEI for all search committees
- Flexwork – Matt Philip and Ellen Huelmann are present to address this. Continue to look at which positions can be done remotely. We need to be more flexible. We have learned how to do this in a hybrid environment.
- Matt Philip added a response to a question that come up regarding an email sent from HR to supervisor’s regarding flexwork. Matt responded that he feels that the decision should remain with supervisors but need to know if there are those who put forth a request for flex schedule that was denied reiterating that flexwork is only for staff.
- Open positions – There is a long list of open positions. Deans have been in place for many years, but, just recently, we have two deans leaving. Exit interviews need to be done, but what about surveys on why we stay?
- Ellen Huelmann stated that she will be taking over the exit interviews process moving forward.

Virtual Reopening – Staff impact & concerns (SUSC members & staff raise concerns)

- SUSC members are hearing significant challenges and varied expectations of staff across campus, with inequitable risk being imposed on those who are on campus regularly
- Feel the university is communicating to faculty and students but not staff. Left to staff leaders speaks to the inequality across campus. Some asked all staff to be on site even if they do not have student facing roles. There is a difference between flexwork and remote work during this time of COVID.
- Tim reiterated that if there are those who are denied flex work, please bubble up to Tim and HR (Matt Phillip).
- How to protect those who have reported against retaliation?
- We have had more positive COVID tests over the past two weeks than over the entire pandemic. The numbers are incredible and overwhelming.

- Concern raised about decision to hold labs in person. We were told originally that classes and labs would move online. Faculty pushed back for in person labs, but no staff were consulted even though staff are the ones that interact with all the students in all the labs daily. A faculty member may only be at one lab for the entire week. It is difficult to be on campus right now. Faculty can be on campus for a very limited time, but many of us need to be here all week. Can be 350-students per day. Every day works ask if today is the day they get COVID. Felling demoralized.
- Does the administration realize just how burnt out we all are? We just got back from vacation and I'm already burnt out.
- Another person highlighted that they take two modes of public transit to get here every day, five days a week (does not have a car option)
- Staff have said that we would like to have criteria established whereas when the cases reach a certain level, either on campus or the general community, then in-person classes would automatically be triggered to go online.
- Want more communication about what is happening, and how these decisions are being made. More communication – like what criteria was sent to supervisors (in order to consider flexwork).
- We understand that we all have different jobs and some jobs cannot be done remotely. Staff understand this difference. What we find are situations where jobs could be done 100% remotely and some staff in those position are not be extended the approval to do that. When concerns comes up is because we're saying we think we could do better and making the right decisions for a variety of people in different places
- Flexwork in in pilot stage and will be assessed to put forward a permanent policy around March ('22). What may be missing is the person who requested a flexwork plan and was denied. HR put trust in supervisors to come up with a reasonable approach. It may be best to increase visibility, should HR be aware of these requests?
- Is there any SU support for long COVID? Per Tim it has got to be part of our strategy moving forward. Matt reiterated that we have a strong benefits program to help with support.
- Sick leave – Could we allow those who need to miss work due to COVID related issues (vaccinations and recovery, testing, and illness) time that is not counted against their sick leave? HR will consider.

Human Resources: Staffing Data in recent years and Staff Performance Evaluations

- Matt Philip shared about upcoming HR communications.
- Performance review – now in the stage of self-review due January 21st. Concerns about some staff not getting link to EngageSU. HR is addressing and fixing this. Maggie Ricketts will extend the time, possibly a week. Keep an eye out for communication.
- Matt asked group how important is it that HR place communications in SU Today instead of sending a message directly from HR. Staff council believe it is important to send out an email from HR to communicate with staff.
- Matt shared graphs pertaining to staff headcounts and turnover. Monthly staff turnover resignation rates are higher than we typically see. New job requisitions. Average number of applicants on decline. Pie chart showing 42% know SU only during pandemic times.
- Hiring group would like for us to list salary ranges on job postings. Matt indicated that this is something that can be opted into when areas submit job postings.

** Closed Session for S USC Members**

- Inclusion and Community Committee - Debrief of the Athletics conversation from the 12/8/21 S USC Meeting
- Wrap up - (Kari)
 - IAC to draft email regarding follow-up of athletics response to now former Coach Hayford
 - Kari will send out an email to S USC explaining the new process for managing the S USC inbox

Next S USC meeting: Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 1:00-3:00pm PDT (<https://seattleu.zoom.us/j/99968641737>)

Next S USC office hour: Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 9:00-10:00pm PDT (<https://seattleu.zoom.us/j/92109294817>)