



The University of Texas at Austin
Staff Council

2021-2022 Report to the President

May 23, 2022

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Executive Overview

During the May 2021-May 2022 term—a transformative period for the university and the culture at large—UT Staff Council (UTSC) effectively engaged in myriad ways with campus leadership, stakeholders, partners, and its constituents.

UTSC provided direct input about the university’s Strategic Plan *Change Starts Here* and its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan *You Belong Here*. UTSC officers met on multiple occasions with Dr. Richard Flores and associates, as well as colleagues in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), to respond to and provide feedback about the plans as they were being developed. UTSC hosted guest speakers who disseminated information and fielded questions about both plans during its monthly UTSC General Meetings as follows: Dr. Richard Flores (November 2021), Helen Wormington (March 2022), and Paul Kinscherff and Emily Reagan (April 2022). Through the monthly ‘News from the Chair’ email sent by UTSC Chair Rhonda Cox, over 10,500 UTSC constituents were consistently encouraged to share their ideas related to the Strategic Plan via the President’s Office ‘Share Your Input’ Qualtrics survey.

Through ongoing conversations with President Hartzell, EVP/Provost Wood, SVP/CFO Bazzell, and AVP for Human Resources Howarth-Moore, UTSC officers elevated issues and concerns received from constituents, provided real-time feedback about campus climate, addressed matters of interest as identified by UTSC’s committees, and advocated for staff-centered approaches to solving challenges brought forth as a result of the pandemic. Highlights included a focus on flexible work arrangements and attendant adoption challenges/proposed solutions, the approach to managing pandemic-related matters on campus, and wellness leave.

Throughout the term, UTSC committees engaged with partners in DDCE, Document Solutions, Human Resources, HealthPoint, the Office of Sustainability, Parking and Transportation Services, UT Learning & Development, and the UT Wellness Network. Networking and change-making opportunities in the form of the Diversity and Inclusion Spring Mixer, the Staff Sustainability Luncheon, and Waller Creek Clean-ups were successful collaborative efforts yielding opportunities for staff to engage, develop, and contribute to the university’s mission.

This term marks UTSC’s 20th anniversary since its inception in fall 2001 and the adoption of its Bylaws in 2002. To mark this milestone, UTSC’s Communication Committee developed a robust twenty post social media campaign launched in spring 2022. The campaign focused on UTSC’s history of collaborative efforts with campus partners and also encouraged constituents to get involved by serving as UTSC Representatives.

The coming term coincides with the official launch of the university’s Strategic Plan and DEI Plan. In alignment with its core values of advocacy, collaboration, and transparency, UTSC looks forward to actively participating in and supporting the transformative work that emerges as the plans’ initiatives take root.

Benefits Committee

Committee members: Esmer Bedia (Chair), Brett Bowman, Stephanie Cook-O’Neal, Lisa Gandy, Michael Greenlee, Christie Jenner, Gwendolyn Kelso (Co-Chair—partial term), Bobby Knight, Meera Rajagopalan, Regina Smuts, Elista Street, Jodi Torrez, Michael Walker, Brian Winkelmann, Alicia Zapata

Introduction

The Benefits Committee strives to support and advocate for initiatives and projects that result in a positive outcome for constituents related to the benefits afforded to them as university employees. This year’s committee continued its focus on work initiated in the 20-21 term as well as new areas of focus in support of university staff.

Summary

The committee focused on the following this term.

- Collaborated with colleagues in Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) to provide feedback about information on the PTS website pertaining to the parking garage waitlist.
- Reviewed information on the Human Resources Benefits website with a focus on findability.
- Collaborated with Human Resources partner Steven Blackwell, Senior Manager of Benefits and Leave Management, providing feedback about the information reflected on the Staff Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) website.

Conclusion

The opportunities the committee has to collaborate with campus partners—that include Human Resources and Parking and Transportation Services colleagues—is greatly appreciated. We are thankful to have the opportunity to collaborate with amazing campus partners.

Recommended future committee work with Human Resources partners includes the following.

- Collaborate on a Staff Tuition Assistance Program (STAP) Supervisor Handbook.
- Promote and amplify messaging about the Staff Tuition Assistance Program (STAP).
- Provide feedback about available and desired staff benefits.
- Provide feedback about Human Resources website information that would benefit from translation into multiple languages.

Communication Committee

Committee members: Vivian Abagiu, Taylor Grobelny, Jason Huerta, Mark LaForest, Tiffani Nguyen, Weldon Phillips, Marjorie Wilcox (Chair)

Introduction

The Communication Committee's primary purpose is to amplify UTSC's work and opportunities for constituent engagement and to highlight messaging from campus partners via its social media channels and its website.

Summary

The committee focused on the following this term.

- UTSC 20th Anniversary Social Media Campaign. To celebrate and bring awareness to UTSC 20th anniversary, the committee developed and authored content for a "20 for 20" social media campaign. The hashtag #UTSC20for20 was used to highlight the twenty associated posts on its Facebook and Twitter accounts. The campaign focused on 1) promoting some of the major accomplishments that have resulted from UTSC's collaborative efforts with other campus entities, 2) showcased UTSC's core values in action, and 3) highlighted ways constituents could connect and engage with UTSC. The university community has responded positively to #UTSC20for20 posts – overall, impressions and shares across both platforms have increased since the campaign launched in early March. See Appendix I for top #UTSC20for20 posts.
- New UTSC Representative Starter Kit. Committee members are contributing to a revision of this onboarding document, which will reflect guidance and tools for promoting constituent engagement taking into account the shift from an almost exclusively on-site workforce to a mix of on-site, fully remote, and hybrid staff members. Additions will include suggestions to aid in recruiting fellow staff members to run for election and guidance for how to best engage through their messaging with their constituents.

Conclusion

Committee members worked collaboratively by leveraging individual's skill sets to execute planned work. The committee was honored to have an opportunity to amplify the work of UTSC during this milestone term.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Committee members: Ari Acosta, Teresa Baker, Christine Bethke, Ariel Brown (Chair), Richard Charbel, Katelyn Christiansen, Brian Davis, Anna Claire Eddington, Larrimie Gordon, John Hash, Julie Hayes, Stephanie Lopez, Natalia Morgan, Sofia Retta, Nicole Whetstone, Judy White

Introduction

The committee engages with campus partners to work towards a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming campus so all staff members feel seen and their voices are being heard.

Summary

The committee focused on the following this term.

- Annual Diversity and Inclusion Spring Mixer. This term's annual mixer was held in the William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center North Ballroom on April 6, 2022 in partnership with members of University Resource Groups (URGs): Association of Asian and Asian American Faculty and Staff Association, Black Faculty Staff Association, Hispanic Faculty Staff Association, and Pride and Equity Faculty and Staff Association. The mixer supported informal networking by attendees and enabled URGs and UTSC to promote their organizations and the resources and benefits of membership. The mixer featured a panel discussion focused on "The Great Resignation" and its affects across the university. The panel was comprised of members from each of the URGs, facilitated by Dr. Brandon Jones, Associate Director for Student Learning and Development. There was candid discussion about the work environment during the pandemic, suggestions for how staff could feel seen and heard related to returning to in-person work, and what university leadership can do to retain more staff members.

Conclusion

Diverse workplaces increase innovation, retention, and productivity. A diverse and inclusive culture at The University of Texas at Austin will help make our entire campus stronger and better equipped to support and propel the academic mission of the university. The committee is committed to continuing its outreach in ways that will result in balanced representation of the university's workforce as reflected by elected UTSC Representatives.

Health and Wellness Committee

Committee members: Ronald Bell, Daniel Cardona, Rachel Cohen-Ford, Greg Cumpton, Marcy Davis, Brittany Faske, Kathryn Flowers, Harlan Johnson, Kelli Kent, Amanda McKinney, Veronica Peña, Dory Thompson (Chair), Beth Van Riper

Introduction

The committee supports and advocates for initiatives and projects that increase staff access to, and awareness of, health and wellness programs and benefits.

Summary

The committee focused on the following this term.

- Supported the efforts of Healthpoint partners engaged in executing adoption of Annual Wellness Leave (eight hours of leave per year for eligible employees as provisioned by Texas Government Code Title 6.B.664.A. [Section 664.061. Agency Wellness Policies]).
- Met regularly with Healthpoint partners. Provided feedback about 1) verbiage on the Healthpoint website to highlight free and remote-friendly wellness resources for remote workers and remote campuses and 2) recommended showcasing LifeMart resources on the Healthpoint page since most are hidden behind a registration link.
- Created a Wellness Glossary of commonly used university-specific health and wellness related terms and suggested where the glossary might live on the Healthpoint website.
- Aggregated gym membership opportunities across Rec Sports, Blue Cross Blue Shield and LifeMart.
- Aggregated data on available health scholarships for use by Healthpoint and Rec Sports.
- Considered equal access to wellness and UT Rec Sports programs.
- Committee members served as liaisons to UT Wellness Network's annual event planning committee and Forty Acres Food Alliance.
- Formalized the committee's partnership with UT Wellness Network; the committee was spotlighted in UT Wellness Network's regular newsletter and linked as a partner on their [Campus Wellness web page](#).

Conclusion

The committee recommends continued focus on employee health and wellness beyond the 40 acres as many employees are working off-site with flexible work arrangements. The committee should review annually the Healthpoint website, including the Wellness Glossary and provide feedback as needed. The committee offers its continued support to Healthpoint partners engaged in implementing Annual Wellness Leave as it recognizes the initiative's positive impact on the health of the UT community. The committee recommends future adoption and operationalizing Weekly Wellness Leave (30 minutes three times a week for exercise).

Issues and Research Committee

Committee members: Kaley Aguero, Zachery Berry, Mary Capps, Rachel Cowan, Donna Daugherty, Antonia Garza, Melissa Huebsch, Luke Kilma, Todd Lawrence, Autumn Leal-Shopp, Cameron Ludwick (Co-Chair—partial term), Matthew McKinney, Jonathan Partridge, George Perez, Casey Sloan (Chair), Lisa Vera, Elsa Vizcarra

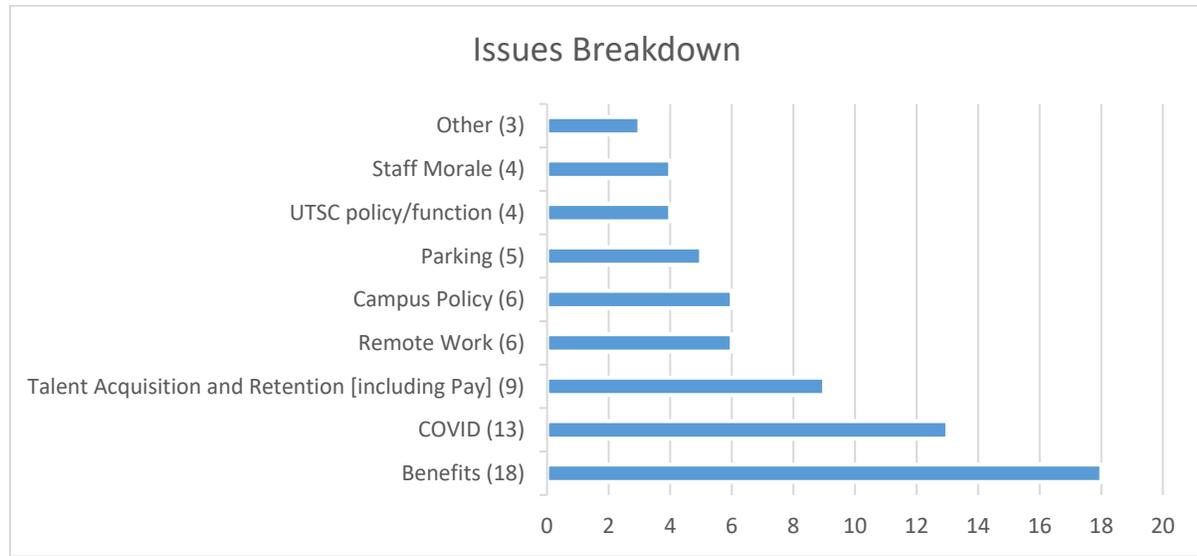
Introduction

This committee addresses issues submitted to UTSC, researching and delegating issues as appropriate. The '[Issues Form](#)' maintained by the committee allows staff an optionally anonymous, simple, convenient way to communicate concerns. The committee collects, records, and investigates concerns, and communicates with staff constituents to share information and update them about their issues.

Summary

The committee continues to work on streamlining the Issues submission, communication, and archiving process.

The committee fielded 68 issues submitted between March 2021 and May 2022. Of these 68, 61 are closed. The committee communicated information back to the constituent if they identified themselves when submitting their issue.



Conclusion

The committee will continue to maintain the 'Issues Form,' communicate with submitters, and work on improving the submission process.

Professional Development Committee

Committee members: James Derry, Cynthia Faulk, Jeffrey Kick (Chair), Joseph Midura, Tyler Ritter (Co-Chair—partial term), Jeffrey Townsend

Introduction

The committee supports and advocates for initiatives and projects related to professional development.

Summary

The committee focused on the following this term.

- Professional Development Grant Program. Sixteen awardees received grants totaling \$19,572. Seventy one eligible UTSC constituents from across the university applied and were assessed using a weighted scoring rubric.
- Professional Development Grant Process. Following the conclusion of the fall 2021 Professional Development Grant cycle, the committee engaged in process improvement focused on further clarifying the grant submission process and assessing the committee's approach to scoring applicants. A new clarifying eligibility requirement was developed to specify that an applicant must already be accepted into a program for which they are seeking funding at the time they apply for the grant.
- Professional Development Lunch and Learn Series. The committee developed this professional development opportunity using feedback collected from UTSC Representatives about topics of interest. Each session, UTSC Representatives engaged and learned from each other through conversation centered on curated, topical content drawn from LinkedIn Learning and other authoritative sources. Three sessions were held as follows.
 - Working Effectively with Your Manager (2/25/2022)
 - Communication and Active Listening Skills (3/25/2022)
 - Working with a Multi-Generational Workforce (4/29/2022)

Conclusion

UTSC thanks the President's Office for the invaluable financial support it provides for the Professional Development Grant Program. Past grant awardees have emphasized their appreciation for this program and the value it brings to them professionally and personally, which translates as gains for the university.

Sustainability Committee

Committee members: Wesley Barnett, Evelynn Breedlove, Theresa Claiborne, Rainbow Di Benedetto, Brianna Duran (Co-Chair), Mark Featherston, Madison Gove, Katie Hartel, Rob Lazare, Lisa Lennon, Melissa Misselhorn, William O’Leary (Co-Chair), Rose Orwell, Colin Scott, Abraham Vasquez

Introduction

The committee supports and advocates for initiatives and projects that support sustainability efforts benefiting the entire university community.

Description

The committee continued to build and strengthen relationships with colleagues and organizations across campus including Jim Walker, Director of Sustainability, Richard Beto, Director of Document Solutions, and Nossé Ovienmhada, Work Life Balance and Wellness Manager.

- Waller Creek Cleanups. On November 19, 2021, February 11, 2022, and April 22, 2022 the committee hosted cleanups along Waller Creek. Overall, 15 staff members from across campus removed over 275 pounds of trash from the creek. The committee thanks Landscape Services, student interns, and the Environmental Health and Safety Office for making these cleanups possible.
- Increased Access to Sustainable Products through Document Solutions. The committee advocated for more sustainable product choices. Document Solutions agreed to work with customers’ preferred sustainable product vendors.
- Annual Sustainability Lunch. In partnership with the Office of Sustainability, the committee hosted a hybrid Staff Sustainability Lunch on May 3, 2022; 73 attendees participated (57 in-person and 16 virtual). Faculty experts Dr. Dawna Ballard (Moody College of Communications), Dr. Katherine Lieberknecht (School of Architecture), and Steven Pedigo (LBJ School of Public Affairs) served as addressing *Sustainability and the Future of Work*. The conversation and interactive Q&A were moderated by Director of Sustainability Jim Walker. In addition, the committee partnered with HealthPoint colleague Nossé Ovienmhada to provide free office plants to attendees.
- Project Connect & Commuting Feedback. The committee discussed challenges staff face with rising housing prices and access to public transit vis-a-vis the city’s Project Connect initiative. The committee compiled related questions and concerns, which were shared with the UTSC Chair to bring forward to university leadership.

Conclusion

The committee has done a lot of great work this year with a focus on offering opportunities for staff to build community around shared sustainability values.

Bylaws/SOP/Wiki Ad Hoc Committee

Committee members: Greg Caponigro (Chair), Rhonda Cox, Melissa Huebsch, Mark LaForest, Ann Sellers

Introduction

The committee continued the work that was started by the 20-21 Bylaws Subcommittee to modernize UTSC's governing documents. The committee's primary focus during the 21-22 term was on restructuring the Bylaws and reflecting standardized processes in a separate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document.

Summary

The committee reviewed the updated Bylaws and moved operating procedures into a separate SOP document. Once this was completed, the committee reviewed the operating procedures to identify what needed to be updated and documented many conventions that were already happening in practice within UTSC.

Conclusion

The amended Bylaws and the new SOP were approved as UTSC's governing documents by a quorum of UTSC Representatives at UTSC's February 17, 2022 General Meeting.

District and Job Profile Analysis Ad Hoc Committee

Committee members: Rainbow Di Benedetto (Chair), Larrimie Gordon, Ashley Toscano

Introduction

The committee was convened to:

- Review staff job titles and recommend any changes in UTSC constituent eligibility to the Executive Committee
- Review current district configurations and counts to ensure logical departmental groupings and the correct representative/constituent ratio

Summary

In the past, titles of “Director level and above” have been excluded from UTSC representation. However, there is not a definition of “above,” making consistent application of this rule difficult. A review was done when Workday was implemented, but there were some unintended consequences of those decisions as well as new titles and other changes over the past few years. The committee was charged with taking a fresh look and recommending any needed revisions.

The committee reviewed both eligible and ineligible titles to determine if rules could be established to reduce subjectivity in the review process. Using the information available in Workday, the following rules were proposed and confirmed by the Executive Committee.

Classified and Administrative & Professional (A&P) titles should be excluded when:

- Job Family Group is Nonemployee or Student
- Job Family Sub Group is Faculty or Student Employee
- Job Family is Faculty or Summer Job
- EAM Code is Executive (examples include President, Provost, Vice President, Vice Provost)
- Pay Rate Type is No Pay
- EE06 is 2-Faculty

The review process was not able to be completely systematized due to the lack of additional criteria to use to draw a reasonable cutoff, so there was an additional case-by-case review of remaining titles. The committee recommended:

- excluding five titles that were being included
- including 14 that were being excluded
- continuing to exclude 39 titles

The review process is by its nature imperfect due to the inconsistency in the use of titles across campus. The committee recognized this and made the best decisions possible based on the most common usage.

UTSC's Bylaws were amended to more accurately reflect the updated constituent definition, and a list of excluded titles were made accessible via the [UTSC's Who's My Representative web page](#) for greater transparency into the process.

The committee then moved forward to reviewing the district counts and configurations and recommended some minor changes to prepare for this year's election cycle.

Conclusion

Going forward, these rules and exclusions will be reviewed on a periodic basis and revised as needed.

It would be of great benefit to this institution if job titles were more clear, organized, and consistent in their usage. Aside from reducing administrative headaches in processes such as these, it would also facilitate the development of better paths for career advancement and corresponding professional development opportunities.

Appendix I

The #UTSC20for20 campaign launched March 1, 2022, celebrating 20 years of UT Staff Council with 20 social media posts. The campaign hashtag #UTSC20for20 was used on both Facebook and Twitter to connect post content.

Top Tweets

Feb 2022 · 28 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 62 impressions

We're celebrating 20 years of #UTSC this spring! 🎉
Follow along – we'll share a few of our favorite moments, memories & accomplishments using #UTSC20for20 pic.twitter.com/527oLEXbX7



5

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Mar 2022 · 31 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 485 impressions

Your #UTSC Representative is here for YOU! Find out who represents you – and how you can connect – using our handy-dandy search tool: bit.ly/3HsrHLm. 🔍
#UTSC20for20
pic.twitter.com/0OKrRD2OXZ



3 7

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Apr 2022 · 28 days so far...

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

Top Tweet earned 944 impressions

#COLLABORATION is key — and a core value! #UTSC Representatives create a sense of community by forging partnerships with campus stakeholders & executing projects that are valuable to our organization. 🧡 #UTSC20for20
pic.twitter.com/x3dpWdRpvq



2 8

View Tweet activity

View all Tweet activity

Top Posts



UT Austin, Staff Council

Published by Taylor Grobelny · March 1

Did you know UT Austin, Staff Council was formed in 2001 as the result of efforts by The University of Texas at Austin Human Resources, with widespread support from then-President Larry Faulkner and University Leadership Council? It's true – and we're turning TWENTY during the 2021-22 year! 🎉

We're celebrating with 20 social media posts highlighting #UTSC and our accomplishments through the years. Follow the fun using #UTSC20for20!



407 People reached

75 Engagements

↑ +15.5x higher Distribution score

Boost post

12

2 Shares

Like

Comment

Share



Comment as UT Austin, Staff Council



UT Austin, Staff Council

Published by Taylor Grobelny · March 3

Seeking diversity in membership, perspectives and ideas when representing staff culture. Creating a sense of community by forging effective partnerships with campus stakeholders. Maintaining honest and transparent communications and processes.

There's no doubt about it, #UTSC's core values, advocacy, collaboration and transparency, are behind everything we do for our constituents. Learn more at staffcouncil.utexas.edu. #UTSC20for20



231 People reached

45 Engagements

↑ +9.3x higher Distribution score

Boost post

7

2 Shares

Like

Comment

Share



Comment as UT Austin, Staff Council

Appendix II: UTSC Leadership 2021-2022 Term (May 21-May 22)

Officers

- Rhonda Cox, Chair
- Todd Lawrence, Vice Chair
- Ann Sellers, Secretary
- Greg Caponigro, Parliamentarian

Executive Committee

- Rhonda Cox, Chair
- Todd Lawrence, Vice Chair
- Ann Sellers, Secretary
- Greg Caponigro, Parliamentarian and Chair, Bylaws/SOP/Wiki Ad Hoc Committee
- Rainbow Di Benedetto, Chair, District and Job Profile Analysis Ad Hoc Committee
- Esmer Bedia, Chair, Benefits Committee
- Marjorie Wilcox, Chair, Communication Committee
- Ariel Brown, Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Dory Thompson, Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
- Casey Sloan, Chair, Issues and Research Committee
- Jeffrey Kick, Chair, Professional Development Committee
- Brianna Duran, Co-Chair, Sustainability Committee
- William (Billy) O'Leary, Co-Chair, Sustainability Committee
- Sandra Catlett, ex officio, UT Austin's UT System Employee Advisor Council member
- Elizabeth Schaub, ex officio, UT Staff Council Program Coordinator

The following UTSC Representatives served as committee Co-Chairs for a portion of the term: Gwendolyn Kelso (Benefits), Cameron Ludwick (Issues and Research), and Tyler Ritter (Professional Development).