



## Staff Senate Minutes

January 19, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

Online Via Zoom

### Call to Order via ZOOM video conference

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82419371680?pwd=Q1BiN1R5ckhORTh1cHZnbTlyN1p1UT09>

### Start recording

- Reminder that meeting is being recorded, which includes all chats

**In attendance:** Colin Haines, Jackie Digmann (sub for Melissa Hinzman), Michelle Gallagher, Beth Jones, Laura Tierney, Olivia Flores, Keegan Gormally (sub for Kelly Rush), Jenna Otto, Tony Manso, Samantha Cameron

**Absent:** Rip Horsey

**Guests:** Ryan Wright, Alexis Larson, Adry Clark, Sharon Price

### Approval of minutes

- Draft in Staff Senate Team Drive for December 1, 2020
  - Approved in meeting- motioned by Laura, seconded by Jenna

### Reports

- Board of Trustees Special Meeting
  - The board of trustees meeting was in December which allowed for the governance groups (staff senate, unions, faculty senate, and ASWOU) to voice their concerns directly to the Board. There were a lot of overlapping concerns between the groups voiced to the BoT.
  - Since then, there has been more communication from the BoT directly to the staff, faculty and students of WOU. They are also in the process of developing a website devoted to transparency of communication.
- Keegan Gormally will be our UBAC Representative
- Campus Update Committee
  - The first session is coming up this week. Sam has been leading this effort with Jenna helping on campus to facilitate the process.

## Staff Senate Minutes

January 19, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

Online Via Zoom

- Departments have been enthusiastic about the process and are eager to present.
- The departments presenting this month are MarCom and SHCC
  - This will be both a presentation and a Q&A session
  - This will be live streamed as well as recorded and available to people who cannot attend the live streamed.

### **New Business**

- Strengthening Committee Numbers
  - The Staff Connections Committee is looking for more people to join. Kathy leaving left Tony the only chair of the committee but there needs to be a new chair to become a co-chair as well as help the committee grow when Tony's term is up at the end of the year.
  - The Student Success Scholarship Committee needs another member as well. Right now Michelle is the only member. Typically members review student applications and score them to see what students will receive the scholarship. Keegan volunteered to be the last reviewer.
  - Will continue to move this to unfinished business until the position is filled.
- Dr. Adry Clark - American Council of Education's Learner Success Lab
  - Last summer WOU applied to become a part of a learners success lab. This focuses on helping students achieve outcomes besides just graduating. Some of those goals include career preparation and personal development goals. The finding of this program could shape our strategic plan in the future.
  - The advisor from ACE is coming for a virtual visit, Feb 3rd, 4th, and 5th to meet with different groups. There is an interest to have folks from the Staff Senate to meet with the advisor. The meeting will be about 45 minutes. Adry will send out a survey to the staff senate for folks who are interested to fill out to see when a good time is.
- Bereavement Leave for Unclassified Staff
  - This was brought to Colin's attention by an employee that was directly affected by this policy. The two policies between classified and unclassified staff for bereavement leave are very different and should be evaluated. Both policies are described below.



## Staff Senate Minutes

January 19, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

Online Via Zoom

- After staff edits the proposal by Monday 1/25/21 and it will be sent to the President/Admins and the Board of Trustees.
  - Motion made by Colin, seconded by Tony. Approved- 10-0-0
- “Rightsizing” Staff Senate
  - Colin brought up the question whether we reduce our staff senate to 10 people since the number of staff has been reduced.
  - Jenna brought up that there is a lack of representation from some groups on campus that would benefit from the Staff Senate. Some examples are Campus Dining and Maintenance.
    - Next election we should push for outreach in these underrepresented groups. Keeping in mind the special hours that folks in these groups work. Reaching out to supervisors is a good way to spread communication about the staff senate.
    - If staff is not able to attend the meeting they are able to ask a proxy to fill in for them when they are unable to attend.

### Unfinished Business

- VP Election
  - We are looking to fill the VP seat. We need people to self-nominate so that we can get someone into this position before elections happen.
- UTAC Representative
  - During the last call for UTAC representatives there were no nominations for this position. We are seeking someone to join this committee to represent staff and bring back information. Ask people that you think are interested in and we will be sending out another call after the next meeting.

### Announcements

- Public Comments - Anything for the good of the order?
- The Staff Senate Website needs to be updated with the current executive board.



## Staff Senate Minutes

January 19, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

Online Via Zoom

### Adjourn

Motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:51

### Upcoming Meetings:

- Tue, February 2, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

### Supplemental Information

- From Page 12 of the Classified Employee Handbook

#### **Bereavement Leave**

The current CBA indicates classified employees are eligible for a maximum of four (4) days paid bereavement leave arising from a death in the immediate family member of the employee or the employee's spouse or domestic partner. "Immediate family" members are specified in the current collective bargaining agreement. Leave, other than sick leave, may be granted to discharge additional customary obligations, arising from the death of an immediate family member.

- From Page 11 of the Unclassified Employee Handbook

#### **Bereavement Leave**

Professional staff must use earned sick leave for any period of absence from service where the employee's presence is required because of death in the employee's or their spouse's immediate family (parents, spouse, children, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or another member of the immediate household).

- Proposed verbiage in support of bereavement leave for unclassified employees:
  - We, the staff senate, believe that in the spirit of compassion and empathy, along with a sense of fairness and equity across employee classifications. The death of an immediate family member can be a devastating blow and it is unreasonable to expect an employee to simply continue working in times of such hardship. If Western Oregon University itself hopes to maintain the sense of family that has helped it retain many employees over the years, we implore you treat those under your employ with the same compassion you



## Staff Senate Minutes

January 19, 2021 (11:30am–1:00pm)

Online Via Zoom

would give and expect from members of your own family. We believe that the policy for bereavement leave on Page 12 of the Classified Employee Handbook provides a sufficient amount of time for employees to grieve and demonstrates a degree of empathy from its writer. We would like to see something with similar verbiage replace the policy on Page 11 of the Unclassified Employee Handbook, which mandates employees must use “earned sick leave” in the event that an immediate family member should pass away. Requiring an employee to use sick leave, in the event that they have sick leave to use, to mourn the loss of a loved one does not reflect a culture of caring; it reflects a culture that disregards the feelings of an employee in their toughest moments. This policy does not reflect that Western Oregon University culture that we know. Having such an unempathetic policy for a single subset of employees does not reflect togetherness and flies in the face of our slogan, “Together We Succeed.” We ask that you rectify this oversight in empathetic thinking and alter this policy to reflect the sense of community and togetherness we all expect from our University. Thank you.