Divison of Finance and Administration
Employee Advisory Committee

February 27, 2015 Minutes

Members Attending:
Jennifer Bomnskie – University Risk & Compliance / Office of Safety & Security
Marco Campos – Utilities & Energy Services
Jesse Mendez – Utilities & Energy Services
Gina Miller – Utilities & Energy Services
Babette Perkins – Environmental Health & Safety
Adrian Shepherd – University Police Department
Steve Smith – FCOR / Annenberg PCC
Mary Wilson – Transportation Services

Members Absent:
Cynthia Ishaq – Transportation Services

Guests Attending:
Monica Bell – Transportation Services
James Foster – Transportation Services

Ex Officio Members Attending:
Jerry Strawser - VP for Finance & Administration
Jane Schneider – Office of VPFA
Karen Bigley – Office of VPFA
Melissa Loyd - University Staff Council
Sarah Tobola – Human Resources
Ashley Skow – Office of VPFA

Introductions and Welcome
- The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Jennifer Bomnskie.

Approval of Minutes
- The January 28, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

Administrative Report by Jerry Strawser

- **PwC Report Response**: Dr. Strawser hosted a division-wide meeting on February 18 to give employees an update. As a final response to the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report, all vacant positions (PINs) as of February 1, 2015 were swept back by the University. The President has indicated that safety and security of the campus would not be affected by this sweep, so some of those open positions may be reinstated. Many departments within our division were affected by this sweep. Dr. Strawser is very aware that our division is already short-staffed. The process going forward will be to evaluate the division as a whole to determine what our needs are. As positions become vacant through normal retirements and resignations, we will determine the best use for that money at a division-wide level. To Dr. Strawser’s knowledge, there will be no other action coming out of the PwC report. He expressed appreciation to employees for continuing to provide excellent service throughout all of the uncertainty with this report.

- **Legislative Cycle**: TAMU’s outlook for the current legislative cycle looks good. We will likely receive a large increase in our funding related to our student growth. One of the biggest challenges we face is the Hazlewood Act, which exempts qualified veterans and dependent children from paying tuition and fees. Our cost for this has grown from $2M to $15M in the past two years, and the state does not help pay for this. Dr. Strawser has not heard anything about budget reductions for TAMU and believes the governor realizes that TAMU is already very efficient.

- **Communication**: In January Dr. Strawser’s office sent an email about establishing a bi-monthly newsletter and asking for feedback on topics employees would like to read about. We haven’t received a lot of feedback on this, so please discuss with your co-workers and provide your feedback to Karen Bigley at bigleyk@tamu.edu. Initial thoughts for the newsletter were that it could feature information such as awards received, personal milestones, a note from the VP, and various areas of the division. Another idea is to host a town hall meeting every few months to give employees an opportunity to ask questions in person.

- **Overtime**: A representative from Transportation Services provided feedback on overtime, saying that employees enjoy working special events up to a certain point, but at times there are so many events that it is taxing on them and they don’t get to spend time with their families. Dr. Strawser added that he has become aware of the large amounts of special events that employees like parking attendants and police officers are asked to work, and he has discussed with those department heads about saying no to some events if the employees don’t want to work them.
Benefits Report by Sarah Tobola

- **Wellness Exams**: On-site exams have been scheduled in two locations, GSC and MSC, to provide opportunity for those staff members who don’t have their own doctor but need to get a checkup to meet the wellness exam requirement. Employees who have an established physician are encouraged to get their well checks by June 30, 2015.

- **Health & Wellness Fair**: Employees are encouraged to attend this event on Wednesday, March 4 from 10:00-2:00.

- **Staff Appreciation Week**: This is scheduled for March 23-27. All employees are encouraged to participate in the various events offered throughout the week, such as a Maroon and White Walk on March 24.
  - Question regarding the department appreciation day, and whether the EAC could set up BBQ pits and provide food to employees. Rep from Environmental Health & Safety noted that there are rules associated with the distribution of food. See [https://ehsd.tamu.edu/Pages/submit-food-form.aspx](https://ehsd.tamu.edu/Pages/submit-food-form.aspx) for details.

- **Spring Break Reminder**: Employees must be in a paid status the day before and after a holiday in order to receive it.

- **Anthem Data Breach**: The recent data breach with Anthem was discussed and including that BCBS of Texas systems were not affected, so for the most part our employees were not impacted by the breach. However, there is a small number of people who had services outside the Texas area who could have been impacted and will be notified directly by BCBS of the inclusion in the breach. Also be aware of scams related to this breach, and never give out your information over the phone. BCBS would contact you in writing.

- **Voluntary Retirement Plans**: Reminder to take advantage of the voluntary retirement plans that TAMU has to offer.

- **SEBAC**: Elections for TAMU’s System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee representative will occur after Spring Break.

University Staff Council Report by Melissa Loyd:

- **Rosenthal Meat Lab**: USC received information about the university’s meat lab and the products they have to offer. You can find more information on their website: [http://agrilife.org/rosenthal/](http://agrilife.org/rosenthal/).

- **Staff Appreciation Week**: USC encourages participation during March 23-27.

- **Staff Emergency Fund**: The SEF committee will have containers out at the SAW outdoor events for staff to donate loose change. The Committee Members are also researching ideas for a University-wide fundraiser and the fund will be included in the next State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC).

- **Strategic Planning Open Forum**: The next open forum will be held on March 13. The university community is invited to attend.

Old Business

- **Service Parking**: The EAC Chair received a call from Debbie Hoffmann with Transportation Services to discuss the concerns regarding a shortage in service parking spaces which was discussed at the EAC meeting on 1/27/2015. Transportation Services understands that there are issues with parking around many of the construction sites. If there are particular problem areas that you’d like to report, please pass those along to Jennifer or to Transportation Services so they can be investigated.

- **F&B / Wellborn Road Intersection**: Work at this intersection is almost complete. We are waiting on the railroad to complete the final steps. Expect completion by the end of March.

New Business

- **EAC Membership Expansion**: Staff support for the EAC will begin working to expand membership to departments that were formerly in the Division of Finance. Also, there are many current members of the committee whose terms are expired, so elections will be held for those positions. Traditionally we have targeted a ratio of 1 representative to 50 staff members. Note that UPD is entitled to two representatives, however their department elected to have only one in an effort to keep from pulling officers away from their regular duties. Some of the smaller departments will be grouped together. The former Division of Finance had a Council on Respect, and membership for that council will also be expanded to include the departments that were in the Division of Administration. EAC staff support will meet with Council on Respect staff support to discuss the possibility for similar departmental groupings. EAC members should review the documents on current membership, proposed
departmental groupings, and proposed changes to the bylaws and provide any feedback to Ashley Skow or Jane Schneider.

Closing Discussion
- Members are pleased to see staff participating in Walk Across Texas program.
- Congratulations to UPD’s Crisis Intervention Team for winning a President’s Meritorious Service Award.
- Details on the Division of Finance & Administration Excellence Awards will be announced soon.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.