

LSU | Staff Senate

MEETING MINUTES July 19, 2023

President Joshua Duplechain presided over the July 19, 2023, Staff Senate meeting held in the Event Room on the Second Floor of the Barnes & Noble Bookstore at LSU at 10:30 a.m.

Unclassified

Executive/Administrative/Managerial

P - Tammy Millican ('24)

Professional/Non-Faculty

A - Bates, Kelli ('24)

P - Bonner, Amber ('26)

P - Breaux, Kevin ('25)

Pr - Campen, Ryan ('24)

P - Canady, Robyn ('26)

P - Carney, Mo ('24)

P - Compton, Skylar ('26)

P - Duplechain, Joshua ('24)

P - Ferguson, Amanda ('24)

P - Gresham, Deanna ('24)

P - Guttner, Ginger ('25)

Pr - Hicks, Emmy ('24)

P - Iyengar, Von ('24)

P - Jeffcoat, Danielle ('26)

P - Kennison, Jennifer ('25)

P - Lee, Quinnea ('24)

P - Martin-Whitaker, Neely ('25)

P - Miller, Cassandra ('24)

P - Mimms, Anissa ('26)

P - Oster, Anthony ('24)

P - Owens, Jace ('26)

P - Phelps, Olivia ('26)

A - Rafati, Karina ('24)

P - Robison, Becca ('26)

P - Smith, Henri ('24)

A - Trahan, Amy ('25)

P - Walker, Jason ('24)

Pr - Washington, Valori ('26)

P - Waters, Bradley ('26)

P - White, Dayton ('25)

A - Williams-Carter, Tyrslai ('24)

P - Williamson, Jeannie ('26)

Classified

Skilled Crafts

P - Constance, Taylor ('25)

P - Corbitt, Brent ('24)

Technical/Paraprofessional

Pr - Matkovic, Igor ('26)

A - Nehlig, Mark ('24)

Clerical/Secretarial

P - Jensen, Jerri ('26)

P - Salesneves, Sarah ('25)

P - Smith, Celeste ('26)

Service/Maintenance

P - Chauffe, Mary Ann ('26)

P - Robertson, Winkeyssa ('24)

A - Indicates Absent

P - Indicates Present

Pr - Indicates Proxy

GUESTS:

Aaron Cherry, LSU Facility Services
Jake Williamson, Law Enforcement Online
Kimberly Roser, LSU Religious Studies
Casey Coughlin, Campus Federal Credit Union
Roxane Berthelot, Campus Federal Credit Union
Zacki Soliman, Campus Federal Credit Union

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Joshua Duplechain at 10:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

There was a quorum with four proxies noted.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Senator Amber Bonner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – June 21, 2023, Staff Senate Meeting

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Past-President Tammy Millican. The motion, seconded by Senator Amber Bonner, carried.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

President Joshua Duplechain gave his Presidential Address during the first meeting of his term which reads:

“Hello, and welcome to my first message as your new Staff Senate President. I have to make this one good, as my mom will most likely print it out and put it on the refrigerator for the next several months.

I’ll tell you a little bit about myself if we haven’t met yet. I’m the director of communications in the LSU College of Engineering, and I’ve been at LSU for about 17 years. I’ve previously worked in the Office of Communications and University Relations, the LSU Law Center, and the E. J. Ourso College of Business, and I’m lucky enough to have made a lot of friends in those places along the way. I look forward to making more over the next year as president.

When I ran for the position, my main message to the four people in the room who showed up to hear candidate speeches was that, as a long-time staff member, I wanted to do my part to help ensure a better quality of life for our staff. This university would be nothing without its students and faculty to be sure but try imagining it without staff. Our duty as Staff Senate members, particularly as president, is to advocate for the nearly 4,000 staff on this campus and to celebrate the work each and every one of them do to keep this place running on a daily

basis—whether that’s cleaning a building; helping a student navigate their way to graduation; making sure employees get paid on time; or telling the great stories of our faculty, staff, and student achievements to the larger public.

To that end, I want to discuss a couple of recent events that reflect this advocacy and recognition of staff from the university. Two weeks ago, an email went out from LSU Parking announcing that employees with all-access parking would see a \$150 annual increase in their fees to maintain this access. Immediately, the emails began hitting my inbox and Brian Favela’s, Director of Parking and Transportation Services at LSU. Some were filled with questions, some with anger, and some with both. I reached out to Brian myself to see what could be done, and later that same day, he called me with what I thought was a pretty good compromise. Now let’s be clear, anything short of not imposing the fee increase will not make some employees happy, and I completely get that. But I will say that in my time at LSU, I have never seen a unit take the feedback/criticism it got for a policy change to heart and make changes accordingly, especially in such a short timeframe.

I think the solutions Parking came up with address a lot of the concerns, and I know Brian is open to doing more as situations present themselves over the course of the academic year. I can tell you that he is already looking at more locations for timed parking, in addition to the four locations outlined in the email last week. I also applaud the creation of the Paratransit system mentioned in the email.

As a Staff Senate, we will work on identifying ways that departments/units can take on this fee increase on behalf of their employees so that they are not footing the bill for carrying out duties essential to their position. And we are joined in these efforts by our friends in the LSU Faculty Senate.

The second thing I want to mention is the response from the university to a staff member’s email that outlined the ways this person felt the university failed staff at the end of the legislative session. The messaging reporting on the “wins” LSU achieved during session was lackluster as it pertained to staff, in this person’s opinion, and they made that clear in their email. But that’s not the part I want to highlight to you. Instead, I have asked for and received permission from Kimberly Lewis, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer at LSU, to share her response to this employee which reads:

“Thank you for your email message and, more importantly, thank you for your service to LSU. I spoke with President Tate earlier today about your message and asked if I could send the response. He was in agreement with my request.

“I have been at LSU for almost 18 months, and this was my second legislative session fighting for LSU. I understand the areas highlighted in the President's campus wide e-mail would lead one to believe staff had not been prioritized this legislative session. Let me assure you that is the farthest thing from the truth.

“The budget package presented by President Tate to the Board of Supervisors and to the Board of Regents included funding for faculty and staff pay increases. In addition to the request for merit/pay increases, the budget package included enhancements to staff pay ranges, funding

for staff training and professional development. To be specific, the request included the following statement:

"LSU supplemented the state faculty pay increase funding to implement an approximate 4% merit increase program for full-time instructional faculty, other faculty, and professional staff. It is imperative that LSU support and continue investing in faculty and staff on an annual basis. The estimated cost of implementing a system-wide merit increase for faculty and staff next fiscal year is \$22 million. One of the top priorities for the LSU System annually is ensuring the availability of financial resources to implement a merit increase program so we do not fall farther behind our SREB peers on faculty and staff compensation. Statewide and nationally, employers are experiencing unprecedented staffing challenges. Government and higher education institutions have been hit especially hard with lower wages than most private sector employers. Turnover rates have reached 50% in some LSU departments, and vacant positions remain posted for months with no applicants. Finance and administration positions are one example of those difficult to fill, and existing staff are prime targets for private sector hiring with highly transferable skills. LSU is not alone as our peer institutions are also experiencing increases in resignations and unprecedented challenges finding new team members to fill open slots. These staffing issues have increased stress on remaining team members and resulted in poor performance of core elements of critical functions. Having participated in multiple surveys and discussions with peer institutions seeing success in addressing their staffing shortages, several strategies have been identified for implementation. The proposed solutions include implementation of a sub-entry level training positions for certain job series; implementing alternative, non-supervisory career ladders; ensuring appropriate compensation with a livable wage for all positions; and flexible work accommodations. The staffing solution is a System priority."

"For the past two years we have focused on having the legislature fund faculty and staff pay raises. Unfortunately, there is a reluctance in the legislature to provide merit increases for higher education staff. We have not let that reluctance impact our staff. Last year, under President Tate's leadership, LSU staff received the same merit increase as LSU faculty. This was achieved by reallocating funding from other areas to prioritize staff merits. The president has not wavered in his commitment, and this year LSU will continue to prioritize providing pay raises to staff through other means. There are also plans underway to improve professional development opportunities for staff."

"I hope this message conveys the importance of all staff to this university. From the parking attendants manning the gates, to the grant staff in sponsored programs, to the academic department staff like yourself. Without you, LSU could not educate our students or conduct groundbreaking research. The President's Scholarship First requires the full contingent of faculty and staff. We will continue to support both. Again, thank you for your service to LSU." Again, I have never seen this type of response from LSU administration to a staff member, and I want to thank Kimberly for taking the time to address these concerns. She was also instrumental in ensuring that members of Staff Senate were represented on two current critical hiring committees."

The bottom line is that staff are being heard and considered in a way that maybe they weren't before. As your Staff Senate President, it's my job to make sure that continues and our voices

only get louder. Over the next year, we will continue to work on initiatives that are of benefit to our staff—namely our resolution to waive fees for staff who want to take classes at LSU. But we’re going to need your help in these efforts. Give us your feedback and thoughts on issues you encounter on campus. What are ways that we can work with various administrative offices to make your job a little easier, your life a little better? And consider volunteering your time to Staff Senate, whether that’s helping out at an event or serving on one of our committees. You don’t have to be elected to Staff Senate to be a part of it.

If you’ve read all the way to the end, I hope you find this message encouraging, and I hope you’ll let us know how we can better serve you.”

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Joshua Duplechain reviewed relevant meetings in which he attended.

- July 5 - held the Executive Committee meeting in preparation for the month of July.
- Members of the Executive Committee have attended the LSU Police Chief candidate interviews during the month of July – an announcement will be coming out soon.
- Attended a meeting with Brian Favela to discuss the new parking universal fee – a committee is being formed to discuss ongoing issues.

Staff Senator Appointments

The Staff Senate Executive Committee has approved the following appointments:

- Amanda Ferguson who works with the College of Agriculture to fill a vacancy in the Professional/Non-Faculty, Unclassified Staff Group through June 30, 2024
- Mary Ann Chauffe who works with Residential Life to fill a vacancy in the Service/Maintenance, Classified Staff Group through June 30, 2026

Staff Senate Caucus Liaisons

President Duplechain announced the caucus liaisons for 2023-2024:

- Von Iyengar who works with LSU Early Childhood Education Laboratory Preschool will serve for the Asian and Asian American Pacific Islander Faculty & Staff Caucus
- Kelli Bates who works with Information Technology Services will serve for the Black Faculty & Staff Caucus
- Cassandra Miller who works with LSU Residential Life will serve for the Disability Faculty & Staff Caucus

- Karina Rafati who works with the Office of Admissions will serve for the LatinX Faculty & Staff Caucus
- Ryan Campen who works with LSU Residential Life will serve for the LGBTQ+ Faculty & Staff Caucus

NEW BUSINESS

Orientation

President Duplechain presents the Staff Senate New Member Orientation to the full Senate. He shared the Mission, Vision, and Purpose of the LSU Staff Senate. Senator expectations were explained along with attendance and committee participation. Events such as Holiday on Campus, the New Staff Receptions, Appreciation and Mentor/Mentees were discussed. Staff Senate Scholarships and volunteer opportunities were also mentioned. Joining Staff Senate's social media accounts was encouraged.

Committee/Liaison Assignments

President Joshua Duplechain announced that the Executive Committee has drafted a survey to be distributed to the full Senate for interests and committee choices. Once the survey has been completed, the committee membership will be outlined for the year.

Staff Senate Budget/Gift Fund

Treasurer Henri Smith provided a written financial report for June that was included in the meeting packet for Senate review. She mentioned the Staff Senate Gift Fund guidelines and criteria that is used to recognize Senator and former Senator's life events that may happen throughout the year. Senators were asked to contribute \$20 each to the fund for the year. Venmo and Cash App options are available, if needed.

Senator Portraits/Placards/Name Tags

Staff Senate Administrative Coordinator Melonie Milton announced that if anyone needs a professional photographed headshot for the Staff Senate website, the Office of Communications & University Relations can schedule using their application in August. President Duplechain mentioned that he can also have taken in his college as well. Please let us know if you would like to schedule.

Melonie Milton also announced that the Staff Senate has provided Door Placards for newly elected Senators that were distributed during the meeting. Also, if anyone needs an LSU name badge, please include your interest on the survey.

Staff Senate Apparel

Melonie Milton announced that the Staff Senate will open orders online for Staff Senate apparel this year through the Red Stick Sports Website. There will be some different choices

available. Items can be shipped directly to those who place an order. The link to order will be sent out soon.

Future Guest Speakers

The Executive Committee has identified some guest speakers for the year. If anyone has any suggestions, please send those to the Executive Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mentor/Mentee Event

President Duplechain announced that there is a Mentor/Mentee event scheduled on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at 8: 30 a.m. in 225 Peabody Hall. If anyone would like to participate, please email him or the Staff Senate Office of your interest.

Optional Retirement Plan

Past-President Tammy Millican announced that if you are enrolled in ORP and wish to switch to the Teacher's Retirement System, it looks like the university will allow a one-time switch for those interested.

Staff Senator Birthday

Staff Senator July Birthdays:

- Member-at-Large Mo Carney celebrated his birthday on July 6.
- Senator Tyrslai Williams-Carter celebrated her birthday on July 17.
- President Joshua Duplechain celebrated his birthday on July 18.
- Senator Amanda Ferguson will celebrate her birthday on July 21.
- Senator Ginger Guttner will celebrate her birthday on July 30.

Happy Birthday!

MOTION TO ADJOURN – With there being no more business, Senator Deanna Gresham made a motion to adjourn. The motion, seconded by Treasurer Henri Smith, carried.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Quinneka Lee, Secretary

QL/mm