

**Stephen F. Austin State University**  
**Staff Council Meeting Notes**  
**Monday, May 13, 2024**  
**10:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.**  
**McGee Business Building (Room 133) and Zoom**

**Attendees:**

<b>Attending Representatives</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair: Grace Romero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair-Elect: Brittany Beck <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parliamentarian: Lissy Turner <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treasurer: Choya Coleman <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary: Emily Keller  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gina Ajero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crystal Deckard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sabrina Delaney <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ryan Dietrich <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erika Sanchez-Garza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Angela Harless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Hawkins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Travis Killen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tim Lewallen <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ashley Schmidt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shana Scott <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nadia Sifuentes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leon Stefl <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Stelson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Yates
<b>Not Present</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Daniel Adame <input type="checkbox"/> Amanda Kennedy <input type="checkbox"/> Kenneth Morton <input type="checkbox"/> Brandon Stringfield

**Meeting Minutes**

Topic	Minutes
<b>I. Call to Order</b>	Time: 10:00 a.m.
<b>II. Roll Call</b>	Secretary Keller called roll. Individuals noted above were in attendance. Tiffany Rivers served as proxy for Amanda Kennedy. Jeremy Higgins served as proxy for Kenneth Morton. Steve Laurent served as proxy for Brandon Stringfield.
<b>III. Presentations</b>	a. Dr. Neal Weaver (President) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening statements</li> </ul> b. Nicole Ivancic (Purchasing Manager, Procurement) and Kim Jones (Assistant Director, Procurement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement Expertise: How to get the best suppliers, goods and services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Procurement and Business Services <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategic framework for sourcing, negotiating, contracting, and complying with institutional objectives</li> <li>2. Purchasing is a subset of procurement, covering the actual buying of goods and services</li> </ol> </li> <li>ii. What does SFA Procurement and Business Services do? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help customers secure goods and services that represent the best value to the university, while promoting full and equal opportunities for all businesses</li> <li>2. Procurement, Travel, Accounts Payable, Contract Management, Property, P-Card</li> </ol> </li> <li>iii. Historically Underutilized Businesses</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

- 1. Work with Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) when possible and communicate this to our customers when possible
  - a. Software and furniture are two items that we require to be purchased from a HUB
  - b. We work with HUB vendors and encourage them to offer the best price possible
- iv. The Procurement Official works as a “boundary spanner” by linking their internal organization with the external world
- v. Job Requirements
- vi. Accounts Payable – News and Notes
  - 1. Prospective employees and students do not need to go through PaymentWorks
  - 2. Every vendor must be enrolled in PaymentWorks. If you have questions if a vendor is enrolled, please do a search within the “onboardings” in PaymentWorks
  - 3. Resources are provided on our website: <https://www.sfasu.edu/procurement-business-services/pay#>
- vii. New and Upcoming Items
  - 1. Faculty/staff reimbursements moved to Concur on May 1, 2024
  - 2. Contracts with an aggregate value of \$500 or less will be paid via a journal voucher instead of by requisition
  - 3. In the distant future, SFA will implement an e-procurement process that will streamline purchasing and allow for an online shopping experience
- viii. Questions
  - 1. Chair Romero: With the new platform, will I be able to purchase equipment for Campus Recreation all at once?
    - a. Nicole: It will be to a specific vendor. If you are purchasing on a cooperative contract, it will hopefully go directly to the vendor and be instantaneous.
  - 2. Representative Scott: I recently entered a requisition that changed into a purchased order for a company that was already set up in Banner. When I sent the invoice to Accounts Payable, I was told the vendor was not in PaymentWorks. If they are in Banner from previous years, I would have thought they would have transitioned when we switched. How do we know to invite them to PaymentWorks if they are already a vendor? Should that have been handled when the purchase order was done, or by Accounts Payable?
    - a. Kim: If you look at a vendor in Banner, there will be a PW if they have been processed through Payment Works. We can send a memo out. I would think Accounts Payable would initiate that from their end, but I can find out.

- c. Amy Mooneyham (Assistant Director, Student Business Services) and Hillary Parrish (Treasury Analyst, Student Business Services)
  - Lumberjack Educational Assistance Program (LEAP)

- i. LEAP stands for Lumberjack Education Assistance Program. It is an SFA exemption that is for employees, their spouse, and dependents (as outline by IRS regulations) to take SFA courses at a reduced rate.
  - 1. LEAP benefits apply only to mandatory tuition and fee charges.
  - 2. Statutory tuition, excessive hours tuition, 3-peat charges and non-mandatory incidental fees are not covered by LEAP benefits (ex. Graduation fees, general deposit charges, housing, meal plan, etc.). Statutory tuition is \$50 per credit hour for undergraduates and \$80 per credit hour for graduates.
  - 3. Employees that have applied for LEAP, are approved for LEAP, and meet all the required eligibility for LEAP benefits automatically receive the employee scholarship. Please note that it may take an additional 5-7 business days for the employee scholarship to post to the student account.
- ii. Eligibility
  - 1. Employees
    - a. Active, regular (100% FTE) employees become eligible for LEAP benefits when they will have completed six months of continuous service for the university before the last day of the enrolled term.
    - b. GPA of 2.0 for undergraduates & GPA of 3.0 for graduates
    - c. If departmental workload permits, an employee may attend one class at the university during normal working hours by utilizing an alternative work schedule or by using accrued compensable leave. To be eligible for an alternative work schedule, an employee must request approval from the appropriate supervisor and director/dean for the time off to attend class.
  - 2. Spouse/Dependent(s)
    - a. Active, regular (100% FTE) employees may apply for LEAP benefits on behalf of their spouse/dependent child(ren) when the employee has completed six months of continuous service for the university prior to the end of the semester in which the spouse/dependent child(ren) will enroll.
    - b. GPA of 2.0 for undergraduates & GPA of 3.0 for graduates
    - c. The LEAP benefits may be applied to undergraduate or graduate courses that are part of the overall degree plan of the spouse/dependent child(ren).
    - d. Spouse/dependent child(ren) must upload requested documentation yearly to document their eligibility.
- iii. Application
- iv. Supervisor Approval
- v. Spouse/Dependent Acceptance
- vi. Internal and External Aid

1. LEAP benefits will be reduced if tuition and fees are paid by a third party or contract, or are paid by any other exemption or waiver.
  - a. Third party or contract: A sponsoring organization or agency who takes responsibility for paying a student's tuition and fee balance either in full or in part.
  - b. Example of an exemption: Hazlewood
  - c. Example of a contract: Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
2. LEAP benefits will also be reduced by student financial aid with the exception of PELL grant, FSEOG (Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant), outside scholarships, or loans.
  - a. Outside scholarship: A scholarship provided by a private donor, foundation, business, or other sources external to Stephen F. Austin State University, SFASU Foundation, Inc., and SFASU Alumni Association.

vii. Taxes

1. Pursuant to Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 117(d), employees who take graduate courses are taxed on exempted tuition and fee values that exceed \$5,250 annually (January-December). The employee scholarship is not factored in the taxed amount.
2. Pursuant to the IRC, a spouse or dependent of an employee who takes graduate courses subjects the employee to taxes on the exempted tuition and fees for those courses that exceed \$5,250 annually (January-December).

viii. Frequently Asked Questions

1. I've applied for LEAP (or my spouse/dependent has applied for LEAP). Why hasn't it posted to my student account yet?
  - a. Often, the employee has applied, but the supervisor has not approved the application. Check with your supervisor first.
  - b. Often, the employee has applied, but the spouse/dependent has not accepted the application.
  - c. LEAP cannot post to the student account until financial aid posts, which is usually about a week before courses start.
  - d. Each LEAP application must be approved at least three business days prior to the payment deadline in order to expect LEAP to be applied to the student account by the payment deadline.
2. I am an employee and LEAP posted to my student account. What reason is there still a balance on my account?
  - a. Most likely, the reason is that the employee scholarship has not had a chance to post to your account yet. It typically posts about 5-7 business days after the first day classes start, but employees will not be dropped for this balance. Please note that if no payment is on your account three business days before the payment

	<p>deadline and you have applied for LEAP and your supervisor has approved, call or email our office ASAP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Can I utilize LEAP benefits at another UT affiliated university?       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. No. LEAP stands for Lumberjack Education Assistance Program and can only be utilized at SFA by qualifying recipients.</li> </ol> </li> <li>ix. Dual Credit       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LEAP exemptions cannot be applied to accounts that receive the dual credit exemption.</li> </ol> </li> <li>x. Questions       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representative Dietrich: Can you have multiple applications such as for myself and for my spouse?           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Amy: Yes.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>IV. Meeting Minutes</b></p>	<p>Posted minutes from the last meeting up for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to accept the minutes as written by Representative Hawkins</li> <li>• Seconded by Representative Harless</li> <li>• Approved with no abstentions</li> </ul>
<p><b>V. Officer Reports</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Chair – Grace Romero       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff Service and Awards Ceremony</li> <li>○ SGA President’s Farewell Address</li> <li>○ Last presentation to the Interim President’s Leadership Cabinet. The highlights of the report included:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update on number of faculty/staff enrolled and taking advantage of Coursera Career Academy was 119 combined</li> <li>▪ Urged the importance of continuing to prioritize professional development opportunities for staff so that SFA continues to grow and stay competitive as the education setting and technological advancements evolve at a rapid pace</li> <li>▪ Mid-year salary increases               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the minimum wage was needed and worthy.</li> <li>• The salary average increase must not stop at 3.74%. I expressed how crucial it is to close the gap between the inflated costs of living and staff wages. The university cannot afford to see employee retention decrease, and cannot wait another 12 years for the salary pay grades to get updated. I emphasized that in order to retain and engage our employees, we must create a process for regular review.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Recognition</li> <li>○ Continue advocating for staff</li> <li>○ HOP Committee (Handbook of Operating Procedures) to review two policies           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>05-707 University Publications, Mass Email and Webpages</b> and</li> <li>▪ <b>05-709 University Mass Email (New)</b>. This falls under the University Marketing Communications Stakeholder Review Plan</li> <li>▪ The 30-day review period for Faculty Senate and Staff Council will conclude on Tuesday, May 28.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Attended Faculty Senate meeting</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff Council tree</li> <li>b. Chair-Elect – Brittany Beck <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Received a copy of the Ombuds from CC, and I will drop it in Teams</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Secretary – Emily Keller <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nothing to report.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Treasurer – Choya Coleman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalizing any outstanding service award costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paid for certificates and plaques</li> <li>▪ Will be working on closing other costs this month</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Pending key updates for the comment boxes</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Parliamentarian – Lissy Turner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You are allowed three absences during the year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VI. Committee Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Executive Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Met to set agenda for this meeting</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Nominations &amp; Elections Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Committee will be meeting soon, and HR is ready to provide report</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Communications Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Photography for social media accounts and Translation Network</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Worklife Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We put together a document of staff needs and priorities. We separated everything into categories: adequate staffing, equitable pay, equipment and deferred maintenance, professional development, evaluating and streamlining processes, and transparency and decision-making. It is the recommendation of the committee that Grace put this in front of Dr. Weaver when she can.</li> <li>○ Special event for staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Staff Recognition Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Positive feedback for Staff Recognition Ceremony</li> <li>○ We have started to create a rubric with timelines and necessities for the event going forward.</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Bylaws Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Nothing to report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>VII. Unfinished Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Social Ad-hoc Committee</li> </ul>
<b>VIII. New Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Closed Session</li> </ul>
<b>IX. Closed Session</b>	
<b>X. Adjournment</b>	<p>Approved with no abstentions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion to adjourn the meeting by Representative Scott</li> <li>• Seconded by Representative Schmidt</li> </ul> <p>Adjourn Time: 11:40am</p>