

**Staff Advisory Committee  
Teams Meeting  
March 25, 2021**

**Members Present:** Angie Denson, Margo Dirkson, Shana Eads, Amy Foster, Carrie Harris, Susan Henry, Michelle Holm, Corinne Johnson, Bethany Jones, Andrea Kruszka, Charlene McClain, Kim Meredith, Robert Scantland, Michael Sliger, Angie Wells

**Members Absent:** Kathy Faulkner

**Others Present:** President Oldham, Lee Wray, Sherrie Howard, Trudy Harper, Diane Smith

**Summary:**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Discussion with Trudy Harper, Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Comments by the President

Discussion on Opportunities for Staff

**Proceedings:**

Chairperson Angie Wells called the Teams meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Andrea Kruszka motioned to approve the agenda. Carrie Harris seconded. APPROVED.

Andrea Kruszka motioned to approve the minutes from October 29, 2020. Bethany Jones seconded. APPROVED.

Angie Wells introduced guest, Trudy Harper, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Harper greeted everyone with a warm welcome and asked everyone to stop by and see her when she is on campus teaching. In working with the staff on campus she realized that the quality of the professionalism of our staff is superior to what she has encountered in private industry. You are the first and the last face many people see, especially the students. She thanked everyone for all they did.

Wells mentioned at the previous Staff Advisory meeting it was discussed that the faculty had a chance to come before the Board of Trustees to talk about faculty compensation. She had several staff come to her and asked who would represent the staff to the Board when it comes to raises and compensation. They felt that staff got overlooked. Ms. Harper replied that the resolution that the Faculty Senate brought before the Board in December may have been addressed from the Faculty but she felt the Board of Trustees didn't think of the Faculty as being the only employees of the university. It is implied that the staff is represented. When we think about salaries, salary distributions and compensation plans we think about it as one bucket, including staff.

December 1, 2020, Jeannette Wolak presented to the Board the history for compensation. It did not seem like the Board had been very consistent from year to year. Ms. Harper felt that everyone on the Board wanted a merit-based compensation system and felt that Dr. Wolak was right, in the fact, the Board had not given people a vision of what they were trying to accomplish. We want to be thoughtful. We want to have a plan around the pool of dollars that the state has given us to make pay increases with this year. Every group of people in a budget group at the university that has a satisfactory review is eligible for a pay increase somewhere between a 1% - 7%. The division head will allocate some people 1% and some people 7% or some 2% and some 6%. Harper explained that there may be a lot of 3% or 5% but what we don't want to see is that everyone gets a 3.5% or 4% pay increase. We want the performers to get rewarded. Dr. Sally Pardue had often reminded us that it is not just faculty but also staff. Ms. Harper closed with offering her email address if anyone wants to reach out to her at: [Tharper@tntech.edu](mailto:Tharper@tntech.edu).

President Oldham commented what a wonderful job everyone on campus had done, especially the staff. Not only have we been Bold, Fearless and Confident, this year we can add Resilient. We have been creative and innovative in the midst of great obstacles and challenges. We appreciate all of you, thank you. We are making plans for a relatively normal fall semester. Hopefully we can remove some of these restrictions in the near future. Vaccinations are being provided on campus. Hopefully we will be getting more vaccines so we can get a lot of students vaccinated before they leave this semester.

The Lab Science building is now open. We are in the process of redoing Peachtree. Later in the summer we will begin construction. It will predominately become a pedestrian thoroughfare. It will take most of a year to complete construction and will be inconvenient at times. We will get campus information out about it over the next few months.

The design for the Engineering building is complete. We expect the legislature to pass the appropriations bill for funding and hope to break ground by early Fall. State funding is good this year and we are also scheduled to get almost eight million dollars in capital maintenance projects which will include renovation to Derryberry Auditorium, Wattenbarger Auditorium and major additional campus outdoor lighting. We want to thank Governor Lee, Speaker Sexton, Senator Bailey and Representative Ryan Williams for all their support.

We will continue to push for more activities on campus as the months proceed. Intramurals, flag football. We currently have eleven COVID cases on campus total. President Oldham read an e-mail from a student's mother who was impressed by how the university handled the situation when her son tested positive for COVID. Thanking us on caring for TN Tech students.

Angie Wells said she would like to see this committee get more involved and have more camaraderie with all staff. What if we have more training for staff? She discussed having a survey to see what types of trainings we would like to have. Sherrie Howard, from Human Resources, said they would love to partner with staff on trainings that would be beneficial for growing in your position. Being more efficient and productive and make you a better TTU employee. She would love to put a survey out to find what areas HR can help you in your role. She said she would be happy to work with Angela in putting that survey together.

Wells also mentioned the possibility of staff retreats. Having keynote speakers come in for personal development such as mental health or physical health. Where we could get together and get motivated and inspired. It would give opportunities to network across the campus. We are always waiting for someone to come to us. I would like for us to come together and work together. We could do

something as a committee to help each other. Where are we on Emergency Preparedness? It would be great if this committee could get the information out to the rest of the staff. Wells did a little research to see if other colleges were doing similar programs. She found two; Carleton College in Minnesota and the University of North Carolina. They had so much information on line to reference.

Andrea Kruszka added she thought that trainings in time management, conflict resolution, organization and communication skills would be good. Margo Dirkson mentioned that since she works in Advancement, on the edge of campus, that she feels very detached because she does not work in an academic area. It would be nice to have more of the social element and it would be helpful to get to know more people on campus. Kruszka mentioned that she helps run some of the Eagle Works programs on campus. They have done a design challenge that encourages problem solving, creative thinking, and team building.

President Oldham supported the ideas and suggested that the committee come up with a structure on how they would like this done and what kind of topics. We can make this happen. I encourage you to continue the conversation and we will get this program put together.

Wells asked to send your ideas in an email to her and she will get with Kruszka to organize more. Charlene McClain added that we were all public servants and a class on how to deal with people would be good. There is a CPR class available. The students are our main priority and we should take their interest first. I would encourage us all to do something as a group and that would benefit everyone. She mentioned that ITS sent out a LinkedIn link that individuals could do on their own to better themselves.

President Oldham thanked everyone and asked to please make this happen. Trustee Harper added that she was so impressed with the enthusiasm and leadership of this.

No other such matters.

Andrea Kruszka motioned to adjourn. Bethany Jones seconded. Adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Donna Schrock, recorder