

Minutes - September 9, 2021

Call to Order

- Dane called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Amanda presented the minutes from Aug. 12, 2021. Berlin moved to approve the minutes, and Sonja made a second motion. All voted yes.

Updates and comments from Staff Council President

- Leo's father passed away, and Leo is out of town with family and friends. A card is available for Staff Council members to sign. Carolina will deliver it to his office. Dane encouraged members to reach out to Leo to offer support.
- The Employee of the Month for August is Jennifer Denham in the College of Education and Social Sciences. Her reception was set for Sept. 13, but it conflicted with President's Council. The new date is 2:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 27 on the third floor of Old Main.

Staff Council Subcommittees:

- Employee of the Month Committee – Sam for Leo
 - The Employee of the Month for August is Jennifer Denham in the College of Education and Social Sciences, and her reception is scheduled for Sept. 27.
 - There are currently 12 nominations, and the EOM committee will meet soon to vote on September.
- Treasurer & Scholarship Committee – Lauren
 - There were not as many scholarships awarded as in the past, but those funds could increase due to the I Am WT campaign.
 - There are still expenses tied to the summer Fun Fest that are showing up in the report. This is a catch up from the lag time in reporting on the ProCard side.
 - The committee will meet in October to award the Staff Leadership Scholarship.
 - Sonja made a motion to approve the minutes, which was given a second by Amanda. It passed by all.
- Staff Appreciation & Events Committee – Beth
 - Beth was not in attendance at the meeting and no new information was reported.
- Spirit Committee - Brittny
 - The next committee meeting will focus on the buffalo chip scavenger hunt. IT suggested using the same platform as text to vote for the parade to avoid someone stuffing the ballots.
- Professional Development Committee – Carolina for Abby
 - There is now a LinkedIn page for WT's Staff Council. It will work to connect staff to professional and work related topics.
 - The committee is working on a book club to allow staff a chance to gather.
- Communications & Outreach Committee – Sami
 - Be sure to reach out to Sami, Jeremie or Amanda with your events so they can be posted on social media and the website.
 - The committee will be asking for information for Monday and Wednesday posts.

- Election Committee – Carolina
 - Levi left Staff Council so there is a vacancy for an SSC employee, as well as the committee's Levi had been serving.

New Business

- Dane announced that Dr. Terry has presented an idea for granting a waiver for a 50% reduction in tuition and fees for employees and their spouses, as well as dependents up to the age of 26.
 - Dr. Terry would love ideas and feedback on the idea. This is getting support from the highest levels of the University, but will still have to undergo a strenuous and grueling approval process from the Texas A&M System.
- There is a vacancy for a member of Staff Council on the Student Fee Advisory Committee.
 - Ideally, the person serving on this committee will not be an employee of the Division of Student Engagement Enrollment and Success (SEES).

Announcements

- Sami is taking nominations for 2022 peer leaders to serve in the summer. One can email their name and Buff ID number to Sami at sthompson@wtamu.edu or direct the student to the job opening on Handshake.
- Sam announced the Office of Career and Professional Development is taking nominations for Intern of the Year. The winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship. The nominations are due by Oct. 1.
- Amanda announced that the Office for Diversity and Inclusion will hold several events for Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs Sept. 15-Oct. 15.
- Lauren talked about Fine Art Fanfare, a newsletter for the Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts and Humanities. It goes out by email each Monday, and one can contact Lauren.
- Dane discussed WTTV, which puts promotions on monitors around campus. If you have something that needs to be promoted, send it to Dane.
- You on the Moors Now is a theatre production by WT students and tickets are free to students, faculty and staff. Dance said it was a nice production and urged everyone to attend.
- Carolina announced that Staff Council did not receive its request of a storage closet in Old Main.
 - Dane said he had limited room in a closet in the Fine Arts Building. Darcy recently moved out of her office in the JBK basement, so that would be a possible location for Staff Council items. Amanda offered her storage area in Old Main for the Employee of the Month items so that they are stored in the same building as the ceremony takes place each month.
- The next meeting of Staff Council will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14 in the JBK Senate Chamber.

Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

– *Respectfully submitted by Amanda Rogers, Staff Council Secretary*

Thursday, September 9, 2021

- **Call to Order**
- **Approval of previous meeting minutes**
- **Updates and comments from the President**
 - Sign Leo's condolence card
 - EOM Reception moved for Jennifer Denham – TBD
 - Standing meeting with the president next Friday (maybe)
 - What questions or concerns do you need addressed?
- **Old Business:**
- **Staff Council Subcommittees:**
 - Employee of the Month Committee - **Sam**
 - Treasurer & Scholarship Committee - **Lauren**
 - Approval of Treasurer's Report
 - Staff Appreciation & Events Committee - **Beth**
 - Spirit Committee - **Brittney**
 - Professional Development Committee - **Abby**
 - Communications & Outreach Committee - **Sami**
 - Election Committee - **Carolina**
- **New Business:**
 - Tuition and Fee Waivers for WT employees and their dependents
 - Student Fee Advisory Committee Representative
 - Any New Business from the Floor?
- **Announcements:**
 - Peer Leader Nominations 2022 – **Sami**
 - Intern of the Year Submissions - **Sam**
 - Hispanic Heritage Month/ Diversity Office Events – **Amanda**
 - Fine Arts Fanfare – **Lauren**
 - WTTV - **Dane**
 - You on the Moors Now - **Dane**
 - Any other announcements?
- **Adjourn**

Thursday, September 9, 2021

▪ **Student Fee Advisory Committee**

- The role is to make recommendations on the allocations for the Student Service Fees. Most of the work occurs in a series of meetings that typically occur January through March. That time period we ask a good bit of work from members, as they not only attend meetings, but they are asked to look carefully at the budget requests of all the groups and offices which request student service fees, and meet individually with about 8-10 different offices who have requested funds and serve as their main liaison between the requestor and the committee.
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- Additionally, we have periodic requests for contingency, or off cycle budget adjustments that have to be made, and those are handled throughout the year using Basecamp and voting online.
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- The ideal person would be someone not within the SEES division (that could be a conflict of interest) who is reliable and responsive, and who has an interest in supporting student life.

Staff Council



Treasurer's Report as of August 12 - September 8, 2021

Staff Council Operating Fund / 11-0785021-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$6,039.62
	12-Aug	Amazon	(\$56.06)
		El Tropico	(\$195.96)
		Walmart	(\$47.44)
		Amazon	(\$54.82)
		Walmart	(\$43.51)
	24-Aug	Postage	(\$7.70)
	25-Aug	Reimbursement for Cards	(\$15.94)
	27-Aug	Cake Company	(\$18.69)
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$5,599.50

Tuition Assistance Fund Scholarship / 11-0787001-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$89,760.00
	8/13 - 8/27	\$250 Scholarship x 7	(\$1,750.00)
	8/12 - 8/30	\$500 Scholarship x 14	(\$7,000.00)
	8/12 - 8/26	\$1000 Scholarship x 5	(\$5,000.00)
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$76,010.00

Staff /Faculty Endowed Scholarship (Interest) / 50-0687212-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$3,088.98
		No change	
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$3,088.98

Staff/ Faculty Endowed Scholarship (Principle) / 50-1687212-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$97,800.00
		No Change	
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$97,800.00

Staff/ Faculty Endowed Scholarship (Interest) / 19-0487115-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$4,242.34
		No change	
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$4,242.34

Staff/Faculty Endowed Scholarship (Principle) / 30-0689108-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$68,075.00
		No Change	
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$68,075.00

WTAMU Staff Leadership Scholarship (Interest) / 50-0687163-92

Balance 8/12/2021		Opening Balance	\$1,176.22
	16-Aug	\$150 Scholarship	(\$150.00)
		Ending Balance 9/8/2021	\$1,026.22

Outstanding Items	Amount
Total Outgoing	
Operations Account Balance	
Adjusted Balance	0.00



Employee and Family 50% Tuition and Fee Reduction Program

Purpose

The purpose of the tuition benefits provided under this program is to encourage and assist eligible employees and their immediate family members (spouse and dependent children under 26 years of age) in obtaining a university-level education. As an institution of higher education, encouraging and supporting higher learning for and among its employees and their dependents is essential.

How to Apply

The University offers a 50% waiver on all assessed tuition and fees for eligible employees and their families. If you are an eligible employee, you may apply for tuition and fee reduction benefits by completing an online waiver application at least one week before the start of the enrollment term (fall, spring, or summer). An employee's supervisor must first approve the Waiver submission online, which will automatically route to Human Resources for validation and approval before transitioning to the University Business Office for the billing adjustment.

Program Considerations and Limitations at the Institutional Level

- The waiver is applicable to the pursuit of a first baccalaureate degree by the employee or employee's eligible dependent(s).
- The waiver is applicable to the pursuit of a graduate degree program by the employee or employee's eligible dependent(s) at a maximum tuition and fees total of \$10,500 per year (i.e., \$5,250 of waiver benefit per year).
- Employee dependent(s) are not eligible to apply the waiver for certificate programs, non-degree applicable courses, and second bachelor's degree.

Eligibility Considerations

- The employee must work full-time in a budgeted and benefited eligible position with the University.
- Employees may begin classes three months after the start date.
- Dependents (i.e., spouse and dependent children) may use this benefit after the employee has completed six months of service. Children may have this benefit until they reach age 26 and are unmarried. Children must be biological, legally adopted, stepchild (children under your legal guardianship are not eligible), or a foster child of the eligible employee who has lived with the employee for at least two years.

- The program does not cover tuition charges incurred before an eligible employee or dependent receives affirmative admission status as a degree-seeking student.
- Retroactive applications for previous terms are not permissible.
- In all cases, employees and families are responsible for all other expenses, including housing and meal costs, books, etc.
- In the event of an eligible employee's military leave of absence, the employee and employee's eligible dependent(s) will remain eligible. The dependent child will continue to receive the dependent tuition assistance benefit during the employee's entire duration of the military leave up until the dependent child turns 26 years of age. The spouse will remain eligible for the duration of the employee's military leave of absence, and benefits will only terminate if the employee does not return to work after the military leave of absence.
- In general, an employee and dependent may not receive tuition assistance benefits (e.g., WT Merit Scholarship Awards) under any other university tuition assistance benefit while receiving tuition assistance benefits under this waiver plan. Exceptions include the following:
 1. Need-based scholarship and related funding (e.g., Pell Grant) can augment the waiver plan without limitation.
 2. Scholarship funds directly from the academic department or college of the major of the employee or dependent(s) can augment the waiver plan at a maximum limit of \$1,000 per term (fall, spring, and summer).
 3. Talent scholarships (e.g., athletics, distinguished scholar, etc.) at levels approved by the Vice President of the awarding division.
- In the event of any change in employment status under which an employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria under the waiver plan protocols, the employee and employee's eligible dependent(s) will remain eligible to receive the dependent tuition assistance benefit through the end of the most recent enrolled academic term.
- Doctorate students working at 0.5 FTE or higher as an Instructor, Graduate Assistant (GA), or Research Assistant (RA) are eligible at the graduate degree program maximum level (i.e., \$5,250 waiver benefit per year).

Applicable Tuition and Fees

- Eligible tuition and fee categories include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Statutory Tuition
 - Designated Tuition
 - Differential Tuition
 - Graduate Tuition
 - Graduate Designated Tuition
 - University Services Fee
 - Declared Major Enhancement Fees
 - Undergraduate Academic Enhancement Fee
 - Health Fee
 - Student Services Fee
 - Student Center Complex Fee

- Rec Sports Fee
- Intercollegiate Athletic Fee
- Distance Education Fee
- Deferred Maintenance Fee
- In some cases, fees associated with applications, insurance, memberships, travel, and related may not be eligible for the waiver. The Vice President for Business & Finance is authorized to determine waiver eligibility of specific tuition and fee categories.
- Dispute resolution over tuition and fee waiver issues will go to the designee of the President of the University, in consultation with the Vice President for Business & Finance.

Tax Considerations and Limitations

- The University does not provide individual tax advice to participants in the waiver plan; however, a summary of general information regarding the federal tax treatment of benefits under the program is below. Individuals with questions about the tax treatment of benefits provided under the plan should contact a personal tax consultant or advisor.
- Section 132(h) of the IRS Code provides that the following individuals are considered employees for the purposes of qualified tuition reductions in the form of remission, waivers, or grants:
 - A current employee
 - A former employee who retired or left on disability
 - A widow or widower of an individual who died while an employee
 - A widow or widower of a former employee who retired or left on disability
 - A dependent child or spouse of one of the above
- Section 117(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code allows employees of certain educational institutions, including nonprofit universities and colleges, to exclude from gross income qualified undergraduate tuition reduction they, their spouse, or their dependent children receive from the employee's employer.
 - Undergraduate-level tuition assistance benefits for an eligible employee are exempt from federal taxation.
 - Undergraduate-level tuition assistance benefits for an eligible employee's legal spouse are exempt from federal taxation.
 - Undergraduate-level tuition assistance benefits for an eligible employee's child are exempt from federal taxation if the child is eligible to be claimed as a tax dependent on the employee's federal income tax return for the calendar year to which the benefits apply.
- Graduate tuition remission is covered under section 127 of the Code, which sets an annual limit of \$5,250 for the exclusion of employer-paid tuition expenses for both undergraduate and graduate coursework. Therefore, all coursework taken by a graduate student, regardless of the level, counts toward the annual exclusion. For any eligible graduate student, the value of the waiver that exceeds \$5,250 will have a tax withholding the same rate as the applicable federal W-4 withholding.
 - *What happens to the taxes that are withheld?* The taxes that the University withholds are forwarded to the respective governmental agencies and credited to the employee income tax withholding. The amount of taxable income reported

from the waiver and the taxes withheld by the University are reported on Form W-2.

- *The tuition waiver does not come in the form of payment, so how will the withholding be made?* When the value of the tuition waiver exceeds \$5,250 in a calendar year, the excess is includable as taxable income as a non-cash earning. This means you will not see a pay increase in your check, but rather the excess waiver amount is added to your regular earnings. When the earnings are added to your pay, the University must calculate and withhold the appropriate income taxes.
- Graduate-level tuition waivers which exceed the limitations of section 127 of the Code may be excludible under section 132 of the Code as long as the courses are part of an educational assistance program under section 127, and the tuition would be deductible under section 162 if the employees paid it themselves. The following questions help determine tax-exempt status:
 1. Is the graduate/non-credit course required to meet the minimum education requirements of my position?
 - If yes – taxable
 - If no – read next question
 2. Is the graduate/non-credit course part of a program of study that will qualify me for a new trade or business?
 - If yes – taxable
 - If no – read next question
 3. Will the graduate/non-credit course maintain or improve skills required, appropriate or helpful to my current position?
 - If yes – non-taxable
 - If no – read next question
 4. Is the graduate/non-credit course required as a condition to retain my current position or pay rate?
 - If yes – non-taxable
 - If no – taxable

**For the course to qualify as a tax-exempt job-related course, the answers to the first two questions must be No, and the answer to either the third or fourth question must be Yes.*

Dispute Resolution

The Office of Human Resources has the authority to administer the plan, interpret its provisions, and decide, among other things, the satisfaction of eligibility requirements and claims for benefits. All decisions of the Office of Human Resources will be final and binding on all persons. The University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate the Employee Tuition Waiver Benefit at any time. This document provides only a summary of the main features of the plan.

Staff Council Member	Term	EEO Category	Present	Attended Since June 2021
Betts, Abigail "Abby"	2022	EEO 3	Y	3
Eatley, Julie	2023	WTAC	Y	3
Ellis, Sandra	2022	SSC	Y	4
Faltinek, Jerry	2023	EEO 3	Y	4
Ferrara, Barbara	2022	EEO 5-7	N	3
Freas, Mary	2023	EEO 4	Y	4
Galloway, Carolina	2021	EEO 1	N	3
Gaston, Lauren	2023	EEO 3	Y	4
Glenn, Dane	2022	EEO 3	Y	4
Green, Ryan	2022	SSC	N	2
Gree, Samantha "Sam"	2023	EEO 3	Y	4
Lee, Britny	2023	EEO 1	Y	4
McIntosh, Berlin	2022	EEO 4	Y	4
Middleton, Jeremie	2023	EEO 1	Y	4
Mowry, Beth	2023	EEO 4	Y	3
Palmer, Barbara	2023	EEO 1	Y	4
Reid, Leo	2022	EEO 1	N	2
Rogers, Amanda	2023	EEO 4	Y	4
Thompson, Sami	2022	EEO 3	N	2
Webber, Darcy	2022	EEO 3	N	2
Wilson, David	2023	EEO 3	N	3
Wopperer, Jamie	2023	SSC	N	0
Young, Sonja	2023	EEO 5-7	Y	4