

## Thursday, March 11, 2021

- **Call to Order**
  - Meeting called to order at 2:03 PM
- **Special guest: Dr. Walter Wendler**
  - Carolina mentioned invited to discuss plans to return to campus Fall 2021. We wanted to speak directly to him about it.
  - Carolina opened the floor to Dr. Wendler to discuss expectations on the report we are sending to him. Dr. Wendler thanked council for taking time on this. We have a better sense than a year ago. And governor has lifted restrictions and is leaving to local jurisdictions how they would move forward from this point. Texas A&M System has asked us to continue on with current requirements in place: social distancing, masks, etc. until the end of the semester. And in the meantime, start thinking about how we will return to the fall. No matter what we do, there will be concerns from both sides. Dr. Wendler has gotten perspective from student government, and will be from faculty (working on it). We've been cautious and done a reasonable job, low infection rate. A good job of "containment" and being careful. Why he's going back to the same three constituency groups, who have been deliberate and thoughtful. Concerned about our fall enrollment (applications look good and doing everything to be open) but will be a lot of questions still. Asked for insight for from where they sit as we hopefully open up the campus in a more complete fashion. Thinks we'll be much closer to how we looked in the last 50 years, minus last year. Not back to normal, still cautious, and some things may not change. We are now more mindful of things like shaking hands and such. His hope is for better insights and increasing sense of awareness for being careful. His goal is to have something out as soon as the system has set what to look after and what is open to local decision.

- Carolina asked about the format for classes. Dr. Wendler said instruction will likely be mainly on campus. But he encouraged to remember that online-only presence has increased and hopes that it will continue to increase. In part because of Covid, but also in part because students are older, returning from the workplace, and he anticipates eventually having a 50/50 split of on campus and online students. His goal is to have all courses recorded on lecture capture (study, review, etc.) in a way to enhance environment. He mentioned several concerns, including students missing synchronous learning and having guidelines for attendance. His hope is on campus are fully face-to-face and he hopes to be back to more typical day-to-day experience for students to engage college experience for own benefit.
- Carolina mentioned some staff mentioned being more effective at home. She asked Dr. Wendler if possible, to have a limited basis of working from home on occasion for productivity purposes. Dr. Wendler mentioned he's been asked this often. Some faculty and staff consistently remote. He thinks we will see some changes in how that works. Dr. Wendler mentioned Barbara Ferrara cannot work from home, can't get to help people from a remote work environment. Does not want to bend things into acceptable circumstances when the best work is face-to-face. Hopes to land in a place where some staff might work remotely, but a small portion of the population. We will still have some circumstances where some staff will work remotely. Carolina mentioned not everyone has been able to do their job remotely and that she is excited to share that with him in the document.
- Something Carolina mentioned she saw a lot was how much people missed having in person meetings, socials, recognition of accomplishments, etc. Carolina asked how he anticipates events happening both for faculty/staff, and for students. She also asked about limitations. Dr. Wendler mentioned there will always be care, but return to where maybe not as many limitations. The governor has given permission, but we have to assess if it is right for us. Anything we do to that end enhances college experience. We

are managing by Zoom, and he wouldn't be here with us if it weren't for Zoom. All of us in many ways would rather be in the room and face-to-face. He is able to quickly pull together a meeting on Zoom, which is an asset for quickly gathering. Hope we are going toward a more conventional approach. Event tonight in JBK, limited to 110 people. In four months, could have a much more normal sized crowd. Tables of eight, versus the four happening tonight. Chances are very good that we'll have a more "normal" configuration on all parts for faculty, students and staff.

- Carolina opened the floor to questions and thoughts. Berlin mentioned Dr. Wendler very thorough and gave a great observation of weighing what it looks like when we open and come in. Berlin asked if there will be a grand day of hugs and handshakes and all the people. Dr. Wendler mentioned he wants to be optimistic about it during this challenging time. Regrets for the freshmen that started this year. So much taken away because of the circumstances. Optimistic that next fall will be much better.
- Betty asked about the student government perspective and probation increase. Survey asking if they were looking forward to in person class in fall and 33 of 33 said yes. Bet 90% would say yes. A different set of expectations and academic performance. Dr. Wendler mentioned the cold snap issues. The cold weather snap was the worse it had been. Input from student body president, which changed the way he was managing. He will listen to what others say and what he said was very reasonable. Can't have online instruction without internet.
- Carolina asked about too many people working in shared spaces, and now that the mask requirement may be completely lifted, she asked how he expects that to work out without the masks. Dr. Wendler mentioned some may still wear masks on a regular basis and that is their choice. If work conditions are too crowded, may have to look into space, as might hurt productivity anyway. Many people that are already afraid of germs (germaphobe) and may feel vulnerable. Will work through on an individual basis, one rule won't fit everyone.

- Dr. Wendler asked for a written report from Carolina. Mentioned may be challenges through all of this and we will work through it each time and work hard to make it all work.
- Berlin mentioned different departments have different number of people. Having a common understanding of mask practices. Dr. Wendler mentioned his office space and sitting with others and sitting six feet apart and their preference for masks based on distance. Up to each individual. But, when working in tight quarters, he mentioned we may need a more careful way of looking at it. Betty mentioned covid situations and having a hard time reaching the covid team. Dr. Wendler mentioned if she felt comfortable, forward the email to him and he'll follow up on it, because it shouldn't happen. Might be useful for him to have that. Certain sense of everything is okay now and we "do what we want" which is almost true but not quite. Sinus infections and covid – do we send them home? How do we know which it is? Betty mentioned hard to make decisions when things are not matching up. Dr. Wendler mentioned hard enough if you are a medical professional, but we need consistencies and protocols to engage. Betty mentioned last current info was in January. Hard to decipher the reading and the CDC guidelines keep moving. Sometimes organizations have things in place to protect individuals. Doing our best with good intentions, trying to make best decisions with what information we have.
- Carolina thanked Dr. Wendler for opportunity to share our feedback. Dr. Wendler thanked for the feedback and opportunity for the different perspectives.
- **Approval of previous meeting minutes**
  - Betty Stocker moved to approve, Candice Copelin seconded, council voted approval.
- **Updates and comments from the President**
  - Update on "Return to Campus Fall 2021" thank you for sharing your opinion!
    - Carolina has received really good feedback and perspectives. Will compile into one document (8 pages worth of answers) and will work to summarize that

shows it all. Still a working project, so Carolina is still open to feedback, share with her or the leader of your group.

- Any comments or items to share with the group?
  - Betty mentioned some felt it forced their hand to do what hadn't before and found good things. Many miss the interaction and there are so many unknowns.
  - Carolina mentioned Teams is a positive for using and that we CAN do zoom 😊. We've improved our technology usage and better serving our online. Many want to keep both options open to accommodate. Many miss events with others and social gatherings. Parking will become a problem again soon.
  - Betty wondered how new people coming in feel. Just a picture on a screen now, and haven't had in person interactions with many. Dana mentioned like starting your job fresh.
  - Carolina encouraged the conversation to continue.
- Update on volunteer opportunities for staff
  - Reached out to HR about staff using release time for volunteer activities. The System does not have something in place that would work for that purpose. Unsure of the best avenue to make that happen. Need to justify if wellness time already in place could include volunteer work as well, system said no. Has to be a physical activity. Carolina will still look into different angles.
  - Even if we don't do, maybe we could try to do something once or twice a year and offer t-shirts to get engagement. Betty mentioned what about coming in to the office earlier to have more time for "lunch". We will continue exploring avenues to make this happen.
- Guests

- If anyone would like to have guests attend to provide information, please reach out to Carolina. Come talk about something we want to know more about.

▪ **Staff Council Subcommittees**

▪ Employee of the Month Committee (Betty)

- Amy's yesterday, in OM second floor. Nice set up, she felt very special and thanks to Leo for help.
- Darlene Brasington for March.
- Maybe three or four candidates in the que for choices. Good time to nominate in the que.

▪ Treasurer & Scholarship Committee (Ashley)

- Sam's Club purchases? Was concerned about the duplication for the same amount. Ashley was concerned if it was a duplicate or two batches.
- David reminded if we purchase something for Staff Council, to scan and send the receipt to Ashley.
- Ashley wondered if the Sam's charges were for the chips and drinks from an earlier event in the semester.
- Taryn asked Dana and Tamara about the scholarships awarding for the 21-22 academic year. Has to go to spouses, children and grandchildren of WT staff. Focused on GPA and work criteria in instrument. Six recipients that met the criteria, dispersed \$300 to each and Dana will notify them in the next few weeks.
- Approval of Treasurer's Report – we will wait until we hear from Mickie or Ashley to approve based on unsure purchases.

▪ Staff Appreciation & Events Committee (Ronnie)

- Thank you to helpers for delivering the I Caught You Caring cards. Over 340 staff and about 30 faculty and students. Special thanks to Abby for printing, cutting, and organizing; Sandra for running the SSC side; and Barbara for the major \$\$\$

raising to get it covered (done in 45 minutes!!!) Brandon Jefferson won the \$25 Buff Card drawing.

- Carolina asked about another event in the Spring, Ronnie mentioned I Caught You Caring is the typical spring event, but asked if it was in our budget to do another event. Carolina mentioned typically end the year with sno cones in May/end of semester. Candice mentioned partnering (Spirit Committee). Dana mentioned looks like money in our budget still for events. Since outdoors, we can pick a day for sno cones in May. Ronnie and Candice will get together.
- Spirit Committee (Candice)
  - NA
- Professional Development Committee (Jeff)
  - NA
- Communications & Outreach Committee (David)
  - NA
- Election Committee (David)
  - Emails out for nominations for upcoming elections after April 1<sup>st</sup>. SSC, David emailed Tadhi to replace the two falling off. Sandra and Ryan are staying on, Cindy and Ken are falling off. David asked Sandra to follow up with Tadhi to take the next two-year term. For WT, nominate people. He is emailed those nominated to get a head start on the accept/decline for nominations. The week after Spring Break, he will do a final reminder for nominations and a final accept/decline email.
  - Discussed having a representative specifically for the Amarillo Center so they are represented as their own entity. David opened the floor to thoughts on this. David's thoughts are: would there be benefit to having an Amarillo Center rep like their own entity, so that the folks there have a better opportunity to be represented. Candice said someone would always be interested. From the

Caught Caring delivery, to the drinks and chips being handed out, everyone thanked her for having someone speak for them and including them. Betty asked about WT Enterprise having an office there and if SBDC did. WT Enterprise is down north. Candice mentioned Revolution 1800, which says a product of WT Enterprise. Maybe person at Amarillo Center could also represent them. Could call “Amarillo Representative” to encompass them as well. At least they would know they are welcomed to the table. Harder to include because not usually a representative from the Amarillo Center. We learned by having Candice that she can be the person that facilitates bringing, delivering, giving a head count, etc. Good for Staff Council and the Amarillo Campuses to have a representative. David still needs to touch base with HR. Candice will poll folks at the Amarillo Center and get back to David and Carolina before nominations are due.

▪ **Announcements**

- If planning to attend future meetings in person, please use Sign-Up Genius. Contact Abby if questions!
- Buffs @ Work Virtual Coffee Break: March 12, 2021, 2:00, Zoom
- Spring Break: March 17 – 19, 2021
- All Staff meeting: June 2, 2021, details will be provided later.
- *WTAMU Vaccine Clinic information:*  
<https://www.wtamu.edu/about/information/covid-19/vaccine-info.html>
- Berlin thanked the staff council for the card. She lost her mom, who was overseas. It has lifted her spirit from across the miles. And wished blessings to all.

▪ **Adjourn**

- Meeting called to a close at 3:25 PM

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2019-2020 Staff</li> <li>▪ Council Member</li> </ul>	Term	EEO Category	Present	Attended Since July 2020
Betts, Abigail “Abby”	2022	EEO 3	Y	7
Broughton, Kendra	2021	EEO 5-7	Y	9
Castagnetta, Tamara	2021	EEO 3	Y	8
Copelin, Candice	2021	EEO 3	Y	9
Eller, Ashley	2021	EEO 4	N	7
Ellis, Sandra	2022	SSC	Y	9
Ferrara, Barbara	2022	EEO 5-7	Y	5
Flatt, Kenneth	2021	SSC	Y	9
Galloway, Carolina	2021	EEO 1	Y	9
Glenn, Dane	2022	EEO 3	N	8
Green, Ryan	2022	SSC	Y	9
Hall, Ronnie	2021	EEO 3	Y	8
McIntosh, Berlin	2022	EEO 4	Y	7
Thompson, Sami (McMeans, Zach)	2022	EEO 3	N	8
Melcher, Dana	2021	EEO 1	Y	7
Reid, Leo	2022	EEO 1	N	7
Riggs, Cindy	2021	SSC	N	8
Stocker, Betty	2021	EEO 3	Y	8

Sulik, Jeff	2021	EEO 1	N	5
Webber, Darcy	2022	EEO 3	Y	7
Wilson, David	2020	EEO 3	Y	9
Yildirim, Taryn	2022	EEO 4	Y	9