

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STAFF SENATE MEETING**

Tuesday, September 10, 2024
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

PRESIDING: Megan Colascione, President

Call to Order – Megan Colascione, President

President Colascione officially called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM. President Colascione welcomed staff senators and visitors to the staff senate meeting.

Roll Call/Attendance Report – Julia Hodge, Secretary

Secretary Hodge checked the roll after taking attendance. According to the attendance report, 40 senators were in attendance, 11 senators were absent or online, and no senators gave proxies.

Establish Quorum – Julia Bellon, Parliamentarian

Based on the attendance report, Secretary Hodge declared a quorum was established and Parliamentarian Bellon declared business could be conducted.

Approval of Minutes – Megan Colascione, President

There were no changes to the August 13, 2024, staff senate meeting minutes. Senator McCormick made a motion to accept the general body staff senate minutes as written. Senator Carey seconded the motion to accept the minutes as written. All senators were in favor. The motion was adopted and carried, and the minutes were accepted as written.

President's Update – Megan Colascione, President

- Reminders – please avoid putting forth distinct names when addressing issues in the general body discussion. Meetings and minutes are recorded.
- Celebrate
 - Ex-officio Representation for Staff Senate
 - Julian Williams, VP Access, Civil Rights, and Community Engagement
 - Caroline Agardy, VP for Human Resources
 - Shannon Means, VP for Strategy and Innovation
 - Thank you to Senator Chelsey Malloy!
- Collaborate
 - Health & Wellness Expo
 - September 24 (8:00 AM – 2:00 PM)
 - Russell House
 - Volunteer for a 2-hr shift to represent Staff Senate
 - Email Jessica McKie
 - State of the University
 - September 11 (10:00 AM)
 - Russell House
 - Provost Retreat
 - September 13 (9:00 AM – 12:00 PM)
 - Russell House
 - Must RSVP to attend
- Innovate

- Partnership with University Leadership on the expansion of Staff Senate Awards
- Partnership with Provost's Office to revamp the Women's Leadership Initiative
 - Adhoc committee opportunity
- Please join me in welcoming our guest speakers today from the Graduation & Retention Network (GARNET) and the First-Generation Center.

Guest Speakers – Amanda Therrell, GARNET Director, LaNae' Budden, First-Generation Center Director & Melissa Kupfer, First-Generation Assistant Director

- [GARNET](#)
 - Provost's Goal
 - Increase freshman to sophomore retention rate to 94% (currently 92%)
 - Increase 4-year graduation rate to 75% (currently ~70%)
 - Increase resources for first-generation students
 - Increase affordability for freshman class
 - Graduation and Retention Council
 - Interdepartmental
 - Reviewing barriers to degree completion
 - Systemic process improvement
 - Primary Aim
 - Identify and remove barriers to on-time degree completion
 - Degree progression, retention, and interventions
 - Summer semester
 - Winter session
 - Accelerated study plans
 - Complete Carolina
 - Interdisciplinary Certificates
- [First-Generation Center](#)
 - Definition
 - USC uses the TRIO definition of first-generation students (FGS). The definition means any individual whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree.
 - Stats:
 - Freshman to sophomore retention rate for FG is currently around 50%
 - 20% or more of USC undergrads identify as FG
 - First-Gen Forward Network Leader
 - National model for holistic student success
 - Empowers higher education institutions to:
 - Transform FG experience
 - Advance outcomes
 - Build more inclusive institutional structures
 - Brings together leaders in higher education to:
 - Share data
 - Model innovations
 - Scale impact
 - Asset-Based Approach

- We believe our first-generation students have **Great potential** and are **Resilient, Ambitious, and Determined!**
 - Center's Core Functions
 - Provide support and advocacy for first-gen students
 - Develop comprehensive first-gen focused programming and services that promote students' academic, personal, and professional growth
 - Coordinate connections to campus mentorship and resources
 - Promote research and scholarship around the first-gen student experience
 - First-Gen LLC
 - Dr. Stephen Thompson, Faculty Director, College of Education
 - LLC located in Maxcy
- How can we partner?
 - Identify barriers to degree progression and retention from your perspective and let us know
 - Complete the [Faculty & Staff First-Gen training module](#)
 - Sign up to be a mentor
 - Do not have to be FG yourself as a mentor
 - Group model – grouping students with at least 3 mentors (“Cocky Crews”), approx. 2.5-3 hours a month commitment
 - Offer an internship
 - Provide a research opportunity
 - Fill out the First-Gen Faculty and Staff form if you are FG
 - Add a Basic Needs Statement to your syllabus
 - Volunteer at Center events
 - Attend off-campus community building events with students
 - Host your own event
- First-Generation Week – first week of November
 - How can you create signature events for your individual campus community?
- Area of Improvement
 - Capturing data to identify first-gen grad students
 - Identifying students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree abroad
- First-Gen Newsletter is forthcoming

Reports of Committees:

Membership: Kathryn Kenard/Andrea Avant

- No report at this time.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, September 17 at 3:00 PM via Teams

Communications: Michaela Taylor/Lori Carey

- Current Project: updating the website
- Future Project: request in with central communications to do a video showcasing the history and founding of Staff Senate

Staff Policy and Well-Being: Jason Cone/Cami Reid

- Amanda Minnet from our committee will be meeting soon with Jessica Koumas in Facilities (Interior Design within Facilities) to speak on mental health space for staff either 9/9/24 or 9/10/24
- Jessica McCormick will help by serving on a committee as the representative for Staff Policy and Well-being for EVP (Employee Value Proposition) Study in conjunction with Kim Pruitt's office
- Segal Consulting – university's HR website should be updated this week to continue to improve transparency
- Jason Cone reached out today 09/10/24 to Molly Peirano (Title IX Office) to come be a guest at one of our two next meetings as a committee
- Even though our committee is pivoting from Dependent Tuition Remission we'd like to report the following – Caroline Agardy is working with HEEPA, a higher education efficiency administrative act legislation group, to continue moving tuition remission for employees forward. The state HR contact asked if we had any benchmarking data available. Katie Hopkins will send the information she has compiled. Caroline has discussed our desire for legislative changes with Ed Walton and Craig Parks.
 - As we transition from the primary goal of tuition remission we are working on a survey to determine what projects to focus on moving forward
- Megan Colascione shared that she met with PACWI (Provost Advisory Committee for Women's Initiatives) leadership. They have asked if the Staff Senate would like to partner with them to revamp the women's leadership program on campus. They do plan to keep the Women's Leadership Institute.

Professional Development: Khristina DeLorenzo/Simone Keller

- Discussed survey about professional development opportunities
- Upcoming: Lindsay Crawford from the Controller's Office will be coming to the October meeting
- Looking into organizing another basketball game or group activity outside of our regular meeting hours

Community Projects: Chakira Hogan/Alexis Watts

- Thank you to everyone who donated to our international student household item drive for the Gamecock Community Shop. They are still in need of:
 - Sheets, towels, bathmats, shower curtains/liners, shampoo/conditioner, soap, deodorant, body wash, laundry detergent, and pillows. (These can be gently used)
- This next month, we will hold a clothes drive for the Carolina Closet which provides professional clothing for students or staff.
 - So clean out your closets and bring that to our next staff senate meeting!
- We have 'adopted' a teacher and their class – Thank you to Chris Burkett at College of Education who identified Leydi West as a first-year teacher to assist. She is a COE graduate who is teaching 6, 7, and 8th grade Spanish at Irmo Middle School in Lexington/Richland School District Five. We will update you with the types of general education supplies needed soon.
- We are continuing our Ronald McDonald House tab drive from last year. Please start asking all your constituents to keep their can tabs and collect those!

- We are also working on possibly adopting a nearby street as part of the Keep the Midlands Beautiful (Adopt-a-highway/street program.) This would involve setting up 4 times a year for Staff Senate to pick up litter. Updates to come at our next meeting.
- CPC Committee Meeting is next Tuesday, September 17 at 3:00 pm on Teams

Bylaws: Marissa Buck/Manda Fontenot-Tuk

- Robust discussion on attendance
 - Specifically virtual attendance and impact on voting, experience, etc.
- Upcoming: sending out a survey to collect some informal feedback from other Senators on your thoughts /opinions.

Staff Senate Awards and Recognition Committee: Toni Karl

- Sub-Committee sign ups (November)
- Appreciation Day location is being discussed and explored
- Philanthropic part of event – possibly donations collected
- Timeline of Appreciation Day – possibly move awards to AM then follow up with appreciation day event

Staff Senate Scholarship/Fundraising Committee: Michelle Knight

- Met with our counterpart committee chair from Clemson Staff Senate
 - She shared fundraising efforts that are successful for their group
- Looking to have a golf tournament for a fundraiser in the spring
- Exploring emergency fund for USC staff

Order of Business – *Julia Bellon, Parliamentarian*

- Bylaws Update
 - Second Reading and Vote
 - Senator Epps motioned to have a second reading of the bylaw amendment related to changing the language for VP, President, and Immediate Past President succession and terms. Senator Fontenot-Tuk seconded the motion.
 - Parliamentarian Bellon read the changes.
 - Move to approve VP Burkett and Senator Adams seconded.
 - All in favor and the amendment passed.

Additional Announcements

- Gameday is coming Saturday!
- USC School of Medicine Greenville is creating the first ever staff council!

Adjourn

Senator Chambers made a motion to adjourn. Senator Epps seconded the motion to adjourn. All senators were in favor. The formal meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 8 at 3:00 p.m. in the Lumpkin Auditorium, Close-Hipp Building, 8th Floor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Hodge
Secretary
Staff Senate