



## **Staff Council General Meeting minutes for March 22, 2023**

### **Zoom Meeting 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

Minutes Recorded by Maria Estrada, Staff Council Secretary

**Board:** Tremaine Kwasikpui, Staff Council President; JR Sears, Staff Council President-Elect; Maria Estrada, Staff Council Secretary; Gerrelyn Davidson, Staff Council Treasurer; Rachael Hudspeth, Staff Council Communications Officer

**Guests:** Sheila Ortega-Calvillo, Academic Success Coordinator.

**Call to Order:** The Staff Council general meeting was called to order by Staff Council President, Tremaine Kwasikpui around 10:01 a.m.

**Reports:** Mr. Kwasikpui greets and welcomes attendees to the Staff Council General Meeting for March 2023 and reviews the agenda.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the February 15, 2023, minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved.

#### **Welcome New Gators**

Mr. Kwasikpui introduces the new UHD gators/employees.

- Kionna LeMalle, Assistant Director, Executive Communications
- Chinaza Nwosu, Administrative Assistant II
- Roberto Valenzuela, Computing Operations Specialist I
- Tamia Brown, Academic Success Coordinator II
- Gia Petties, Academic Success Coordinator I
- Taylor Quinn, Director Administration and Operations
- Jessica Acuna, Student Account Specialist I
- Jacqueline Hester, Administrative Assistant II
- Michele Holt, Coordinator, Basic Needs
- Anthony Word, Labor Technician
- Michael Simmons, Coordinator, Basic Needs

#### **Edge Grant Recipient**

Ms. Davidson introduces the Edge Grant recipients for the month of March.

- March Recipient: Elvira Rodriguez

#### **Staff Good News**

Mr. Kwasikpui announces Staff Good News for the month of March.

- Tesha Koltys shared that her daughter Kimberly will graduate as a lead chef from the Culinary Institute of America San Antonio on April 14th.

### **Gator Regalia Loaner Program Initiative**

#### **Sheila Ortega-Calvillo, Academic Success Coordinator, Presentation on Regalia Loaner Program Initiative**

Mr. Kwasikpui introduces Ms. Ortega-Calvillo.

- Ms. Ortega-Calvillo speaks about the Gator Regalia Loaner Program, which allows alumni and staff to loan their regalia to graduating UHD students.
- Currently, fifteen students need regalia for the Spring 2023 commencement.
- A cost center is being established for those interested in donating funds for the program.
- Ms. Ortega-Calvillo asks that staff please spread the word about the initiative.
- The program is for undergraduate and graduate students.
- She asks interested staff to join the UHD Staff/Faculty Zoom or add her on LinkedIn for further information.

### **Upcoming Events**

- March 22<sup>nd</sup>- Community Engagement Showcase from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, A300
- March 29<sup>th</sup> – Spring Health Fair from 9 am to 1 pm
- March 29<sup>th</sup>- President’s Lecture Series on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project from 11:30 am to 1 pm
- March 30<sup>th</sup>- Annual Bayou Bash from 5 pm to 8 pm, UHD South Deck, *Staff Council will sponsor 50 tickets.*
- April 2<sup>nd</sup>- Saint Arnold Art Car IPA 5K, *volunteers are needed.*
- April 3<sup>rd</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>-Arts and Communication Festival
- April 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>- National Student Employee Appreciation Week

### **President’s Report**

- Matching Campaign- Mr. Kwasikpui would match the \$5 donation of the first 50 people that donated. \$728 dollars were donated, and Mr. Kwasikpui matched the donations with \$250, for a total of \$978.
- UHD Day at the Capital- Approximately 80 students traveled to the capital on behalf of UHD to discuss the legislative agenda. The priorities include the following:
  - Enhancing Student Success- mental health services, financial literacy training, course redesign, increase academic advising support, increase academic tutoring, peer monitoring support, and English as a Second Language.
  - Dynamic Academic Environment and Impactful Knowledge Creation- the center will provide an interconnected hub between UHD’s academic community and alumni, businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies to assist with innovation, research, and entrepreneurial projects.
  - UHD Public Safety and Emergency Operation Command Center Building- will provide health and safety to UHD. The center will also provide a space for the cadet program.

- Property Acquisition- additional instructional and laboratory space, additional parking, a Police Department and Emergency Management Command building, and the expansion of campus life spaces
- Take Care- Please take care of yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually.

### **Additional Information**

- Ms. Jacobson adds that staff can contribute to the Gator Regalia Loaner Initiative Program by visiting [uhd.edu/give](http://uhd.edu/give), choosing “other,” and typing in Gator Regalia Loaner Fund. She also congratulates Mr. Kwasikpui on his Matching Campaign Initiative.
- Mr. Kwasikpui provides staff with the Suicide Crisis Lifeline number, 988.
- Ms. Ortega-Calvillo shares the cost of regalia, \$75 for undergraduates, \$99 for graduates, and \$35-40 for stoles. The loaner initiative is important because the bookstore carries only specific sizes.

### **Questions from Staff**

**Question:** Why can't UHD invest in LED indicators to reflect what parking spaces are available.

**Answer:** The question will be submitted to the facilities and parking departments.

**Question:** We received an email from DeVrone Suggs on 1/19/2022 regarding reimbursement of taxes for business/travel meals but I believe he is not interpreting the policy correctly. This is what was sent: In compliance with Texas Administrative Code Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter O, Rule 3.322 (Exempt Organizations), the following rules apply: • We cannot claim sales tax exemption for travel meals. • We cannot claim sales tax exemption for business meals when the employee makes payment using cash or a personal payment card. • The sales tax exemption can be claimed for business meals where the employee pays using a University P-Card or Travel Card (if in travel status), or if the meal is paid directly by the University. Travel Meals Business Meals in TX Reimbursements Do not present the certificate. Do not present the certificate. Direct Payments Do not present the certificate. Present the certificate (Vouchers and P/T Cards) (Vouchers - Remove sales tax from invoice) (P/T Cards - If more than \$10, contact the vendor to get it back) He interpreted this to mean that we will not be reimbursing taxes on business meals. But the policy is saying that they can't use the tax exemption certificate. UH Main Campus is reimbursing taxes. I have confirmed this with a Division Administrator over there. In fact it's in their policy MAPP 04.02.01B Section IX Part H: Business meals while Employee Traveling 1. Business meal expenses incurred during employee travel may be paid or reimbursed on a local Expense Report. Employees must present a copy of the university's Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate when they pay for the business meals with the university credit cards or vouchers (see MAPPs 04.01.03, 04.01.11, and 04.02.05). If employees pay for the meals out-of-pocket and request reimbursements, the certificate should not be presented, and the full amount of sales tax may be reimbursed. Meals for a group of employee travelers are not considered business meals. Each employee should pay for the meal and record the expense in the Concur Expense Report. 2. Business meals, including beverages, tax, and gratuity, shall not exceed \$100 per person. No exceptions will be made. 3. See MAPP 05.02.02, Official Functions and Discretionary Expenditures, for required documentation, approvals, and fund restrictions. I have brought this up to both DeVrone and Lorena and both insist that this is a State Policy. But if that is the case then why is UH still reimbursing taxes? My concern about this is twofold: 1) We are not correctly following policy as a state institution 2) this is a disservice to those who are on business meals and go often and are missing out on being reimbursed.

**Answer:** The below email was received from the UH System Office. The following information is provided to clarify when sales tax exemption can be claimed for business/travel meals in Texas. In

compliance with Texas Administrative Code Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter O, Rule (Exempt Organizations), the following rules apply: We cannot claim sales tax exemption for travel meals. We cannot claim sales tax exemption for business meals when the employee makes payment using cash or a personal payment card. The sales tax exemption can be claimed for business meals where the employee pays using a P-Card or Travel Card (if in travel status), or if the meal is paid directly by the University. *Contact information and further clarity will be requested and provided to staff.*

**Question:** What is the policy on incentives to those that donate to the Gator Fund? At some non-profit orgs if you commit to 1 or 2 days pay (taken out of over the course of a year) you get a “free day off” or some other incentive like wearing jeans for 3 months, etc. something that you don’t get reimbursed monetarily for. Also, is there any way IT could do a training on the great programs that we have access to (like Qualtrics, Microsoft Forms, etc.....) I had no idea that I was already set up with these accounts until I figured it out on my own.

**Answer:** IT does have training for the programs, and staff can request it on different platforms. (*The training link was added to the chat, along with the contact email*). The policy on donating comes from the IRS and states that any that is given in return must be deducted from the amount of that gift. UHD decided not to give donation incentive gifts. The Time Fraud State Law does not allow employees to obtain time off. The president would have to approve a jean incentive.

#### **General Q&A**

**Question:** There have been several changes to food services provided on campus; however, there is a lack of communication with staff.

**Answer:** We will certainly investigate the issue. An email has already been sent as well.

**Question:** Can Staff Council add the recording of the meeting to the Staff Council website?

**Answer:** Yes, we can investigate how we can add it.

Mr. Kwasikpui reminds everyone to please complete the Staff Climate Survey.

Ms. Jacobson gives an update on the Give to Gators Campaign. The campaign ends on March 31st, and we’ve collected about \$38,000. We hope that more people will donate, but we thank everyone who has donated.

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Kwasikpui at 10:45 am.