



Tulane Staff Advisory Council Minutes
Zoom Meeting
September 25, 2025

Attendees: (To be updated)

AGENDA ITEMS

Call to Order and Introduction of Guest Speaker(s) Judy Vitrano and John Patrick

Heather Marinello, Vice Chair of SAC, opened the meeting on September 25th, 2025, at 3:01 PM. She introduced herself and shared that Rosalind Butler, the chair, was traveling abroad. Heather mentioned that Harrison Giese would manage logins and take virtual attendance. Judy Vitrano, the General Manager of WaveWorks, was introduced as a special guest.

1. Wave Works Presentation

a. Oracle Cloud Implementation Project Update

Judy Vitrano provided an update on the university's Oracle Cloud implementation project, which began in July 2022 and is expected to go live in spring 2026. The project involved selecting Oracle Cloud as the software vendor and a system integration partner after an 18-month process involving over 100-200 university staff. The implementation includes converting data, reviewing requirements, and testing, with the project currently in a testing phase. The changes will affect over 10,000 employees and students, including new systems for benefits elections, absence management, and timekeeping, while maintaining existing systems like the Gibson Portal, Banner Student System, and Concur for travel booking.

b. Oracle Cloud Platform Implementation Updates

Vitrano discussed the implementation of a new Oracle Cloud Platform, highlighting features such as a digital assistant for employee queries, an HCM Help Desk, and Oracle Guided Learning for system navigation. She

explained changes to the chart of accounts, including expanded fields and a new university activity field, while emphasizing that the structure aligns with the finance system for improved reporting. Vitrano also introduced the use of the Project Portfolio Module for grants and other activities, noting enhanced functionalities like real-time encumbrances and improved transaction-level reporting, which will benefit researchers and faculty members by consolidating various activities in one place.

c. Tulane-Oracle Cloud Partnership Strategy

The strategic partnership between Tulane University and Oracle Cloud involves approximately 250 people working on the project, comprising 120 from Tulane, 120 from the system integrator, and 10 from Oracle. Vitrano explained the project structure, including an executive committee led by Patrick Norton and Robin Foreman, a steering committee involving various functional areas, and a large project team managing 23 work streams. John Patrick, the Director of Organizational Change, outlined the change management efforts, emphasizing communication, training, and support for users during the transition to Oracle Cloud, with extensive support available post-go-live.

d. WaveWorks Cloud Disaster Recovery Plan

Vitrano explained the disaster recovery plan for WaveWorks, which involves off-site data storage in North Carolina managed by the IT team. She highlighted the advantages of moving to Oracle Cloud, which provides multiple centers and reduces the risk of data loss due to local issues. Vitrano also discussed the transition from on-premise to cloud-based systems, emphasizing the benefits of cloud technology for easier upgrades and configurations. She expressed excitement about the project's potential to improve employee experience and access to information, while also mentioning upcoming technological advancements in the HCM area with artificial intelligence.

The meeting moved to the next agenda item.

2. Committee Updates

a. Benefits Committee

Mary Maywalt provided an update on the current stages of finalizing the 2026 benefits costs, highlighting the key drivers: insurance premiums, prescription costs, and utilization. She explained that Tulane has switched from Aon to

Hub International as its benefits consultant and hired Employer's Choice to negotiate with pharmacy companies. Mary emphasized their focus on negotiating the best prices while preserving choice and quality of coverage for employees. The committee reported on benefits plans, including open enrollment and cost drivers, with a focus on optimizing pharmacy and specialty drug spending while maintaining high-quality coverage. The committee discussed retirement changes, such as catch-up contributions for higher earners, and addressed concerns about benefit increases and salary adjustments not keeping pace with healthcare costs.

- b. **Budget Committee** (Elizabeth Tierney, SAC parliamentarian, shared a meeting is scheduled for Nov 17)

- c. **Committees on Committees** (no update)

- d. **Equal Opportunity & Institutional Equity**

Julia Broussard reported that there was ongoing work by the Equal Opportunity and Institutional Equity Committee regarding Title IX processes and membership updates, particularly when there are allegations of a previous act that falls under Title IX, such as sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. The committee is also looking at civil rights policies as they relate to the mandates issued by the new administration.

- e. **Information Technology** (The update was provided via chat by Dyaisha Orgah due to audio issues)

- i. AI and Data sensitivity – cloud-based solutions are cost-effective but require strong vendor vetting and legal agreements on data protection
- ii. Clarified that Zoom phone conversation storage does not save all calls, but there is a concern regarding privacy
- iii. Business School has adopted a new AI tool, BoodleBox
- iv. New tech requests must go through Business Relationship Managers
- v. Degree Works Maintenance Issue – is functioning but displays outdated course requirements. Automation is recommended to streamline future updates.

- f. **Physical Facility** (Elizabeth Tierney shared that a meeting is scheduled for late October)

- g. **Social Issues** (no update)

- h. **University Senate –**

Heather shared for new business

- i. There was an election for Senator at large
- ii. A first reading of the revisit of the Benefits Committee Membership language, which will be revisited at the next meeting

- iii. A first reading of changes to the faculty handbook regarding conduct, which will be revisited at the next meeting
- iv. There was a motion by SLA that there be a review by EOI & E committee on the process by which the Title IX office evaluates and advises on the acceptance of admission to Tulane University.
- v. President Fitts indicated that we have reached new records in research and fundraising. Tulane's endowment returns on investment increased by 2% exceeding other universities across the country. However, it was acknowledged that some funding was loss this year.
- vi. Incoming class numbers have increased
- vii. Building projects updates were provided for the uptown and downtown campuses.

3. Old Business

a. **Toy Drive**

A discussion opened up regarding the toy drive, with Trina Beck and Marie Maywalt highlighting the challenges of organizing it and suggesting alternative community service projects.

b. **Social Media**

Roz Butler proposed creating a social media platform ad hoc committee, and staff were encouraged to email SAC@Tulane.edu if interested.

c. **Return to Work Policy**

Heather Marinello, vice-chair, provided an overview of the return-to-office policy, noting that Tulane leadership is reviewing it and seeking clarification on gray areas of implementation.

4. New Business

a. **Staff Appreciation Updates**

The staff appreciation football game for October 9th was discussed, with volunteering opportunities available between 5:30-8:30 PM. Mary Letsch announced upcoming events, including Employee Appreciation Week (October 6-10), Benefits Open Enrollment (October 27-November 14), and staff recognition for milestone anniversaries to take place on December 11.

5. Next Meeting

- a. October 23 at the Business School, Room 460 from 3 – 4:30 PM

6. Adjournment

- a. Motion made and seconded by SAC rep that the meeting had been adjourned