



TULANE UNIVERSITY
Staff Advisory Council

The Tulane Staff Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Business School – Room 460
October 23, 2025

Attendees: Auranyd Alvarado, Shantrella Baptiste, Trina Beck, Julia Broussard, Rosalind Butler, Robert Carter III, Leisha Deriso, Christine Fisher, Jason Fujinaga, Bobbie Garner-Coffie, Harrison Giese, Katherine Gruber, Cara Guilbeau, Dale Hall, Bennetta Horne, Michelle Illidge, Mary Letsch, Analene McCullough, Jason McFarland, Dyaisha Orgah, Stacey Stanson, Tyrus Stewart, Carl Thomas Jr., Elizabeth Tierney, Tyler Tran, Phillip Williams, and Austen Williams

Excused: Kellie DeBroeck, Tara Desko, Nadia France Jenkins, and Heather Marinaro

Absent: Lesley Bertrand, Bethany Branson, Vanessa Durbin, Sarah Entress, Will Ferbos, Theresa Glissman, Samantha Grabert, Brenton Guerin, Crystal Guillemet-Williams, Katherine Hague, Kellie Jordan, Amanda LaBella, Korey Lane, Marie Maywalt, Carrie Moulder, Alundis Pledge, Shawn Potter, Amelia Prados, Virginia Romero, Angelique Smith, Wendy Stark, and Alexa Sturtz

AGENDA

Call to Order and introduction of guest speaker Jonathan Small

Rosalind Butler, SAC chair, called the Oct 23 SAC meeting to order at 3:11 PM. Before moving into the agenda items, the chair recognized members who volunteered for the Staff and Faculty Employee Appreciation Football Game on October 9, and they were asked to stand. The volunteers were recognized and applauded for their commitment and willingness to serve at the event.

The meeting officially moved into the slated agenda items.

1. Roll Call of SAC Representatives
2. **Reading and Approval of Meeting Minutes** – it was noted by Trina Beck that the statement that the University experienced a 2% increase in endowment was inaccurate. The University had a 2% increase in endowment investment returns, which is the highest among universities.
3. **Human Resource Updates** - Jonathan Small, VP of H.R., provided updates on the 2026 Employee Benefits package.
 - a. Publix National is the new benefit consultant for Tulane University
 - b. Open enrollment begins Oct 27
 - c. Employees will receive two cards: medical and pharmacy
 - d. There will be a 4% increase in health care coverage rates, which is lower than the national average. (10% or >)
 - e. There are three health plans: HRA, POS plan, and HDHP Plan, each with its own deductible and out-of-pocket maximum. (Please see the Tulane Health Benefits website)
 - f. LCMC is the partnering healthcare provider for Tulane, which offers the university a more affordable rate for employees. This was achieved through administrative negotiations and network adjustments.
 - g. Employees can go to other facilities, such as Ochsner, but will have a higher deductible and out-of-pocket expenses. (Ochsner was unwilling to negotiate its rates.) Please visit the Tulane Health Benefits page for more information.)
 - h. Deductible and Out of Pocket Coordination- If you reach your maximum deductible with LCMC, but choose to use Ochsner services for additional healthcare, your deductible maximum will increase. The previously met LCMC maximum will carry over, but you will be required to meet the maximum costs of the Ochsner facility. (Please see Tulane Health Benefits website)
 - i. Weight-loss Management Drugs (GLP-1)
 - i. Wegovy, Ozempic, etc. will still be offered, but the cost will increase to \$150 per month. The university could no longer offset the cost of the drug, originally \$25-30 per month, due to GLP-1 astronomical increase in cost.
 - j. Jonathan expressed confidence in the new plan due to:
 - i. Negotiations kept rates below the national average
 - ii. Participants retain flexibility in where they receive care
 - iii. Without adjustments, premiums could have risen 10% or more

4. Officer Reports

- a. The University Senate Committee report was given by Bobbie Garner-Coffie
 - i. A conversation was introduced regarding the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee under the President's Commission on Tulane Values. Their role would be to:
 - Upholding and strengthening Tulane's core shared values — both current and aspirational.
 - Ensuring these values guide decision-making and support the university's mission.
 - Encouraging alignment between institutional behavior and individual actions within the Tulane community.
 - ii. Ad Hoc Purpose:
 - Focus specifically on Institutional Neutrality.
 - Review and develop guidance around how Tulane, as an institution, should navigate public statements, social issues, and individual expression
 - iii. Scope and Key Questions
 - When faculty or staff post on social media, are they doing so in a personal capacity or Tulane representative
 - How should Tulane approach public issues that spark debate or controversy while maintaining academic freedom and institutional fairness?
 - How can the university ensure equity and consistency when responding to concerns about speech, expression, or representation?
 - iv. Context and Rationale
 - The topic was prompted by recent national incidents, including cases where individuals at other institutions faced disciplinary action for online activity.
 - The goal is not to limit free expression, but to clarify boundaries and ensure transparency when it's personally stated vs institutionally, and for balanced handling of such issues across the university.
 - v. Areas for Review
 - Academic freedom

- Public and political discourse
- Religious and scholarly interests
- Personal versus institutional identity in communication

b. Board of Administrators (No updates, to be held in January)

5. Senate Committee Reports

a. Budget committee – (no update, committee meeting on Jan 17)

b. Committees on Committee (no updates)

c. Equal Opportunities & Institutional Equity Committee report was reported by Julia Broussard.

i. The committee presented findings on student-athlete admissions and transfers, especially cases involving prior misconduct (e.g., Title IX concerns) Key recommendations:

- Increase transparency regarding the process and policies.
- Formalize decision escalation
- Expand prevention engagement to involve more campus units in sexual violence prevention work, integrating it into existing programs.
- Standardize admissions training
- Address inconsistencies in the vetting process for graduate and professional students

ii. Next steps for the committee are:

- Upcoming In-Form Review Process scheduled for January

d. Faculty Staff Benefits – (no update, committee met in early September)

e. Information Technology Committee report was given by Tyler Tran

i. Classroom and Teaching Design Initiative – has six strategic plans related to degree design and classroom improvement. Four areas for focus

- Pedagogical innovation — improving teaching methods and instructional flexibility.
- Prototype classrooms — designing two to three pilot classrooms to test new layouts, technology, and learning tools.
- Enhanced digital integration — ensuring digital systems better support both faculty and student learning needs.

ii. Degree Works Update – the academic progress tracking system is currently under review to improve functionality for students and advisors.

f. Physical Facilities (no update, committee will be meeting on Oct 29)

- g. Social Issues – (no update, Analene McCulloch reported the committee has not been active and has had no success with reaching out to committee members. Roz Butler indicated that she would follow up with the Social Issues committee chair

6. SAC Committee Reports

- a. Toy Drive – the council revisited organizing a toy drive for the non-profit CASA. Trina Beck indicated that we may have missed the window for toy collection, as CASA requests their donations by the first week of December. It was agreed that, given logistical issues and time constraints, pulling this off would be a challenge. It was then suggested that we offer an internal toy drive for a Tulane family in need. Roz Butler indicated that although this was a thoughtful idea, the council has to be sensitive to privacy issues. Other suggestions that were made include:
 - i. Volunteering with CASA to wrap gifts
 - ii. Collecting gift cards
 - iii. Individual online donations
- b. Social media – Roz Butler indicated that building a social media platform will allow SAC to highlight all the good work that's being done and encourage other staff to get involved. Two members have volunteered to serve on an ad hoc committee, Aura Alvarado and Katherine Gruber. The UMC will be contacted to determine guidelines for establishing a Tulane-affiliated social media account.

7. Old Business –

- a. Return to Work policy – Roz Butler reported that SAC officers, along with Phillip Williams, met with Jonathan Small and Will Ferbos to discuss the rollout of the RTW plan and ambiguity around implementing across departments. Will brought the concerns before the TU administration, and the following updates will be made to the HR website:
 - Add context regarding Tulane's position regarding flexible working arrangements (FWA)
 - Highlight each type of arrangement available to employees
 - Include examples of exceptions
 - Describe the type of FWA that can be approved at the departmental level
 - Clearly state that the policy applies to staff
 - Equitable enforcement remedy:
 - Training sessions that include common scenarios to equip managers regarding the application of the policy

- Scaffolding to understand the range of options available to the manager
- Messaging to managers and department heads

Leadership is still working on several other items and opportunities as it relates to the RTW policy. SAC reps stated that the RTW policy has other implications that were discussed under new business.

8. **New Business** – Transportation and Parking concerns. Analene McCullough discussed that the RTW policy does not address the parking and transportation issues. On-demand shuttle services were offered but are inconsistent and require 24-hour notice, which contradicts the term on-demand.

Another parking issue brought to the floor was the underutilized spaces allocated for faculty, while staff still struggle to secure parking. Trina Beck suggested that the council invite the director of shuttle and transportation to the November meeting.

9. **Open Floor**

- a. Bobbie Garner-Coffie would like to see an open swap meet for staff. It would be an opportunity for staff to showcase their skills and professional offerings outside the office. Roz Butler also suggested that this would be a good place for the SAC social media platform and website.
- b. Roz Butler suggested that each committee should establish short and long-term goals so that the council can celebrate its good work and quantify its impact.

10. Next Meeting on November 20 (virtual)

11. Meeting Adjourned at 4:32