



TULANE UNIVERSITY
Staff Advisory Council

The Tulane Staff Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Maurin Family Dining Room, Business School, Room 460

September 17, 2026

Present: Trina Beck, Lesley Bertrand, Jade Byrd, Robert Carter III, Joey Couvillon, Natalia Daar, Leisha DeRiso, Sarah Entress, Will Ferbos, Christine Fisher, Bobbie Garner-Coffie, Becky Gipson, Benjamin Griffith, Katherine Gruber, Dr. Cara R. Guilbeau, Michelle Illidge, Laura Kreller, Amanda La Bella, Mary Letsch, Danielle Martin, Jason McFarland, Ted Moree, Diana Noveck, Desiree Packard, Stacey Stanson, Wendy Stark, Tyrus Stewart, Alexa Sturtz, Carl Thomas Jr, Elizabeth Tierney, Maria Villafranco, Phillip Williams, Austen Williams

Absent: Nancy Anderson, Bethany Branson, Genevieve Burguières, Rosalind Butler, Catie May Carey, Nina Cortes, Tara Desko, Ashley Ernst, Jason Fujinaga, Harrison Giese, Todd Gitlin, Theresa Glissman, Samantha Grabert, Brenton Guerin, Crystal Guillemet Davis, Katherine Hague, Dale Hall, Korey Lane, Brayden Luneau, Marie Maywalt, Analene McCullough, Valerie McGinley, Kalil Mosquera, Dyaisha Orgah, Larry Overton, Shawn Potter, Amelia Prados, Ashley Robison, Daniel Senentz Jr, Jonathan Small, Angelique Smith, Douglas Stream, Ashley Toney, Tyler Tran, Sharia Tyler

Community Members in Attendance: Zera H. Bowie, Jamie Calvert, Leslie Monson, Trinity Williams

Agenda

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:09 PM by Phillip Williams, SAC Chair. Williams stepped away to attend the Board meeting and turned facilitation over to Dyaisha Orgah, SAC Vice Chair.

II. Roll Call of SAC Representatives

Attendance was captured through sign-in, and formal roll call was waived.

III. Review and Approve Minutes

The August meeting minutes were approved as presented, without opposition, and will be posted to the SAC website.

IV. Announcements from HR – Mary Letsch

Professional Development Week is underway, with both in-person and virtual sessions. WaveWorks drop-in sessions remain popular and continue to be offered uptown and downtown.

Upcoming dates:

- Employee Appreciation Week (Oct. 19–23)
- Employee Appreciation Football Game (Oct. 24)
- Staff Recognition Social (Dec. 10)

V. Officer Reports

University Senate Committee – Bobbie Garner-Coffie reported on the following:

- SAC received a shout-out for its contribution to the President’s recent email addressing feedback from the listening sessions.
- The university is shifting more meetings and activity downtown in anticipation of a growing employee presence there. Members were encouraged to incorporate the downtown campus into their work.
- E-bike policy remains under discussion, with healthy debate and continued safety concerns, particularly around storage. Options discussed included walking e-bikes to bike racks once on campus, a docking station on a university street, and a dedicated lane. Members noted it can be hard to tell where city streets end and university streets begin. Golf cart safety and registering bicycles with TUPD were also raised.
- Members with strong e-bike safety concerns were asked to email the SAC address so they can be raised as a community rather than as individual perspectives.

Board of Tulane University – The Board had not yet met.

VI. University Committee Reports

- i. Budget – Did not meet
- ii. Committee on Committees – No one present
- iii. Equal Opportunity & Institutional Equity – Has not met
- iv. Faculty/Staff Benefits – Elizabeth Tierney attended and will distribute the minutes via Teams and email
- v. Information Technology – Dyaisha Orgah reported that the committee met for the first time this year:

- Tulane AI, powered by Nebula One, was introduced as a secure institutional AI platform to replace fragmented use of outside AI tools that raised data privacy, FERPA, HIPAA, and IP concerns. It runs within Tulane's Microsoft Azure environment with single sign-on, private user workspaces, and access to multiple AI models through one interface. User data is isolated and is not used to train external models.
- Governance is still developing along an academic track (Provost's office) and an administrative track (COO's Center of Excellence). Some advanced capabilities remain restricted until governance matures, and institution-wide AI agents are planned.
- The initial September quota is about \$10 of usage per user, intentionally low to measure demand and cost. Departmental and grant-funded allocations are planned. Faculty asked about enterprise agreements and access to frontier models, and IT acknowledged the need.
- IT stated that recent Canvas slowdowns are unrelated to Tulane AI.
- Pathify will replace the aging Gibson intranet platform, which is nearing end of life with security and maintenance concerns. No timeline is available yet, and further discussion is expected at upcoming committee meetings; any timeline will be shared at the next staff update.
- vi. Physical Facilities – No one present
- vii. Social Issues – Has not met

VII. **SAC Committee Reports**

i. **Community Service – Roz Butler**

The committee reactivated the annual Toy Drive. After reviewing about ten nonprofits, the committee selected One Accord Ministries (Pastor Andy), a small nonprofit that delivers toys to a different New Orleans neighborhood each year. Gifts should be \$20 or less. Drop-off locations will be posted on the SAC website, and University Communications will help provide unified promotion. Representatives were asked to share the information in their schools and departments.

ii. **Health and Wellness – Bethany Branson**

Not present; no report was given.

iii. **WaveWorks – Elizabeth Tierney**

The committee held its first meeting with 11 members and established a working framework. Members are submitting issues, routing, and potential solutions into a shared spreadsheet, which Elizabeth Tierney and Natalia Daar will consolidate. A second meeting next week will review the issues and vote on which to pursue first.

VIII. **Old Business**

a. **Posting of election results**

- i. Motion from Ted Moree: "I moved that future election results for SAC representatives and proxies, including candidate names and vote tallies, be published to the SAC website and announced via the same channels the election itself was announced within one week of the polls closing."
- ii. Members discussed the value of transparency and the difficulty of coordinating announcements during the annual officer transition. Concerns were raised that publishing vote tallies could discourage participation by embarrassing candidates who receive few votes.
- iii. Roz Butler moved to amend the motion to publish the names of winners without vote tallies. The amendment was seconded and accepted by the maker of the motion.
- iv. The amended motion passed by hand vote with more than half of voting members in favor. Proxies were confirmed as eligible to speak and vote when authorized by the absent representative by email to SAC.

IX. New Business

a. WaveWorks professional development sessions

- i. Michelle Illidge announced four WaveWorks sessions during Professional Development Week: system tips and tricks, an Accounts Payable session with Lisa LeBlanc, and sessions with HR and finance experts. Representatives were asked to encourage colleagues to attend.

b. SAC representation at University Senate

- i. A staff member asked for more SAC presence at Senate meetings. Will Ferbos explained that the number of staff seats is set by the Senate constitution and bylaws and cannot simply be adjusted, though the request will be reviewed. It was noted that SAC meetings are open to all staff unless the officers close them, while Senate meetings are closed to non-members and invited guests.

c. Pickleball courts – staff access

- i. A director asked whether staff could receive free or early-morning access to the new pickleball courts and a simpler registration process. The courts on Broadway are managed by Athletics/Campus Rec, and staff were directed to contact them. Mary Letsch, who meets regularly with Athletics, will pass along the feedback.

d. Tulane AI

- i. Bobbie Garner-Coffie encouraged faculty and staff to use the platform at tulaneai.tulane.edu for Tulane work rather than personal accounts. The platform is being developed based on user feedback, chats are not monitored, and trainings are offered monthly through December. A member reported receiving no confirmation after

registering for training; confirmations may arrive only as calendar invites, and Bobbie will raise the issue with the team.

X. **Next Meeting**

Wednesday, October 21, 2026, 3:00–4:30 PM, downtown.

XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 PM.