

Minutes

UWF Staff Senate

Meeting

via Google Meet

University of West Florida

November 12, 2025

The meeting of the UWF Staff Senate was called to order at 1:30 pm by Staff Senate President Ethan Henley.

Attendance was taken by sign-in of Senators and online participants via Google Meet. The following Senators were present:

Olivia Ashcraft, Chip Chism, Nadya Collins, Marisa Elmore, Zachary Farrington, Stephanie Fenner, Ann Gilbar, Ethan Henley, Brooke Karas, Mikey LeFevre, Sarah Madaris, Angie Quenan, Monti Stone, Sandra Taylor, Ivan Zarate Rosas.

Proxy Attendance: Jennifer Andrews.

Absent: Sierra Ebert, Brett Haskell, Alex Miller, Keyaundra Mobley, Billy Nelson, Megan Veach, Pam Weeks.

Guests: Manny Diaz, Jr. – Interim University President; Dr. Angela Bryan - Director of Institutional Effectiveness; Amber Nussbaumer; Stephanie Ellis.

## **Administrative Reports**

### **A. Executive Report – Manny Diaz, Jr. – Interim University President.**

- a. Return to campus announcement – the move is system/ region wide and not an independent, UWF decision. There will be areas of flexibility for certain types of positions and accommodations will be reviewed on an individual basis in collaboration with HR.
- b. Holiday schedule – the actual regulation has been pulled back because it became a discussion about Juneteenth which is not what it was intended to be; looking at balancing the staff's request to have a certain number of days and desire to have Thanksgiving off; even though it won't be in the regulation but an announcement should be released soon for next year with our intent is to have spring break off and continue to have Thanksgiving break off; we won't have Columbus Day off since we need that academic time and we lose a Monday due to Thanksgiving; the intention is to provide employees with the opportunity to have meaningful time off; prefer giving the week of Thanksgiving and spring break off than have one-off holidays;

that doesn't mean that we may not exercise something else in the summer like July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. The intent is to announce ahead of time so everyone can plan. Even though it's not in the regulation, we can revisit amending the regulation for next fall to make it more of a permanent structure; but in the meantime this is how we will navigate the holiday schedule; we did not want this to be a discussion about one holiday over another but more of a balanced approach of providing our employees the opportunity to spend time with their families and make it meaningful and balancing with academic time.

- c. The possibility of allowing OPS employees to work during spring break has been brought up but discussing with HR; will look at options.
- d. Budget – in pretty good shape; starting to be more conservative; deficit when it comes to the employer side of the benefits that's responsible at the university so we are going to take some of our recurring money and close that gap; that will put us in a position so we have a little bit of a cushion and being cautious going into the legislative session; looking at increasing campus safety with the increase in enrollment and size of our institution; important to have the right number of officers and more visibility on campus. Looking at solutions to improve the police force on campus and technology to make a safer campus.
- e. Board of Trustees meeting tomorrow; committee meetings; special board meeting tomorrow to ratify Dan Lucas as new CFO since it's a Cabinet position; agenda for December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting is still being developed.

#### **B. Guest Speaker - Dr. Angela Bryan - Director of Institutional Effectiveness**

- a. SACSCOC reaffirmation – site visit went very well with no recommendations.
- b. Next month when the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meets that they will vote to reaffirm us; we would be good for 10 years; and will not have to do this again until 2035; except for the legislation that requires us to change accreditors and we have to do that in the year following a successful reaffirmation.
- c. We have started working on that and have some of the pre-work out of the way, including our Board of Trustees approving our move to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which is another accreditor like SACSCOC. Our Board approved that in September; we also had to receive permission from the US Department of Education (ED) to change accreditors since accreditation is tied to Title IV money.
- d. Still waiting on a few other things to happen but the process with the HLC will begin in January; they have an accelerated process for seeking initial accreditation and is designed for institutions like ourselves that are in good standing with another similar type of accreditor; will start process in January; hope to get a vote by HLC's Board of Trustees in November 2027. Final documents by May 2027; site visit anticipated in summer 2027; initial vote for accreditation November 2027; (keeping in mind this is all an estimate since it's based on when we submit things etc.) ; at that point with

initial accreditation we will go back to the Department of Education to resign relationship with SACSCOC which could happen in 2028; if we receive initial accreditation in 2027 with HLC, reaffirmation will be in year 4.

## **2. Approval of Minutes and Treasury Report**

Edits to minutes – Olivia Ashcraft - change “Ashley” to Olivia; and Mikey suggested removing the extra comma in the attendance section.

Motion to approve the November Meeting Minutes as amended.

Motion: Mikey LeFevre.

Second by: Sandra Taylor.

Passed unanimously.

Staff Senate Treasurer, Brooke Karas, shared there are no updates to the Treasury Report.

## **3. Supervisor of Elections**

-No updates.

## **4. Committee Reports**

- Employee Emergency Fund Committee – Staff Senate Treasurer, Brooke Karas, shared there are no updates.
- ERAP – Sandra Taylor shared an email will go out next Monday with all the information; nominations will open December 1, 2025, and close January 23, 2026.
- Hand to Paw –Brett Haskell shared (via email) more information to come.
- Holidayfest – dates: 12/3: Cookies & Cocoa event; 12/10 – downtown event.
- Textbook Scholarship Committee – Chip Chism – had preliminary committee meeting.

## **5. New Business**

- a. Staff Senate engagement and promotion – discussed making Staff Senate more visible on campus; talked about ideas including tabling and other options on how to make ourselves more resourceful to our constituents and visible on campus; Mikey LeFevre mentioned making new employees aware of Staff Senate during new hire orientation and onboarding process with HR; Ann Gilbar mentioned having a Staff Senate ribbon for nametags; Mikey LeFevre asked about Staff Senate representation on the Board of Trustees similar to SGA and Faculty Senate; Sandra Taylor had ideas about an ornament exchange during Cookies & Cocoa but possibly look into for next year.

- b. Argo Pantry support – As we approach Thanksgiving and the holiday season, please remember that our Argo Pantry is always in need of support.

**6. Old Business**

- a. United Way Campaign will launch January 12<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> 2026 (more to come).

**7. Open Forum**

- a. Olivia Ashcraft asked about the Presidential search update; application period closed on 10/31 and is currently in review stage.
- b. Ethan shared Explore UWF will be on Saturday, and reminder football game on Saturday as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angie Quenan – Secretary

**Staff Senate Executive Board**

President- Ethan Henley

Vice President – Zachary Farrington

Supervisor of Elections- Sandra Taylor

Secretary- Angie Quenan

Treasurer- Brooke Karas

Senator at Large- Chip Chism

Communications- Olivia Ashcraft