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University of Montana Staff Senate Meeting  
Minutes

University of Montana Staff Senate

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10-11-2023

### Documents from the October 11th, 2023 meeting of the University of Montana Staff Senate

University of Montana--Missoula. Staff Senate

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## October 2023 Agenda

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

10 am - 12 pm

UC 225

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 963 1968 6875

[Box Link](#)

1. Welcome – Call to Order (5 minutes)
  - a. Roll Call
  - b. Quorum Present
  - c. Welcome Guests
2. Q&A Session with Shawn Blair, Interim Director of Human Resource Services (45-60 minutes)
3. Business (20-25 minutes)
  - a. Approval of Minutes:
    - i. [September 13, 2023](#)
  - b. Vote in new senator Astella Schepp
  - c. Information about Employee Wellness Program (Carrie)
  - d. Corbin Hall Tiles update (Coco)
  - e. FY24 Playbook Objective 6 review
  - f. Staff usage of the UM Food Pantry/Can the Cats
4. Campus-wide Committee Updates (10-15 minutes)
  - a. University Committees
  - b. Search/Hiring Committees
  - c. Others?
5. Committee Updates (20-40 minutes)
  - a. Bylaws & Resolutions
  - b. Communication & Visibility
  - c. Data
  - d. Professional Development
  - e. Wellness and Retention
  - f. Scholarship/Staff Awards
6. Share Your Successes (if time allows)
7. Public Comment (5-10 minutes)
8. Adjourn



## October 2023 Minutes

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10 am - 12 pm

UC 225

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Meeting ID: 963 1968 6875

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1. Welcome – Call to Order (5 minutes)
  - a. Roll Call
    - i. Present In-person: Anderlik (L), Badzioch (L), Calenberg, Carter, Corbin, Cowley, Darling, Elensky, Ignacio (L), Jensen (L), Kneebone, Krause, T. Magnuson, Ponce, Ruediger, Smith, Spooner, Thompson, Tucker
    - ii. Present Online: Beccari, Gray, Harrington (L), Hopkins\*(L), Leggins, J. Magnuson, Malinak (L), Mason (L), Matson
    - iii. Absent:
    - iv. Excused: Andrews\*, Kurien
  - b. Quorum Present
    - i. (Y/N) Yes
  - c. Welcome Guests
    - i. Astella Schepp, Drew Murray, Kit Edington, Ben Froemming, Susan Purdum, Sarah Brethauer, Mary Ellen Farrar
2. Q&A Session with Shawn Blair, Interim Director of Human Resource Services (45-60 minutes)
  - a. Included in a separate document.
  - b. Coco Ponce: Over 50 questions submitted. Unfeasible to cover in an hour. Prioritized questions that received multiple inquiries. Will try to get answers to other questions from Shawn Blair after the meeting.
  - c. Shawn Blair:
    - i. History: Director for Employee Relations, previous Compensation Manager. Been with HR office for a little over 7 years.
      1. Coco Ponce: This session is exciting because it is Important to have communications between HR and Staff Senate. Staff are the majority in our workforce.
    - ii. HR is going through changes and will hopefully be a better touch point for employees.
    - iii. Redoing how we recruit.
    - iv. For years, it has been the office to go to get paid and not all the other services.
    - v. Looking at having periodical sessions based on a talking point / topic, such as compensation classification, or career advancement, taking place in the future.
    - vi. Career advancement is something that HR is prioritizing as part of our recruitment effort.
  - d. Questions
    - i. Q: What is the Mission of HRS, especially when it comes to general perception, the current state of affairs, and staffing in HRS?
      1. Mission is to be consistent with our prosperity mission – to empower prosperity.

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2. Must be an approachable office.
3. Make the University of Montana a destination workplace
  - a. Get the word out that we have a diverse group of people – chefs, plumbers, etc.
- ii. Q: What are some of the obstacles and challenges facing HR?
  1. Creating a culture shift. It takes time.
  2. Staffing and getting Liaisons in place to help interface with people
  3. Growing university – needs are growing and recruiting employees in a market with challenges, such as housing, is out there.
    - a. Will give a good barometer about recruiting practices as they take on more people.
- iii. Q: What are ways Staff Senate can partner with HRS to provide support and open communication, staff wellbeing and retention
  1. Extremely important.
  2. Constructive feedback and ideas from a different perspective
    - a. Liasons in the future
    - b. Ask HR email is great
- iv. Q: Who can classify staff go to about raises, and merit increases? Does the union do that? Is it all about the legislature? What about base rate pay when people have started on different days.
  1. Hiring rate for a permanent employee can not be higher than the lowest rate of the same classification position.
  2. Compensation would be a good training for staff senate on compensation
    - a. Staff member (unable to determine from meeting recording) – A great deal of logistics for career ladders. Training would be appreciated.
      - i. Shawn Blair – don't hesitate to set up consultation. All part of the approachability goals for HR
  3. Our pay plans allow great flexibility
  4. Longevity is not part of base rates or hiring rates
  5. Merit, career ladders are direct with supervisor and not union
  6. Coco Ponce: To boil it down, if you want to do any career ladder or in-range progression, a consultation would be the next step?
    - a. Shaun Blair: If there is a business need for a higher level position, then yes. If you take nothing else away from this session, we are an office of approachability. We want more contact. Reach out.
- v. Q: Who should an employee contact when they feel there is an abuse of power going on between a staff member and their supervisor?
  1. That is such a generalized question.
    - a. If there is a violation of policy – HR or Title IV Office depending
    - b. If there is a poor relationship or spoken to poorly or asked to do things outside duties – Shaun Blair and HR and partners.
    - c. Safety concerns are also handled by HR.
    - d. If you aren't sure, reach out to HR.
    - e. Coco Ponce- What about Conflict and Resolution?

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- i. So, if a conflict needs to be worked out, would that go to Conflict and Resolution?
    - 1. Shaun Blair- HR. They will work through and bring in partners like Conflict and Resolution.
  - ii. Senator (recording did not allow an identification) asked about using the MUS compliance hotline.
    - 1. Shaun Blair – Yes. Any resource although he would appreciate to know what is going on so that they can start working on the issue.
  - iii. Alex Anderlik – would be remis if he didn't plug the union. The Union will also work with other parties to come to a resolution.
- vi. Q: Flex Time. Can we go over the policy for Flex Time? Why do some supervisors get to decide that some people get to use Flex Time and others do not, creating resentment for those who can not use it. What is the policy for overtime and flextime? Example – overtime was expected but flex time was encouraged.
  - 1. Complicated. Typically, LOAs are exempted.
    - a. We need to probably do a training session on this.
  - 2. Flex time, in general, is to be used in the same week. Unless you are in the bargaining agreement, then that is over 8 hours per day.
    - a. If you worked a different week to make up for an upcoming doctor's appointment, it would be overtime.
  - 3. Flex time must be made in advance and planned with your supervisor.
  - 4. Overtime and comp time. If you are expected to work an extra two hours, it would be overtime
  - 5. Supervisors must be able to manage their departments, so these policies can account for that.
  - 6. People under the same circumstances in the same department should be being treated the same.
  - 7. Shaun Blair gave an example of a lady who came into the office every day at 7:45 every day to do office chores. She logged it and ended up filing for the overtime for all the years she tracked.
- vii. Is UM HR doing anything to speed up the hiring practices? What considerations are there to speed up hiring practices from when a job is posted to get the best candidate?
  - 1. High priority. #1 thing they have focused on over the last few months
  - 2. Number of approvals has been high with some having up to 12 approvals before the hiring process can move through. Some are unnecessary, and people need to be trusted to do their job to ensure the position is needed and funded.
  - 3. 6.5 weeks (current average) to 3 weeks is the current working goal for the process.
  - 4. Rapid response to get people from places that are closing to get good employees before others do. Possibly getting them on as a temp and then working through the full process.
  - 5. Get qualified employees. Advertise the breadth of jobs on campus. Get the word out.
    - a. Ashley Smith – Likes the idea. Saves people from their worst day when they get laid off.

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- viii. Q: Partners on benefits. Currently staff can only add dependents who they are married to. Domestic partners can be added in some employment environments. Will that change soon?
  - 1. Shaun Blair – No. It's a much larger change across the system and with the provider.
- ix. Q: Last fall the Senate turned in a resolution on performance reviews. Any response?
  - 1. HR pushed the mandatory review forward in bargaining and now it is part of the collective bargaining agreement.
    - a. Supervisors need to provide comprehensive reviews.
      - i. Benefits the employee to have a track record for improvement and growth
      - ii. It is a problem when HR from gets requests to terminate when the employee has no performance record.
      - iii. Supervisors can be held accountable for non-compliance
    - b. Trey Magnuson: Do you know the percent of compliance?
      - i. A software package could help track compliance for mandatory review as it is unknown now.
      - ii. Any number would be speculation.
    - c. Coco Ponce: Objective #6 in the fiscal year playbook will be discussed later in this meeting. This covers encouragement of supervisors to give evaluations and we need to see if objective #6 is getting done.
- e. Coco Ponce: Will send questions over so Shaun can look over and hopefully answer more or meet with people.
  - i. Shaun Blair – if there is another topic to talk about, let him know and they can work it out to partner up.
- f. Trey Magnuson- Professional Development committee is forming a community of practices and they need to who is in all classifications. Who be contacted?
  - i. Libby Newman - compensation classification
  - ii. Trey Magnuson: This will allow people doing similar jobs to be in contact with each other.

### 3. Business (20-25 minutes)

- a. Approval of Minutes:
  - i. [September 13, 2023](#)
    - 1. Approve: Cat Cowley
    - 2. Second: Ashley Smith
      - a. Minutes approved
- b. Vote in new senator Astella Schepp
  - i. Motion to approve: Badzioch
  - ii. Second: Smith
    - 1. Vote - Unanimous
- c. Information about the Employee Wellness Program (Carrie)
  - i. Virgin pulse program, free Fitbit concepts Anne has them in HR, open to anyone over the age of 16 or 18 on their health plan, can get money for finishing challenges, can get \$40 per quarter to their online store.



- ii. EAP (Employee assistance program), counseling sessions, employees try to go through Curry but get denied because they are staff members, not students, help with work-life balance, mitigation plans, credit monitoring, will preparations, interactive tools.
    - iii. Hinge health program: If you need to do PT but don't want to go to a doctor, you can use this one at home, and they design a program just for you. All programs are free of cost.
    - iv. Well-champion people, challenges around campus, Anne and Neil
      - 1. Mason – Q:
  - d. Corbin Hall Tiles update (Coco)
    - i. November 9<sup>th</sup>, unveiling the plaque for the tiles to give context to the architecture and recognizing symbols to why they exist.
  - e. FY24 Playbook Objective 6 review
    - i. [https://www.umt.edu/strategy/annual\\_playbook/objectives-projects.php](https://www.umt.edu/strategy/annual_playbook/objectives-projects.php)
    - ii. Most people are not aware of the institutional projects so Staff Senate was encourage to go over.
      - 1. Helps ensure these are taking place
    - iii. Are we following best practices for recruiting?
    - iv. Are we seeing the changes HR has promised taking place?
      - 1. Faster turnaround? Better candidates?
        - a. If not, we need to provide feedback
    - v. Are managers getting training? Are training opportunities being supported by Deans and Directors?
    - vi. Trey Magnuson – The first objective is for new employees, the second objective is for managers, and the third objective is for HR. Staff is being left out of these objectives. They are not focusing on the staff.
      - 1. Needs to see when the university is putting more emphasis on the betterment of staff.
      - 2. Many good things Shaun said but there must be substance.
      - 3. Should be institutional and not by sector
    - vii. Are we getting mediation when there is a problem?
    - viii. Coco Ponce: Wants to give good feedback at the end of the year on Objective 6 to help with the FY 25 playbook
    - ix. Alecia Grey – Shaun didn't give a straight answer on conflict resolution but Objective 6, with Build Deeper, outlines that HR should be the one stop shop.
  - f. Staff usage of the UM Food Pantry/Can the Cats
    - i. Increased usage of the food pantry by staff
    - ii. Discussion ensued on general questions on Pantry donations and needs. [UM Food Pantry \(umt.edu\)](https://www.umt.edu/food-pantry)
    - iii. Cowley: Oddpitch brewing. 10% of beer sales and art sales.
- 4. Campus-wide Committee Updates (10-15 minutes)
  - a. Due to time constraints, this will have to take place via email.
- 5. Committee Updates (20-40 minutes) \*sent via email\*
  - a. Due to time constraints, this will have to take place via email.
- 6. Share Your Successes (if time allows)

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7. Public Comment (5-10 minutes)
  - a. None
8. Adjourn
  - a. Approve: Magnuson
  - b. Second: Carter