August 19, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:
Vanessa Arredondo, Sarah Babb, Nadya Balabanova, Raammen Bass, William Brooks, Margaret Butterfield, Adrian Doyle, Sharon Dukesherer, Gary Hatter, Nadya Kerawala, Chris Lechner, Reggie Melonson, Nicole Murph, Kris Okimoto, John Orozco, Cindy Passanante, Morgan Plank, Fred Puza, Humberto Solis, Mason Stockstill, Brittnnee Wadlington, Jennifer Westendorf, Ashley Wilson, Trevor Wiseman, Francisco Ybarra-Navarette, Michelle Yeung

Welcome:
• Introduction of Senators

Updates:

MBA Program Tuition Remission
• Tuition remission for the MBA program has been suspended for this year. Pending review.
• Chris Lechner and John Orozco met w/ Rebecca Chandler in Human Resources on behalf of Staff Senate to discuss. She confirmed the following:
  ○ All employees and dependents that were enrolled prior to the start of the fall semester and who were receiving tuition remission for the MBA program will continue to receive it.
  ○ The decision to not grant tuition remission for the coming academic year for the MBA program occurred due to significant changes to the format of the program and the pay structure. It was Rebecca Chandler’s understanding that, as part of the redesign process the MBA Program, like
many other graduate programs at LMU, it must be primarily supported through tuition. Thus, tuition remission benefits for the new Program are being carefully reviewed.

- The College of Business Administration’s website states that: “The LMU MBA Program has introduced a new and improved curriculum for the fall of 2015. The new program offers a more well-rounded MBA experience for students and increases the marketability and value proposition of the program. The redesign is in response to several factors including increased competition and changing market conditions. Other than a few minor enhancements in the early 1990s, this is the first time the MBA Program has undergone a significant revision since its inception in 1974.”
- It is the Executive Board’s understanding that there are less applicants being accepted into the program than before, and thus less slots available for all applicants, not just staff and dependents.
- Of the 15 applicants for the MBA program that are staff or dependents, the first 3 staff and/or dependents of staff who submitted their completed applications and were accepted will be receiving a scholarship that will cover the approximate costs that tuition remission would have covered. Of the remaining 12, if any are still being considered, they will most likely not be offered this scholarship if they are admitted. Individuals may be eligible for financial aid.
- All individuals who have been officially admitted have been notified of their ineligibility for tuition remission.
- The decision to continue tuition remission beyond this year will be considered by the Comprehensive Benefits Committee this Fall.

- Rebecca informed John & Chris that there would be a communication going out to inform staff and faculty of the changes to the program and tuition remission.
- A MyLMU announcement went out on July 29, 2015 which stated:
  - The LMU MBA Program has introduced a new and improved curriculum for Fall 2015. The new curriculum offers a more well-rounded MBA experience for students and increases the marketability and value proposition of the program. Learn more about the program [here](#).
- The Staff Senate discussed and expressed the following thoughts and concerns:
  - There is a general belief that this announcement was insufficient. It buried the communication and was unacceptable. Unless you clicked on the link, you would be unaware of the changes to the tuition remission benefit.
  - Staff Senate would like to send out a communication to all staff clarifying the changes in the program and requesting staff feedback.
  - There is a feeling among the senate that these changes to the MBA
program do not embody what LMU is about. It has changed into a money making focus.
- The MyLMU announcement shows a lack of transparency, which is a running theme that we have seen with other university issues.
- Tuition remission seemed to be an after thought following the program changes.
- What is to stop other programs from cutting tuition remission?
- This was a recruiting tool that affects all staff, but especially new staff who came to LMU because of this benefit.
- Where are the checks and balances when changes like this are made?
- Why does the university never come to Staff Senate about this?
- John Orozco brought the changes in the MBA program to the attention of the Faculty Senate and they will be discussing the issue at their retreat later this week.
- Education Doctorate has never been a part of tuition remission.

- Senators have been tasked with reaching out grass roots style, not only about the MBA program, but about Tuition Remission as a whole. Then the information will be passed on to committee members on the University Benefits Committee.
- On the Staff Survey 2014: 68% of staff would like more opportunity to participate in the decision making process. 34% of staff disagree or disagree strongly that they receive timely communication about decisions or changes that affect their work.

- Goals will be listed on the website.
  - Feedback from senators requested before it is posted.
- Communications Committee
  - John would like to send out a communication to staff at the beginning of the school year, welcoming staff, introducing the new senators, etc.
  - Suggestion that a communication go out once a month in lieu of a semi-annual newsletter.

Annual Staff Climate Survey
- Results were provided to Staff Senate and disseminated to senators on August 18, 2015.
- Response Rate in 2011 was 83% vs. this past year, which was 70%.
- Communication & vulnerability were concerns.
- When are the results shared with administrators across campus and will they then share it with employees? What will then be done to address the information that was learned?
• Suggestion that Executive Board bring this topic of discussion up with President Snyder and Provost Hellige and ask what will be done with the information.
• What happened with 2011 data after the climate teams looked into the results and made their proposals?
• The raw data from the survey is not available to us and, to our understanding, the administration does not receive it from the 3rd party that conducts the survey either.
• John Orozco will follow-up with Abby Robinson Armstrong first about what the plan is for addressing the issues/concerns/information shared in this most recent survey.

Committee Updates
• Elections Committee
  □ No Updates
• Recognition/Education/Fellowship Committee
  □ Meet Your Senators event @ the Loft. Wednesday, September 16th from 5-7pm.
• Signature Events
  □ Annual Holiday Party is confirmed for December 18th, the last Friday of the calendar year and the last day of finals. Add to First email Communication to all staff.
• Communications
  □ First communication to go out no later than the 2nd week of classes.
• Benefits/Opportunities Committee
  □ Benefits Committee would like to have committee members become experts in all of the benefits/opportunities offered at the university.

Computer Literacy Program Update
• John Orozco met w/ Kristine Brancolini, Dean of the Library, regarding the Library Program run by Ray Andrade to provide computer literacy to staff (mainly Facilities staff) on campus.
• There have been issues with this professional development program given concerns that staff are taking too much time off.
• Abby Robinson Armstrong is looking into the need for this program.
• Staff Senate would like to push for more set guidelines from HR regarding how much time employees should have for professional development.