



Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2024, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Foster 143/144

Rick Shoemake moved to begin the meeting at 10:01 a.m. Hannah King seconded.

The group welcomed the Faculty Senate representative to the Staff Council, Dr. Jeff Olafson.

Lauren Muhl asked for a volunteer for Staff Council's representative to the Master Teacher committee (time commitment is roughly four hours).

Staff Council was also encouraged to share the new Staff Council initiatives with their units. We were then led in prayer and meditation by Brett Gibson.

Amos Barker moved that the August minutes be accepted, seconded by Luke Whiting.

Chelsea Derry then reported out on the work [of Staff Council's initiatives and working groups for 2024-2025](#).

Jenny Branson then shared the background on the [draft changes](#) that are proposed for the Constitution and Bylaws. They are set to be voted on in the October meeting. There will be a second set of more substantive changes proposed in our October meeting for approval in the November meeting.

It was noted that the Staff Council will likely put on a spirit shop again this year.

The group then welcomed Baylor's new CFO, Dr. Curtis Reynolds. He noted that a great deal of his work in the past six months has been setting up the framework for the [new strategic plan](#), focusing on the commitments. His focus will be on infrastructure – both physical and financial. This will include AI within that utility infrastructure. There will also be work, alongside the provost, in interdisciplinarity, especially in health sciences and engineering. There is a hope that there will be a space that allows for “collisions” between units.

It was also noted that we have a lot of old, historical buildings. Mr. Reynolds will be pushing for dynamic learning spaces – flexible, high technology, support AI, and support the many learning needs of the students. There will be a push for renovation and refreshing after the new interdisciplinary space is made available.

The CFO is also responsible for enrollment management. We are facing an enrollment cliff – many students are coming out of high school and making different choices than university. Enrollment Management is anticipating this cliff, and working on ways to drive interest in Baylor, especially in relation to competition from public institutions. The value of the Baylor degree is crucial, especially when placed up against other private universities. We do this by having high-level faculty, a clear return on value (jobs), and updated facilities.

*Next Staff Council Meeting:
October 15, 2024, 10 a.m., Sid Rich 340*



The incoming class of first-year students is at about 3,440. This is higher than the past ten years, with the exception of the COVID year. Our new goal for incoming class is 4,500 to 5,500. We are a different institution in this way than in the past.

We are also re-imagining the [excellence scholarship](#) distribution – this scholarship goes to folks that enroll with a high affinity for the university. The awards will likely be reconfigured at the \$5,000 level, as that tends to be the breakpoint dollar amount for incoming students. This will allow Baylor to reach more students. It was also noted that Baylor’s USNWR ranking just rose.

Mr. Reynolds postulated that the small pool of potential students for the future, we need to be hyper-focused on what we offer. It is likely that programs that do not offer a high rate of return will go away.

Targets for next year for enrollment will be 3,400 to 3,600 students, 350-375 on transfers and a discount rate of 44-46%. From a financial position, we are extremely strong – we have an S&P rating of A+. Over the next strategic plan, we want to be competitive in the compensation arena, perhaps through a merit-based program as well as in classroom modernization across campus. Our endowment is now at 2.1 billion.

It was noted that Athletics is up against some significant challenges, with NIL and revenue share, and it will have an impact on what we offer in terms of scholarships. The focus on the physical side will be minimal after the completion of the Fudge football area.

He shared he has a deep desire to be transparent, respectful, and collaborative with the staff as a whole. There was an invitation for anyone to reach out to him with additional questions.

Mr. Hank Steen was then welcomed to speak to the group to [share about the open enrollment period for 2025 as well as new offerings for the 2025 year](#). He reminded everyone who is benefit-eligible to ensure they update their benefits Oct. 15-29. There will an increase to deductible for the HDHP plan (\$1,650 and \$3,300). PPO will stay the same. There will likely be an 8.8% increase across both medical plans.

New items will be:

- One Pass Select- discounted membership you can buy for gym access. You would pay directly to One Pass Select. Costs are monthly.
- Pet Insurance – available in October, you would pay directly to MetLife.
- Lantern- surgery cost savings benefit plan for planned, non-emergency procedures.
- Menopause care will be added to our [Progyny benefit](#).



Baylor University

STAFF COUNCIL

We then welcomed Ms. Lindsay Heller and Ms. Casidy Orand from Human Resources to discuss [total compensation statements](#), as previewed in earlier Staff Council meetings. This summary will take into consideration tuition remission, time off, retirement contributions, as well as other items. These statements will be generated from December 1 for a one-year lookback period for issuance on December 2.

There was a motion to adjourn at 11:23 by Jennie, seconded by Jayne.

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