

# Staff Council Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2025 ■ 10:00-11:30AM ■ FOSTER 143/144

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The meeting was called to order at 10:02am by Hannah King.

Staff Council Chaplain Luke Whiting shared a time of spiritual formation, encouragement, and prayer.

August 2025 minutes were approved by a motion from Jaime Basher.

Hank Steen, Director of Benefits from Human Resources, discussed 2026 benefits updates and Open Enrollment, including:

- Open enrollment will be October 14-28. This is an active enrollment and all benefit-eligible employees need to log in and elect 2026 choices (even if you plan to keep current elections).
- New updates and opportunities:
  - Surest Health Plan Option:
    - Additional option to the PPO and HDHP
    - No deductibles and no coinsurance, services bundled into single copay
    - Same network of UHC providers as other plans
    - Premiums will fall between HDPD and PPO premiums
    - Flexible Spending Account is available but HSA is not an option
    - Educational webinars will be held October 1 and 7 from 11:00am-1:00pm.
  - Life Insurance Enhancements
    - Moving to Aflac for life insurance benefits
    - Baylor will provide 1x salary (minimum of \$50k, cap at \$100k) for employee life insurance
    - Voluntary life insurance increases from 1-5x salary (cap at \$500k) to 1-8x salary (cap at \$1M)

- For this Open Enrollment only, coverage is guaranteed-issue up to \$500k for employees and up to \$100k for spouses (no evidence of insurability required)
  - Additional Voluntary Plans
    - Identity theft protection through Norton LifeLock
    - Legal insurance through LegalEASE
- Salary bands are adjusted based on merit pool to soften impact of moving to a new pay band.
- Materials with benefit information will be delivered via mail.
- Open Enrollment general sessions will be held virtually October 9 and 20 at 12:30pm.
- A virtual Benefits Counselor will be available during the Open Enrollment period.
- Medical premiums are expected to increase around 6% (lower than national average).

Kevin Vance, Director of Payroll Services, presented on the recently announced transition from monthly to semi-monthly payroll, including:

- The transition will occur January 1, 2027. Paychecks will be issued twice per month on or near the 15<sup>th</sup> and on the last day of each month.
- The change applies to all faculty, exempt staff, and graduate students. The biweekly employee pay schedule will not change.
- Total compensation and benefits are not changing.
- 2027 pay calendars are available at <https://payroll.web.baylor.edu/semimonthly>.
- Reasoning behind the change for staff:
  - Quicker access to pay and benefit contributions
  - Earn and have access to accrued leave sooner
  - Enhances operational efficiency, industry competitiveness, and recruitment
  - Retirement, HSA, etc. contributions will “go in quicker”
- Reasoning behind the change for faculty:
  - Faculty are transitioning from 10-month to 9-month academic year contracts beginning in 2026-27, and semi-monthly pay frequency better aligns faculty contracts (approximately August 16 to May 15).
- Benefit premiums will be equally split between the two pay periods.
- Accrual rates will remain the same.
- Last payment of 2026 will be December 31 and first payment of 2027 will be January 15.

- HR and Payroll are providing support resources to help employees adjust and plan accordingly. More communication is planned, targeted and general, to address items like elected withdrawals (taxes, retirement, etc.) and deposits directed to multiple accounts.
- General inquiries can be directed to [semimonthlypayroll@baylor.edu](mailto:semimonthlypayroll@baylor.edu)
- Benefit deduction and employee leave questions can be directed to [askhr@baylor.edu](mailto:askhr@baylor.edu).
- Tax withholdings, garnishments, and direct deposit questions can be directed to [payroll\\_office@baylor.edu](mailto:payroll_office@baylor.edu)
- Faculty contracts can be directed to [provost\\_office@baylor.edu](mailto:provost_office@baylor.edu).

Vice-Chair Daniel Ramirez shared a recap from Faculty Senate, including that the Senate engaged in a lively discussion around graduate school changes and academic freedom.

Doriann Beverly reminded Staff Council to review Faculty Ombudsperson and University Grounds and Access policy documents in the Teams Channel.

September birthdays were recognized and celebrated.

The meeting was closed with a motion by Luke Whiting at 11:16am.