



Staff Senate Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2025 | 3:00 p.m. | COB 307

[Zoom Link](#) | Passcode: NMy4R.LX

❖ COMMITTEE UPDATES

➤ Leadership

- Call for nominations for the next Staff Senate President.
 - Prior Senate service is not required.
 - Interested individuals can reach out to Steve Myers, or past presidents Bruce Bettinger or Christna Chatman

➤ Benefits

- Benefits Fair Update
 - Reached out to Human Resources to see it would be possible for UT Tyler to host more than one benefit fair each year, or if there could be opportunities for employees to ask questions about health and dental coverages to representatives throughout the year—similar to the opportunities provided for retirement inquiries. Given that coordinating such events might be challenging when considering multiple satellite campuses. Would it be possible to explore virtual options, or alternatively, could we share the contact information of benefit representatives so employees can schedule individual appointments?
 - ◆ Human Resources is doing some research to see what they can do/offer.
 - more information coming soon!
- “Did you know?” – Technology Edition
 - **[IT Purchases](https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/information-technology/it-purchases/)** -- <https://www.uttyler.edu/offices/information-technology/it-purchases/> Discount Products for Personal Use
 - ◆ **[HiEd Online Shopping](#)** - Save up to 80% on various Software and Hardware products! Visit [HiEd Online](#) and login with your university email and ID number.

- ◆ [Dell Products Shopping](#) - New pricing, awesome deals! [Start shopping](#) for Dell products at a discounted price. If prompted enter UT Tyler's Member ID: US1407703.
- **Apple Discounts** -- <https://www.apple.com/us-edu/shop/buy-ipad> Save on Mac, iPad, and more with special pricing. Available to current and newly accepted college students and their parents, as well as faculty, staff, and homeschool teachers of all grade levels.
 - ◆ How do I find savings? We've made it easy to find savings on the Education Store. Look for the Education Savings symbol on pricing for all eligible products:
 - Mac
 - iPad and select accessories
 - Displays
 - AppleCare+ for Mac
 - AppleCare+ for iPad
 - ◆ How do I get started? Simply shop the Education Store. When you add items to your bag and check out, the savings will be reflected in your order total.
- Q: Can you address why our BCBS insurance is being pulled from UTSW? Many current and past employees have to go to UTSW for care that's not provided in Tyler.
 - Response from HR: We are aware that there might have been communication from BCBS. They are currently negotiating with SW Health Resources, the entity that negotiates on behalf of UTSW. However, to clarify a few point and reassure you of your in-network coverage when seeing providers. UT CARE participants, including UT System, will continue to have access to care at UT Southwestern at in-network rates, regardless of the outcomes of these negotiations. If you have further questions, contact benefits@uttyler.edu.

➤ **Star Award**

- December recipient is Rachael Hawkins
- January recipient is Carlos Alvarez
- February recipient will be announcement at the April monthly meeting.
- Nominations for March will be open until the 25th. If you would like to nominate someone, please do so at https://uttyler.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ey74ctmUZIGeYMu

➤ **Faculty and Staff Awards Banquet**

- Friday, April 18th.
- Nomination deadline closes Friday, April 28th.
- Awards include: Passion, Service, and Scholarly
- Nomination link has been sent via Campus News.

➤ **University Appreciation**

- Week 1: May 12–16 | Appreciation Luncheon on Tuesday, May 13
- Week 2: May 27–30 (Memorial Day week)
- Key Information:
 - Signup opens via Patriot Engage on April 7 (5-week registration window).
 - Limit: 2 off-campus events per employee.
 - Departments must maintain regular business operations—coordinate with supervisors.
 - If unable to attend an event, please remove your name to free the spot for others.
 - Donations of swag items requested for prizes (leftover departmental items welcome).

❖ **GUEST SPEAKERS**

➤ **Samantha Cockrell, UT System EAC Representative**

- Representing UT Tyler and Health Science Center on EAC.
- Focus Areas of meetings:
 - Raising awareness of UT System employee benefits.
 - Improving mental health access, sick leave, and bereavement policies.
 - Highlighting successful practices from UT Tyler for system-wide learning.
 - Working on generational onboarding differences, retention, and financial wellness resources.
 - Example success: “Total Rewards Statement” now provided to employees.
- Input and feedback welcome: Contact scockerell@uttyler.edu.

➤ **Kathryn Lake, Chief Strategy Officer**

- Overview of the updated Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan:
 - New Strategic Priorities:
 - ◆ Student Success
 - ◆ Teaching Excellence

◆ Service to East Texas

- Reduced focus on growth metrics (enrollment, research volume); increased focus on quality and impact.
- Strategic planning now includes:
 - Enhanced student services
 - Greater campus accessibility (e.g., proposed pedestrian bridge)
 - Revised campus layout to foster connection and ease of access
- Master Plan Highlights:
 - New residence hall, redesigned academic spaces, and retention pond for improved stormwater management.
 - Improved pedestrian paths and looped access routes.
- Design thinking approach to improve operational areas, starting with procurement and onboarding.
- Q: Statement recommending planning to have a state of the university event for the fall, where you invite the community to the campus and communicate what's happening at UT Tyler and the future of the University, such as the new plan.
- Q: How will the new developments be funded?
 - Long-term projects to be funded through various sources, including grants, philanthropy, and Board of Regents approvals.
- Q: If you had to guess what's "long term" mean? As a R2 school we need more lab space to keep competitive with others when it comes to getting grants.
 - There are short- and long-term goals. It will be a number of years before some of these projects would break ground. Specifically to research, there will be a lot of redesigning. Many issues are space utilization rather than square footage.

➤ **Campus Announcements**

- None

Next meeting will be Wednesday, April 16 at 3:00 pm, COB 307 or via [Zoom](#)