

# UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

## Staff Council Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2021 | Wednesday | ONLINE (WebEx) Participants:  
Professional Staff of University of Hartford

Discussion and approval of the minutes from previous general meetings:

- January 13, 2021 – Approved
- February 10, 2021 – Approved

### Staff Council Reports

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Treasurer's Report: (Linda Zigmont) Balance is \$1,422.98

- No change

Benefits Taskforce: (Cindy Oppenheimer, Laura Heemskerk)

- BTF met on February 18, 2021
- Health insurance is up for renewal. We will be looking at all lines of coverage. Quotes will be obtained by various carriers and BTF will review and meet with potential carriers over the summer. Are people happy with Aetna?
- Our claims look good this year but there is a concern that participants are not going to the doctor for annual preventive appointments. Remember to not to put off preventive visits.
- Connecticut Paid Family Leave: Deduction are being taken out of paychecks, but we are still waiting for state to give more direction.
- Reminder to all to get the COVID-19 vaccine when eligible. There is no cost to participants.
- Upcoming topics:
  - Re-marketing medical, dental and vision as well as life and disability plans this year for 2022
  - Employee tuition remission for doctoral programs: Currently not available, but this would be only for part time programs that have space
  - Bereavement: Increase in time for immediate family (spouse, parent or child) from 3 days to 5 days. Here is the current bereavement policy:

This policy provides regular full-time employees with a determined number of days off with pay for purposes of arranging and attending a funeral and resolving personal matters following a death in the family as follows:

- An excused paid absence of up to three days of missed work time will be granted for a death in the immediate family. For this policy, immediate family is defined as children, stepchildren, grandchildren, spouse, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother, sister, stepbrother and stepsister.
- The University will also grant an excused paid absence of up to one day of missed work time for a death of a relative beyond the definition of immediate family described above.

Resource Planning & Priorities committee: (Laura Heemskerk, Laura D'Angelo-Gohn)

- The last RPPC meeting was February 4, 2021 – We began to discuss the budget plan for the fiscal year. The March meeting was scheduled for March 4 but was recently canceled. Our next meeting is scheduled for April.

Faculty Senate: (Rachel Yacouby)

- Faculty Senate got the update on NECHE and then talked about UH finances, including TIAA- CREF.
- Pres. Woodward talked about updating our buildings, especially the dorms, about the dwindling number of students going to college, and announced that UHart Start will be ratified February 19, 2021. He talked about rightsizing athletics and realigning staff.

Human Resource Department: (Lynn Thibodeau)

- Dialogue for Direction is happening again this year and they are due to our office by May 28th.

### New Business

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Guest Speaker Katie Kitchens – Director of Student Success; Currently overseeing COVID-19 response/testing, contact tracing, quarantine, etc.

- Per Katie: In the Fall semester, 20-25% of residential undergraduates (about 600 students) were tested for COVID-19
- Spring 2021 semester began with 100% of residential and commuter students being tested each week, based on guidance from DPH.
- We are now down to 25% of commuters being tested. This is strategic based on the amount of time students spend on campus.
- Kenna Grant works primarily with external vendor for contact tracing efforts; this is outsourced for optimized accuracy/safety
- Per Kenna Grant, the University has been hovering around 22 steady active COVID-19 cases and about 30 individuals in quarantine.
- Regarding vaccine distribution, CT is operating on an age-based system, so the vaccine is currently available to anyone over the age of 55; Walgreens is rumored to be efficient with scheduling appointments
- Reach out to Katie Kitchens at [kkitchens@hartford.edu](mailto:kkitchens@hartford.edu) and Kenna Grant at [mckenna@hartford.edu](mailto:mckenna@hartford.edu) with any questions regarding the University's COVID response.

General elections are starting. Nominate yourself or your choices for Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Communications Director. The four At-Large Community Representative positions are also open for nominations, two for Exempt and two for Non- Exempt. **Nomination due date by 5 p.m. on March 19.**

- New e-board positions are installed during annual meeting; Chairs will provide an overall report on the yearly activity
- Discussion about moving the date of the annual meeting for 2021 (April 14<sup>th</sup> is current date) – Proposal to postpone until May; No additional feedback from members

The Draft of the University's NECHE Self-Study is **available for review until March 14<sup>th</sup>**. The following message is being shared on behalf of Laura Pence and Kathleen Neal:

*We are pleased to share the draft self-study report for our 10 year NECHE University reaccreditation in fall 2021. We encourage our faculty, students, staff, and emeriti to read a chapter (or more!) and provide feedback and comments. A few reminders: first, the report speaks to [the nine NECHE standards](#) that are required. If people read more than one chapter, they may see ideas coming up repeatedly- that is both a function of the NECHE standards and of the crosscutting priorities of our community.*

*Each chapter contains the sections Description, Appraisal and Projections. Description provides a candid presentation of how the University of Hartford meets the standard. Appraisal provides evidence to demonstrate to what extent we meet the standard. Finally, Projections identifies specific commitments the University of Hartford will make to maintain and enhance our performance, and address any gaps. All projections must be realistic, and we must demonstrate that we have the capacity to execute the plans. In other words, please keep in mind that the projections are not a wish list.*

*After your review, there is a form where you may submit your thoughts and suggestions. We ask that people focus on content rather than wordsmithing, grammar, and proofreading. There are several drafts to go and a*

*professional proofreader will review the final draft of the Self Study for formatting, consistency and voice.*  
**All feedback must be submitted by midnight on Sunday, March 14.**  
*Our thanks for all the time that everyone takes to read and make comments.*

Best regards,

Laura Pence and Kathleen Neal NECHE  
 Reaccreditation Co-Chairs

Old/Continuing Business

- Updates from Community Representatives

Announcements

- There will be a town hall-style meeting with **Pres. Woodward on March 25 at 10 a.m.** The link will be posted after today’s meeting in UNotes for staff to register.
  - Question about the Faculty Senate update where there is mention of “rightsizing athletics and realigning staff.” Staff requesting elaboration on this matter for the 3/25 Town Hall meeting with President Woodward
- Greg Betz has agreed to be the Staff Council delegate to the President's Task Force on Environmental Sustainability
- Academic Staff Excellence Award: Complete details on the award and access to the nomination packet can be found at the “Academic Affairs Staff Excellence Award” link on the Office of the Provost website ([www.hartford.edu/provost](http://www.hartford.edu/provost)). If you have any questions regarding the Academic Affairs Staff Excellence Award, please contact Robyn Kelsey, Executive Assistant to the Provost, in the Office of the Provost at [kelsey@hartford.edu](mailto:kelsey@hartford.edu). **Nominations must be received no later than March 26.**
- Call for nominations for the Staff Spotlight – ongoing; nominations roll over each month
- The United Way campaign will begin on 3/22 and will end on May 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Donations will take place completely online; there will be no cash or checks.
- Hawks men’s basketball team will play UMass Lowell in the America East men's basketball championship game on Saturday 3/13 and will air on ESPN2.
- University of Hartford’s Day of Giving is March 11<sup>th</sup> – Kickoff party is 3/10 (tonight) at 8:00 p.m.
  - <https://www.hartford.edu/unotes/2021/03/day-of-giving-kick-off-party-on-march-10.aspx>

Future Staff Council general meetings (always second Wednesday at 1 p.m.)

Apr 14, 2021 (Partnership Council)	May 12, 2021 (Annual Meeting)	Jun 9, 2021 (Pres. Woodward)
July 14, 2021	Aug 11, 2021	Sep 8, 2021

