

**Staff Council Called Meeting – Via Zoom  
September 23, 2020, 2:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:**

- ✓ Billie Abell
- ✓ Amanda Brown
- ✓ Sarah Elder
- ✓ Mona Gilley
- ✓ Kim Jefferies
- ✓ Amy Robinson
- ✓ Charles Robnett
- ✓ Katie Thomas
- ✓ Jennifer Smith
- ✓ Kristi Taylor
- ✓ Brian McGinley
- ✓ Dr. Mark Rudin
- ✓ Hattie Powell

The meeting was called to Order at 2:02 p.m. by Brian McGinley.

Dr. Mark Rudin discussed the health and safety of the university is paramount in all we do. Culturally has tried to keep students engaged on campus during the week and weekends.

In light of the pandemic, ongoing evaluation of keeping the students, faculty, and staff safe during this time continues and some institutions are proposing the following:

- Canceling spring break and ending the semester a week early in conjunction with having graduation a week early in the spring
- For staff, the two days for spring break can be taken in the spring as:
  - Set days
  - Varying days - taken based on departmental needs

Dr. Rudin reached out to the Chancellor for the A&M System and consulted other System institutions about these options. The System has given approval for institutions to make changes at the institutional level. School districts, parents, and others in the community would need to know to allow flexibility to discuss accommodations to parents for work, home, daycare, etc.

Dr. Rudin would like feedback and input from Staff Council on the proposal.

Dr. Humphreys has spoken with SGA and will be meeting with them and Dr. Dobbs has spoken with Faculty Senate. Goal is to get notice out early if we move forward with the changes.

Feedback from Staff Council:

- Amy Robinson – need to look at dual credit student challenges and students being out for spring break at their schools, but still having classes here. Amy and Dr. Rudin will discuss up with Dr. Dobbs.
- Kristi Taylor – From RLL perspective removing another leave/return for spring break would be helpful to try and maintain the decrease in cases in the residence halls
- Hattie Powell – suggested an FAQ document with questions and answers addressing areas of concern. Revise as we get feedback

- Brian - different divisions are treated differently, need communication to be pushed from top down to all divisions to work with staff on the possibility of making accommodations for their staff.

Dr. Rudin – we need an honest discussion with campus leaders of the different treatment of staff concerning policies, which he has tried to change since becoming President.

- Katie Thomas - from a student perspective, some need the spring break for their mental health and because of burnout. Don't know what affects having no spring break will have, but we will be interested to hear from students.

Dr. Rudin shared Dr. Dobbs heard similar comments from those on Faculty Senate. Hope faculty can look at current environment and adjustments made in course deliver due to the pandemic, and making accommodations if some students feel they need a break, and want an accommodation to complete assignments.

- Kristi – faculty may be able to find a balance – some doing Tuesday/Thursday classes others MWF, etc. flex attendance for a week or two weeks, etc. around the spring break period.
- Charles Robnett – some school districts have different spring break periods now, therefore, letting staff and faculty make changes can still work.

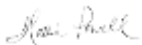
Dr. Rudin, shared there were two camps: 1) designate specific days off or 2) give departments the option to work with their staff. Staff would just take those 2 days between January and end of term. He favors giving departments' latitude to decide what works best with their own departments. Linda King is still waiting on final approval from System on the decision to allow flexibility in how staff take the 2 days off based on departmental needs.

Katie thanked Dr. Rudin for bringing it to our attention and asking for our input. There was general consensus from Staff Council members that proposal is a good idea.

Dr. Rudin asked members to email him if anyone has additional thoughts and suggestions. He will meet with Staff Council as a group after the final approvals/decisions.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Hattie Powell, Staff Council Recorder