



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

MINUTES

Staff Assembly

The University of South Alabama's Staff Assembly was duly convened by Dallas Schmidt, President, on Tuesday, October 7, 2025 from 9:30-10:30 am at the University's Faculty Club.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debbie Cobb, Autumn Courtney, Joel Dobson, Courtney Ellis, Tamir Haseeb, Pamela Howard, Trey Ruffin Johnson, Brandon King, Kevin Morris, Broderick Morrissette, William Nguyen, Dallas Schmidt, Alice Smith, Bailey Smith, Heather Sprinkle, Kassidy Wilcox, Coleman Wolf, Alison Gay Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Marjorie Burkett, Elizabeth Hall, Ashley Lawson, Julia Kristman, Sarah Schrenk, Andi Winborn

EX OFFICIO MEMBER Peter Susman
PRESENT:

GUESTS: Elizabeth Dickson, Michael Mitchell, Brandi Purvis

1. Welcome – Dallas Schmidt, President

Staff Assembly President, Dallas Schmidt, welcomed assembly members and guests.

2. Roll Call – Broderick Morrissette, Parliamentarian/Historian

Attendance: 72% of members present (quorum met)

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: Trey Ruffin Johnson

Seconded: Heather Sprinkle

Unanimous approval

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve: Trey Ruffin Johnson

Seconded: Courtney Ellis

Unanimous approval



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5. Guests

- Dr. Michael Mitchell, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Jaguar Productions is working to reestablish its ticket sales program. At this time, faculty and staff are unable to purchase discounted AMC Theatre and Bellingrath Gardens tickets while a new tracking system is implemented to assess student demand. It is hoped that discounted tickets will be available to faculty and staff again in the future.

- Brandi Purvis, Assistant Director of Campus & Community Engagement

The Employee Community Volunteer Program allows faculty and staff to receive paid time off to participate in volunteer activities. Eligible employees must be regular, full-time, benefits-eligible faculty, staff, or administrative employees in the University of South Alabama General Division or USA Health who are in good standing and have completed at least one year of current service.

Employees must obtain supervisor approval and complete the required paperwork before volunteering. Participants may use up to eight hours per fiscal year.

Community Engagement has partnered with United Way, and volunteer opportunities are available on [South Serves](#). Please note that university employees may not volunteer with student organizations if such work is part of their regular duties, University Health employees may not volunteer in the University hospitals, and volunteer hours may not be used for religious or political campaigns.

6. Ongoing Business

- Coleman Wolf, Vice-President

The Executive Committee met with President Bonner and Dr. Kent, who expressed strong support for the Staff Assembly's Childcare Initiative and approved the formation of an exploratory committee. Various University constituencies are being invited to recommend potential committee members. The committee will examine the initiative's feasibility, regulatory requirements, potential locations, financial considerations, and educational components.

- Dallas Schmidt, President

Heather Sprinkle, Chair of the Communications Committee, created a [PowerPoint slide](#) about the Staff Assembly that will be included in Human Resources' new employee orientation sessions.



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7. New Business



- New Staff Assembly Logo
Motion to approve: Trey Ruffin Johnson
Seconded: Brandon King
Unanimous approval



- Dallas Schmidt, President



University staff can submit questions or suggestions to the Staff Assembly through an [Asana form](#). The Executive Committee will assign submitted Asana tickets to the appropriate committees for follow-up.

8. Committee Reports

Elections and Nominations Committee:

- Bailey Smith, Chair

The committee is preparing for Spring elections.

Policies and Issues Committee:

- Trey Ruffin Johnson, Co-Chair

The committee is [researching and discussing](#) the following items:

- **Sick Leave Donation:** The committee revisited the idea of allowing employees to directly donate sick leave to colleagues facing serious or life-altering illnesses. They plan to review current Sick Leave (Policy No. 2095) and FMLA (Policy No. 2096) to identify possible revisions.
- **Parental Leave:** The group reviewed the Alabama Public Employee Paid Parental Leave Act (SB199), which provides paid leave for state employees but currently excludes public universities. The committee discussed recommending that the University’s policy be updated to better align with the intent of SB199.
- Trey Johnson was appointed as the Staff Assembly representative to the University Policy Committee, with Courtney Ellis serving as alternate.
- Per Peter Susman, the [Staff Assembly Bylaws](#) stipulate that the Staff Assembly can “make recommendations or and proposals for compensation and benefits actions once per year during the April quarterly meeting, to coincide with the budget planning process and timeframe.”



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Communications Committee:

- Heather Sprinkle, Chair

The committee met to discuss ways to [improve awareness and communication](#) about the Staff Assembly's purpose and activities. Ideas included partnering with Marketing and Communications to build visibility, creating a monthly newsletter, highlighting professional development and wellness opportunities, and updating the website to serve as a comprehensive staff resource.

Members supported adding staff headshots to the website and sharing event photos to showcase engagement.

Action Items:

- Collect or take headshots of Staff Assembly members for the website – discussed finding a time for staff to get their headshot taken.
- Create a shared photo folder for committee and event pictures.

Research Committee:

- Brandon King, Chair

The committee is examining the advantages and disadvantages of including salary ranges in University job postings and is reviewing practices at other institutions, particularly R1 universities along the Gulf Coast. The group is developing a self-study to present to the Staff Assembly.

- Elizabeth Dickson, Senior Director, Employment, Compensation, & HR Systems: “Over the years, this has been discussed with administration and there are several pros and cons related to listing salaries on job postings. It has been decided by administration that we do not post salaries on job postings, at this time.

“If a current employee is interested in a posted position, they can contact HR for the salary information and/or how the open position compares to their current position (promotion, demotion, lateral). We are always happy to provide that information, so employees can decide if it is something they are interested in pursuing or not.”

9. Listening Session – Dallas Schmidt, President

The Staff Assembly plans to host a Listening Session for University staff in addition to the regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. The purpose of the session is to provide staff members an opportunity to share concerns and ask questions in an open forum. The Assembly discussed possible formats for the session, including requesting that participants submit topics or questions in advance and considering a “reverse town hall” structure to encourage dialogue and engagement.



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10. Announcements

Food Drive – Dallas Schmidt

The Staff Assembly will host a Homecoming Food Drive from October 27–31 to support the Jag Pantry. Requested donations include breakfast items, shelf-stable milk and meals, and healthy snacks with expiration dates after January 2026. Donation boxes will be available in Computer Services, Human Resources, Meisler Hall, Student Academic Success, the Student Center, USA Police, and the Whiddon Administration Building.

Student Complaint Log – Alison Gay Wood

The University maintains a Student Complaint Log to support student success, ensure compliance with federal regulations, and meet SACSCOC accreditation requirements. All colleges, schools, and support units must record written general student complaints, including those received by email or other electronic means. Logs are collected twice each year in January and June, and units may also submit an annual report. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness oversees this process and provides resources, guidance, and a log template on the [Student Complaint Log webpage](#).

Homecoming – Heather Sprinkle

Staff are encouraged to participate in Homecoming activities, which include a concert, door decorating contest, pep rally, bonfire, and the football game.

Call for Guest Speakers – Dallas Schmidt

The Staff Assembly welcomes guest speakers. Members are encouraged to send suggestions to Dallas Schmidt at dallasschmidt@southalabama.edu.

Graphic Design Requests – Kevin Morris

The Office of Marketing and Communications is currently experiencing staff turnover and medical absences. As a result, requests for graphic design materials, including logos and flyers, may take longer to process.

Asana Explanation – Alice Smith

Members requested additional information about the Asana software and clarification on how queries submitted through the Staff Assembly request form are received, assigned, and addressed.

11. Adjournment – Dallas Schmidt, President

Minutes respectfully submitted by Alison Gay Wood, Secretary.