President’s Staff Sack Lunch Q&A
October 3, 2018

1. Is there any way staff might still get a Spring Break Day? I know it's not in the calendar, though it hasn't been publicized.

2. What happened to our Spring Break holiday? We went from 14 holidays last year to 13 this year. Can we have it back, please?!

As much as we would love to recognize everyone's hard work with additional days off, we will not be having a spring break day off, nor will we be celebrating a whole week long for Thanksgiving, as has also been recommended by certain members of our faculty. There are real, legitimate reasons for this that have to do with the state and the fact that we're state employees. The fluctuation in the number of days is set by the state and depends on whether the holiday falls on a weekend or week day. For this year, they are only allowing 13 holidays.

There certainly have been times when we have been permissive around certain types of holidays and certain types of breaks. Last year we celebrated with half day off prior to the Good Friday vacation, taking some time to celebrate the great things everyone in this university has done. We’re allowed to do that on a discretionary basis, so stay tuned for next year. And, keep your fingers crossed we’ll have another fantastic year we can celebrate in a similar semi-official way.

3. We still don’t have payroll deduction for cafeterias. When will this happen? There will be more people buying those meal plans!

If that’s something the staff would like and it is legal for us to do so, I would be happy to take that forward to the Board of Regents in the spring so they can authorize the action.

4. Sweet tea or punch at the Staff Sack Lunch, please.

We will serve sweet tea at the spring Staff Sack Lunch.

5. Why is the building sign for the Union on Highland Street in the middle of the sidewalk? It’s a safety issue.

The sign was placed in the sidewalk location to give visibility and enable visitors to identify the Union from Highland Street. Because of the Union’s distance from the road and the extensive landscaping along Highland Street, determining the best sign location is challenging. Based upon this question, Facilities has relocated the sign and will evaluate its effectiveness in a few months.

6. Is total enrollment just at UNT Denton or at all campuses?

The enrollment numbers announced – 38,154 – are just for the University of North Texas, which includes our Frisco campus. There are 44,000 students in the total system which includes UNT Dallas, UNT College of Law and the UNT Health Sciences Center.

7. When should we expect the renovation in Wooten Hall to be completed?
The Wooten Hall Code Upgrade Project will be complete in December. While we know it was challenging to work and teach in a building under renovation, the high demand for classrooms and offices across campus required us to modify the building while it was in use. More work in Wooten Hall on electrical and mechanical systems will take place in 2019 but there will be less disruption to occupied spaces.

8. **UNT was recently called a great place to work for women. Why don't we offer maternity leave? When will this change?**

We do offer maternity leave, when employees use their vacation, sick leave and FMLA. The state does not allow much more freedom than what we have. We can't make our own rules, but have to abide by state employee rules. If someone here has been told they don't get maternity leave, then it's probably a good question to bring forward to our HR folks. Again, if someone has a specific issue, why don't you come see us? Or see the vice president in charge of your unit?

9. **How do you plan to utilize the data from the upcoming campus climate survey?**

I've done campus climate surveys in two other universities, and they're a little scary sometimes. Everybody's worried that somehow they'll put the university in a bad light. I'm not worried about that. You're going to find out some things that are peeves for people, and some things, places where people don't feel as welcomed as they should in our inclusive community. You're going to also hear about things that we can do better in. And you can't fix things, and you've heard me say this before, we can't fix things unless we know something's wrong. And so when we get the campus climate survey, we're going to go through the data. We'll have quite a period of inspecting it. We'll look at it carefully. Where we can make affirmative recommendations to improve the climate on campus, we're going to do so. So the answer is we're going to use the data to make us a better place and to demonstrate that UNT cares and that we are the best community of any university that any of you have every worked in.

And I've just got to tell you, if you don't feel that, I want you to feel that. OK? And I want you to feel it because it works for you in your unit. It's how your supervisory staff treat you. It's how their in turn treated. It's how you feel the vice presidents and how I'm doing in terms of trying to make sure that the campus feels like it's a welcoming place for everyone. So we're serious about this. And I'm confident that under Joanne's leadership that this is going to result in good things for us.

10. **At these events, can they add a dropbox for anonymous questions? Handing questions to a person to college makes the questions not anonymous.**

Yes, an anonymous box to collect questions will be added for the Spring 2019 Staff Sack Lunch, as it is important that staff feel comfortable asking questions. We are not keeping track of who submits questions and we do not screen them, so no one should feel intimidated about asking a question. Please feel free to ask, just don't put profanity in it, and we'll be OK! President Smatresk and the Cabinet have many years of experience and are comfortable answering even the most uncomfortable questions that you might want to ask. They are not offended by questions and would never take action against anyone for asking a question. We want open and
transparent processes for who to contact to deal with issues on our campus. If there is an issue that you want to bring forward, please do find a way.

If anyone has a question they feel is a burning issue they want answered, there are additional ways outside of our Staff Sack Lunches to bring your questions forward. Resources available include the Talon Team, the Office of Institutional Equity & Diversity, Human Resources, and your supervisors. We will also shortly have a whole cadre of trained mediators led by Deb Rohwer, who is going to be a trained mediator. 18 of your colleagues have volunteered to undergo 40 hours of mediation training and get actual mediator certificates. Additional information regarding the mediation program will be publicized in the coming weeks, along with the list of certified mediators that you can take your issues to, knowing that they will be treated with respect and anonymity.

11. Is the EAP program available to student employees as well as staff and faculty?

No. Students should utilize the programs and services available through Student Affairs. If you have a student that has an issue or challenge, please send them to the Dean of Students Office because they can work to figure out what challenge they may face and what services and programs are available to help them. If we don’t have something on campus, then we’ll refer them off campus.