The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm by Staff Council President, Marie Mize.

Roll Call

*Members in attendance:* Christine Ahern, Charlie Bauder, Shirley Burgess, Debi Chandler (via sub Stan Ianier), Kelly Cona, Hayley Cox (via sub Kristen Lawerence), Melanie Crawford, Anjali Dougherty, Tamala Foreman, Macie Fouche, Jami Gilstrap, Elmer Gray, Michelle Griffin, Andrew Hanneman, Savannah Hembree, Angie Heusser, Stefani Hilley, Pattie Holly, Stuart Ivy, Kevin James, Laura Kelley, Brittney MacDonald, Emma Mattox, Liz Phillips (via sub Melanie Peiper), Jackie Mitchell, Marie Mize, Mary Moore, Matt Mundy, Ken Schroder, Amanda Shaw (via sub Mandy Dixon), Alec Shepherd, Gabrielle Saupe, Kyla Sterling, Joy Strickland, Brittany Barnes (via sub Wendy Holland), Matt Weeks, Beth Woods (via sub Reed Geisenhof)

*Members absent:* Ian Armit, JoHannah Biang, Shirley Burgess, Danielle Free, Matt Hammons, Heather Macon, Kassie Suggs, Scott Woodward

A quorum was present.

Marie introduced President Jere Morehead to the council and turned the floor over to him.

**Guest Speakers**

**JERE MOREHEAD, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA** (with Juan Jarrett, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and Arthur Tripp, Assistant to the President)

President Morehead thanked the council for their continued service to the university especially in role of staff council participant.

He encouraged the council to ask questions during his talk and mentioned that he invited Arthur Tripp (Assistant to the President) and Juan Jarrett (VP for Human Resources) to the meeting to help provide answers.
He said the semester was off to a good start, with the largest student body in history. This is growth is a good thing for UGA, but also presents some challenges—notably traffic congestion on campus. This is the most academically talented student body in history of the university. President Morehead said he met with director of admissions earlier and based on inquiry requests from high school students calling the admissions team thinks that the number of applications will continue to rise. President Morehead suspects that once the 2019 U.S. News & World Report ranking are released in a week, the number of interested students will increase even more.

As a follow up to his comment on campus congestion he added that East Campus is particularly affected and the university is trying to alleviate some of the traffic issues by restarting crossing guard efforts to slow down foot traffic. Ryan Nesbit, VP of Finance and Administration, is considering new changes to address parking and traffic challenges on East Campus, but there is not an easy solution since the university has to work with the existing infrastructure.

On the subject on parking, President Morehead reported that a new parking lot had been added in an effort to be responsive to the need for lower parking rates for staff. The new lot is $10 per month with shuttle service to campus every 15 minutes. He said most staff opted to not use that lot and that students are using it. When the lot is completed it will have approximately 850 spots. Additionally, there will be a new parking deck by the STEM research facility that will be underway this fall; it will take a couple years to build but will add 350+ parking spaces to campus.

President Morehead explained that the General Assembly did not provide funding for raises this year and there was no tuition increase, so the university had to be innovative to provide for a 2% raise pool that will that goes into effect on January 1. He said that his single biggest challenge for the university making a persuasive case that demonstrates why supporting faculty and staff is critical to the ongoing development of the institution and that this is even more important when rising health care costs make it financially harder for faculty and staff.

President Morehead added that he was very pleased with two recent staff initiatives: the new staff networking program and staff appreciation day.

He added a final note about community relations— the new Georgia Possible initiative is a partnership with Clarke County high school to help students develop leadership skills and drive determination to go to college. There will be a kickoff event for that program at the end of the week.

President Morehead opened the floor for questions.

Mary Moore asked if the president could speak about the search process for the provost position.

President Morehead reminded the council that they have a representative on the provost search committee and said that it was essential to hire someone who has the skill set for collaboration between faculty and staff, the ability to drive forward the initiatives already underway (including need-based scholarships), and to raise funds to grow programs; it’s also crucial that the candidate understand the obligation of serving the people of Georgia. The search committee will narrow it down to 8-10 semifinalists and then 4-5 finalists will be interviewed. It will take most of the academic year for the search to be completed. When finalists are selected it will be an open process with input from the campus community.
Jacob Schindler asked the president if he could speak on the Comprehensive Administrative Review being conducted by the University of Georgia Systems and if there were any specific goals or findings that president was looking for.

President Morehead explained that UGA was the last school in the USG system to undergo the review. The USG’s goal is to find out how institutions can operate more efficiently, but President Morehead thinks that we’ve already dedicated attention to administrative efficiency over the last few years and suspects that the report’s results will be positive. He mentioned that there are several known challenges facing the community, including the OneSource conversion, the Korn Ferry study that is underway in HR, and issues surrounding pay equity. Although he wasn’t sure that this review would touch all those issues but he stressed that it was important to make sure everyone participates.

Kyla Sterling asked if President Morehead could speak more about the findings from the Korn Ferry study— specifically any changes that came out of that review, how they will affect current staff, and where staff can policies that have been updated based on the review.

President Morehead asked Juan Jarrett to address this process. Juan Jarrett explained that no recommendations have been made yet, but that the steering committee had been engaged with Korn Ferry to gather feedback and comments from the campus community about needs for a Staff Salary Administration Plan. He said this was not a classification study and not a pay equity study, but it’s a starting point to establish UGA’s salary principles. He said the guidelines hadn’t been updated holistically in 15-18 years. The Korn Ferry report will be a series of recommendations that will be made to President Morehead and VP Nesbit and then it will undergo a campus review (the process of which will be determined by the work group). The principles will hopefully address equity, salary competitiveness within schools and colleges, and a counter-offer process. Juan hopes that this will cut down on staff members seeking reclassification since there will be a method for seeking higher pay. He also mentioned that have been able to change the guidelines for hiring new staff by going to the mid-point of the range for salaries to be in line with the USG system office. His hope is that the process will result in guidelines that will help UGA recruit and retain staff members.

President Morehead asked when the report is expected and Juan Jarrett said by the end of the month the president and VP Nesbit should have a report and that the next step is a meeting between President Morehead, VP Nesbit, Juan Jarrett and the working group to go through those recommendations.

Laura Kelly said that there have been several meetings to discuss starting a policy unit for UGA (similar to peer and aspirant schools) and asked if President Morehead had any thoughts on starting such a unit on campus.

Arthur Tripp answered this question and said that Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Russ Mumper is leading the charge to assess the need for a policy unit.

President Morehead added that he believes Dr. Mumper is also working to get the policies in order for the university’s next SACS reaccreditation process. He said he hasn’t gotten a recent update, but expects it to move forward quickly.

Elmer Gray asked if President Morehead could share any insight into the status of UGA’s natural history museum because it doesn’t have a centralized location for all its holdings.
President Morehead said this was actually looking into this over the last couple of weeks. He said it was odd that other top tier universities have great natural history museums, but the University of Georgia doesn’t have room to display its holdings—even though we have one of the top ten holdings in the country. He pulled together a group including the deans of Arts and Sciences, Forestry, Ecology, Agriculture, several department heads, as well as the VP for Development, and the interim provost to assess the situation and discuss plans to find a better home for the holdings. The group agreed conduct two external studies to see what kind of holdings are realistic to have on display and to have in storage, and what is the feasibility with our donor base to support a museum of this nature. He also mentioned looking at the potential for collaboration with the city of Athens. He said next steps will be bringing in consultants to conduct the two studies and he hopes that there will be rapid progress because it can be an economic driver for the city and state.

Elmer Gray asked about locating near the botanical gardens.

President Morehead said that will be studied, but that it might ultimately make sense to have it closer to campus/downtown.

Christine Ahern asked if the studies will look at economic impact.

President Morehead said that they certainly would, and that economic impact was the real driver for outside support.

Christine also asked if there would be research space included in the plans.

President Morehead replied in the affirmative and added that teaching space would also be included.

Mary Moore suggested the group look at a location on the town side of the greenway.

President Morehead said the group will look at a variety of locations and thought there might be the possibility that some funds from the Capital Campaign could be funneled into this project if it reaches its goal earlier than expected.

A Council member asked about the future of professional advising on campus since that was an initiative that Provost Whitten had been leading.

President Morehead said that VP of Instruction, Dr. Shrivastav, was very committed to that initiative so he doesn’t think it will be disrupted, but he said he’d ask for an update next time they meet. He added that the university is assessed positively on the quality and professionalism of its academic advisors and the student/advisor relationship is crucial for academic success and post-grad employment.

Juan Jarrett clarified that HR has taken a “strategic pause” with programming around professional advising because the next step in HR’s process would have been to conduct a campus wide job audit, but that has been paused because the CAR assessment will do the same thing. The hope is that HR will be able to utilize that data from the CAR assessment so that they have a better understanding of how to update the classification structure for professional advising in order to be in line with the system office. The goal is to review the data after Thanksgiving so that it can be utilized next spring.
Tamala Foreman asked if the momentum has slowed down for staff appreciation events and asked there would be changes to the staff appreciation event in the future. She also asked how staff would be able to be included on the committee for future planning.

President Morehead asked Arthur Tripp to take that question since he heads that event.

Arthur said that every year there is record breaking attendance and that the President of Staff Council sits on that planning committee. He said that staff are continually providing feedback on the event.

Marie Mize added that the council wants to encourage more staff involvement in Staff Appreciation event and that it would be under active discussion.

President Morehead said that the energy level at the last event was great and attendees had a lot of fun- despite the heat.

Arthur Tripp said that they provided 80% more shade options this year and that they are always trying to improve the experience.

Laura Kelley asked if the President’s Office had you considered any indoor locations for the Staff Appreciation event.

Arthur Tripp said that there is always a rain location, but it’s hard to find a big enough space with the number of people in attendance and that feedback has indicated that people enjoy spending the time outside.

President Morehead asked if there were any additional questions and thanked the council members for their time.

Marie Mize asked the council if they had any other items to bring forward.

A short discussion ensued about communicating the meeting times and places to the wider staff community so they can participate. Marie mentioned that the council was working on updating the Staff Council webpage.

There was also a short discussion about finding a different venue for meetings and Andrew said he’d look for a new meeting room.

Laura Kelley shared some context around the policy committee which has been an initiative of staff council for some time; UGA does not currently have a policy unit— or a central repository for all UGA policies, so the committee has been advocating for its creation.

Marie thanked the council for attending and the meeting adjourned at 3:18pm.