Call to Order: Cynthia Hayes, Chair, called the March 8th meeting of the Staff Advisory Council, in the Race Room of the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, to order at 3:40 p.m. She then introduced Yvette Jones, COO and Sr. Vice President for External Affairs, who was our guest speaker for the meeting.
I. **Review and Approval of the Minutes:** A quorum was present. The minutes of the February 8, 2007 meeting were approved as written.

II. **Guest Speaker:** Yvette Jones was present to give an overview of the current status of the University, to answer any questions that we might have, and to listen to any concerns:

- **Provost and SVP/Dean of School of Medicine Searches:** Michael Bernstein has been chosen to be our new Provost. He will start on July 1st. Paul Whelton has resigned to become the President of the Loyola Health System in Chicago; a search for Senior Vice President/Dean of the School of Medicine has begun. That position will probably not be filled until September at the earliest.

- **Staff:** Tulane is currently operating with a full-time workforce of just over 4300 faculty and staff. Before Katrina hit, there were close to 7000. Some of the reduction is due to the Renewal Plan and restructuring the University, but there have been many voluntary departures (around 250). The University is having a hard time filling the vacancies created by voluntary departure. There are approximately 90 active faculty searches going on, fairly evenly split between uptown and downtown. There will be more positions to fill downtown because of the need to backfill faculty that had been cut after Katrina. On any given day, there are about 250 positions open; each takes up to six months to fill. The University is facing a difficult labor market in certain areas, especially in skilled craft positions where external demand is high. Retaining newly hired staff is also a challenge. On the other side, the University is getting very good candidates for faculty positions, and it is hoped that the length of a search will be reduced to between 60-90 days.

- **Undergraduate Admissions:** This remains one of Tulane’s biggest challenges. Last year Tulane was only able to recruit 900 freshmen out of 21,000 applications. This was a shock; the administration knew that Katrina would have an effect on enrollment, but they didn’t expect that it would decrease freshman enrollment from 1700 down to 900. As a result, Tulane has changed its recruiting strategies, has generated a pool of almost 18,000 applications, and hopes to recruit 1200 freshmen, which is the number that they budgeted for. There will be a decrease in the student body from about 5100 full-time undergraduates this year to about 4875 full-time undergraduates next year due to graduation of a large undergraduate class (around 1700 students). Tulane’s ideal would be to have about 5600 undergraduate students. In recent years, the undergraduate population had gotten a little too large, which placed a strain on facilities and the faculty. Tulane is starting to regain stability in enrollment, but expects that it might take two years until enrollment levels out.

- **Finances and Damages:** As a result of the storm, Tulane lost approximately $200M in property damage, $100-120M in operations due to being closed for the semester and to losing some students, and about $150M in assets related to research, libraries and other contents. So far it has only collected about $115M in insurance. Additionally, Tulane signed a mediated settlement with Allianz Insurance in the end of February. The terms cannot be disclosed; however, Tulane had $250M in coverage and they were happy with the settlement that was negotiated. When this settlement arrives, it will be used to repay contractors about $90M in fees (they haven’t been paid in a year) and to start repaying the $150M that was borrowed right after the storm. Tulane will also continue to try to
recover about $100M from FEMA, which might take 10 years. Those dollars would be used to pay off the remaining part of the $150M loan. The next step will be to focus on correcting the $30M operating deficit that has resulted from smaller enrollments (20% drop) and the impact that the medical practice had on operations. In order to retain medical faculty, Tulane guaranteed the salaries of the physicians who depend on clinical revenue to augment their salaries for a year. This has generated a $15M deficit for the current year. The revenue picture looks better for them, but Tulane still expects the deficit to continue at $30M for several years.

The Administration’s focus is to bring back the undergraduate enrollment to the size it needs to be, to pay off some of the debt to lower our expenses and to work with the medical group to generate revenues. Tulane is understaffed; cutting staff positions would not help the budget, so the approach will focus on generating revenues. Two sources of revenue are Research Funding and Fund-Raising. Research funding has remained strong, despite the fact that many of the faculty had their labs destroyed. For the coming year, Tulane anticipates about $140M in awards, comparable to pre-Katrina numbers. While Tulane has lost some faculty, they haven’t lost a significant number of research dollars. Fund-raising has gone very well. Tulane is still operating the Promise and Distinction Campaign, with its goal of $700M by June ’08. As of March, $623M has been raised, and $650M is expected by June 30. They hope to surpass the $700M goal in the final year of the Campaign. The Rebuilding Fund that was put together after Katrina has been incredibly successful, raising around $80M for unrestricted use and for specific things related to rebuilding. In the next 16 months, Tulane needs to raise about $6M per month; anything that SAC can do to help meet that need will be helpful to the University. Finally, Tulane’s endowment should be at $1B by the end of the year, which was one of the goals of the Campaign.

e. **City Park:** Tulane’s partnership with City Park came about through a very active alumnus who wanted to find a way for Tulane and City Park to work together. This led to a dialog about partnering with Tulane students, not only through volunteering but also through classroom work (Business School students developing a business plan). Staff members have also helped by volunteering with groundwork, painting, cleaning and restoration work. Both City Park and Tulane can benefit from this partnership.

Cynthia added that she attended a meeting in February and was very impressed with City Park’s plan for recovery and development (which is available on their website at http://www.neworleanscitypark.com/plan.html). She spoke with their volunteer coordinator Lisa Laraway who will put together her thoughts about volunteer opportunities, which Cynthia will present to SAC. Some ideas included building play areas for children through KaBoom, educational offerings by educators, and team-building exercises for university offices. This presents a wonderful opportunity for staff to become involved.

f. **Questions and Answers:**
   - **Is a change to the leave policy being contemplated at this time?** No. In the past, Tulane has looked at making changes but has not implemented any of them, and has not consulted anyone recently about changing the
current policy. When it becomes an issue, Anne Baños will bring it to SAC.

- **When will the library be renovated?** FEMA will probably help Tulane add two floors to the library but it may not happen any time soon (2010?). The larger plan ($80M renovation) probably won’t happen for 15 years.

- **What’s happening with the development of Uptown Square?** Nothing. Tulane does not have the resources or the staff to put into its development right now. It is not needed for graduate housing because of the Papillion. It does have a developer, Paul Flower, who is interested in looking at the property from primarily a commercial standpoint. Every inch of it is currently being used.

- **What is the status of the Alumni House renovations?** The Administration hopes for renovations to be complete for reoccupation by March 2008. FEMA wants Tulane to elevate it, but Tulane may just go ahead without FEMA. Some money still needs to be raised for the project; current projected cost for renovation is about $800K. The Annual Fund House will become the phone room, and Tulane probably will elevate it.

- **Regarding City Park, has the University thought about doing some staff or other events out there, to funnel business their way?** This partnership is just starting and a lot of ideas are coming out. Tulane is directing prospects to City Park. Regarding the continued use of Tad Gormley stadium for football games, there were complaints by opposing teams about the quality of the stadium as a whole; it needs to be upgraded before Tulane can resume playing there. The fans love having games there, but there are certain standards that must be met, such as amount of seating, conditions of dressing rooms, etc.

- **What’s the status of Fogelman Arena renovations?** Campus Planning Committee is reviewing the initial plan; a parent who is on the Board has put up a challenge match for Athletics. Funding would be used to renovate Fogelman for basketball and volleyball competition as well as to make it a performance venue. This will be a $23M project, for which still about $9M still needs to be raised. This will probably be the next capital project.

Yvette was thanked for her in-depth review of the current status of Tulane and for providing answers to SAC questions.

III. **Human Resources Liaison:** Stefanie Allweiss presented a summary of Human Resources projects and events:

  a. **Staffing:** There are about 250 staff (not faculty) positions open right now. HR is seeing attrition, primarily among the newer staff members, and is trying to determine the reasons (i.e. low pay, benefits, compensation issues, etc.).

  b. **Staff Recognition Event:** Stefanie signed letters for 450 anniversary recipients for the upcoming event on March 22nd, and certificates have been hand-signed by Anne Baños. Unfortunately due to Scott Cowen’s schedule, there will not be a dinner for the 25-year employees, as has been held in the past. The event will be catered with food, wine and
cakes for each incremental anniversary year. Only currently employed staff members are invited to the event (not those who made their 25th anniversary during the hiatus and who are no longer employed at Tulane). This event honors staff members who reached their anniversary dates from July 2005 – December 2006. Suzanne Lossi has been asked to make posters listing recipients for each anniversary year; a photographer will be present, and New Wave will interview the two 45-year recipients for an article. The ceremony will be held here in the LBC. Supervisors are being notified of the event so that they will permit the recipients to attend the celebration.

c. **Orientation:** The entire orientation process is being revamped. HR, along with members from Payroll, is meeting once a week as a group to generate ideas. Orientation will be mandatory. Everyone will attend Orientation on a Friday, and then will start working in their department on the following Monday. There may be a separate Orientation for faculty. The morning session of each orientation will be used for completing forms, reviewing conditions of employment, explanations for insurance, etc, and the afternoon might be something upbeat and friendly, like the “It’s Good to be TU” event. HR is going to poll campus organizations to see which of them would be interested in participating in an Orientation “Welcome Center”. There are issues still to be worked out (location, parking, and perhaps shuttling people from University Square to the Orientation site). If anyone has any ideas about what issues (e.g., harassment and sexual discrimination policies, environmental services, disability services), or organizations should be represented in Orientation, please forward them to Stefanie.

d. **Wellness Initiatives:** Stefanie has met with Pfizer, UHC, Cigna, and Karen DeSalvo to talk about Wellness Initiatives which would include all aspects of wellness - caring for health as well as things like leadership training - and she will be putting together a committee which represents a cross-section of the University. The first step will be to encourage employees to fill out a health assessment survey so that they know which issues we should be targeting.

e. **HR Website:** The website is being totally overhauled to update information and remove material that is out of date.

f. **Reaching Employees:** Some university employees (i.e. Newcomb Child Care and in Facilities Services) do not have e-mail capabilities (computer access in their office) so they had not heard about the Staff Event in January. The University needs to make sure that all Tulane employees receive an e-mail address, perhaps at Orientation, to enable all staff to be contacted with news, emergency updates and information on benefits to which they are entitled (taking classes, insurance choices, open enrollments, etc.) as new information becomes available.

g. **Question about review of positions and increase of pay for job title changes** - Anne Baños is looking at this topic with a lot of scrutiny. If someone receives a promotion and a grade change, then they should be entitled to a salary increase; this all has to be approved through Anne. One representative pointed out that many job grades do need to be reviewed, and that there are many people who are red-lined. Another mentioned that with post-Katrina cost increases, a 3% raise doesn’t cover much. Stefanie acknowledged that Anne is cognizant of the staff’s concerns, but the University is still in financial exigency. One representative noted that if the job grades pay ranges are not
extended, there will be an increase in title change requests. Stefanie will take this issue back to HR to investigate further.

h. Question about whose responsibility it is to do a job performance evaluation on staff members who split their previous evaluation period between two departments - The department who supervised the employee for the majority of the time being evaluated should do the evaluation. HR is compiling a database for all evaluations and they will make sure that departments do not globally rate their employees in their evaluations (e.g., give all 5s or all 3s with no comments), a practice which devalues the process. Also, HR will make sure that supervisors understand the proper basis for evaluating an employee (e.g., they do not penalize employees for taking Family Medical Leave), and they will ensure that departments turn in their properly-executed evaluations to HR. Different evaluation pilot programs will be reviewed in the future as well.

i. Final Comments and Miscellanea: Supervisors may need Orientation as well. International staff members (not working in New Orleans) will also need Orientation. United Way letters have gone out; Vince Ilustre and Karen DeSalvo are co-chairmen. The goal for the year is $70K (half of last year’s goal). The top prize is a free weekend in a local hotel. United Way also gives gift-giving incentives. SAC needs to be part of the Orientation so that new employees know that there is such an entity, and that they can go to SAC with any questions.

IV. Report of the Chair: Cynthia Hayes thought that this would be a good time to look at the Mission Statement and Objectives to see what SAC has accomplished and what still needs to be worked on. The main focus is that SAC is in a partnership with the Administration in making this environment a wonderful working relationship with open, honest communication. Especially now, given the current financial constraints, what can SAC do to enhance the working environment for staff? SAC needs to foster a positive working relationship with the Administration in order to achieve our goals. Everything that SAC has brought to the Administration has been responded to in some fashion. Past perceptions have appeared to indicate that there was an air of suspicion by some staff members towards the Administration which portrayed a lack of trust. So, how do we, SAC members and our fellow colleagues feel about the current relationship between the staff and administration and about issues with supervisors? Is there enough communication? Are there roadblocks? What more should SAC be doing? Cynthia then called for a discussion of the matter among the representatives.

○ In response, a representative remarked that years ago, when she was a member of SAC, there was an adversarial attitude between SAC and the administration. Some current negative attitude may exist because so many long-term employees remember when they only paid $10 for a doctor visit, or when there was a graduate tuition waiver, or when they received higher pay raises. Those things have changed because of the external environment, not because the Administration wanted to take things away from us. The Administration has done much for the staff (for example, extra holidays like Memorial Day and managing a pay increase within the post-Katrina financial exigency environment). Some staff members seem to be more concerned with their own self-interests now rather than with the group. Group issues, benefits, and services are what SAC is supposed to focus on – things that affect everyone, not just an individual. Every
individual may need help at some time; SAC should act as a conduit for people and direct them to where they need to go to receive help.

○ A representative noted that SAC needs to represent all employees (exempt, non-exempt, male, female, all ethnicities, all levels of pay grade, etc.). SAC needs to be diverse and represent every faction at Tulane; it should be a real reflection of the University. SAC representatives need to be communicators to the staff, to reach out to everyone, listen to them and then bring their concerns back to SAC. In June, SAC has the opportunity and the responsibility with its elections to reach out to everyone and to create a diverse group that does truly represent the University.

○ A representative opined that somehow we need to get SAC representatives to attend the meetings. There are mechanisms that can be implemented so that representatives can participate in meetings even if they can’t physically attend (e.g., teleconferencing or videoconferencing). According to the by-laws, representatives are supposed to attend regularly or be replaced. There are a few representatives who have never attended a single meeting since the Katrina hiatus. Those people need to be replaced with people who will actually attend and contribute. Back in the “old days”, SAC was divided up into many smaller districts and information could trickle down from a representative to constituents within a district, most of whom were familiar each other. Minutes were printed out and distributed by hand. These days, with large district representation and with electronic posting of minutes, the information that comes out of SAC meetings doesn’t seem to make it out to the staff. Much of the move away from district representation came about because of the Katrina exodus and reorganization of departments, but now Tulane has settled into fairly stable department sizes and physical locales so perhaps SAC can once again devise a district map and target representatives from all parts of campus, especially those that are underrepresented now (maintenance, security, etc). That would help to unite the staff and make them feel as if they are part of a larger network of employees.

○ A representative said that with our upcoming elections, staff members will be able to nominate candidates online, and then the Election Committee, with the Chair and appointees, will look at the nominees and the districts and make sure that all areas are being represented.

○ A representative expressed concern that supervisors know the proper way to fill out a job performance evaluation, and the laws that apply (e.g., regarding FMLA and employee absence).

After thanking the representatives for their ideas about SAC’s progress with its Objectives and for conducting a useful dialog on the topic, Cynthia asked the representatives to let her know how they feel about doing projects like the City Park Initiative and Lusher School, and asked them to suggest future projects that might encourage staff involvement.
V. Officer Reports
   a. University Senate: The meeting was cancelled this month so there is no report.
   b. Board of Administrators: They are meeting next week, so there is no report today.

VI. University Senate Committees:
   a. Benefits: They will be meeting March 26th, and there will be a healthcare oversight committee meeting in April.
   b. Budget Review: There will be a report forthcoming.
   c. Computing: Cynthia has no knowledge of a meeting being held.
   d. Equal Opportunity: Cynthia has no knowledge of a meeting being held.
   e. Physical Facilities: Shirley Dymond reports that there was no meeting.
   f. Social Issues: Suzanne Lossi reports that the committee chairman has put out a call for issues.

VII. SAC Sub-Committees:
   a. Election Committee: Cynthia coordinated the election for a new Elections Coordinator, since Mary Little resigned that position after the last meeting. She called for nominations from the floor, and there being none, she moved to accept Rhonda Earles, by acclimation, as Elections Coordinator to fill the remainder of this term. The motion passed unanimously.
   b. Electronic Technology and Information: No report. Now that Rhonda has been elected to fill the Elections Coordinator position, she will work with Linda to establish a working online elections procedure that we will implement for our June elections.
   c. Recognition: No meeting since the event last month.
   d. Staff Issues: Susan Barrera reported that they did not meet, but she and Cynthia had discussed holding smaller events at the Primate Center and Downtown, similar to the January event in the LBC with vendors coming in, to reach staff members from the other campuses who were unable to attend in January. Perhaps SAC can coordinate that with our June meeting Downtown, and in July with our annual Potluck event at the Primate Center. Stefanie can provide us with the vendor contact information to help us put it together.

One representative was happy to report that SAC’s current procedures for presenting problems, receiving answers from the Administration, and then reporting back to constituents seems to be well received by staff members. Staff members appreciate that communication is flowing between the SAC and the Administration, and that SAC is listening and getting answers for them, which helps them keep a positive attitude. Since approved monthly minutes are being funneled to Linda and are being posted online, we can always direct staff members to the SAC website to see what we are doing.
e. **Constitution:** There was a second reading of the amendment that *Staff Advisory Council* will allow for proxy voting in the election of officers. Proxy voting will be by electronic e-mail vote or a hand-carried ballot through another representative. Proxy votes shall stand as delivered. Only representatives in good standing will be allowed to vote by proxy.

There was discussion about who is considered to be “in good standing.” The Constitution states that *If a representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings, a majority of the officers may agree to consider that Representative’s position vacant, and shall notify that Representative of this determination in writing, with a copy sent to all Officers. Representatives who have been so notified may petition the Chair in writing for reinstatement within two (2) weeks of such notice. If no petition for reinstatement is received or the Chair denies such petition, the Chair will appoint the next eligible member of the Proxy Representative Pool for that Representative’s district to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the applicable term.*

SAC tried to address the lack of regular attendance about a year ago, when it became obvious that many representatives had never attended meetings. These representatives were contacted; some indicated their interest in continuing on as representatives but still have never attended. Regarding the use of proxy votes, the pertinent point is that representatives would not, and should not, accept a proxy vote from a representative who does not regularly attend meetings.

At this time, the motion was submitted and seconded, and the amendment passed unopposed.

**VIII. Old Business:** none.

**IX. New Business:** President Cowen is scheduled to be the guest speaker at the next meeting. Cynthia suggests that everyone invite guests to the meeting.

**X. Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be April 12th, at the Lavin-Bernick Center’s Stibbs Conference Room. Guest speaker will be Dr. Scott Cowen.

**XI. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 PM.

Ann E. Smith Case  
Recording Secretary  
Approved on May 10, 2007