



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW ORLEANS

## STAFF COUNCIL

### Staff Council Minutes 04.21.2022

Guest Speaker: Rebecca Conwell

**Bio:** As President and CEO of the UNO Research and Technology Foundation, a 501(c)3 that serves as a public-private partner with the University of New Orleans, Rebecca is charged with leading the new era of the Foundation and the management and development of its greatest asset, the newly rebranded research park -- The Beach at UNO, a Sandbox for Collaboration. Working closely with the Foundation's board of directors, staff and the university, Rebecca is implementing a plan to create an environment at The Beach that is entrepreneurial and community-driven, where people come together to solve complex social, scientific and business breakthroughs for the New Orleans and Gulf region.

Rebecca's career has been defined by her civic and professional leadership in service to the Greater New Orleans region. Prior to joining the Research and Technology Foundation, Conwell served as the Executive Director of the New Orleans Recreation Development Foundation, and as the Senior Advisor for Economic Development for Mayor Mitch Landrieu and the City of New Orleans where she was instrumental in strengthening the city's economic development functions, attracting new businesses, overseeing the city's incentive offerings.

Additionally, Rebecca spent 14 years working at Tulane University, serving as Executive Director of State and Local Governmental Affairs, Chief of Staff for the University President, and Interim Executive Director of the Cowen Institute, a think tank for K-12 education in New Orleans.

Throughout her career, Rebecca has been appointed to and served on numerous local and regional boards and advisory bodies including United Way of Southeast Louisiana's Women's Leadership Council, Son of a Saint's Inaugural Advisory Committee, NOLA BA's Board of Directors, New Orleans Regional Business Park's Board of Commissioners and Kingsley House's Board of Directors. Additionally, Rebecca was an early mentor for the Justice & Accountability Center at Propeller, a Force for Social Innovation.

Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Lamar University. Additionally, she is a graduate of Leadership Louisiana and Loyola University's Institute of Politics.

**Presentation:** For those who aren't familiar, the research park was created 30 years ago as a public private partnership. As with most partnerships that span decades, the relationship

between the two entities will wax and wane with leadership changes, plus the organization has changed over the years.

In 2017, the board of directors saw a need to realign the commission, and spent a couple years reassessing the relationship and strategic plan. Rebecca was hired to implement that strategic plan. The plans are ambitious!

You can see our website here: <https://thebeachuno.org/>

The goal is to benefit UNO. No longer just a real estate lease.

**5 main initiatives:**

1. Create a vibrant brand and location: it's amazing how many people grew up here and have no idea what we are.
2. Encourage companies and research to partner with UNO and locate at The Park. Currently 95% occupied. Most of them have a relationship via internships, endowed partnerships, etc.
3. Invested to renovate space into the Lindy Boggs conference center. We should begin work on that within the next year.
4. Create grants and incentivize external funding with the faculty
5. Increase innovation and entrepreneurship

**Shafin Khah:**

- The space has 30 acres, 600,000 square feet of office space, lab facilities, conference center
- Sandbox Innovation Center
- 3D printers, virtual reality, etc
- We're excited about this as an asset for UNO, both students and faculty
- Faculty side: lots of great grants and funding,
- Safin has been involved in several SBIR/STTR programs over the years and is excited to bring these to UNO
- Building partners and relationships through alumni
- Helping students think through ideas they might have to develop and pitch and find funding
- Helping students think through business plans and bringing ideas to the market
- New Orleans entrepreneur week
- Green energy, hydrokinetic energy, etc.
- Venturewell - e-teams program that they run regularly

**Entrepreneurship education:** Lean startup course with Shafin - taking an idea through a very particular process to understand the needs of your customer and market, rather than creating in a silo

[skhan@unofoundation.org](mailto:skhan@unofoundation.org)

We want to bring programming to UNO students

## Questions:

### 1. Why did we name it "The Beach"?

When we were brainstorming on our identity, "just name it something new" When I used to work for the city of New Orleans, I toured an entity called "station f" built out of the shell of an abandoned train station. It was very easy to remember, it tied back to its roots. I was inspired by the history of our location at the old pontchartrain beach, but the word "Pontchartrain" locally is overused and saturated. The simplification of "the beach" really lends itself to marketing but still ties to the history of the location. We don't have "research and technology" in the title anymore, but is in all of our language. The terms have really changed to encompass so much more in 30 years

### 2. Lean start up course: where is it? How will we promote it?

It'll be at the business school, we've been talking to the deans, but open to suggestions. We want engineering and humanities students to join.

### 3. How can we help?

Be aware of the programs, be a champion for sharing the information with students

Spread the word! Want to come have a tour? Let us know! Excitement is contagious, and if you can speak in the first person that's the best.

## Executive Committee Reports

### Randall:

- University Budget Committee: energy project,
- Diversity Engagement Committee - they do a lot of work! Lots of educational opportunities that are available to staff, etc.
- Institutional effectiveness committee: gets us ready for SACS and our accreditation process. Randall was a part of participation with our WEAVE goals but for this committee.
- UNO faculty senate: a lot of restructuring with faculty senate, they're in the process of bylaws. Will we retain our one vote?

**Joy:** Not many reports, quick shout out about Sucbauf - \$5 unless you volunteer. UC parking lot. 35th annual Sucbauf!

**Willis:** n/a

**Coleen:** n/a

**Julie:** Continue checking the website! If you have anything to add to the website, please let me know and

## Committee reports:

Highlights: membership and elections: time to start volunteering to staff council! If you want to be a part of staff council, please fill out (FORM) so we can track interest. We're happy to chat about what it looks like, time/work commitment.

**Staff concerns:**

1. Birds on campus: limiting bird strikes  
If you do find a bird that has struck a window please contact Liz as soon as possible. Take a picture and send it to her if possible. If anyone lives or goes to baton rouge regularly, the museum collects bird specimens so if someone wants to act as a courier...
2. Changes to sick leave policy that were made and RX drug
3. Rx drugs: communication came out early January when the change was made during open enrollment, came out from OGB and the Benefits mailbox, happened due to a vendor change. UNO cannot control what the vendor changes. All of our rx options could be different depending on what insurance policy each individual have. You can make an appointment with HR to check on your policy if you have specific questions.
4. Sick leave policy: policies were revised and posted through the presidents office. Under administrative policies. It was updated to match the UL policy when we went on workday. UL system was already in line with the civil service policy. The change that was made is that sick leave can now be used for care of immediate family members. So if an immediate family member has an appointment you can now use your sick leave for those appointments. Each department has different requirements re: doctor's notes, but you can now use your sick leave for this purpose
  - If you need to miss more than 5 days, that might fall under FMLA
5. Upward Promotions at UNO: If you sent out that question, please contact Karen Paissant. These are real specific HR requirements that make it hard to answer generally.

**Events committee:** Ice Cream social stay tuned.

**Awards committee:** Service with Jazz has been chosen for March. Reagan Laiche in Enrollment Services!

**Wellness Committee:** May 2nd Cross Campus Walkers will meet in front of the rec center at 12:30 to walk for 30 minutes. Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

**Miscellaneous:**

Baseball! A couple games left in the season:

<https://unoprivateers.com/sports/baseball/schedule/2022>

HR and Benefits Updates will be added to the agenda. This could be a good time for policy updates to be given to staff regularly

**Sustainability at UNO:**

A website! Yay! <https://www.uno.edu/sustainability>

The website has lots of information about different initiatives on campus

We have a map: let me know if there are any updates (Bird feeder etc)

Resource Library: green guides

Privateer Pocket Garden: Native plants, rain garden, rain barrel etc.

Shout out for the picnic yesterday! It was so fun!

## Participant List:

Julie Landry	Monique Nolan Legendre	Toni Slessinger	
eland	Tiffany	Liz Sigler she/her/hers	
creed1	Reagan Laiche	Ayana Olatunji-Morales	
Randall Menard	Joy Ballard (she/her/hers)	Emily Zurek	
scalamar	Eileen Dooley	ctraczek@uno.edu	
Coleen Maidlow	sjhoyt	Mariana Z. Martinez	
Kassie Thibodeaux	dbauer	Jenerio C. Sanders	
Nerolie Rayson	Britney Butler	sesmail1@uno.edu	
Rachael Lindstrom	Elaine Ramond	Nora	
Edgar Avila Jr	Tracy Franklin	Ame Flynn	
Carol Mitton	Jennifer Grant	Samartha Mudigere Girish	
Brian	Becky Ferris	Rami LeBlanc	
Shafin Khan	Kimberly Esteves	Janet Fleming	
Rebecca Conwell	Karen		15042
Kristy Askam	Phil Pinkston	hwebb1	
Lisa Grass	bbarras1	Jaime McSkimming	
Jody	rkern	LaKita	
David Armstrong	Marketa Janousova	Christie Thomas	
jricchiazzi	(she/her/hers)	vgranito	
Sam Pallas (she/her/hers)	Tiffany C. (she/her/hers)		15042803178
M. Bonaventure	LeeAnne S. (she/her/hers)	Addrianne Davis	
Lynette Bates	Kenny Merrick UNO	Sergio Cuevas	
Erin Sutherland	Tajuanda Montreuil		
Patton	nmukherj		

The UNO Staff Council is dedicated to providing the best possible representation for the staff of the University. Our goal is to identify ways to support and enhance the lives of our valued fellow staff. Staff Council welcomes input from the entire university community in order to make the University of New Orleans the best place to work and prosper in the City of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana.