Idea/Question #1:

Currently, our staff benefits do not mirror our faculty counterparts or other institutions. HR has noted that they are consistently evaluating policies and benefits and looking for improvements or changes that need to be made. It would be beneficial to have USAC be a catalyst for changes through advocacy to create an environment that staff feels valued.

Rationale/Reason:

Though there are many benefit differences that should be examined, one in particular that stands out is that if two UR employees are married, they actually lose 8 weeks of parental leave because the 8-week period is split between employees. This not only does not benefit employees of the university but actually punishes families that are both employed by the university. Not to mention, 8 weeks of parental leave for staff vs 12 weeks many other places, and compared to the entire semester for faculty. The parental leave policy overall for staff seems to be seriously lacking.

Response:

Human Resources works closely with the University Benefits Committee throughout the year to develop the employee benefits package, in accordance with the University Benefits Philosophy. More information on the committee and the philosophy can be found here:
https://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/benefits-philosophy.html

The Benefits Committee includes representation from faculty, staff, and retirees. Starting in August of 2023 a representative from USAC was formally added to the group although USAC has played a role over the years by making recommendations for staff representation.

Making decisions on benefits is an important but delicate balancing act. We are informed by feedback from the community as well as staying abreast of the benefits market. In considering changes or additions to our benefits, we also keep our fiscal responsibilities in mind.

For the great majority of our benefits, we are aligned with what we offer staff and faculty. The structure of faculty and staff roles varies greatly, and the expectations for the work of faculty are much more directly tied to the academic semesters.   This has an impact on some benefits, including how we structure leaves.

Regarding parental leave benefits, particularly when both parents work at UR, we are committed to taking a closer look at the policy this year with the Benefits Committee.

Idea/question #2 :
I remember a few years ago, HR was working on a library of some sort that had all of the jobs on campus in it. Is this still in the works? Curious of the status of it.

Rationale/reason:
People would be able to look into jobs they might want if a position became available and work on getting those skills/education requirements to better be in the running for a new position. Quite a few people have told me they are interested in doing different things and learning more but currently don't know the best path to get to where they want.

User was picturing something like this: : https://hr.wisc.edu/standard-job-descriptions/

Response:

This question is very closely connected to the one last month regarding a career framework, which would typically then include a job library. As we shared last month, we do not currently have a career-level guide or career framework. We have information on HR's website that describes our pay grades and how those are determined.   Talent Acquisition Specialists or Human Resources Business partners are available to provide coaching and guidance on navigating careers on campus.   The Talent Acquisition Team is responsible for finding the best new Spiders to join our web! We work daily to attract top talent who will embody the values of UR and push our mission forward. We partner with hiring managers and search committees to attract, recruit, and hire amazing candidates, creating a capable, diverse, and inclusive community. Feel free to reach out to our team to learn more about careers at UR.

A number of years ago, there was a significant attempt to create a career framework, including job families. This was met with resistance from the community.   We are in the process of preparing to implement Workday, the system which will house most of our HR and finance information. As this project progresses, we may have more opportunities to explore how the functionality might help us address this request.

Idea/Question:

How can staff request a "panic button" in their office or suite to alert campus police to a disturbance.

Rationale/Reason:

Given the recent shooting of a faculty member at another university, the issue of staff safety on campus is in the news again. While our open campus is an asset, certain offices are more accessible than others. For example, the reception desk or the first office on the ground floor of any building is more likely.
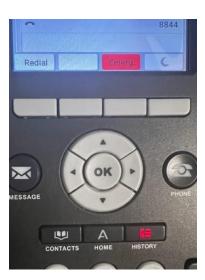
Response

Public Safety encourages you to take the following 2 steps:

1. Download UR Spider Safety app: https://preparedness.richmond.edu/

Familiarize yourself with these two icons:
   a. *Emergency Services Contacts* icon which provides direct connections for an emergency, non-emergency and 911 for off campus
   b. *Mobile Blue light* Icon which connects you to our emergency communications center and provides your location to the Communications Officer (on-campus use).

2. Check your VOIP desk phone, if you lift the receiver you will see a red emergency icon. Once you press the button directly below it you are connected to our emergency communications center.

If you lift the receiver and do not have an emergency icon, you may have an older model phone (black and white in color). There is a small cost for a phone replacement, please coordinate with your department supervisor and you can make a request to Telecom.

These two steps provide you a mobile and workplace option to quickly reach URPD Emergency Communication.

A panic button is a hard-wired piece of equipment that has been installed for use in certain, specified locations across campus.