

Three answered Web Submissions:

I understand that the University of Richmond contracts with Orkin Pest Control and that glue traps are heavily used. My concern is that glue traps are incredibly cruel and they do not target any specific "pest." Beneficial insects (including our mascot, the spider!), small reptiles, even birds, etc., can all be hurt or killed if they accidentally get onto a glue trap. Even if the target "pest" is caught by a glue trap, it results in a horrible end, with death by dehydration, starvation, exhaustion, or mortal injury, as they struggle in vain to get free. This causes immense suffering. Additionally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises against using glue traps because they terrify animals that get caught in them, causing them to defecate and urinate, potentially spreading pathogens and diseases in the vicinity of the trap. Is there not a better way? Can UR put more effort into prevention, such as sealing gaps where pests may be entering buildings? I'm sure our food service areas are as clean as they can be, but perhaps a look into alternatives could be explored. Note: I would not advocate switching to rodenticides or heavy poisons, as that creates an entirely different issue. Thank you for your consideration of this concern.

Response:

Thank you for sharing your concern about pest control practices on campus. The University of Richmond contracts with Orkin Pest Control to provide integrated pest management services, with a focus on safety, effectiveness, and sustainability. Preventative practices are the priority, and we work to reduce the need for intervention by addressing underlying causes whenever possible.

While Orkin has multiple options available, including rodenticides and poisons, the University has chosen not to rely on those methods due to their environmental and health risks , such as primary poisoning from bait ingestion and secondary poisoning when wildlife or pets consume affected rodents. Glue traps are one of the tools currently in use.

Limited and targeted use of glue traps provide a controlled way to monitor pest activity and help prevent issues such as unpleasant odors or sanitation problems from rodent remains in inaccessible spaces. To minimize unintended impacts, glue traps are placed only in targeted areas as necessary. As part of each service call, Orkin technicians inspect for signs of activity and identify potential entry points. Any structural issues found are addressed by University Facilities to help reduce the need for future interventions.

We are continuing to explore ways to strengthen our pest control practices and will take your feedback into account as we evaluate potential changes in the future.

In the University Faculty Meeting held Friday, September 12, the Associate Vice President of Financial Planning and Budget reported that members of the upper administration have been charged to identify ways to maximize university resources and explore how potential resources and individuals could span across units to increase efficiency. In the current political and financial climate, this new scrutiny raises concerns that the University is moving towards potential job cuts. Optimizing resources and efficiency is an ongoing priority across campus units, and of particular importance now, and so I am seeking additional information about the assessment process. It is my belief that transparency will help to ease any anxiety and the spread of misinformation in this moment when we see many higher education institutions cutting jobs and significantly re-organizing. My questions are: 1. What framework and metrics will be used to assess resource use? When will this framework and related metrics be shared with the employees whose work is being assessed? 2. Will this process reduce or eliminate current employee positions? 3. Is reorganization a likely outcome of this assessment? If so, how will staff subject to reorganization be included in the process? 4. How will staff be consulted and included in analysis of their campus roles? 5. When will the university inform staff of this assessment project and its expected campus impact? To date, there has been no formal communication with staff on this topic [through USAC and/or other channels that might be used].

Response:

Thank you for raising these questions and for sharing your perspective. We understand that conversations about resources, efficiency, and planning may create concerns, and we want to be clear about the purpose of this effort and how it is being carried out.

The University is engaging in what we are calling Integrated Resource Planning. This effort's primary focus is not about staff reductions or reorganizations. The goal is to develop a more thorough understanding of the needs, challenges, aspirations, and financial resources available for each school and division across the University. For some units, opportunities and challenges may involve staffing; for others, the issues may relate more to technology systems or other operational supports. While staffing adjustments could occasionally be an outcome in support of division or University priorities, that is not the primary focus of this work. The intent is to better plan for and align resources with the priorities of the University.

There is no single framework or formula for efficiency across all units, as each has different roles in fulfilling the mission of the University. Rather than applying one set of metrics, we are asking division leaders and deans to assess their own needs and identify opportunities they believe could improve effectiveness, strengthen operations, and maximize resources in a more fiscally challenging environment. We will work to aggregate these ideas and, where possible, help advance them.

This process will include meeting with each vice president, dean, and leaders of larger divisions to understand their priorities and how we are currently resourced to support them. We have also been sharing information with Planning and Priorities (which includes USAC representation) as well as other staff and faculty groups across campus. This will help us identify both gaps and opportunities to better align resources with current University priorities.

Question about sick leave policy: UR policy states "A supervisor may require medical evidence for ANY time claimed as sick leave." Is this policy contrary to VA law? (see below). Should the UR HR policy be updated to provide further guidance and clarification so that the policy is fairly applied across campus?

<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title40.1/chapter3/section40.1-33.5/> F. For paid sick leave of three or more consecutive work days, an employer may require reasonable documentation that the paid sick leave has been used for a purpose for which such leave is required to be provided as set forth in subsection A.

Response:

Thank you for the inquiry. The University's sick leave policy is consistent with all applicable state and federal laws. The Virginia law you're referring to (Va. Code § 40.1-33.5) only applies to home health workers (per Va. Code § 40.1-33.3) and thus does not apply to University employees. The University's [Sick Leave Policy](#) provides that a supervisor may require medical evidence for any time claimed as sick leave. As with any matter of managerial discretion, we strongly encourage supervisors to apply this provision fairly and consistently.