



University Staff Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Special Programs Building, Room 156

In attendance: Ashley Blount, Kolby Ferguson, Mary Wheaton, Piera Balsamo, Julia Trachtenberg, Erin Lowery, Justin Woodson, Jess Oliver, Amanda Boyd, Matt DeWald, Holly Blevins, Deryk Noonkester, Mina Zatelli, Robin Walinski, Meghan Gill, Dr. Aesha Uqdah, Joy Heinzman (RLH), Caitlin McBride, Stephanie Fillman, Jennifer Phillips, Brain Joseph, Miriam Blackmon, Iria Jones, Ashley Kuemmerle, Monica Smith, Meghan Harris, Heidi Thompson, Carol Yeatts, Wendy Sheppard, Kirstin Stacia, Darrell Tyler, Aretha Harris, Mirinda McCants, Jenika Simmons, Jacqueline Carrell, Monica Booker

1. Call to Order and Chair's Report (Carole) 1:01

- Introduction by Carole – thanked attendees to breakfast with Monica Smith, WBB game, Faculty Senate breakfast/mixer
- Still need someone to host Spider Bites for April and May
- April 8th – Amy Howard, Assoc. Provost for Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement will be speaking.
- May meeting – HR Business partners will be speaking
- June 10th meeting – Hallocks are not available. Please contact Carole Yeatts with suggestions for a speaker.
- Melissa Falk, Associate Vice President & Dean of Admission will speak in September
- The current USAC Executive Board term ends on June 30th. Nominations for USAC Exec Board open through March 25th; at the April meeting those nominated can speak and will be recorded. Voting for the USAC Representatives for the Exec Board will be open April 8-22nd. Full participation in voting is requested. May 13th meeting the new Exec Board will be announced and a transition plan will be shared later.

2. Kirstin Stacia - Treasury report and Approval of the Minutes

- Treasury Report: Current balance is \$3254.50; reserving \$450 for election software leaves \$2800.
- The January meeting minutes were posted on the USAC Website; Miriam Blackmon made a motion and Ashely Blount seconded the motion to approve the January minutes. After the vote, the minutes were approved.
- The February minutes are not posted on Box because the meeting was a closed meeting for USAC representatives only. Kirstin will email the February minutes to representatives.
- Darrell Tyler asked who has access to the Box folder for USAC – Kirstin will check who is the administrator of the folder.

- Showed an example of new swag; bamboo phone holder for new employees and giveaways, as our supply of mousepads is dwindling.

3. Reports from Committees and Liaisons

- Cort Schneider - Faculty Senate – no report
- Miriam Blackmon - Planning & Priorities - merit pool – reminded that it is a pool and raises can be up to 2x the base
- Jess Oliver - Benefits Committee – Last meeting was focused on the Cigna/Bon Secours agreement; staff are reminded that they can apply for a continuation of care if they have a pre-existing condition and are currently under a care plan
- Monica Booker – Planning and Priorities – The Campus Plan will be presented on Thursday, March 20th at 10:30 in the Robins Auditorium. It's open to staff and faculty.
- John Shines - Plant Improvement Team – no report
- Amanda Boyd - Food Service Involvement Team – unable to meet due to weather, power issues
- Mary Wheaton & Erin Lowery - Communications– Active posting on social media to gain exposure for events and communicate activities; please encourage colleagues to like and follow
- Justin Woodson & Mina Zatelli - Events & Engagement – Save the date for Spiders in the Know on May 14th – Ushers need to be there by 8 am. A signup link was sent out. Please wear your USAC nametag.
- Julia Trachtenberg - first tour for new staff members at 12-1 this Friday, March 14th – led by Heather Sadowski starting from the Well-Being Center
- Elections – no report

4. Web Submissions– Wendy Sheppard - The new Web Submission form is live on the website. The difference is that the form asks if a response is needed or if it is just a comment.

- Web submission details can be found on the USAC website.
- On-call pay question: Questions or comments – Mirinda McCants – please explain “looking into it”, by the department will need to review – make sure HR is being proactive, or expecting staff to contact HR Business Partner for more information.
- Snow day closure decision-making process – Ashley Blount (part of the snow team) – if conditions were going to deteriorate at noon, then the action should be taken earlier and not wait until noon; there was a lack of communication and coordination; recommend salt bags around campus to not wait for the golf cart of salt to come around. Mary Wheaton commented that the decision makers need to keep in mind some people may have a longer commute and would need more time to get home; Mary also commented that the UR decisions were not in line with other local institutions (VCU); school divisions, and possibly UR could consider the broader community; Darrell Tyler commented that UR has most students living on campus which makes UR different from VCU. Wendy commented that there may be further discussion about essential and non-essential staff. There were multiple

meetings and considerations about the University's decision-making concerning weather closure.

- Affinity groups – how are we affirming people's existence, Title VI – A response will be shared at the April meeting.
- Lack of visible response to federal government attack on DEI and Dear Colleague letter of 2/14/25 - A response will be shared at the April meeting.
- Dear Colleague letter comment - A response will be shared at the April meeting.
- USAC and Faculty Senate to work together for a special Spiders in the Know about Trump's Executive orders - A response will be shared at the April meeting. Question – could the June meeting address this – probably should wait until we hear from Exec Leadership in Spiders In The Know; could possibly have Monica Smith address USAC again.
- Monica Smith– This is a fluid situation, exec orders and Dear Colleague letter, senior leadership is paying attention to and considering ways to manage our responses to the UR community – UR is not making preemptive changes at this time. There is also litigation around these issues – being careful not to flood UR constituents with information as things are still changing. Monica is partnering with Shannon Sinclair, VPA & General Counsel about these issues and be more proactive with communication – Last week, launched a new website for Inclusion and Belonging – leaning into the University's mission and values, definitions of DEI and other terms are included on the website– this is a visible statement of commitment to belonging and community. Monica shared a link to the Inclusion and Belonging website. [UR Inclusion & Belonging](#)
- Benefits Bon Secours – Cigna – what are the options if an agreement is not reached? – HR and Admin and currently working with Bon Secours and will share results as soon as they have an update.
- Sick days for new hires – A response will be shared at the April meeting. This is worthy of review – Workday will not let you go in the negative for hours. The two floating holidays may help with this issue.
- Parking – students parking in faculty/staff designated spots – Parking Enforcement Officer (Walter Jackson, Jr.) is on medical leave; Other officers are trying to cover for him – Question – could hiring a second person be an option?
- Parking spots for EV – available to visitors, if registered as a visitor. Non-electric vehicles should not park in the EV spots. EV cannot be in the spots if they are not charging. Is UR maintaining industry standards for charging stations? Can students park in Hybrid spots marked for Faculty/Staff?
- Catering – dietary restrictions – could someone handle vegan or dietary needs of someone with celiac disease; Piera Balsamo commented that special dietary restrictions need to be

communicated ahead of time. Ashley Blount – having an option available as a standard, and expanding the options may be needed. This submission was received after the Awards Ceremony.

Open Meeting adjourned at 2:18

5. Closed Session

- Review of USAC Representation – no one's term is ending in 2025.
- Some website corrections are needed.

Announcements:

USAC Tour for New Employees – Friday, March 14 at 12:00 pm at the Well-Being Center.

USAC Meeting – Tuesday, April 8 at 1pm in Special Programs Building, Classroom 156. Featured speaker will be Amy Howard, Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement, on the Burying Ground project.

USAC Meeting – Tuesday, May 13 at 1pm in in Special Programs Bldg., Classroom 156. HR Business Partners have been invited to speak.

Spiders in the Know – Wednesday, May 14 at 8:30-10:30 am at Camp Concert Hall. USAC reps needed to usher.

USAC Meeting – Tuesday, June 10 at 1pm.



University Staff Advisory Council

Goals 2024-2025

1. Strengthen and foster a cohesive and inclusive staff community on campus
 - a. Establish a USAC events committee to promote a sense of community across campus staff. Launch new initiatives to bring together staff from across departments, including informal breakfast/lunch gatherings and organized campus tour for staff led by staff.
 - b. Offer hybrid USAC meetings for general staff but encourage USAC members to attend in person.
2. Enhance visibility of USAC to be seen as a conduit of information, voice for all staff, and leader in community efforts

- a. Increase accessibility of web submission feature on USAC website and increase awareness to staff of available web sub option to ask questions and raise concerns.
 - b. Strengthen visibility and role of USAC for staff advocacy, retention, transparency, compensation, and appreciation.
 - c. Raise profile of USAC board and committee members collectively and individually so all staff feel heard and represented. Invite all staff to join USAC committees.
 - d. Continue connections with Faculty Senate and find more ways for faculty and staff to interact.
3. Solidify processes and institutional knowledge within USAC
- a. Define committee structure within USAC and create goals and expectations.
 - b. Review current USAC Board structure and compare with current campus employment to ensure fair and accurate representation.
 - c. Pull together procedures guides for future board members.
 - d. Connect with past USAC board members and invite their input and participation in USAC activities and initiatives.
4. Continue USAC awareness through existing systems and processes
- a. Continue USAC role in the onboarding process by sending USAC profile and swag to new staff members.
 - b. Continue regular and timely communication with staff via all-campus communications and presence at major campus events. Continue to make sure information is shared with staff in a variety of modes including printed flyers and signage for those who do not regularly access email.
 - c. Continue to invite University representatives to present at monthly meetings and quarterly breakfast including senior management, compliance, campus safety, HR, DEIB, and student development.