University Staff Advisory Council (USAC)
University of Richmond
ANNUAL REPORT
July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

Friends and colleagues,

The University continues its progression towards being a model institution in higher education and employer of choice in Richmond. This was the first year of the Richmond Promise, UR's strategic plan to provide direction and parameters to this endeavor. Although the five initiatives have yet to be completely detailed, they have already taken shape in programmatic and organizational restructuring across campus. In addition, this year has ushered in changes in key positions within the Administration, such as a new VP for Business and Finance and Chaplain, as well as the announcement of position vacancies for Dean of the Business School, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and Police Chief. Despite only two Cabinet members having more than two years of experience, the University has moved forward and involved USAC along the way.

The Council has continued to solidify its place as an advocate for staff on issues that affect their ability to be successful at the University while maintaining a strong relationship with leadership across campus. We took a proactive approach by seeking out the Administration's upcoming plans, communicating those to staff, and soliciting their feedback and participation. Our biggest tasks were successfully adopting the UR Santa holiday program from the Events, Conferences & Support Services Operations office and partnering with Human Resources and the University Faculty Council to implement the first engagement survey of its kind. While UR Santa provides an opportunity for benevolence and altruism during the winter season, the survey allows the University to record and benchmark employee opinions – identifying both growth areas and strengths - that the Administration will address through enhancements.

In 2009-10, USAC has built upon the foundation that has been laid since its inception 10 years ago. The Council continued to provide a forum for issues and concerns and made recommendations to administrators across campus on behalf of staff. Most importantly, we fought to keep the needs of staff at-large ahead of our own personal agendas. It is this focus on the University staff community that will allow the 2010-11 Council to be increasingly proactive and practical, strategic and supportive. If the Council can keep pace with the changes at the University and remain knowledgeable of best practices in higher education, USAC will continue to be successful in providing a support system that empowers and emboldens staff to actively participate in furthering the University mission.

Shawn Morrison
2009-2010 University Staff Advisory Council Chair

II. MAJOR ACTIVITIES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

- Successfully administered UR Santa program
- Endorsed, encouraged, and facilitated participation in the University's first Staff Engagement Survey
- Worked with University Communications to upgrade USAC web page which immediately allows for better archiving of minutes and web submissions
- Partnered with Human Resources to encourage participation in new Open Enrollment online process
- Continued relationship between USAC and University Faculty Council (UFC) leadership by scheduling five meetings during the academic year to discuss happenings on campus and opportunities for partnership and support
- Proactively communicated with Staff about relevant topics, such as the Cell Phone Tower, Performance Feedback Development web site and reviews, and Spring Fest
- Served as a staff advocate for issues such as on-campus parking and various HR policies
- Endorsed the UFC Childcare Report
- Voted to join The Student Alliance for Sexual Diversity, W.I.L.L., The Community Board for Gender and Sexual Diversity, and UR Men for Change in supporting the addition of gender identity and gender expression to the University's non-discrimination policy
- Promoted the Sustainability Action Plan

III. Staff Suggestions and Questions

USAC received 43 suggestions, comments, and questions via our website, http://usac.richmond.edu/contact/suggestion-form.html. Several positive changes were brought about as a result of these submissions, but the most notable is Human Resources' creation of a policy group beginning in July 2010. Much of the feedback USAC receives online is related to the official University policies – both what they are and where to find them. USAC's relationship with Human Resources has been instrumental in both communicating concerns and making recommendations to be considered.

IV. TOPICS TO ADDRESS and RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR

- Loss of history each year
    - o To a certain degree, the Council seems to transition slowly between years. The leadership is learning what their roles are for the first time and half the Council is new and feeling their way through.
    - o Recommendation:
        - ex officio Chair position who serves as non-voting member in an advisory capacity
        - have elected leadership work with lame duck leadership to provide behind-the-scenes view of responsibilities
- Improve communication with Staff
    - o In our efforts to be proactive and put information in the hands of staff, the Council should consider the communication vehicles that the larger University is utilizing.
    - o Recommendation:

- ▪ Have quarterly/semester meetings with Cheryl Spain, the Internal Communications Service Manager
- ▪ Utilize new web site
- ▪ Scheduled meetings between Council members and their respective division leadership
- Discount Page
  - o Explore and document who is offering things that benefit UR employees/staff - both on and off campus opportunities.
  - o This has been discussed for years but nothing formal has come together.
  - o Human Resources was also planning to gather information at one point.
  - o Determine if the University has a specific point of contact for external vendors and collaborate with this contact
- Open Meetings
  - o Strategically have open meetings if they further USAC's mission and annual goals
- Richmond Promise
  - o Communicate with the Administration as the Richmond Promise is expounded to discuss the implications for staff and how USAC can be involved
- Elections
  - o Although engaged and thoughtful staff have been elected to the Council over the years, the election process needs to be strategic – making it more than just enlisting the most popular.
  - o Recommendation:
    - ▪ Have those accepting nominations submit a blurb that is posted with ballot somehow
      - Not only will this inform the process more, but it will also allow USAC to be more strategic in having an idea of what skill sets will be available to the Council in the upcoming year. This can help the Council to continue its momentum at the turn of the year and plan for better delegation of responsibilities
- New Employee Orientation
  - o I think it would be beneficial to have USAC representation at the orientations to explain to new staff the purpose and mission of the Council
- Publicize USAC's endorsement on Spiderbytes and USAC web site
  - o If and when USAC supports a campus-wide or staff-specific issue, I think the University community should be informed formally.
  - o I think it's important for the at-large University to see USAC as a relevant body when discussing complex issues.
  - o At the same time, the Council needs to keep in mind how its voice can make the greatest impact.
- Committee liaisons reporting back to the Council

Recommendations to each Council member
- If you're interested in helping with something, let the leadership know
  - o We don't want to have to ask everyone or go hunting for assistance/representation
- Remember that you represent University Staff, not just your personal issues; similarly, we want web submissions to be addressed if there are issues that affect the needs of communities of staff, not just an individual

- Report back to your departments, as well as gather information from your division leadership

V. Committee Involvement

University Committees	Department	USAC Representatives	Beginning Fiscal Year
Planning and Priorities	Provost	Susan Galvin	09-10
		Rick Neal	09-10
		Shawn Morrison	10-11
		Katybeth Lee	10-11
Budget Committee	VP, Business & Finance	Michele Whiteside	10-11
Fringe Benefits Committee	HR	Eric Beatty	09-10
HR Policy Group	HR	Scott Hollen, Linda Pugh, Shawn Morrison	10-11
Transportation	HR	Abiodun Solanke	09-10
Engagement Survey Steering Committee	HR, President's Office	Lindsay Love	09-10

C. Guest Speakers

- **Valerie Wallen**, *Dir. of Organizational Learning and Development; August 2009; December 2009; May 2010*
- **Seth Hickerson**, *Asst Dir Fitness & Wellness; August 2009*
- **Nanci Tessier**, *VP for Enrollment Management; September 2009*
- **Michele Whiteside**, *Events & Technology Manager, USAC Chair 2008-09; September 2009*
- **Laura Dietrick**, *Dir. of Total Compensation and HR Administration; October 2009; March 2010*
- **Natalia Green**, *Dir. of Parking Services; October 2009*
- **Dee Hardy**, *Associate Vice President for Campus Services; November 2009*
- **Trey McDonald**, *Sustainability Coordinator; December 2009*
- **Jon Henry**, *SASD (Student Alliance for Sexual Diversity); December 2009*
- **Sylvia Gale**, Assoc Dir. of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement; *February 2010*
- **Doug West**, *Dir. of Telecommunications, Media Support and User Services; March 2010*
- **Kathy Monday**, *VP for Information Services; March 2010*
- **Andrew McBride**, *University Architect; April 2010*
- **Lisa Miles**, *Assistant Director of Common Ground; April 2010*
- **Steve Bisese**, *VP for Student Development; May 2010*