



University Staff Advisory Council

2010-2011 Annual Report



The University Staff Advisory Council began 2010-2011 by reviewing the organizational structure of the University and identifying Council representatives for each division in which staff are employed. Each Council member committed to represent staff in his or her areas, to relay information and to seek feedback from these constituents on a regular basis.

In September 2010, the Council held a **Staff Forum** to seek staff feedback on where the Council should focus its work for 2010-2011. The Council also solicited ideas electronically. The three highest areas of interest were:

1. Staff life (which included career development, rewards and recognition, and flexible workplace concerns)
2. Communication
3. Sustainability

The Council formed three sub-committees around each of these areas to advocate for staff ideas and concerns to the senior leadership team.

The **Staff Life** committee collaborated with Human Resources who had also identified career development and recognition as areas of opportunity based on the Best Colleges to Work For survey which was conducted in February 2010. The Council recommended staff members for the Career & Compensation committee, who worked with Sibson Consulting to re-evaluate the compensation structure and create clearer career advancement opportunities for staff, and the Rewards & Recognition committee, who reviewed the work compiled by a similar committee in 2008 in order to launch a pilot program in 2011. The Council convened a cross-campus committee to research best practices for a flexible workplace and share recommendations with HR.

The **Communication** committee explored different platforms for hosting a staff community board. No satisfactory options were found. The suggestion has been made to hold monthly

The **University Staff Advisory Council (USAC)** provides a forum for issues, concerns, interests, enhancements, and information that may apply to the staff of the University of Richmond. The council shares information, discusses issues and ideas, and serves as a liaison between the staff and the administration.

The **Richmond Promise** states that the University aims to “identify and embrace model practices so as to ensure that the University is best engaged with the community in its capacity as a major employer in the region.” (Principle IV: Goal 4)



staff brown bags around different topics, which may facilitate some of the knowledge sharing staff are seeking. The committee also met with Cheryl Spain, Internal Communications Manager, to discuss the University's communications plans involving staff.

The **Sustainability** committee collaborated with Megan Litke, the Sustainability Coordinator to create and pilot a Green Office Program. The Council funded new stickers for recycling bins in offices in Sarah Brunet and Tyler Haynes Commons, and co-wrote an educational message to all staff about how to effectively utilize the recycling options on campus.

The Council also undertook a thorough review of the Council's **by-laws**, which had not been updated since 2008. Major changes included:

- Broadening the Council's scope from reporting only through the VP of Business and Finance to the entire senior leadership team (the President's Cabinet)
- Establishing the AVP for Human Resource Services and the immediate past Chair of USAC as ex-officio non-voting members
- Establishing the right of the Council to call for a closed meeting (voting members only) at any time by majority vote
- Specifying the manner in which staff members are recommended for service on University committees by the Council
- Removing the caveat that allowed the Recording Secretary to be a former member of the Council

In an effort to create an **election process** that more effectively enabled staff to elect representatives to advocate for them, the Council made significant changes, including:

- Allowing staff to nominate up to three candidates in each category (previously one)
- Encouraging candidates to write a statement about why they want to serve on the Council and allow their picture to be published on a secure website
- Moving the election to an entirely electronic process to ensure anonymity for all staff voting

The Council hosted **staff forums** in September (40 attendees) and May (160 attendees).



The Council hosted a table at the **Employee Appreciation basketball game** in February where we raffled off a Kindle. Nagy Gabriel, a housekeeper at UR since 1987, was the winner.



- Attending meetings with Housekeeping and Landscaping staff to explain the new process and the transition from paper to electronic ballot

These changes led to an 85% increase in nominations, and a 15% increase in staff who voted in the Council elections in April 2011.

There are a number of efforts still ongoing as this year draws to a close. The Council has reviewed and given feedback on a smoking policy and a pet policy, though neither has been enacted to date. The Council also worked much of the year with Carl Sorensen, AVP for Human Resource Services, to propose a University Engagement Initiative that would provide a more structured way for staff to serve in the local community. This was not approved by the Cabinet, and so the opportunity still remains to identify ways for staff to join with faculty and students in the efforts outside of campus. The Council has identified additional ways to strengthen the election process and staff participation in the coming year.

This is an exciting time to be part of the University of Richmond community. The Richmond Promise has generated enthusiasm across campus for the work that is before us, and staff have a myriad of opportunities to contribute. This year, we have been pleased that the Council has been proactive in seeking out ways to make the University of Richmond a great place for staff to work. We hope in the coming year that the Council will not only continue this effort, but also seek ways to empower staff to participate in and contribute to the life of the entire University community.

Sincerely,



Katybeth Lee
 Chair, University Staff Advisory Council 2010-2011
 Assistant Director, Career Development Center
 Office of Alumni and Career Services

Council members served on the following

University committees:

AVP for Public Safety
 Search

Campus Master Plan

Career & Compensation

Climate Action Plan

Flexible Workplace

Planning & Priorities

Rewards & Recognition

Transportation

The Council received **39 web submissions**. Topics included:

Campus directory

Compensation

Fair hiring practices

Parking

Retirement benefits

Rewards and recognition

Sustainability issues

Work pace/load