



# University Staff Advisory Council

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

### OVERVIEW

The 2019-20 year was challenging with the onset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic causing an abrupt switch to remote work and instruction in March. The situation was exacerbated in May with the death of George Floyd, which sparked worldwide protests and civil disobedience demanding racial justice and equity. Many of our staff, faculty and students were personally affected by both. We are deeply grateful for the University's leadership as they responded swiftly to the pandemic and racial distress by taking proactive actions to ensure the safety of staff without income disruption and added health EAP benefits.

Through these challenges, the 2019-20 University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) worked to achieve these four goals:

- 1) Create opportunities to celebrate and highlight the value of and respect for staff and faculty in our campus community.
  - a. Staff-Faculty Mixer in February
  - b. USAC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration
  - c. Staff Gelato Day (*cancelled due to COVID-19*)
  - d. USAC Member Presentations
  - e. Planning & Priorities Committee Service Presentation, Jasmonn Coleman
- 2) Provide diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) training and programming for council members to become DEI leaders on campus.
  - a. Cross-Cultural Mentoring
  - b. DEI Across the Pond
  - c. Implicit Bias Training
- 3) Work with the Office of Sustainability to create USAC sustainability ambassadors for each department on campus.
  - a. Soft Plastics Recycling Awareness Training
  - b. Rethink Waste, Trash Carry Challenge
  - c. Eco-corridor Tour (*cancelled due to COVID-19*)
- 4) Display and convey web submissions (web subs) in a visually appealing and useful fashion from an archive and information perspective.
  - a. Consolidated web sub entry forms
  - b. Developed Cascade forms to catalog web subs

## **NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### Web Submissions

During the 2015-16 term, the Workplace Environment Committee was formed to divide the vice-chair's responsibility of researching and responding to web submissions amongst a handful of council members. Since web subs are the primary mode for receiving constituent feedback and concerns, the executive board opted to eliminate the Workplace Environment Committee so that all council members would have an opportunity to share their perspective on web submissions to ensure a diverse and inclusive understanding of the matter was shared with University leadership.

### USAC Mentors

USAC representatives often begin their term without fully understanding how the Council works or what all is required in their role. To aid with the onboarding of new members, the 2019-20 Executive Board decided to pilot a mentoring program. Second year members were intentionally paired with first year members from areas of campus they might not have been exposed to previously so they could each learn about each other while orienting to USAC business.

### USAC Member Three-Year Term

Council unanimously voted to approve extending member term limits to three years to provide more opportunity for members to learn their role as USAC representatives, contribute substantively and provide more continuity of effort from year to year.

### USAC Officer Re-election

Council similarly approved the change to allow Officers an opportunity to be re-elected to serve a second term as chair, vice-chair, and secretary/treasurer, with a two-term limit.

### USAC Engagement

The chair, vice-chair and secretary/treasurer held "coffee and chat" meetings outside of Tyler's Grill once a month in an effort to engage directly with staff from across campus. The meetings were advertised in SpiderBytes and well attended. Staff who attended were interested in learning more about USAC and the University or stopped by to share a concern, and even offer their support to work on web subs like childcare opportunities.

The chair and vice-chair also presented on USAC during Facilities department wide meetings to share the work done by council.

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher provided a cross-cultural mentoring workshop to council members in an effort to encourage ongoing, intentional, and mutually enriching relationships with those of different races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, cultural and/or socioeconomic backgrounds. Dr. Crutcher inspired us to care, listen, find commonalities, accept differences, and build trust with each other and our campus colleagues.

USAC members volunteered to participate in a BridgeBox workshop with Michele Norris, Creator of The Race Card Project. Allison Olivia Johnson, Nick Minnix, Jennifer O'Donnell, Mark Stanton, and Richard Thomas attended the workshop and shared their experience with council during the December meeting.

### USAC Member Presentations

Many members indicated that in addition to advocating for staff they joined USAC to learn more about their colleagues and how the University worked across departments. To that end, members were given an opportunity to briefly present on their role or their department's role during monthly meetings. This was hugely successful. Members expressed a greater understanding and appreciation for each other and the work they do.

### Professional Development

Rhonda Lambert, secretary/treasurer, is a champion of professional development and advocated to include board training, cross-cultural mentoring, talent/personality assessments, and more. Many of the guest speakers invited to USAC meetings were at Rhonda's encouragement.

## **MEETINGS**

The format of meetings was modified to allow for council discussion of web submissions during closed session. Each meeting included time for guest speakers, USAC member presentations, Department Updates and Announcements, Budget Review, Committee and Liaison Updates, Gallery Comments and Closed Session.

USAC members presented on their role or their department's role at the University in response to members' request to learn more about what others do at UR. Those who presented during the 2019-20 term include:

- Jessica Washington, Program Manager, Student Engagement and the Bonner Scholars Program, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement (October 8, 2019)
- Ashelle Brown, Learning & Development Specialist, Human Resources (November 12, 2019)
- Nick Minnix, Events Coordinator, The Richmond MBA (December 10, 2019)
- Mark Stanton, Compliance Coordinator, University Athletics Compliance Office (January 14, 2020)
- Michael Torquato, Manager of Landscape Services, University Facilities (February 11, 2020)
- Priscilla Greene, Assistant Director of Admission, Office of Undergraduate Admission (April 14, 2020)
- Rosanne D. Ibanez, Esq., Assistant Director of Admissions, Operations Manager, Richmond School of Law (May 12, 2020)

Guest Speakers included:

- Joanne Even, Business Development Director, Executive Education, provided Board Training to USAC members during closed session (July 9, 2019)

- Laurie Melville, Sr. Assoc. VP of Finance & Controller, presented on the New Financial Policies (August 13, 2019)
- Carl Sorensen, Sr. Assoc. VP of Human Resources, presented the Career Framework (August 13, 2019)
- Natalia Green, Director of Parking & Transportation, shared UR Downtown Transportation Changes (September 10, 2019)
- Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher, Presidential Spouse, conducted a workshop on Cross-Cultural Mentoring: Continuous Caring for the Beloved Community at the University of Richmond (September 10, 2019)
- Keith McIntosh, VP of Information Services and Chief Information Officer, presented on IT Governance (October 8, 2019)
- Carl Sorensen, Sr. Assoc. VP of Human Resources, shared information on Open Enrollment and a College Debt Relief Program (October 8, 2019)
- Kristine Henderson, Director of Compliance and Title IX Coordinator, presented on Reporting Ethics and Compliance Concerns (November 12, 2019)
- Heather Sadowski, Director of Health Promotion, and Slade Gormus, RN- Health Promotion & Peer Education, presented on the Momentum Towards Becoming a Tobacco-free Campus (November 12, 2019)
- Nancy Propst, CAP, Administrative Coordinator for Geography & Interdisciplinary Programs, presented on Soft Plastic Recycling (November 12, 2019)
- Lisa Miles, Assoc. Director of Common Ground, presented on MLK Family Day (December 10, 2019)
- Shana Sumpter, Director of Information Security, presented on CrowdStrike (December 10, 2019)
- Joe Wolff, Director of Catering, presented Changes to Catering (January 14, 2020)
- Sarah Busching, HR Events and Communications Specialist, shared potential changes to Busch Gardens Day (February 11, 2020)
- Leigh McCullar, Director of HR Consulting, presented the HR Business Partner's Approach for addressing workplace conflict (February 11, 2020)
- Shani Buchholz, Administrative Coordinator for the Office of Common Ground, presented "DEI Across the Pond" (February 11, 2020)
- Ashleigh Brock, Assistant to the President, presented on the Menuhin Competition and opportunities for staff involvement (March 10, 2020)
- Rob Andrejewski, Director of Sustainability, carried out a Rethink Waste – Trash Carry Challenge (March 10, 2020)
- Dr. Kristjen Lundberg, Assistant Professor of Social Psychology, conducted a two part Implicit Bias Workshop for USAC members during closed session (April 14 and May 12, 2020)
- Jasmonn Coleman, Associate Athletic Director for Development, presented on his experience serving on the Planning & Priorities Committee (May 12, 2020)

- David Hale, Exec. VP and Chief Operating Officer, Jeff Legro, Exec. VP and Provost, and Carl Sorensen, Sr. Assoc. VP of Human Resources, Thanks to USAC members for their 2019-20 service (June 9, 2020)

## **REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHAIR**

*Submitted by Travis Smith, USAC Vice-chair*

Serving as vice-chair this past term has proven to be both challenging and rewarding. There were 54 web submissions (web subs). Most were responded to within a timely manner. Those items that need further attention follow in this report.

It was decided that the entire council would again discuss web subs during monthly meetings. This resulted in a bylaws change in July. This, in many ways, is the primary business of USAC so it is important to seek the wisdom of the group and allow all council members to weigh in on web subs. Going forward, it will be necessary to make sure that every voice is heard around the room and that council members feel empowered to speak up.

I am pleased and proud of the tone and work that the chair and secretary/treasurer have set to create a USAC centered on diversity and inclusion across all spectrums. I believe that hard work and vital first steps have taken place to teach council members what it means to be inclusive. There is still far to go at the University level on this. USAC should consider having and hosting these difficult conversations and confront racism, bullying, and other society ills.

USAC must continue to work and find common ground and attainable solutions in several areas. I am troubled about what we have learned about our faculty, staff, and students in relation to food insecurity. I recommend the establishment of a food pantry to serve our university community. Childcare is another pressing issue. Parents are faced with soaring prices and sometimes-difficult decisions. It is important that we explore all opportunities to provide employees with assistance in this area.

I am pleased and humbled with the talented people that we place on committees such as the Fringe Benefits Committee and Planning & Priorities. I feel that through the work of the Elections Committee and USAC as a whole we have a highly fair and effective method of seating people on Planning and Priorities. I remain steadfast in the belief that this is among USAC's most vital functions.

The system has been set up with the help of Information Services to create a better display of past web subs and responses. Due to a variety of troubles, this task is not complete. I encourage the new incoming executive council to continue this work as time allows. I also encourage the work with University Libraries to continue in archiving USAC's past. This is important, ongoing work.

As a council, we have faced many challenges this past term at the University and national level including, for the first time ever, not hosting in person meetings. The University must heal in so many ways going forward. I believe that through the talent and guidance of USAC this healing can occur. It has been a pleasure to serve.

As of June 5, 2020 54 web subs have been submitted and discussed by USAC and others. The following web sub *themes* still need final resolution:

- Display of personal pronouns in directory (July 2019): This was a goal this year to implement in the registrar's office and for students. HRIS is still looking into how this might be rolled out for staff.
- Paid time off for community engagement and volunteerism (July 2019): After many requests, presentations, USAC decided to form a working group who will look into this. To my knowledge, the group has not had the bandwidth to pursue this yet. Recommend looking at during the next term and introduce a report to HR.
- Paid time off for all employees on Employee Appreciation (Busch Gardens) Day (August 2019): We are still awaiting a final resolution from HR on this item.
- Childcare (Various submissions during 2019-2020): Various web subs pertaining to childcare discounts were submitted. Benefits committee/HR will look into possible discounts when they reconvene (20-21).
- Employee hardship/food pantry (November 2019): There is still no resolution to establishing a food pantry on campus. This is something USAC continues to pursue.
- Update of Employee Benefits/HR Page (November 2019): HR is committing to redo this page as time allows. USAC has also offered to help as needed with this endeavor.
- Merit/employee inequities/implicit bias in promotion (Various submissions during 2019-2020): This must be further evaluated through HR ideally conducting a salary survey of all positions, something that takes a lot of bandwidth and time. HR has indicated to check back on this possibility later.
- Staff forum similar to one held for students (February 2020): Staff have asked for a forum as well as mandatory cultural competency training. The logistics of providing a staff forum have been discussed but have also been a pause due to COVID-19 operations.

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

*Submitted by Allison McCormick, Communications Committee Chair*

The following council members served on the Communication Committee: Alison McCormick (chair), Michele Bedsaul, Ashelle Brown, Rosanne Ibanez, John Jacobs, Rhonda Lambert, and Paul Sandman. Together the committee completed the following work during the 2019-20 term:

- USAC website revisions
  - Reviewed and updated language on the web submissions page
  - Recommended combining question/suggestion forms and reducing language
  - Added several links to compliance and retaliation policies
  - Added new member photos
  - Worked with Communications to change cover photo

- Updated election info as necessary
- Updates on USAC Facebook page
  - Solicited “likes” from constituents and USAC reps
  - Sent out SpiderBytes about USAC FB page
  - Added all USAC meetings as events
  - Posts about USAC nominations
  - Posts about USAC elections one week, two weeks and one day prior to deadline
  - Many other posts, as were fitting, throughout the year
- Created a flyer about USAC for Benefits Fair tabling
- Created poster for USAC Elections
  - Printed copies were to be distributed for dining and facilities and by request for other council members. (postponed due to COVID)
  - Digital copy distributed to all council members to use as promotion to their constituents
- Planning for staff gelato day
  - Was planned for summer 2020, but postponed due to COVID
  - Gelato cups were going to be given to all staff at Passport Café, possibility of short USAC survey for participants

## **ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

*Submitted by Nick Minnix, Elections Committee Chair and Parliamentarian*

The following council members served on the Elections Committee: Josh Jeffreys, Nick Minnix (chair), Beth Simms, Travis Smith, Mike Torquato, and Allie Ware.

The Elections Committee facilitated a vote by Council to make these bylaw changes:

- USAC member terms changed from two-years to three-years. Feedback received from past and current members indicated that a two-year membership term created transition and continuity challenges across membership years. The additional year will enable the council to more effectively fulfill its responsibilities.
- Updated the Executive Board term limit to allow officers to serve two terms pending re-election.

The Elections Committee solicited nominations and facilitated voting for the 2020-21 USAC Executive Board. USAC elected Mark Stanton (chair), Jessica Washington (vice-chair), and Jennifer O'Donnell (secretary/treasurer) to serve July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

The Elections Committee solicited nominations and reviewed nominee statements, narrowing the field down to five nominees for the Planning & Priorities Committee at-large seat. USAC elected Rob Andrejewski to serve the 2020-23 term.

The Elections Committee solicited nominations and nominee statements and facilitated voting for ten USAC representative seats for the 2020-23 term. The following individuals were elected staff in their division:

- Taylor McNeilly, Academic Affairs Boatwright Memorial Library Seat
- Katy Olney, Academic Affairs School Staff Seat
- Kourtney Ennis, Academic Affairs School Staff Seat
- Susan Sokolsky, Advancement Divisional Seat
- Allie Ware, Athletics Divisional Seat
- Jeff Smith, Business Affairs Dining Services Divisional Seat
- Frank McMurrugh, Business Affairs Facilities Departmental Seat
- Craig Buchbinder, Business Affairs Public Safety Departmental Seat
- Fred Hagemester, Information Services Divisional Seat
- Kaylin Tingle, Student Development Divisional Seat

## **VOLUNTEER & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Submitted by Meriwether Gilmore, Volunteer & Engagement Committee Chair*

The following council members served on the Volunteer & Engagement Committee: Meriwether Gilmore (chair), Priscilla Greene, Allison Olivia Johnson, Jennifer O'Donnell, Mark Stanton, Richard Thomas, Jessica Washington, and Melody Wilson.

The Engagement Committee packed a lot of fellowship into a shortened year for USAC and the University. Our fall USAC-Faculty Senate Mixer was hosted by Dr. Crutcher and Dr. Betty Crutcher at the President's House. This is the second year in a row that they have graciously opened their doors to us and it was a wonderful chance to get to know our counterparts in the Faculty Senate.

Our annual table at the Fall Benefits Fair was staffed for two days and we were able to answer many questions from staff members as well as address concerns from some. Maintaining a presence at UR events is a great way for USAC to reach constituents who may not have access to a computer during the workday.

In December, we celebrated USAC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a fabulous party at the Cellar attended by many past and present members, as well as the President's Cabinet.

Our last event this spring was the Staff-Faculty Mixer in the President's Box at the Robins Center on a rainy night in February. The cold weather kept our numbers low, but the food was excellent and there is no better place to watch a basketball game.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to help at these events. They are critical to forming connections across our community and serve to bring us closer together as a University.



## **FOODSERVICE INVOLVEMENT GROUP**

*Submitted by Alison McCormick, Foodservice Involvement Group Liaison*

Liaisons to the Foodservice Involvement Group were Alison McCormick and Richard Thomas.

The Foodservice Involvement Group (FIG), formerly the Foodservice Involvement Team (FIT), meets monthly to discuss and share information across all foodservice locations, and includes liaisons from Tyler's Grill, Passport Cafe, Catering, Concessions, Lou's Café, 815 Boatwright Cafe, ETC, UR Downtown, and Heilman Dining Center. Before the year was cut short, due to COVID-19, we had six meetings, rotating locations to accommodate all.

Our primary goal is to discuss ideas and concerns with our constituents, which we can pass along to the USAC council, as well as communicate topics discussed in USAC meetings to the FIG representatives. Where internal issues arise, Richard and Alison met with the appropriate managers to discuss solutions.

In meetings this year, we discussed the following:

- Employee access to computers
- Suggested changes to dining employee handbook
- Concern over downtown shuttle service – UBER pilot program
- Concern not all employees can take advantage of education benefits due to schedules
- The new Tobacco Free Campus policy and the effect on employees who smoke
- Inclusivity after racial incidents on campus
- Foodservice Appreciation Week – suggestions for improvements

This year we saw continued success with this group and will resume meetings in the fall semester.

## **PLANT INVOLVEMENT TEAM**

*Submitted by Paul Sandman, Plant Involvement Team Liaison*

The Plant Involvement Team (PII) serves a valuable function within the Facilities Department. The group gathers comments, questions and suggestions from representatives of each shop and develops action plans to implement improvements on a monthly basis.

Notable accomplishments over the past year have included:

- The development and implementation of a snow team pay plan
- Improvements in communication and coordination between the Events Department and Maintenance when special events are planned, ensuring the Maintenance Department receives notice with adequate lead-time to check that all systems are working properly in the particular venue

- Assisted in the development of the larger Environmental Operations Department’s Stewardship and Resiliency initiative to fully incorporate our group values into all we do. I.e. Environment, Professional Development, Innovative Ideas, and Communications (E.P.I.C.).

Many other issues were resolved like the decisions to add crosswalks and additional signage in areas to improve safety and providing additional two-way radios to custodial staff. This is only a brief sampling of the kinds of issues handled by the PIT.

## BUDGET

Date	Description	Amount	Balance
07/01/19	Initial budget	\$5,875.00	\$5,875.00
07/31/19	New member name tags	(\$114.00)	\$5,761.00
12/11/19	Prof. headshots and group photo	(\$200.00)	\$5,561.00
12/31/19	USAC 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration	(\$430.25)	\$5,130.75
02/19/20	Faculty/Staff Spring Mixer	(\$2,508.00)	\$2,622.75
04/01/20	Photo board display	(\$126.35)	\$2,496.40
04/28/20	SimplyVoting.com for elections	(\$334.00)	\$2,162.40
06/02/20	Service plaques and bags for 2018-20 members	(\$451.49)	\$1,710.91
06/29/20	Amazon gift cards for current and new USAC members	(\$640.00)	\$1,070.91
Various	Mentoring meetings	(\$64.50)	\$1,006.41

## LOOKING AHEAD

We encourage USAC to continue discussing web subs with all members of council to ensure a diverse and inclusive perspective is shared with University leadership.

USAC’s relationship with the Faculty Senate is essential in the effort to advance staff equity. Faculty Senate Liaison to USAC, Mary Finely-Brook shared that there are several faculty allies working to elevate staff concerns. USAC members are encouraged to reach out for support where faculty alliances are needed.

The Manager of Events and Property Services is listed as an ex officio member of USAC according to the Bylaws however the person who previous held this seat retired from the University. It is recommended that the incoming group remove this member from the Bylaws.

## MEMBERSHIP

### 2019-20 Executive Officers

Chair: Melody Kimball Wilson

*Assistant to VP, Information Services*

Information Services Divisional Seat, 2018–20

Vice-chair: Travis Scott Smith

*Project Manager Library Facilities & Research Sharing,  
Boatwright Library*

Boatwright Memorial Library Seat, 2018-20

Secretary/ Treasurer: Rhonda Lambert Parson

*Administrative Coordinator, Foundation, Corporate and  
Government Relations*

Advancement Divisional Seat, 2018-20

Parliamentarian: Nick Minnix

*Administrative Coordinator, MBA Office, Robins  
School of Business*

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2018-20

Communications Chair: Alison McCormick

*Purchasing Coordinator, University Dining Services*

Dining Services Departmental Seat, 2018–20

Volunteer & Engagement Chair: Meriwether  
Gilmore

*Administrative Coordinator, Counseling & Psychological  
Center (CAPS)*

Student Development/Chaplaincy Divisional  
Seat, 2018–20

### Academic Affairs

Jessica Washington

*Program Manager, Student Engagement and the Bonner  
Scholars Program*

Academic Affairs At-Large Seat, 2019-21

Michele Bedsaul

*Administrative Coordinator, Jepson School of Leadership  
Studies*

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2019-21

Rosanne Ibanez

*Assistant Director Admission/Operations Manager,  
Law School*

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2018–20

Jennifer O'Donnell

*Manager, Biological Laboratories, Biology Department*

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2019-21

### Athletics

Mark Stanton

*Compliance Coordinator, Athletic Compliance*

Athletics Divisional Seat, 2019-21

Allie Ware

*Associate Director, Parent & Major Giving*

Athletics Divisional Seat, 2019-20

### Business Affairs

Ashelle Brown

*Learning & Development Specialist, Human Resources*

Business Affairs At-Large Seat, 2019-22

Allison Olivia Johnson

*Financial Analyst, Office of Planning & Budgets*

Business Affairs At-Large Seat, 2019-21

Richard Thomas

*Floater Manager, University Dining Services*

Dining Services Departmental Seat, 2019-21

Paul Sandman

*Integrated Pest Management Specialist, University  
Facilities*

Facilities Departmental Seat, 2019–21

Michael Torquato

*Landscape Supervisor, University Facilities*

Facilities Departmental Seat, 2018–20

John Jacobs

*Police Captain, University Police*

Public Safety Departmental Seat, 2018–20

Communications

Joe Minick  
*Director of Multimedia, University Communications*  
Communications Divisional Seat, 2019-21

Enrollment Management

Priscilla Greene  
*Admission Counselor, Undergraduate Admissions*  
Enrollment Management Divisional Seat, 2019-21

Information Services

Beth Simms  
*IS Project Manager, Information Services*  
Information Services Divisional Seat, 2019-21

Student Development and Chaplaincy

Josh Jeffreys  
*Jewish Chaplain & Director, Religious Life, Chaplain's Office*  
Student Development/Chaplaincy Divisional Seat, 2019-21

Ex-Officio

Wendy Burchard  
*Strategic Sourcing Manager, Procurement & Strategic Sourcing*  
Immediate Past Chair, 2017-19

Carl Sorensen  
*Senior Associate Vice President, Human Resources*