



University Staff Advisory Council

Annual Report

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

Overview

The 2021-22 academic year continued to offer challenges related to the ever-changing employee experience on campus. The COVID-19 pandemic maintained its impact on the campus experience as mask wearing was required through the fall and into most of the spring semester. Nationwide there were high rates of inflation and skyrocketing gas prices. This led to many staff conversations surrounding compensation and the access to work from home options. There was also a higher than normal rate of staff departures from campus, which in some circumstances increased the additional duties placed on staff while hiring was conducted. USAC was not immune to staff departures as three council members left for other employment and one left the council for an internal transfer. These factors led to a high level of engagement between staff and USAC as we partnered to navigate these complex conversations.

The 2021-22 academic year welcomed President Kevin Hallock to campus as our 11th President. USAC was able to host President Hallock during a November 2021 meeting and facilitated a Q&A between him and staff constituents. USAC also participated in the April 2022 inauguration ceremony and related festivities.

In partnership with University Administration, USAC and the University Faculty Senate (UFS) helped to facilitate the Q&A section for two University Town Hall meetings. These events were held virtually for the faculty and staff population in October 2021 and January 2022. USAC also kicked off and solicited volunteers for the first in-person Spiders in the Know since 2019.

USAC continued the conversation about building names throughout the year. In response to the Naming Principles Commission Draft Principles, USAC hosted a special web submission feedback opportunity for staff to share their perspectives on the draft principles. That feedback was then presented by the Chair and Vice-Chair to the Board of Trustees during their February 2022 meeting.

USAC also partnered with the UFS and undergraduate Student Government Associations to sign a petition requesting representation on the Board of Trustees. That petition was submitted to the Board in February 2022.

In sum, USAC continues to be an active body on campus and our engagement will only increase as we advocate for the overall staff experience and maintain our connection with upper-level administration.

Goals

The 2021-22 University Staff Advisory Council worked to achieve the following three goals:

1. *Continue to highlight, support, and encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion in university staff experiences, including USAC meetings and events.*
 - a. During the open session of our September 2021 meeting, Dr. Amy Howard provided an update regarding the campus burial ground project, the work of the Naming Principles Commission, and the continued research on Robert Ryland.
 - b. In the open session of our February 2022 meeting, Dr. Morgan Russell-Stokes presented on the new Student Center for Equity and Inclusion as well as Black History Month programming available on campus.
2. *Actively engage university staff in professional development opportunities both during and outside of USAC meetings that encourage staff to showcase their expertise for the campus community as well as better their performance in the workplace.*
 - a. During the open session of our October 2021 meeting, Cassandra Taylor-Anderson presented an overview of access services available through Boatwright Memorial Library.
 - b. In May 2022, Carl Sorensen and Theran Fisher presented on the final stage of UR Engaged and explained to staff constituents the process of the Continuum of Contribution. UR Engaged's first full cycle was during the 2021-22 Academic Year.
3. *Continue to support active, two-way communication and knowledge sharing with upper administration while increasing staff representation and voices in university decisions that impact staff.*
 - a. In November 2021, President Hallock was invited to present during the monthly meeting as well as hosted a Q&A from staff constituents.
 - b. Dave Hale presented a financial update during the open session of the March 2022 meeting, which offered insight into the salary pool for merit increases related to the UR Engaged performance management system.
 - c. USAC Executive Board conducted monthly check-ins with the University Senior Leadership Team for a time of collaboration.

- d. USAC's Chair and Vice-Chair presented at the February 2022 Board of Trustees meeting upon invitation to provide feedback on the Naming Principles Commission Draft from the staff perspective.

Noteworthy Accomplishments

Web Submissions

During the 2021-22 term, the Executive Committee worked diligently to communicate every web submission received to the appropriate university leader and provide resolution in a timely manner. USAC received and provided responses to all 95 web submissions received. This was an 82% increase over last year's total web submission count of 52.

Since web submissions are the primary mode for receiving constituent feedback and concerns, they were discussed as a group in closed sessions so that all council members would have an opportunity to share their perspective and ensure a diverse and inclusive understanding of the matters shared with University leadership.

Campus-wide Events

In coordination with the President's Cabinet, USAC coordinated and facilitated two (2) Staff and Faculty Town Hall events. These events were held via Zoom and were requested by both university leadership and the staff community alike. USAC solicited questions beforehand for the President, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Provost, General Counsel, and Vice President of Human Resources to address, as well as provided an opportunity to staff to ask questions in real-time. The events were well attended and came at a crucial time when the campus community needed to remain informed as the pandemic and the university's response continued to evolve.

USAC also assisted in coordinating and running the Spiders in the Know event, which returned as an in-person event for the first time in three years. This was a welcome return to pre-pandemic normalcy, with USAC assisting in asking pre-submitted questions from staff.

Committee Appointments

USAC was approached by leaders on campus to help appoint members of the community to serve as staff representatives on two important committees:

- *Planning & Priorities Committee:* Michael Torquato, Manager of Landscape Services
- *Benefits Committee:* John Studer, Director, Women's Basketball Operations

Collaboration with University Faculty Senate

USAC worked closely with the University Faculty Senate (UFS) during the 2021-22 term. A joint proposal was developed and reviewed by both USAC and UFS members in collaboration with the President of Westhampton College Government Association and President of Richmond College Government Association. This proposal, recommending the addition of faculty, staff, student, and alumnae/i representatives to the Board of Trustees, was submitted to the Board after USAC and UFS had voted to sign in support of the proposal.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

USAC played an important role in much of the development in DEIB during the 2021-22 term. Along with facilitating communication between university leadership and staff on important events, policies, and decisions, USAC engaged with the Board of Trustees and the President's Office to communicate the collective opinion of staff as it related to the drafted naming principles from the Naming Principles Commission. As a result of these campus-wide conversations, the drafted naming principles were approved, and six building names on campus were immediately changed to align with the newly adopted naming principles. USAC also voted to update its bylaws with more inclusive language, including the use of gender-neutral pronouns throughout the document.

Meetings

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings were conducted via Zoom. The format of meetings consisted of an open session wherein guest speakers addressed staff and presented on pertinent issues. Council discussion of web submissions were then discussed during closed session. Each meeting included time for guest speakers, Department Updates and Announcements, Budget Review, Committee and Liaison Updates, Gallery Comments, and Closed Session.

Guest Speakers included:

- *August:* Heather Sadowski, Well-Being Center overview
- *September:* Dr. Amy Howard, updates on Burial Ground, Naming Principles Commission, research on Robert Ryland
- *October:* Cassandra Taylor Anderson, Boatwright Memorial Library services
- *November:* President Kevin Hallock, welcome address and Q&A
- *January:* Allison Moyer & Mike Torquato, Landscaping overview
- *February:* Dr. Morgan Russell-Stokes, Student Center for Equity & Inclusion, Black History Month overview
- *March:* Dave Hale, financial updates

- *April:* Carl Sorenson & Theran Fisher, UR Engaged overview

USAC Committees

USAC's *Volunteer and Engagement Committee* organized volunteers for staff events such as Spiders in the Know and President Hallock's inauguration. The *Communications Committee* completed a website audit and maintained a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. Finally, the *Elections Committee* worked hard to successfully run a university-wide USAC elections to fill outgoing council member seats, as well as ad-hoc elections to fill vacant seats.

Budget

Date	Description	Amount	Balance
07/01/2021	Initial budget	\$5,875.00	\$5,875.00
11/12/2021	Coffee for Staff Appreciation event at Boatwright	(\$58.00)	\$5,817.00
04/12/2022	SimplyVoting.com for elections	(\$334.00)	\$5,483.00
05/17/2022	Nametags for USAC members	(\$17.00)	\$5,466.00
06/14/2022	Dining Dollars for USAC member appreciation	(\$1200.00)	\$4,266.00

Looking Ahead

As USAC looks to the 2022-23 school year and beyond, we advise the continued use of web submissions as a means for gathering staff perspective. We also recommend the development of a means of tracking quantifiable themes that erupt from the web submission conversations year over year. A task for future council members will be to continue communications efforts to highlight USAC as a resource for all staff. This may be through SpiderBytes, New Employee Orientation, or other avenues.

Another aspect that USAC can look to is increasing connectedness between council members and staff constituencies. The staff population has changed dramatically this past year, and ensuring new employees are connected with their council members will be a great challenge especially for the staff members with large constituency groups. We advise the ongoing council to put out more direct communications from council member to constituents to make a more personal connection with USAC.

As USAC continues to increase their presence on campus, they also have the potential to further develop sub committees. As the pandemic evolves into an endemic status, the Volunteer and Engagement Committee will have more access to participate and create events for staff connection. In 2021-22, there was interest from the general staff population to join sub committees, which is permissible in the bylaws. The hope is that sub committees are a way to connect staff, allow for greater participation campus wide, and increase overall communication and care of our fellow staff members.

Membership

2021-22 Executive Officers

Chair: Katy Olney

Administrative Manager, Law School

Academic Affairs Seat, 2020-23

Vice-Chair: Taylor McNeilly

Reference and Processing Archivist, Boatwright Library

Boatwright Memorial Library Seat, 2020-23

Secretary/Treasurer: Kaylin Tingle

Healthy Relationship & Violence Prevention Educator, C.A.R.E. (Center for Awareness, Response, & Education), Department of Health Promotion

Student Development Seat, 2020-23

2021-22 Sub Committee Leaders

Parliamentarian & Elections Chair: Fred Hagemester

Research Analyst, Information Services

Information Services Divisional Seat, 2020-23

Communications Chair: Kourtney Ennis

Director of Marketing, Robins School of Business

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2020-23

Volunteer and Engagement Chair: Susan Sokolsky

Administrative Coordinator, Alumni & Career Services

Advancement Divisional Seat, 2020-23

University Faculty Senate Liaison: Brianne Meagher

Transfer & Curriculum Analyst, Registrar's Office

Academic Affairs At-Large Seat, 2021- May 2022

Academic Affairs

Kourtney Ennis

Director of Marketing, Robins School of Business

Academic Affairs School Staff Seat, 2020-23

Katy Olney

Administrative Manager, Law School

Academic Affairs Seat, 2020-23

Cassie Price

Manager, Communications & Academic Research, Jepson School of Leadership Studies

Academic Affairs Seat, 2021-24

Carolyn Smart

Assistant to the Dean, Arts & Sciences

Academic Affairs Seat, 2021-24

Brianne Meagher

Transfer & Curriculum Analyst, Registrar's Office

Academic Affairs At-Large Seat, 2021- Campus Departure May 2022

Derek Miller

Associate Director, Community Relationships and Community

Engaged Learning, Bonner Center for Civic Engagement

Academic Affairs At-Large Seat, May 2022-2024

Advancement

Susan Sokolsky

Administrative Coordinator, Alumni & Career Services

Advancement Divisional Seat, 2020-23

Athletics

Mitch Alters

Assistant Swim Coach, Athletics

Athletics Divisional Seat, 2020- Campus Departure July 2021

John Srofe

Director of Football Operations, Football

Athletics Divisional Seat, September 2021- Campus Departure April 2022

Jaide Hinds-Clarke
Coordinator of Student-Athlete Leadership Development & Engagement, Athletics
Athletics Divisional Seat, April 2022- 2023

Abby Roberts
Assistant Director of Parent Giving, Spider Athletic Fund
Athletics Divisional Seat, 2021-24

Business Affairs

Ashelle Brown
Learning & Development Specialist, Human Resources
Business Affairs At-Large Seat, 2019-22

Frances Dickerson-King
Student Account Specialist, Controller's Office
Business Affairs At-Large Seat, 2021-24

Michael LaRue
Front of the House Manager, Heilman Dining Center
Dining Services Departmental Seat, 2021-24

Jeff Smith
Concessions and Relief Manager, Concessions
Dining Services Departmental Seat, 2020-23

Craig Buchbinder
Sergeant, University Police
Public Safety Departmental Seat, 2020-23

Paul Just
Team Leader, University Facilities/Custodial
Facilities Departmental Seat, September 2021-23

Pat Coleman
Administrative Assistant, University Facilities
Facilities Departmental Seat 2021-Campus Transfer January 2024

Communications

Cindy Smith
Assistant to Vice President, Communications Office
Communications Divisional Seat, 2021-24

Information Services

Bill Galaspie

Business Intelligence Specialist, Administrative Systems
Information Services Divisional Seat, 2021-24

Fred Hagemeister

Research Analyst, Information Services
Information Services Divisional Seat, 2020-23

Student Development and Chaplaincy

Jamie Lynn Haskins

Chaplain for Spiritual Life & Communications Director, Chaplain's Office
Student Development Divisional Seat, 2021-22

Kaylin Tingle

Healthy Relationship & Violence Prevention Educator, C.A.R.E. (Center for Awareness, Response, & Education), Department of Health Promotion
Student Development Seat, 2020-23

Ex-Officio

Mark Stanton

Assistant Athletic Director/ Compliance
2020-21 Chair

Carl Sorensen

Senior Associate Vice President of Human Resources

Newly Elected Members for 2022-23

Carole Yeatts

Director of Employee Outreach, School of Law
Academic Affairs Seat 2022-23

Nyreng Dut

Custodial Supervisor, University Facilities
Facilities Departmental Seat, 2022-24

Taene Britt
Purchasing Card Program Manager, Controller's Office
Business Affairs At-Large Seat, 2022-2025