UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
September 8, 2020 – 1–3 p.m. – Virtual via Zoom

Members Present: Mitch Alters, Michele Bedsaul, Ashelle Brown, Craig Buchbinder, Kourtney Ennis, Priscilla Greene, Fred Hagemeister, Josh Jeffreys, Allison Johnson, Frank McMurrough, Taylor McNeilly, Joe Minick, Jennifer O’Donnell (Secretary/Treasurer), Katy Olney, Paul Sandman, Beth Simms, Jeff Smith, Mark Stanton (Chair), Richard Thomas, Kaylin Tingle, and Jessica Washington (Vice Chair)

Non-Voting Attendees: Melody Wilson (ex-officio), Carl Sorenson (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Priscilla Greene, Susan Sokolsky

Non-Voting Absent:

Mark Stanton, chair, called the Council meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed council members and guests.

Mark Stanton opened the meeting by briefly outlining the 2020-2021 USAC goals

1. Strengthen communications and outreach efforts to maximize the visibility and accessibility of USAC to all staff members

2. Continue to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive intellectual community in which staff are recognized for their contributions

3. Provide council members with professional and personal development opportunities to improve their leadership and advocacy skills

Guest Speakers: Steve Bisese, Vice President, Student Development
Patrick Benner, Director, Residence Life & Housing
Chief Dave McCoy, Associate Vice President for Public Safety, Chief of Police

Each speaker gave a brief update regarding student conduct, housing, COVID testing, and enforcement of COVID policies. A recording of this portion of the meeting is available on the USAC website at: usac.richmond.edu. The speakers then fielded questions from the council members and gallery guests. The questions and answers are summarized below, and this portion of the meeting is also included in the posted recording.

- To Patrick, where are the contingency spaces for isolation and quarantine, and how many people are in them? Keller Hall, Atlantic and Pacific Houses, University owned houses on the edges of campus, and several apartments. 5 symptomatic students are in isolation at this time.
- To Chief, Patrick and Steve, Thank you for all the additional work you and your team is doing to educate our campus community and keep us safe through the pandemic!
• To Patrick, are you able to share the demographics of the students currently in isolation? This information has not already been gathered, but can be shared once it is collected.
• To Chief McCoy, can you clarify what you said about ongoing pockets of noncompliance? The students have some areas where they tend to feel comfortable taking off masks and not social distancing (common areas in dorms, for example), and it’s an ongoing challenge to remind them that they are still subject to the COVID policies in these spaces.
• Are there concerns about flu season coupled with COVID? Are there concerns about overcrowded contingency spaces? Steve replied that there are groups working on this, and that flu shots will be encouraged throughout the fall. Additionally, campus officials will pay attention to announcements related to the severity of the flu season, as well as additional information that becomes available about COVID. Chief McCoy reminded that symptoms of flu overlap with COVID symptoms, and so campus community members will need to continue to follow current guidelines related to staying home or isolated when symptomatic, no matter the cause. Carl Sorenson added that flu shots are free for employees who use University health insurance, and there will be opportunities to receive the vaccine on campus later this fall.
• Are there concerns about the pockets on noncompliance, and risk for reoccurrence? Will this impact the ability to move forward through the phases of reopening? The campus will not move out of the red phase if VDH and campus level data indicate otherwise (and currently, the rates are still too high to move out of red phase). We will continue to enforce compliance as well as monitoring local trends.
• Chief McCoy, can you clarify what you mean about URPD dispatching students to respond to compliance reports? And do you have updates about the community advisory board you mentioned starting in the spring? URPD will post a Spiderbyte seeking applicants for the board. See the URPD website for more information. The student auxiliary is a program that started a few years ago. The students help patrol and provide extra eyes around campus. They are currently helping to identify and address violations like small groups of students not physical distancing (as opposed to alcohol or other violations). These students also help monitor the intramural fields to ensure only campus community members are using these spaces.
• Patrick, are you able to speak about the ongoing situation with the RA’s (resident advisor’s) petition? Residence life is working with communications on this matter. A student staff member has been contacted, with hopes to address the students’ concerns in a way where the problems can be addressed. Residence life will continue to work with the student staff members who have ongoing concerns.
• Patrick, could you highlight the concerns mentioned in the RA petition? The students requested hazard pay, and also requested to be paid their salaries even if the university goes remote.
• Chief McCoy, when the student auxiliary workers respond to physical distancing calls, can you share the demographics of the students being reported for violations? Demographic information is not collected, and students are never detained during this type of response.

**Updates and Announcements**

Mark Stanton introduced a new council member, Mitch Alters, who will be replacing Allie Ware as one of our Athletics Division representatives. Welcome, Mitch. And thank you, Allie, for your service on USAC.
Jessica Washington directed council members and guests to read through the email update from last week regarding the Making Excellence Inclusive Report. You can find the report and updates here: https://president.richmond.edu/inclusive-excellence/index.html

Jennifer O’Donnell reported that The University’s First Annual Equity Summit will take place on September 29 from 7:30-9:00 pm and October 1 from 7:30-9:00 pm. Faculty, staff, and students can sign up to attend the summit here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vnggxSCWCqf_Y9yjY1AUPpenKJkSS8PThH8YQFw0ahY/edit

Mark reported that USAC helped to facilitate a second Staff Open Forum with senior leadership on August 20, and that we hope more shared events and collaborations will continue through the rest of the year.

The council members participated in a brief check in and ice breaker session, utilizing the Zoom chat function to answer questions.

**Council member expectations**
Mark Stanton provided some examples of how council members can interact with their constituents to ensure USAC is serving to support and represent staff across the university. In addition to emails, council members are challenged to communicate with constituents in other ways, or even plan to visit department meetings in their division.

**Committees and Liaisons Updates**

**Communications committee:** Michele Bedsaul (committee chair), Kaylin Tingle, Kourtney Ennis, Paul Sandman, Susan Sokolsky, Taylor McNeilly, Ashelle Brown, and Mark Stanton

The USAC Communications Committee is live on facebook and instragram, please find the USAC pages and follow along. The USAC website has been updated with council member headshots and links to helpful resources. The committee is also going to start posting hard copies of USAC announcements on bulletin boards in areas where staff do not have constant access to email and other electronic correspondence.

**Elections committee:** Allie Ware (committee chair and Parlimentarian), Josh Jeffreys, Joe Minick, Beth Simms, Jeff Smith, Fred Hagemeister, Jessica Washington

In light of Allie Ware’s departure from the university (congratulations, Allie, and thank you for your service!), USAC will need to identify a new Elections Committee chair and Parliamentarian. Interested council members should reach out to Mark Stanton.

**Engagement committee:** Priscilla Greene (committee chair), Craig Buchbinder, Frank McMurrough, Katy Olney, Allison Johnson, Rich Thomas, Jennifer O’Donnell

The Volunteer and Engagement Committee will take over the selection of the monthly Spider Staff Spotlight staff member (to highlight in the monthly USAC Roundup. This feature will continue to be shared through the monthly USAC Roundups. The committee will also continue to notify council members of opportunities to volunteer on campus.
Faculty Senate Liaison to USAC: Mary Tate

Mary and Allison Johnson invited council members to reach out with ideas for collaborations between faculty and staff members. Mary also invited council members to contact her with questions to take to faculty senate, in addition to reminding the council members they can contact Thad Williamson to put a concern or question on the Senate agenda. The senate will now meet twice a month, in order to stay up to date on the changing situation with the global pandemic.

Plant Involvement Team: Paul Sandman and Frank McMurrough

The PIT will resume meeting later this fall.

Foodservice Involvement Group: Richard Thomas and Jeff Smith

The FIG will have their first meeting of the year later this fall.

Budget Review, Jennifer O’Donnell

Initial Budget: $5,875
Expenditures YTD: $0
Balance: $5875

Expected expenses: Name tags for new council members
Voting mechanism (will be needed in spring)

Gallery Comments
There were no gallery comments.

Closed Session
The Council entered closed session at 2:11 p.m.

Web Submissions, Jessica Washington

September web submissions were reviewed and discussed. Web submissions and full answers are posted as a separate document online at usac.richmond.edu.

Mark Stanton adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 from 1-3 p.m., virtual via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Jennifer O’Donnell, Secretary/Treasurer