UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
October 13, 2020 – 1–3 p.m. – Virtual via Zoom

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

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

Members Absent: Josh Jeffreys, Jeff Smith

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:

Africana Studies Department Presentation
Armond Towns, Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies
Atiyah Husain, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Dr. Husain and Dr. Towns gave a brief background of how the Africana Studies Student Proposal led to the creation of the Africana Studies FLC and Africana Studies Program (with the eventual goal of an Africana Studies Department). The program is in the development stages, and the 11 faculty members in the Faculty Learning Community are currently working through Faculty Handbook approval procedures for the program. The hope is to have the program up and running for students as soon as possible, and hopefully by next year. The creation of this program includes consolidating many resources that exist on campus, to include faculty members and established courses, and will also include expanding to hire new faculty members and create additional courses.
Dr. Husain and Dr. Towns engaged in a brief discussion with USAC council members and guests, brainstorming ideas for how university staff members can provide additional support and engage in the development of this program.

**Title IX Policies Changes**  
*Kris Henderson, Director of Compliance & Title IX Coordinator*  
*Tracy Cassalia, Deputy Title IX Coordinator for students*

Kris and Tracy gave a brief overview of how recent changes to Department of Education regulations have necessitated updates to University of Richmond Title IX policies.

Title IX now covers sexual misconduct involving faculty and staff, in addition to students. Therefore, there now have to be reporting and grievance procedures for each: faculty, staff, and students.

As a result of the expansion, several existing policies have to be updated and then customized to apply to each different category of coverage (faculty, staff, students). One important detail included in each policy, regardless of category, is the standard of evidence designation that will be used in the investigations. Although each policy will be slightly different overall (depending on if it’s for faculty, staff, or students), the standard of evidence will be the same across the board. The current standard of evidence, as has been used in the student Title IX procedures on campus since 2011 is “preponderance of evidence.” As the updated Title IX policies are crafted and then adopted, the Board of Trustees will decide to stay with “preponderance of evidence” or to move to “clear and convincing evidence.” Our compliance office and Title IX coordinators will make a proposal to the Board ahead of the decision. Tracy and Kris invited staff feedback regarding which standard of evidence should be selected — preponderance of evidence OR clear and convincing evidence.

To read more about the University of Richmond’s Title IX policies and procedures, visit the [University of Richmond Title IX Website](#).

**Updates and Announcements**

Mark Stanton announced that USAC will host a 3rd Staff Open Forum with University Leadership on October 28 at 12:00 pm. A Zoom link will be shared via email and SpiderBytes. The event will include a live Q&A session, and there will also be a google link distributed for question submission in advance of the forum.

USAC was asked to solicit staff nominations to serve on the Board of Trustees Presidential Search Committee. Council members were then asked to communicate this request to the constituents within their division. The names provided by council members who solicited nominations were compiled into a list of 44 staff nominees. This list has been passed along to the Board of Trustees. The search committee will be chosen by the board, and will be announced soon. (The committee was announced on Wednesday, October 14, as these minutes were being drafted.)
Mark Stanton gave a brief overview of the University’s Draft Free Expression Statement. Although the initial feedback phase has passed and the draft has been written, there will be a Webinar for the University community to come together to discuss their perspectives and feelings about the statement. USAC has been asked to suggest 1-2 staff members to serve as panelists for the event. (There will also be faculty panelists, suggested by Faculty Senate) The goal will be to encourage dialogue between campus community members, to collect feedback, and make necessary revisions to the statement.

**Council member expectations**
Mark Stanton asked for suggestions for ways USAC representatives can interact with their constituents. Please send along any ideas that have worked.

**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 Communications committee will be partnering with University Communications for a USAC website reboot later this fall. The committee is working on ideas for future social media posts. Kaylin Tingle and Ashelle Brown are overseeing USAC social media accounts (make sure to follow on Facebook - RichmondUSAC and Instagram - @urichmond_usac), and Kourtney Ennis is overseeing the USAC Website.

Paul Sandman has volunteered to coordinate USAC bulletin boards for staff members without easy access to computers for email and other announcements. Paul will post things like USAC minutes, monthly roundup newsletters, and more. These bulletin boards will be in the facilities building, and in dining services locations.

**Elections committee:** Mitch Alters (committee chair and Parliamentarian), Josh Jeffreys, Joe Minick, Beth Simms, Jeff Smith, Fred Hagemeister, Jessica Washington

Mitch Alters has agreed to chair the Elections Committee. Thank you, Mitch!

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

Priscilla Greene reached out to Suzanne Bird and Heather Sadowski to offer USAC support during the upcoming Open Enrollment period. This year’s Open Enrollment events will be entirely virtual, so there is not currently a need for additional support.

**Faculty Senate Liaison to USAC:** Mary Tate

Mary Tate and Allison Johnson gave an update reminding staff members to submit question to Mary Tate for her to take to Faculty Senate.

There will be a Faculty and Staff Open Dialogue Event on Wednesday, October 21, 5:30-7:00. This will be a virtual event, and will offer 3 topics for discussion - work life balance in a pandemic, things you would like to see continue post quarantine, and navigating spaces in a pandemic. Please let
Allison know if you would like to volunteer to facilitate a session. Use this link to register for the event: https://richmond.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cYfxL3oRxBuUH3

**Plant Involvement Team:** Paul Sandman and Frank McMurrough

The PIT had their first meeting of this semester. The meeting was in person, and outdoors. Paul gave an overview of USAC to the facilities supervisors that attended the meeting, ensuring everyone knows about the web submission process.

**Foodservice Involvement Group:** Richard Thomas and Jeff Smith

The FIG has not yet met, due to constraints related to COVID policies and restrictions on meeting numbers. They hope to be able to meet in January.

**Budget Review, Jennifer O’Donnell**

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

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 2:28 p.m.

**Web Submissions, Jessica Washington**

October 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 3:03 p.m. Jessica Washington moved to adjourn, Paul Sandman seconded.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 from 1-3 p.m., virtual via Zoom.

*Respectfully submitted, Jennifer O’Donnell, Secretary/Treasurer*