

Web Submissions 3/11/25

Idea/question

I am submitting this as the employees wish to remain anonymous. I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to discuss our current on-call compensation structure in light of applicable labor laws. Current On-Call Practice: As an hourly employee at the University of Richmond for over 30 years, I share on-call weekend and holiday technical support responsibilities with 10 other staff members. Our support hours are from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, during which we receive an on-call pay rate of \$2.00 per hour, totaling \$12.00 per day. On-call technicians are required to check voicemail and emails throughout their shift, ensuring prompt responses to any technical issues that arise. This requirement effectively ties us to our devices for the full duration of our on-call period, limiting our ability to engage in personal activities freely. Relevant Labor Laws: Virginia's minimum wage laws do not specifically address on-call time compensation. Therefore, we refer to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for guidance. Under the FLSA: If an employee is required to remain on the employer's premises or so restricted that they cannot use the time effectively for personal purposes, on-call time is considered hours worked and must be compensated accordingly. If an employee can use the on-call time for personal activities and is merely required to be reachable, such time may not be compensable. Given that our on-call responsibilities require active monitoring of voicemail and email, this may place limitations on our personal time that align with FLSA's definition of compensable on-call work.

Request for Review: I would appreciate a review of our current on-call compensation policy to ensure compliance with federal labor laws. Additionally, I would like to understand if other departments on campus providing on-call, weekend support receive similar compensation. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your guidance on this matter.

Response: Based on organizational needs, some departments may need staff to remain available for work in between their regularly scheduled shifts. While on call, a nominal amount of compensation is provided in return for an employee being available to report to or perform work remotely. While providing on-call coverage, if a staff member is called in to work in person or remotely, they are compensated at their hourly rate and any over-time as applicable.

Thank you for sharing your concern and we recognize the need to review our on-call practices, level of restriction placed on personal time and compensation. If you would like to share more specific information, please contact your HR Business Partner.

Idea/question

I am worried about the decision-making process for snow day cancellations.

Request for Review:

Virginia's weather is unpredictable, and we haven't experienced snow like this in years here in Richmond. Moreover, this city isn't prepared to manage this level of snowfall; we aren't in northern states with regular snow patterns. VCU switched to fully virtual learning, so it makes sense for UR to follow suit and align with other institutions in the area. Professors can utilize Zoom so students can still attend classes. COVID-19 plans equipped us with the skills and flexibility to move classes and work online, and we should use this to our advantage when necessary. Additionally, non-essential employees should be required to work the whole day remotely on snow days like today. Many employees have children they now need to take care of as schools are closed today. Many employees commute from all over Virginia, and the road conditions were not safe, and the sidewalks weren't clear. The roads were quite icy this morning, and my car slid numerous times trying to get to work.

Response:

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concerns regarding the decision-making process during snow events. We understand that inclement weather can create challenges for both students and employees, and we appreciate your perspective on the matter.

We have a process in place in which we work closely with the Office of Emergency Management to monitor weather forecasts, in addition to considering what other institutions in the area are doing. Our Operations team

meets regularly in advance of storms to assess potential impacts and preparedness. That information is then shared with a leadership group, which carefully evaluates all available options.

In recent storms, we have implemented a modified operating status to provide more flexibility for those who can work remotely while limiting the number of employees who need to be on campus and continuing to maintain our students engaged. For this latest storm, weather forecasts as late as the night of Tuesday, February 18 predicted that snowfall would begin around noon on Wednesday February 19 and thus the decision to commence Modified Operating Status at 12:00 noon on February 19. We recognize that conditions deteriorated earlier than forecast the morning of February 19 and we are appreciative of the efforts staff and faculty made to support operations that morning.

Please know that every decision is made with the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff in mind. We appreciate your feedback and will continue to evaluate our approach to ensure we are making informed and thoughtful decisions.

Idea/question

How are we affirming our campus community that we support a learning environment where staff and faculty can form non-exclusive affinity groups (regardless of background, ethnicity, race or creed)? We need to affirm people's existence, and their groups existence, for them to feel safe, to learn, and belong, and I'm concerned that we haven't yet had a public announcement (be it from HR, Student dev, or otherwise), affirming these basic values principles. Title VI supports this.

[Response: Will be shared at April USAC meeting](#)

Idea/question

I am deeply concerned about UR's lack of visible response to the federal government's attack on DEI. The most recent "dear colleague" letter of 2/14/25 intensifies this attack on educational spaces specifically and suggests that any aspects of student and academic life that "uses race in decisions" is subject to being rendered a violation of federal law.

Request for Review:

I have no doubt that senior leaders are working around the clock to understand the implications of the chaotic orders and actions emerging from this administration, but we need to hear affirmation of this institution's values around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We also need to be assured that people whose jobs are potentially directly affected (most obviously SCEI and others in the Community of Practice) are receiving timely guidance and protection. We know the University cannot predict what is next or guarantee there will not be more disruption, but we need to hear what the University's commitments are in this chaotic time. Silence does not communicate anything other than "business as usual" and this is anything but.

[Response: Will be shared at April USAC meeting](#)

Idea/question

How are we responding as a university to the recent Dear Colleague letter? Are our colleagues at SCEI, and the great work that they do, going to be protected?

Request for Review:

The Dear Colleague letter goes beyond the court's interpretation of SFFA v. Harvard and expands it beyond admissions and into all facets of higher education. Our campus is committed to equity, ethical engagement, and belonging. How are we remaining committed to these and meeting the demands of the new administration.

[Response: Will be shared at April USAC meeting](#)

Idea/question – This is something we can discuss in our next Admin meeting

It would be great if USAC and Faculty Senate leadership would work together to advocate for a special Spiders in the Know that addresses the impacts of Trump's executive orders and attempted/projected policy changes.

Request for Review:

Even while UR is still investigating/waiting for actual policy changes, it is important to be transparent about UR's stances and address questions our community has (even if the answers right now are "I don't know"). The silence is deafening. And in the absence of actual answers, folks are likely to construct their own narratives.

[Response: We are discussing this idea with leadership.](#)

Idea/question

Are HR and/or the benefits committee looking into ways to maintain reasonably priced access to doctors & procedures from Bon Secours if they don't come to an agreement with Cigna? Would it be possible for the University's self-funded plan to negotiate directly with Bon Secours? Or are you considering adding a non-Cigna plan that works with Bon Secours to the options for open enrollment? (would be too late for some folks though). Otherwise, employees on the health plans that are currently getting treatment through Bon Secours will have to choose between their doctor and/or facility (or maybe even treatment plan) and the massive costs of out-of-network care.

[Response: HR and admin are currently working with Bon Secours and will share result as soon as they have an update.](#)

Idea/question

I think it would be beneficial for the University to explore giving staff 1-2 sick days upon hire that can be used in the first month and would later not accrue if unused. This allows new employees that start at all times of year when illnesses may be present and not preventable given the time of year. I think this would be beneficial to new staff that worry about being unpaid for a day or two within their first few months.

Patrick Benner – RLH

[Response: Will be shared at April USAC meeting](#)

Idea/question

Every day I see multiple students parking in faculty/staff designated lots during business hours when the lots are clearly labeled faculty - staff parking only. It seems to be a combination of lack of concern, disregard or respect for university rules, and possibly not of a deterrent in place.

Request for Review:

This is a very walkable campus, and it appears that most students do walk, but obviously enough are driving that they can be seen each day where they shouldn't be parked. There are over 1000 employees that work for UR, the vast majority of which are trying to arrive and get to their office the same time each day. Can tougher penalties be enacted? Can there be unannounced weeks during the semester that student cars are towed during business hours, especially if they are repeat offenders? Maybe between the two options, word will spread that they might have to pay a substantial fee or must pay to get their get their car back.

[Response: Unfortunately, the Parking Enforcement Officer has been on medical leave and the parking enforcement is being done by police officers and Parking Services' staff. Their primary job task is not parking enforcement. The Enforcement Officer will be back full time after spring break.](#)

Idea/question

I frequently see non-UR electric vehicles charging in EV only campus parking spots. There's often a Tesla Cybertruck wrapped in black parked in the lot beside Maryland Hall with no UR identification whatsoever. I've seen other non-UR vehicles charging as well. Why are these spots not reserved for UR affiliated users and non-UR vehicles ticketed or removed?

[Response: The University of Richmond's EV Charging stations are available to any electric vehicle. The vehicle must be charging. If not charging, the vehicle will receive a citation for Reserved Space. If the vehicle is not registered with Parking Services, the vehicle will receive an unregistered citation regardless of if it is charging or not.](#)

[Visitors to campus can get permission to charge on campus.](#)

submission details - No response needed, just sharing an idea/comment.

In the nearly 10 years that I've been part of the community here at UR I've attended countless catered events. I have dietary restrictions and I've tried requesting or submitted before several events with promises that things will be made available for opportunities like staff breakfasts, museum opening, or even event catering, and the resulting options are either non-existent or frankly, sad. I'm not sure who to reach out to, but I think it would be really beneficial for someone to be able to handle events with a general option that satisfies the needs of people with celiacs or vegans specifically. Fruit, for example, while appreciated, does not feel like an appropriate option to offer as a meal or the sole option for a snack. Now more than ever it's easy to find options that will work for folks. Especially in a city that has plentiful choices and recognizes the importance of these diets.