



# University Staff Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 8, 2025  
Special Programs Building, Room 156

In attendance: Carole Yeatts, Kirstin Stacia, Justin Woodson, Mary Wheaton, Erin Lowery, Justin Woodson, Jess Oliver, Amanda Boyd, Matt DeWald, Holly Blevins, Miriam Blackmon, Mirinda McCants, Julia Trachtenberg, Mirabelle Street, Susan McNulty, Leigh Degnan, Robin Walinski, Cort Schneider, Katy Olney, Monica Booker, Meghan Gill, Yahnee Morton, Shannon Jones, Aesha Uqdah, Stephanie Fillman, Heather Mitchell, Derek Miller, Marion Dieterich, Tracy Kitt, Ashley Kuemmerle, Ian Chance, Joy Heinzman, Ari Clayton, Aretha Harris, Meghan Harris, Elizabeth Donaldson, Ashley Blount, Monica Smith

- Call to Order and Chair's Report 1:01 – Introduction by Carole Yeatts
- 2. Featured Speaker:
  - Amy Howard, Assoc. Provost for Strategic Initiatives & Community Engagement- New role, never existed before; result of asset mapping by Provost's office; main focus has been the Burying Ground, six-year project, culminating on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. This has been an ongoing historical project. After opening, it will be open daily, and some architectural tours will be held. There will be a burying ground website. Amy told the story and history of the burying ground.; Shelby Driscoll – student of SPCS found some pieces and put together a report – an institutional history project was developed; Many campus stakeholders took part of in the committee to work on the project; "Burying ground site should remain sacred and lightly touched, unique accessible and inviting and balance resilience ....."; an archaeologist was on site during all of the work. There will be three memorial information sessions, following the consecrations, ceremony – intense bite-sized sessions; There will be signs to remind everyone that it is a quiet place of contemplation; Someone asked if the UVA project was an inspiration? Also, encouraged everyone to see the site at William and Mary and Roanoke College; Richmond College did not enslave people; complicated story to tell, nuance is part of the story; specificity matters; please feel free to contact Amy individually with more questions.
- 3. 1:25 Reports from Committees and Liaisons
  - Carole's announcements:
    - May meeting – HR Business partners will be speaking.
    - June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting – Hallocks are not available. Please contact Carole Yeatts with suggestions for a speaker.
    - Melissa Falk, Associate Vice President & Dean of Admission, will speak in September.

- Voting for the USAC Representatives for the Exec Board will be open April 8-22<sup>nd</sup>. Full participation in voting is requested. At the May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the new Exec Board will be announced, and a transition plan will be shared later.
- Kirstin Stacia - Treasury report and Approval of the Minutes: Reserving \$450 for election software leaves \$2800; still have between \$1-2K to spend. The March meeting minutes were posted on the USAC Website. Mirinda McCants motioned to approve the March meeting minutes; Jess Oliver seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- Cort Schneider - Faculty Senate – Shannon Sinclair came to the meeting to discuss executive actions.
- Miriam Blackmon - Planning & Priorities – The merit pool was announced; everyone is reminded that it is a pool and raises can be up to 2x the base.
- Jess Oliver - Benefits Committee - Cigna/Bon Secours agreement was reached, UR will be requesting bids for a new insurance provider; April 17<sup>th</sup> is the next meeting.
- Monica Booker – Planning and Priorities – The Campus Plan was presented and the committee will be reviewing input.
- John Shines - Plant Improvement Team – no report
- Amanda Boyd - Food Service Involvement Team – Did meet, many staff did not know about the open session Campus Plan presentation; summer schedule – Looking into cross-training staff and want to do some tours for those who have worked in one location for a long time; maybe able to work with USAC for tours.
- Mary Wheaton & Erin Lowery - Communications– Active posting on social media to gain exposure for events and communicate activities; please encourage colleagues to like and follow; please email information about other events to Mary or Erin, and they can post about other events pertinent to staff.
- Justin Woodson - Events & Engagement – Volunteers are lined up Spiders in the Know on May 14<sup>th</sup> – Ushers need to be there by 8:30 am.
- Julia Trachtenberg – Eco corridor tour on April 16<sup>th</sup> at noon. The first tour for new staff members on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup> was a great success – please look for pictures on Facebook. Next Spider Bites luncheon is on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 12.
- Elections Committee – no report
- Mirabelle Street announcements – Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10-3 is the Vehicle Safety Day, in the Jepson Alumni Center Parking Lot – check SpideryBytes;

WIL breakfast – April 16, 8:30-10 in Whitehurst Living Room; Stop the bleed tourniquet sets will be put in buildings with AED, all academic and administrative buildings have AED's.

4. Web Submissions– Web submission details can be found on the USAC website.
- Giving new hires a few days to start – the floating holidays will go in effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> and these holidays can be used immediately. See the details on the web submission response
- Staff support for the current situation as a result of the Exec Actions – a recent HR email went out that details the contacts for help. The contact list will be shared on social media and posted in the Web Subs.
- Dear Colleague letter comment – Administrators and colleagues across campus are carefully monitoring the situation.
- Affirming campus affinity groups – an email was sent from HR on 2/17 about Affinity Groups. Monica Smith comments – most affinity groups center on specific interests, but are open to all staff and faculty, the groups are not exclusive to specific identities, but are open to all
- Attack on DEI – Administrators and colleagues are carefully monitoring the situation and are dedicated to the mission.
- Comments – Ari Clayton asked about continuing the Well-being tours for new staff. The response is that we hope they do, as they are in line with the USAC mission.

Open Meeting adjourned at 1:51.

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## University Staff Advisory Council

### **Goals 2024-2025**

1. Strengthen and foster a cohesive and inclusive staff community on campus
  - a. Establish a USAC events committee to promote a sense of community across campus staff. Launch new initiatives to bring together staff from across departments, including informal breakfast/lunch gatherings and organized campus tour for staff led by staff.
  - b. Offer hybrid USAC meetings for general staff but encourage USAC members to attend in person.

2. Enhance visibility of USAC to be seen as a conduit of information, voice for all staff, and leader in community efforts
  - a. Increase accessibility of web submission feature on USAC website and increase awareness to staff of available web sub option to ask questions and raise concerns.
  - b. Strengthen visibility and role of USAC for staff advocacy, retention, transparency, compensation, and appreciation.
  - c. Raise profile of USAC board and committee members collectively and individually so all staff feel heard and represented. Invite all staff to join USAC committees.
  - d. Continue connections with Faculty Senate and find more ways for faculty and staff to interact.
3. Solidify processes and institutional knowledge within USAC
  - a. Define committee structure within USAC and create goals and expectations.
  - b. Review current USAC Board structure and compare with current campus employment to ensure fair and accurate representation.
  - c. Pull together procedures guides for future board members.
  - d. Connect with past USAC board members and invite their input and participation in USAC activities and initiatives.
4. Continue USAC awareness through existing systems and processes
  - a. Continue USAC role in the onboarding process by sending USAC profile and swag to new staff members.
  - b. Continue regular and timely communication with staff via all-campus communications and presence at major campus events. Continue to make sure information is shared with staff in a variety of modes including printed flyers and signage for those who do not regularly access email.
  - c. Continue to invite University representatives to present at monthly meetings and quarterly breakfast including senior management, compliance, campus safety, HR, DEIB, and student development.