

## Web Submissions 4/8/25

### 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.

Thank you for your suggestion! We recently announced the addition of two floating holidays that will be available to staff effective 7/1/25.

Eligible new hires will receive:

- 2 floating holidays' if hired prior to July 1st
- 1 floating holiday if hired between July 1 and October 31st

These floating holidays are way to provide time off that can be used when other forms of leave, such as sick time, aren't available.

Additionally, staff begin to accrue both sick time and vacation time with each pay period, so some time off becomes available early in an employee's tenure. For specific accruals, please visit the HR website <https://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/leave/index.html>

Hourly employees will earn sick leave based on the number of hours paid each pay period including vacation, sick, holiday, bereavement leave, etc.

New exempt employees who work for at least one day of the month will receive their full accrual for that month. Exempt employees who are leaving the University, will not accrue time for their last month unless they work the full month.

We hope these options help support new staff members when they need time away from work

### 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 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.

Upen will be sharing a response at the end of March

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

Is there any talk of support for staff who are under increasing stress and anxiety due to the current political situation that is impacting their work as well as their worries/concerns for students.

- While no answer is required; we wanted to remind all of the Employee Assistance Program 1-877-622-4327. We also recently added additional resources for specific concerns:
- For questions about grants, contact Jennifer Stancil, assistant vice president, Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations, [jstancil@richmond.edu](mailto:jstancil@richmond.edu), 804-289-8261.
- For questions about your contact information appearing on the UR website, contact Phillip Gravely, associate vice president, marketing and digital engagement, University Communications, [pgravel2@richmond.edu](mailto:pgravel2@richmond.edu), 804-289-8621.
- For concerns about data for research or teaching becoming inaccessible, contact the library liaisons and/or the Faculty Hub, [facultyhub@richmond.edu](mailto:facultyhub@richmond.edu), 804-662-3000.
- For questions related to recording in class, contact Shannon Sinclair, vice president and general counsel, [ssinclair@richmond.edu](mailto:ssinclair@richmond.edu), 804-287-6683, or your dean.
- For questions about VISAs, contact Geraldine Sullivan, chief human resources officer, [geraldine.sullivan@richmond.edu](mailto:geraldine.sullivan@richmond.edu), 804-287-8747.
- If you are approached by external law enforcement on campus, contact URPD at 804-289-8911. URPD serves as the liaison to all external law enforcement agencies.
- For concerns about a student or member of the University community, follow this guidance on the Student Development website or fill out this form.

**To report a bias incident, harassment, or a hate crime, you may [complete this form](#). You can also find more information about reporting concerns [here](#).**

#### **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.

Administrators and colleagues across campus are carefully monitoring executive orders, policy changes from federal agencies, and related litigation. We remain focused on and committed to our core mission and values, as well as advancing out strategic priorities of academic excellence; access and affordability; belonging and community; well-being; and experiential learning and community engagement.

#### **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.

The following was shared via email from HR on 2/17 about Affinity Groups:

Affinity groups play an important role in creating a welcoming campus environment where everyone feels seen, supported, and valued. These groups encourage meaningful connections, provide opportunities for mutual support and learning, and contribute to the strength of our community. Each affinity group is open to all UR staff and faculty.

You can learn more about Beyond Barriers and other affinity groups by visiting our affinity groups webpage. You'll find information about each group's mission, upcoming opportunities to get involved, and how to connect with others.

We also ask managers to remain mindful of the value these groups bring to our community and to support employees who wish to participate in group activities. Together, we can create a more engaged and supportive environment for all.

**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.

Administrators and colleagues across campus are carefully monitoring executive orders, policy changes from federal agencies, and related litigation. We remain focused on and committed to our core mission and values, as well as advancing out strategic priorities of academic excellence; access and affordability; belonging and community; well-being; and experiential learning and community engagement. Both Provost Saab and Geraldine Sullivan, via the HR newsletter, have sent a list of resources to all faculty and staff so that if they have specific concerns, they know who to contact.