The following web submissions were discussed during the August 11, 2020 meeting.

**Idea/Rationale:** Has the USAC Executive Committee had any information from David Hale and Jeff Legro concerning the details of the Healthy Web Community Compact? Staff input on a compact/form that all staff are to sign (per Jeff's letter to students) seems an important step, especially in light of previous conversations about how staff questions, concerns, and input are only being addressed after policies have been set, if at all.

**Response:** This question was shared via email with Dave Hale and Jeff Legro on Thursday, July 16. In a response from Dave Hale on Friday, July 17, he shared who the committee members were that guided the creation of this compact (faculty, student, and staff representation) and an invitation to review and provide feedback to the faculty/staff version. The USAC Executive Board (Jennifer, Jessica, and Mark) reviewed this statement and responded with suggested edits and questions. They tried to center equity and inclusivity from the staff perspective in this response. See [Healthy Web Compact: Faculty and Staff](#) for the final version and more information.

Committee members:

* Brittany Schaal, (chair)
* Alene Waller, M.D.
* Peter Smallwood
* Eugene Wu
* Bill Bergman
* Joe Boehman
* Heather Sadowski
* Tracy Cassalia
* Theron Fisher
* Sarah Busching
* Kris Henderson
* Mike Miller
* Lauren Wicklund
* Cassandra Troy
* Sam Tannah
* + 2 student representatives

**Idea/Rationale:** There has been concern expressed about the lack of childcare for the fall. Either due to childcare centers closing, fear of sending children to childcare, inability to financially secure childcare, or needing to assist children with distance learning with public schools online. Will HR be providing any guidance, beyond working with individual supervisors, to address the changing situation and need for flexibility with expectations around work hours and availability? How do supervisors respond to employee's family needs while ensuring goals are being met? What security does staff have for taking care of children while working full-time? Faculty are also facing the same challenges, but as schedules are different, I'm unsure there is a one size fits all response. Many people do not have full-time childcare or school to rely on for children due to COVID-19. While staying committed to the University, our shared mission and individual work, normal office hours are difficult to sustain.

**Response:** In an [email from Dave Hale and Jeff Legro on August 3, 2020](#), they shared the following statement on support for child care and resources for child and elder care:
In order to address the challenges that parents and caregivers are facing, the University will contribute $1,200 to a tax-free spending account for all regular full-time employees with children 12 years old and younger. These monies may be used to help offset child care expenses incurred between Aug. 10 and Nov. 30, 2020. We understand that finding daycare services will be more difficult than usual, and to help address that problem, the University will also provide for all regular full-time employees access to Care.com, a national network of child, elder, pet, home, and other care providers, which has an extensive network of providers in the Richmond region. Care.com will help regular full-time employees of the University identify vetted day-care providers. Look for more information from Human Resources about how to access these programs in the upcoming weeks.

See the Temporary Child Care Benefits During COVID-19 for more information. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to discuss a Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) during COVID-19 with their supervisor.

Idea/Rationale: Why has USAC not requested the upper-administration to give regular updates on COVID like the Faculty Senate has? At July 23, 2020's Faculty Senate meeting, there was a financial update given by Dave Hale where he outlined the potential for reductions/discontinuation of retirement contributions, salary reductions, and furloughs should enrollments drop or we go remote again due to COVID. I know that USAC meets monthly and anyone can attend those, but I have not heard from my USAC representative since the change in leadership. USAC ought to be holding the same kinds of meetings that the Faculty Senate does, inviting all staff to attend them and USAC members asking questions of our university leadership. Staff are the second class citizens of this University and it is more apparent during the pandemic than ever. We have no all-staff listserv, we are not given updates, we have an inept representative body that isn't given the power to organize or question leadership. Faculty have been getting bi-weekly (or sometimes weekly) updates from university leadership. Staff have gotten two webinars without interaction with our leaders.

Response: Thank you for your web submission. We are saddened to hear that staff may feel like second-class citizens. The Executive Board would like to extend an invitation to speak with the submitter to hear more about these concerns, and only if the submitter feels comfortable and safe doing so. While we accept that no response can undo that feeling, here are some responses to the submission:

Regarding access to information from upper leadership, a similar concern was raised and addressed during July’s monthly USAC meeting. Subsequently, a request for a staff open forum was made to upper leadership. The staff open forum, a collaboration between USAC and Human Resources, was then held on Wednesday, July 29. Subsequently, and at the recommendation of both upper leadership and USAC, a second open forum is being held on Thursday, August 20. As USAC council members, we acknowledge that this is a step in the right direction, and will continue to advocate for additional access to information that feels equitable to faculty. Additionally, in an effort to address this concern, there will be increased participation and attendance from members of the President’s Cabinet at USAC meetings.

We apologize for the lag in communication as leadership and council member changes occurred in July 2020, as we said goodbye to the outgoing Executive Board and council members. We hope to do better so this is not a concern during future transition periods. A note about communication from USAC: monthly USAC roundups will now come from Jennifer O’Donnell (USAC Secretary/Treasurer). You should have received July’s roundup on July 24, 2020, which also provided a list of available staff resources for COVID related concerns. Please contact your USAC representative and/or Jennifer if you did not receive this. Your USAC representative will continue to touch base throughout the academic year as well. We’re hoping this streamlined form of communication will allow for greater and more timely access to information.
A note about USAC and its scope: USAC is an advisory council and does not have expressed power, however, USAC may and does regularly make recommendations to upper leadership. USAC Executive Board Members (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer) meet monthly with Dave Hale, Jeff Legro, and Carl Sorenson to discuss web submissions and other questions/concerns raised by constituents.

Idea/Rationale: I am concerned as a trade (Locksmith). What is protocol with the University about going into a Student's living space (while on campus) to make a repair? If you rent from a realty company at the beach and work needs to be done you as renters would have to vacate the house while the work is being done.

Response: USAC would like to formally recognize the difficult position our colleagues in facilities and other departments, such as dining and custodial services, are in because of the coronavirus. Many of our colleagues in these departments have not left campus or been able work remotely since the University moved to remote instruction in March 2020. Thank you for your continued care of our campus and community. We are grateful for everything you have and continue to do.

This concern was shared with Paul Lozo and USAC representatives from facilities. On August 11, 2020, facilities shared an “Isolation/Quarantine Location Response Protocol” with its team members. This protocol described the process for responding to work orders.

Idea/Rationale: Not sure if this is the right forum but Is there a way for us to reach out to students and faculty both past and present who would want to be paid tutors? This would be outside the University. Now with the majority of schools going with the virtual learning platform it would be a great way for our working families at U of R to have good resources to help fill the gaps that parents will need help with. I believe VCU and UVA are rolling these programs out. Thanks!!

Response: HR has negotiated reduced rates with Little Scholars to help with tutoring and to engage students. More information can be found at https://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/work-life/little-scholars-virtual-learning.html.

Idea/Rationale: Students and faculty have the ability to apply for and receive grants to fund their orgs / programs. Are there any similar sources of funding for staff? I know of the Weinstein Grant, but those are only for programs/research undertaken abroad. I manage a program to greater involve Administrative Support professionals in TIDE. This year the program will be focusing on racial justice issues, and I would like some funding to take a group of them to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC (COVID-pending, of course). Unfortunately, my program doesn't have an independent source of funding and with the budget cuts my office experienced this year, I can't ask my supervisor for the money. So I'm looking for an alternate source, if one exists for staff.

Response: Human Resources and Amy Howard, SOA for Equity and Community, were contacted about this web submission. Currently, no funding exists for this purpose. A working group, comprised of USAC council members, is exploring other funding streams/ways to repurpose existing funding for this purpose.
Idea/Rationale: Could the University please clarify what the Faculty/Staff Healthy Web Compact means when it says in clause 1c that I agree to "Reduce potential exposure by adopting the following behaviors at least 14 days prior August 24, 2020: avoiding large crowds and gatherings, keeping a safe distance from other people (at least 6 feet apart), washing hands often and not knowingly come into contact with a person who has been diagnosed with the virus." This seems to indicate that I must avoid large gatherings even when keeping a safe distance and wearing a mask. Moreover, it does not specify what constitutes a "large" gathering. Are we to follow University guidelines for meetings off campus? Are we following Virginia guidelines of less than 250? This should be specified. The University should also clearly state what the EXACT repercussions will be for violating this compact. We are told that this will be taken seriously and that it will be enforced, but will we be terminated? Especially during this time in our nation's history when so many are showing up for racial justice (and democracy), our policy implies that employees wishing to support such movements by attending an action would be held liable for breaking University policy even if done within healthy CDC guidelines. Moreover, this could be applied inconsistently without transparency ahead of time. For example, personal (air) travel is "strongly discouraged," but that could be just as risky (if not more so) than a public, outdoor gathering with social distancing and masks. This doesn't even mention the fact that we are asking students to return to campus - which may involve air travel - while staff would have to follow different rules. Ultimately, we should have a clearer definition of many parts of this statement.

Response: Brittany Schaal was contacted prior to the meeting about this web submission and provided the following response on August 6:

Thank you for your inquiry. The Faculty/Staff Healthy Web Compact was developed by a committee of faculty and staff members as an opportunity for each employee to demonstrate a shared commitment to taking personal health and well-being steps to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission within our campus community. The Healthy Web Compact is intended to be a statement of shared principles and practices – not a detailed and binding contract. While the University encourages each employee to sign the Healthy Web Compact, signing the document is not a condition of employment. However, all employees will be required to comply with the University’s interim health and safety policies and the Physical Distancing Framework, regardless of whether they commit to the Health Web Compact. We hope that employees who agree to the Compact are signaling an individual commitment to promote the health of our students, faculty, and staff and motivating fellow colleagues to do the same. Shared individual and collective responsibility can become a powerful tool in mitigating health and safety risks within the University community.

While on campus students, faculty, and staff must comply with the guidelines established within the Physical Distancing Framework. This means during the Red Stage meetings, events, and social gatherings are limited to 10 attendees or fewer while University-sponsored outdoor events must be limited to 50 or fewer attendees. In both instances physical distancing is required. Off-campus, individuals are encouraged to follow public health guidance and abide by the guidelines established within the Governor's Forward Virginia Plan.