

UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

December 2016 Web Submissions

1. **Date Submitted:** November 8, 2016

Web Sub: *I know this is not a campus issue, but I am curious if our transportation or URPD departments know what is going on with all the construction at the intersection of River Road and Huguenot Road? It looks like they have added new lights and sidewalks to make it more pedestrian friendly. Seeing as a lot of UR employees come through this intersection everyday for work I am just curious about the what the plans are. Anything to ease the morning traffic in that area and to make the area more walkable is appreciated. Thanks!*

Response: That was a VDOT/Henrico County project to help pedestrians and bicyclists gain access to the Huguenot Bridge. This past summer we created a pedestrian/bicycle path from the dead end of Towana Rd / Roselawn Rd to the path adjacent to the CCV. The final phase will be to improve that old path. (AM)

2. **Date Submitted:** November 8, 2016

Web Sub: *There don't seem to be any recycling bins in the Jepson Alumni Center. I recently attended an event there and wanted to recycle my coke can. I wandered around the building and could not find a recycle bin anywhere. I ended up just bringing the can home to recycle. I would love to see some recycling bins added to the space (or put in a more prominent location if I missed them!), given the number of events held there.*

Response: In September the University began working with Reduction In Motion (RIM), a consultancy that describes themselves as “professional trash talkers.” We brought RIM on board to help us achieve a goal of diverting 80% of our waste from the landfill. Doing this will require a system-wide assessment to understand our waste streams, deployment of new bins, creating consistent signage, and building awareness of why and how we recycle among the entire campus community.

We are currently in the assessment portion of this project and have learned a lot about our waste streams and the need to coordinate our efforts across different campus functions. We have a Recycling Leadership Council with representation from Dining, Events, Facilities, Athletics, Procurement, Recreation, and more. RIM presents to this group monthly and decisions from bag color to branding to bin location are discussed.

We will be reaching out to people to support this initiative in the spring, once the assessment phase is completed. Our success will hinge on people knowing about the new waste diversion program, how to participate in it, and being able to find resources to make the program successful in their area. If all goes well, we will have new bins, signs, and collection processes by the start of the fall 2017 semester.

I am very grateful for the person who submitted the question and to everyone across campus who wants us to do better in this area. We need to do better, and the administration has provided us with the resources to do so in an intentional and systematic way. In the meantime, I will reach out to the Jepson Alumni Center to find out if there are some collection areas for recycling we can provide.

Rob Andrejewski

3. **Date Submitted:** November 8, 2016

Web Sub: *I would like to propose the University consider allowing employees and/or their dependents to utilize the tuition benefit for graduate level courses IF the tuition benefit was not utilized for undergraduate courses. Thank you for your consideration.*

Response: There are a few reasons we do not provide the dependent tuition benefit for graduate tuition.

One can claim a student as a dependent only until they are age 24.

The IRS allows the university to provide the benefit for undergraduate tuition on a tax free basis. Graduate dependent tuition support would be taxable income – for the university and the employee.

The philosophy for providing the undergraduate dependent tuition benefit is to help families provide their children with this important first step in their career. (CKS)

4. Date Submitted: November 10, 2016

Web Sub: *Is something going on with SPCS? It seems like they have fired a lot of SPCS teachers (where is Kelly Lane's art classes?) and there seems like only a third of the usual amount of classes being offered, and a majority of the classes being offered are for education majors. I understand our new dean comes from an educational background, but what about those that are purely interested in liberal arts? It seems like SPCS will support bizarrely hyper specific master's degrees and people wanting to become teachers, but that is about it. A full 50% of the concentrations being offered on their site are not being offered in actuality <http://spcs.richmond.edu/degrees/programs/liberal-arts/undergraduate-concentrations.html> as someone that looked forward to using my tuition remission here, I have had a truly challenging time registering for spring classes that I haven't already taken. If SPCS doesn't start offering more classes, can UR offer tuition remission exchange with JSarge or another community college? One of the main benefits that was used to recruit me was the "AMAZING" tuition remission- but I don't find it amazing in the least.*

Response: I am sorry you are not able to find classes that meet your professional development interests. The University is not considering the creation of an exchange program with one of the local community colleges. (CKS)

Thank you for raising this question. Over the past year, we have begun to examine our course catalog to ensure that we are advertising courses which are frequently requested and that we will have enough student interest to offer. Our Program Chairs, who are faculty members, determine the list of courses to be offered in any semester based on the needs and requests of all our students. While it may appear that one department has more offerings than another, the course options are based on the number of students enrolled in each program each term and what courses students need to progress in their programs. Certainly as we determine what classes to offer, it is possible that some faculty may not teach in any given semester.

As you may be aware, SPCS is working through a strategic plan this year. Our overall goal is to ensure that SPCS is positioned to be responsive to the needs of our community now and well into the future. We look forward to sharing more as we move along our process. We are happy to receive feedback along the way. (JSW)

5. Date Submitted: November 11, 2016

Web Sub: *Now that it is legal for same-sex marriage in the state of VA. Why are the opposite-sex domestic partners of University employees not eligible for the same benefits that same-sex partners of University employees are offered?*

Response: The University Benefits Committee is in the process of reviewing the current policy and best practices to determine the best way to modify our policies to align with the new laws – either to limit benefit eligibility to married partners or extend eligibility to all opposite sex domestic partners. (CKS)

6. Date Submitted: November 14, 2016

Web Sub: *I would like usac to inquire as to why the president of the university didn't send out any message following the election. Countless other universities have acknowledged the hurt that millions are feeling. As a university who now has values, who is allegedly committed to a thriving and fully participatory community, this election has spurred so many bias incidents (there was a BRT meeting, for example) and*

left many feeling vulnerable. For example, we have undocumented students attending UR, and they are at threat of deportation. A note was sent to faculty. None to staff. The president is not showing leadership or living into our values. I am afraid, as a staff member and a member of a marginalized community, to speak out or confront leadership about this. I hope that usac will send this exact message to President Crutcher and ask for a reply directly from him. Not a VP, but it's time we hear directly from our president.

Response: Due to scheduling difficulties, we were unable to meet the President's office. We will follow-up.

7. Date Submitted: November 29, 2016

Web Sub: *Please review the Bereavement and Sick leave definition of family it should be the same for both. Bereavement leave: _____ Immediate family, for this benefit, is defined as the employee's: ?Brother or sister ?Children ?Grandparent ?Grandchildren ?Parents (or legal guardians) ?Spouse/same-sex domestic partner ?Spouse's/same-sex domestic partner's parents Regarding the death of aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, other relatives, and very close friends, necessary time off will be granted on the day of the funeral. SICK LEAVE: _____ Sick leave may be used for the following purposes: ?An employee's own illness or temporary disability ?Sickness or temporary disability of a member of an employee's immediate family ?Medical or dental appointments for the employee or his/her immediate family. If appointments are reasonably foreseeable, this time should be approved by the employee's supervisor in advance. Immediate family is defined as the employee's: ?Children ?Parents ?Spouse/same-sex domestic partner*

Response: This request also came directly to HR and is something we are reviewing. (CKS)