

## UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

### October 2016 Web Submissions

#### 1. **Date Submitted:** September 5, 2016

**Web Sub:** *It would be great if HR could advertise the internal job postings on the regular job site in addition to the talentweb site. i understand that they want us to use the talentweb site for everything, but it was down nearly a full week (with no notification or progress update from HR), and regardless of how they want us to use the system, people go to the regular job site more frequently to look for jobs for their friends and loved ones, or just to see if people have left their jobs. this university is terrible about sharing when people leave their positions- so often this is the only way to find out if this has happened. it would be great if we didn't have to make two trips to see the same things. i know i can't be the first person to request this, so maybe HR should listen to what we're saying, and provide us the information in the way we would like to receive it.*

**Response:** In an effort to promote internal career development, departments often choose to advertise open roles only to internal University of Richmond employees or first internally before inviting external applicants. This provides an opportunity for our current employees to see and apply for jobs that the external community does not have access to. For this reason, we post these positions on UR Talent Web, a system that non UR employees cannot access. Other departments choose to open positions to both internal employees and the external community at the beginning of a search-all of these roles are available on our public site. - HR

#### 2. **Date Submitted:** September 7, 2016

**Web Sub:** *Would it be possible for the University to take a look at compensation time again? I have read and understand the policy- but am frustrated that different departments handle this policy differently. I am a salaried employee- and not eligible for overtime, and i am often called upon to work during nights, weekends, etc. In other departments, if there are things going on- employees can shift back their time, and arrive late or leave early to accommodate an outstanding need- regardless of overtime status or not- or take a day off as pay pack for working a saturday or sunday event. this helps reinforce the work life balance that the university says is important. I have tried talking to my supervisor about this, and nothing has changed because he simply refers to the policy on the HR site. It would be a shame to have to leave a job i like over unfair treatment and unfairly applied policies. It would be great to have a "common sense" policy about working times and ! schedules- and acknowledge the pressure that we are all under to serve the community here.*

**Response:** Managers are responsible for deploying employees to best meet the needs of the department and provide the best service. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, please contact your HR Business Partner who can help you with this. If you are not sure who that is, you can call 8747 or email urhr@richmond.edu and they will connect you to the right person. -HR

3. **Date Submitted:** September 9, 2016

**Web Sub:** *Where is USAC on this title 9 scandal?? The faculty senate has called an emergency meeting. What is USAC doing to engage staff?*

**Response:** Dr. Crutcher reached out to USAC regarding an open forum for staff on the morning of Friday, September 9. Immediately following that discussion, the Office of the President and USAC booked the room and began scheduling the list of representatives that needed to be in attendance to answer questions. Both the President's Office and USAC felt it would be best to wait until all parties were committed before announcing the forum to staff. As details were still being finalized, USAC representatives were notified of the forum via the USAC listserv the morning of Monday, September 12. An email to all staff was sent out that afternoon. This means that within roughly one business day, the forum was scheduled and staff were notified.

USAC believes there is value in faculty and staff gathering together if the discussion is equitable and benefits both parties. We will continue to propose this as an option for future forums. - Kirsten McKinney

4. **Date Submitted:** September 12, 2016

**Web Sub:** *Where is the staff forum with Dr. Crutcher about the title IX scandal? The faculty forum has been announced for Tuesday! Where is the staff forum?? And why cannot faculty and staff gather together?*

**Response:** see above

5. **Date Submitted:** September 12, 2016

**Web Sub:** *I suggest the Massage Scheduling system through the Weinstein Center be made more "user friendly." An on-line payment system would be more convenient than having to go pay with only a check or cash at the Weinstein Center. An on-line scheduling system would also cut down on the wait time for scheduling the actual appointment. In terms of wait times, currently the time to get an appointment once authorized after payment is very long. Perhaps we can employ more massage therapists to satisfy the therapy needs of the university community. I know many people rely on the massages for physical ailments and relaxation needs. Thank you!*

**Response:** We are working to implement on-line payment system through our new fusion software. Beginning in January, clients will be able to login to the Fusion program and pay for their massage sessions on-line. They will still need to schedule their sessions using appointments plus. Since we have input the client information into appointments plus (new client info, packages purchased, expiration dates etc), we do allow 3 business to process the application. This is stated on the application and in the massage therapy policies that each client receives. In many cases, the applications are processed in a shorter time frame. All of our therapists work at other locations in the Richmond area so that is why we schedule appointments two weeks out. This allows the therapists with openings to plan their schedule accordingly. Unfortunately, we only have one room for massage therapy and we have 5 therapists sharing the space. We are fully staffed from 11 am – 2:30 pm and 4 pm -8 pm M-F. These are the peak hours for massage therapy. In the past, we have offered Saturday massages but discontinued as the sessions were not being scheduled by employees. We are making some changes to the massage therapy program to better serve the program participants. Beginning in January 2017, eligible employees will get 5 discounted sessions between Jan 1 – December 31. The sessions will now expire 1 year from date of purchase. I hope I have answered the question. If you do need more information please let me know. - Tracy Cassalia

6. **Date Submitted:** September 12, 2016

**Web Sub:** *In response to the past week's revelations and discussions about sexual assault on campus, the president wrote, "In all of these conversations and communications, I am grateful for your candor, your commitment to holding the University accountable, ..." His statement fails to recognize that, as an employer in an at-will state, the university has every right to fire full-time staff members like me in retaliation for expressing critical views of the institution, a circumstance that unnecessarily turns participation in these conversations into an act of courage (e.g., untenured professor Eric Grollman; it's notable he has no complementary voice on the staff side). The university should consider drafting an HR policy that protects the ability of untenured faculty, staff, and other employees to speak their consciences responsibly and publicly without fear of suffering retaliation, including termination. I, for, example, haven't known whether it is permissible for me to post my thoughts on my own personal social media accounts or even to retweet/post statements/articles by others in my personal communications. Would the member of the president's cabinet to whom I ultimately report be displeased, for example, if I publicly express personal criticism of an official university statement, for example? My concern doesn't relate only to the controversy that erupted last week over the university's handling of sexual assault cases. If my understanding of Virginia law is correct, the university could, for example, fire me if it dislikes my private support of a particular political candidate or participation in a debate over a public issue. While I am unaware of any history of this by the university and believe such retaliation would be inconsistent with our expressed values. I am also mindful that these values are not codified into any policy that protects me. This knowledge has had a strong chilling effect on me over the last week. The president's call for candor would be more meaningful if supported by a written policy protecting employees' candid expression of their views, particularly in times like this. Without such a policy, core values such as a free exchange ideas and a commitment to holding the university accountable are the privilege of just a small part of the university community. (If my knowledge of university policy or Virginia law is incorrect or incomplete, my apologies. If that's the case, I think the university, at times like this, should clarify protections for employees who speak freely; that may encourage more to do so.)*

**Response:** University employees may freely express their opinions on social media. In doing so, employees should make it clear that they are expressing their personal opinion and not representing the university and make sure no University policies are violated (such as FERPA) in communicating their opinion. – HR

The university also attempted to collect feedback with an anonymous option through the website created during this time.

7. **Date Submitted:** September 19, 2016

**Web Sub:** *Why is Labor Day a class day? Since classes are in session it means that some staff members must be at work to provide support for various offices, etc. On other holidays that fall during class times, (Memorial Day, 4th of July, MLK Day) classes aren't held. Labor Day is esp .hard since you have to take your comp day that week.*

**Response:** Labor Day is a holiday because it falls within the regular academic calendar which is set to provide the appropriate number of classroom hours for class completion. – HR

8. **Date Submitted:** September 19, 2016

**Web Sub:** *I feel like I take my life in my hands every day I ride my bike to and from campus on Boatwright Drive to/from Three Chopt. There are several curves on the road and cars with UR stickers aren't patient. There have been many close calls (head on collisions). This is the only place on the ride I feel unsafe. Is there something we can do to remind people that patience will save lives? The share bike arrows don't seem to make a difference. Thanks.*

**Response:** The University will add a statement on parking permits to remind people to share the road with cyclists. Parking and Transportation Services will work with the Office of Sustainability to send out information on 'Sharing the Road' with cyclists.

9. **Date Submitted:** September 22, 2016

**Web Sub:** *When will employees find out about Open Enrollment information? Last year, faculty and staff were told to expect "major plan changes," in regards to health insurance. I have looked back at previous web subs and staff have been concerned about how "quickly" employees have to make decisions about Open Enrollment, so it would be particularly important for HR to roll out information as soon as possible (if there are major plan changes) so that ALL faculty and staff can make informed decisions with plenty of time.*

**Response:** This information is now available (October 11, 2016) as it was released via email from Carl Sorensen on October 3, 2016. In the future, we recommend contacting the Human Resources Solution Center for answers this and other benefits questions for you from 8-5 each day. Please contact them at 289.8747 (URHR) or at [urhr@richmond.edu](mailto:urhr@richmond.edu). – USAC

10. **Date Submitted:** September 26, 2016

**Web Sub:** *We have an inquiry from a campus neighbor. He is concerned and would like to know if the green algae in the lake is caused by runoff from a neighboring property. Thanks!*

**Response:** Westhampton Lake is small compared to its drainage area. The surface area of the lake and drainage basin are 14 acres and 1659 acres respectively. The large majority of the drainage basin is off campus, so it would be fair to say that nitrogen, phosphorus, silt, organic matter and bacteria that comes into the lake is from land use areas including residential neighborhoods, shopping centers, wood lots and roads. The blooms of algae are certainly enhanced by the phosphorus coming into the lake. Algae blooms were fairly minor this summer. There is an issue with duck weed in the lake now, which will go away way on its own with cooler temperatures this fall. We are treating now, with the intent to reduce the duck weed population but not totally eliminate, though our IPM Program. - Steve Glass

11. **Date Submitted:** September 27, 2016

**Web Sub:** *Has there been any discussion of allowing employees to "cash out" their vacation days? I find it more difficult than ever to take vacation, and I would like the option to cash out a few days here or there (especially when I get the message form HR that my vacation is expiring). Of course I know I should be taking vacation, but what good is that if I can't afford to go to begin with? I appreciate UR's work/life balance statements, but I should also be trusted to manage my own work. My department has a lot of employees that have been here for a long time, so I feel like this is a question comes up pretty often (that of expiring vacation) because the longer you are here, the more vacation you get- which is an awesome perk. I believe the University's leave times are extremely generous- but because of the pressure we're under,*

*becomes nearly impossible during the school year to take time off. I did want to point out how generous I feel our University is with leave time, so please don't look at this as if I were looking a gift horse in the mouth- I was just hoping for some dialogue on the topic. Because we have so many different types of employees, and with varying work schedules, responsibilities and often also work holidays or "typical" times off, it can be difficult to take the time off in general. If the university is not willing to support employees in the form of "cashing out" vacation days, could we have more than 1 months' notice for expiration, and could that email also include various options (such as banking into sick time, or donation to a colleague in need) so that we just don't lose the time all together? If I'm not able to use my vacation, I would like to do \*something\* with it. Thanks for your consideration.*

**Response:** There have been no discussions to provide opportunities for employees to "buy back" vacation leave. All employees need time away from work to rejuvenate and refresh. Employee leave balances are posted in Banner Web and accessible by employee and manager at any time to view in order to plan ahead. If you need help discussing with your supervisor your ability to take vacation, one of our HR Business Partners (Pam Ash or Leigh McCullar) can provide guidance.

**12. Date Submitted:** September 28, 2016

**Web Sub:** *How about restricting tobacco smoking in common outdoor spaces? Or becoming a smoke-free campus? I write this as I sit on the patio of Boatwright overlooking the lake. I came out for fresh air over lunch, and I'm in a cloud of cigarette smoke. It's unhealthy for the smokers, unhealthy for me, and an intrusion on the otherwise beautiful landscape we occupy.*

**Response:** USAC continues to look into this.