Members Present: Lisa Bayard, Stephanie Bernthal, Shannon Best, Wendy Burchard, Mika Elovaara, Dustin Engels, Amy Gallagher, Beth Ann Howard, Pam Lee, Paul Lozo, Emily Martin, Julie Neville, Meg Pevarski, Rick Richardson, Heather Sadowski, Brittany Schaal, Tara Stewart, Cassandra Taylor-Anderson,

Non-Voting Attendees: Barry Lawson

Members Absent: Jason Cope, Austin Leach, Joseph Woodford

Non-Voting Absent: Matt Barany, Lynn Robertson, Carl Sorensen

Brittany Schaal, Chair, called the Council meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Minutes were approved electronically via the listserv and posted online.

Council members went around and answered the question: “What is your greatest professional strength?”

Quality Enhancement Program Update, Steve Bisese, Vice President of Student Development: Dr. Bisese explained that through our accreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the University must develop a Quality Enhancement Plan that focuses on improving student learning outcomes.

This is the second time we have completed such a program. The first resulted in the Sophomore Scholars in Residence (SSIR) program ten years ago. This round, the University is focusing on first year living and learning communities in a program titled Endeavor. The Richmond Endeavor will begin this fall with four programs with the intent to expand the number of programs by 2023.

The program will consist of a first year seminar, a field study, a faculty advisor until they declare a major, a focused activity in their freshman spring and more. The students will start the program in orientation and will also live together in a co-ed dorm.

Dr. Bisese invited USAC to share more information about Endeavor with their constituents. More information can be found here: https://livinglearning.richmond.edu/endeavor/index.html

Faculty Learning Communities, Laz Lima: Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) started with Provost Fetrow. She wanted to build faculty development opportunities that included staff. The University was among peer institutions who sought to further faculty engagement. The goal of FLCs is to bring people with similar interests together to dive into a topic that helps fill a “gap” of knowledge in the University community. Interested groups submit a proposal that is vetted by the Faculty Development Committee. Last year, proposals were focused around initiatives of the Strategic Plan.
There are currently 93 faculty and staff in FLCs. Funding comes from the endowment designated for faculty development.

The call for communities generally happens through the Deans in April. Groups with similar interests can decide to pursue a proposal. The Provost Office website provides additional information: https://provost.richmond.edu/faculty-development/faculty-learning-communities/index.html

There was a suggestion for collecting names of staff who have potential interest in a FLC and to work with faculty senate on awareness for staff. A question was asked regarding whether it is solely for professional development or for areas of interest. The response was that the year and focus dictates that. A question was asked if participants already have a baseline understanding of topic, or if they can come in with a blank slate. The response to this was that the topic would play a role in the necessary knowledge level of members.

**Planning and Priorities Nominations Process, Elections Committee:**
The Elections Committee explained a proposal to designate one of the P&P seats for Business Affairs and the other for Academic Affairs. Both seats elected in the same manner. If staff is granted a third seat, that seat would be an at-large seat. It was also proposed to recommend the new staff seat serve a two year term so that a staff seat to be elected each year.

**Proposed process to fill a “non-immediate vacancy” seat:**

The spring before a term is set to expire, the Council will open nominations to staff. Staff who wish to accept his/her nomination will be provided questions to submit written answers to the elections committee. It is suggested this step be conducted by UR Poster Form for anonymity.

- Why do you want to serve on the Planning and Priorities Committee?
- What skills/knowledge will you bring to the Planning and Priorities Committee?
- Feel free to provide any additional information we should know about you or your desire to serve on this committee.

USAC elections committee will review the written submissions, with all identifying information (including name and/or department or division) removed, so reviews will be based on answers only, not the nominees themselves. The committee will rate answers from 1–5 to develop a ranking of candidates.

From the nominee review, up to five candidates with the elections committee’s highest rankings will be invited to the May USAC meeting to give a three- to five-minute presentation as to why they should or want to serve on the Planning and Priorities Committee. During closed session of the May USAC meeting, USAC members will vote on the candidates.

Said elections will be determined by simple majority. The prevailing candidate must win by more than half of the electors (50 percent plus one). In the event, that the election does not result in any candidate earning more than half of all votes, a run-off ballot will be issued for the top candidates remaining until a simple majority winner is identified.

**Proposed process to fill an “immediate vacancy” seat:**
If a staff member departs UR during their P&P term, USAC will follow these procedures, which travel on a tight timeline due to filling the open position without much interruption to the P&P committee.

USAC Chair will send an email to USAC members to share with their constituencies requesting nominations. Staff nominations will be sent to USAC elections committee chair.

USAC members will vote on the candidates, and said elections will be determined by simple majority. The prevailing candidate must win by more than half of the electors (50 percent plus one). In the event, that the election does not result in any candidate earning more than half of all votes, a run-off ballot will be issued for the top candidates remaining until a simple majority winner is identified.

Brittany moved that the council vote on the “expected vacancy” process by a voice vote. The motion was seconded. The motion passed with majority vote.

Brittany moved to designate one seat to academic affairs and one to business affairs by voice vote. The motion was seconded. The motion passed with majority vote.

Meg Pevarski moved to table the proposed “immediate vacancy” process until the March meeting. The motion was seconded. The motion passed with majority vote.

**Budget Update, Amy Gallagher:**
Spent YTD: $1480. Balance: $4395. Expected expenses: Simply voting - $350. The majority of our balance is planned to be put to use for the upcoming faculty/staff social event.

**Committee and Liaison Updates:**
- Communications, *Meg Pevarski*: Meg presented the flier that is intended to soon go out to all staff members with information about USAC.
- Elections, *Pam Lee*:
  - **USAC Executive Committee (2018–19)**
    - 1/29–2/28 - Nominations
    - 4/2 - Candidate statements due
    - 4/10 - Elections by secret ballot
    - 4/17 - Certified results to current Committee
    - 5/8 - Announce winners @ USAC meeting
  - **USAC Council (2018–20)**
    - 3/13–27 - Nominations
    - 3/29–4/3 - Confirm nominees eligibility and acceptance
    - 4/10–5/1 - Elections through simplyvoting.com
    - 5/8 - Announce winners @ USAC meeting
  - **P&P Committee**
    - To fill Roger’s soon-to-be vacant seat (Academic Affairs division)
    - 4/2–6 - Nominations
    - 4/16–20 - Elections committee reviews
    - 4/23–27 - Up to five candidates notified about presenting at 5/8 USAC meeting
5/8 - Candidate presentations + USAC votes (during closed session) @ USAC meeting
5/11 - Winner notified (by email or phone)
- Volunteer & Engagement, Tara Stewart: No report.
- Faculty Liaison, Shannon Best: Shannon discussed ideas for days, times, and locations for
  the upcoming faculty/staff social event. The event will be tied to a local cause. Barry added
  the hope that USAC and the Faculty Senate can have a social gathering before the larger
  event.
- PIT, Rick Richardson: PIT meeting discussed questions about the Wellbeing Initiative and
  summer projects.
- FIT, Lisa Bayard: FIT meeting discussed how to aid students during down times on
  campus, customer service, service excellence. Next FIT Thursday, March 8th.

Web Submissions, Paul Lozo:

Web Submissions were reviewed and discussed. Web submissions and full answers are posted as a
separate document online.

Compliment – Facilities landscaping and maintenance

Suggestion – Hand sanitizer on public bathrooms on campus

Suggestion – Time off/vacation time as “bonus”

Question – Notification process for closures and delays during inclement weather

Announcements:

There will be a tornado drill March 20th at 10:10am.

Closed Session:

The council entered closed session at 2:58 p.m.

No discussion or votes occurred.

Dustin Engels moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded.

Brittany Schaal adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Amy Gallagher, Secretary/Treasurer