**UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**WEB SUBMISSIONS**

March 2019

**Question:** With reference to the current health care and retirement. I was wondering if there could be a policy where if an employee has worked 25+ years could there be a way to continue on the UR health care at the same rate when they retire? The reason would be to foster a continual employment to the university and also show that the retirees are looked after.

**Response:** The University stopped providing retiree health insurance for employees in 1992 due to the escalating cost. Employees hired before July 1, 1992, are still eligible for retiree health insurance after age 65. The university has an early retirement plan that provides eligible employees an opportunity to remain on the university health plan until 65. Check our website for more information: [https://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/retirement/ready/index.html](https://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/retirement/ready/index.html). (Human Resources)

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**Suggestion:** Improve pedestrian crossing at intersection of Three Chopt Road & Towana/Campus Drive. Please submit safety improvements to the City of Richmond for the Three Chopt Rd/Towana crosswalk; as it is not a safe place for pedestrian crossing. I've seen pedestrians struggle to cross this intersection with near accidents. The street hash marks and small flashing yellow light bar above the pedestrian sign is not enough to make this pedestrian crossing safe considering the volume and speed of traffic at this intersection.

**Response:** The Chief of Police has a traffic/parking meeting with the Near West End Group and City councilman on 03/26, I can bring it up there. (Dave McCoy)

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**Question:** Why was the staff awards ceremony turned into a religious event by university chaplain Craig Kocher?

**Response:** Playfulness is a significant theme in all religious traditions as a means to help us enjoy life more fully and take ourselves less seriously. I welcomed the invitation to participate in the Employee Service Awards Ceremony as a way of sharing in a wonderful Spider community and encouraging that same spirit of playfulness and lightheartedness. At the reception after, and in the days following, I have had numerous conversations with colleagues of all backgrounds and from many parts of campus who shared that the closing of the ceremony was a highlight for them. The Chaplaincy staff team, made up of religious leaders from different traditions, said the same.

I’m grateful for the religious diversity of the University of Richmond and for the many ways the Chaplaincy has advanced a wide range of communities and programs for students, staff, and faculty of many faiths and no faith. Our religious and spiritual diversity and inclusion is and will always be a source of Spider Pride for me. (Craig Kocher)

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**Question:** This is in addition to the question around parental leave from the staff forum. I understand that faculty need to take the full semester rather than disrupt the student experience. However, I don't understand why staff should have less time to bond with children just because they don't have a semester-based job. Also, the eight weeks was recently made standard for state employees. So, while eight weeks is above the national average, it is average for the state. Several other universities in the state provide 12 weeks or more paid for staff, as well as paid leave for both parents. I hope this is something the benefits committee is considering.

**Response:** Awaiting response (Human Resources)
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**Idea:** I know that health insurance is quite an expense for the university. I also realize the university has tried many tactics to keep the staff/faculty premiums down. But the truth is that our health insurance is not cheap for our staff/faculty and it is not great. Each year we lose just a little bit more benefit and pay a bit more. The university does not see this as a priority and it should. I am suggesting that the university should make this a priority and either start paying even a larger portion of our health insurance or increase wages to take up the slack. Employees receive a raise and 6 months later, most of it is taken away due to rising health benefit costs. University needs to consider a cost of living raise to balance out rising costs.

**Response:** Awaiting response (Human Resources)

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**Idea:** The University needs to evaluate the current lack of lactation locations for new mothers. Mothers returning to work need to have lactation locations within a reasonable distance from their offices.

**Response:** Awaiting response (Human Resources)

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**Question:** Is there a better way to organize the award categories for the staff event? The event is such a special moment and opportunity to reflect and recognize the accomplishments of staff on-campus and the "administrative" award is so broad that I think it encompasses too large of a grouping of staff. This becomes a problem because people get missed and good work isn't recognized or celebrated

**Response:** Thank you for this feedback. It is true that there are many talented individuals within the administrative category. We think it is fair to have one award from each category. (Human Resources)

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**Question:** How does the event posted in 2/8 Spiderbytes for “faculty/staff of color lunch” foster a thriving and inclusive community? Because of the color of my skin, I am not invited to attend this discussion opportunity. The event itself says that its purpose is to ‘foster community’, but apparently not a community that I can be a part of. In a time where race/color/diversity is on the news or social media daily, this is a time where EVERYONE should come together. Rather, it’s excluding people because of their color. It’s the reverse of what the community, country, world need to do.

**Response:** Awaiting response (Human Resources)