

UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2017, Tyler Haynes Commons 305

Members Present: Shannon Best, Amy Gallagher, Slade Gormus, Beth Ann Howard, John Hurst, Jackson Knox, Ingrid Lasrado, Paul Lozo, Kirsten McKinney (Chair), Barb Michelson, Julie Neville, Heather Sadowski, Brittany Schaal, Cindy Sharp, Kate Sirc (Secretary), Tara Stewart, Cassandra Taylor-Anderson

Nonvoting Members Present: Paul Brockwell, Lynn Robertson, Carl Sorensen

Members Absent: Matt Barany (Vice Chair), Cindy Stearns, Harold Wainwright, Joseph Woodford

Kirsten called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed the guests in the gallery. Minutes were approved via the listserv and posted online prior to the meeting.

Strategic Plan Feedback Session (Dr. Ronald Crutcher and Dr. Jan French)

Dr. Crutcher began this session by thanking the group and the greater staff community for their feedback regarding the strategic plan. A goal of this year-long process was to be as inclusive as possible, and several staff members were a part of the steering committee and working groups.

The draft of the strategic plan is posted on the website. The values that were developed spell “SPIDER” which was important so that it was easy to remember and reference in one’s day-to-day work. Working groups wrote the goals and initiatives that will propel the University forward over the next 5 years based on the recommendations and feedback received. Dr. Crutcher added that our foundation is strong due to the success of the Richmond Promise.

Members of USAC were invited to give their feedback on the draft. The following is a summary of that discussion:

USAC representatives responded positively to the inclusion of sustainability and representation of alumni in the draft.

A USAC representative shared that while it was good the goals are defined, she has heard that some feel they are still too broad. Staff has expressed concern or uncertainty about how these goals are going to impact their day-to-day.

A USAC representative expressed concern on behalf of a constituent who hopes that our value of inclusiveness also includes different political viewpoints. Dr. Crutcher responded that we should be clearer in our definition of inclusiveness and they will work to incorporate language in the final version that spells this out (inclusive of different ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, genders, and political affiliations).

A USAC representative asked if there were plans for specific fundraising efforts related to new initiatives. Dr. Crutcher explained that yes, efforts will be geared towards academic initiatives, such as Spiders Helping Spiders, and perhaps a wellness initiative.

A USAC representative shared that she feels the plan still lacks inclusivity for the entire campus community, especially front line staff. She asked how the plan can better reflect where these individuals fit or the value the University places on their services. Dr. Crutcher responded by saying that first and foremost, we are an academic institution and the plan cannot do and be everything for everyone. Its purpose is to identify goals that will move us forward, and the initiatives support those goals. He added that while many people contribute to that end point, the

primary focus is our students. Dr. French added that there is enough space in goal #3 to include all front line staff (inclusive and thriving community). It may not be explicitly written, but that was the intent.

A USAC representative asked how the success of the plan will be assessed. Dr. Crutcher answered they will develop metrics to assess quantitatively. Dr. French added that the preamble of the plan states that goals and initiatives will be reviewed annually and these findings will be shared with the community.

Dr. Crutcher revisited an earlier point regarding how all our staff members fit into the plan. A goal of the plan is to ensure that we have a culture that prepares students for successful lives, and that culture carries over to the people who support the students. A USAC representative responded she still doesn't see where the value of all community members is explicitly stated in the plan. Dr. Crutcher explained the term "full participation" is meant to encompass this.

Dr. Crutcher discussed next steps and what happens once the plan is finalized. Initiatives will be delegated to implementation teams.

Kirsten asked if there was any more feedback from USAC, and if not we will move to feedback from the gallery.

A member of the gallery expressed she liked seeing "high impact practices" and alumni engagement. Dr. Crutcher defined "high impact practices" as a term for educational experiences for students that have been shown to be critically helpful with retention and higher academic performance. Examples include first year programs, study abroad experiences, senior capstone projects, SSIR. A goal of the plan is to ensure every student has the opportunity to participate in these programs.

A member of the gallery asked if other forms of communication were considered, other than writing, under the academic excellence goal. Dr. Crutcher agreed there is room to include other forms and make this initiative broader.

A member of the gallery asked Dr. Crutcher to elaborate on the faculty development opportunities. He responded by explaining the initiatives are purposely broad, and this will allow an implementation team to determine what types of programs this will include. He mentioned an example of using augmented reality in the classroom. Dr. French added that each school will have their own plan as well, that fit into the overall plan. The school-specific plan will better define what each academic area is doing.

Dr. Crutcher ended this session by sharing they will be back in April to ask USAC to endorse the final version of the strategic plan, before it goes to the Board of Trustees for approval. In the meantime, he invited everyone to continue giving their feedback using the online form available at strategicplan.richmond.edu/process/feedback.html.

Update on Retirement Plan (Carl Sorensen and Laura Dietrick)

Carl and Laura shared some important changes to the University retirement plan. A guide was mailed out but they are also holding presentations with TIAA representatives to give more information and answer questions.

Changes:

- Moving to a group contract as opposed to individual contracts
- Adding new fund options with lower costs and fees

- Adding a Roth contribution option, this option invests after-tax funds that are withdrawn tax-free after retirement
- Annuities are liquid if taken within 4 month of separation, or may be moved in 7 years as opposed to 10

In order to make these changes, guaranteed rates will go from 3% minimum to 1-3% minimum.

Carl explained these changes are being made because TIAA is moving all contracts to a group, so we are ahead of the game. A timeline is available on the HR website that outlines when changes will be made as well as the dates for TIAA presentations.

Carl opened it up for questions. Paul asked if staff elected paperless, should they have still received the mailing. Carl said yes, but the guide is also available on the HR website.

Denise Dwight Smith asked if staff can still make our own choices. Carl answered yes, but funds will be mapped to similar selections if you do nothing, or you may choose your own changes if you wish. All deadlines are listed in the timeline on the website.

Volunteer Committee Changes to Bylaws (Brittany Schaal)

Brittany proposed a change to the bylaws that eliminates the Volunteer and Engagement Committee and instead appoints a Coordinator in its place. Her proposal also defined the responsibilities of a Coordinator. Current committee members will be shifted to other areas, they may choose where their efforts are most needed. Jackson made a motion, Beth Ann seconded. Kirsten called for a vote and USAC unanimously voted in favor of the change.

Committee Updates

- **Executive** – Kirsten shared that she and Matt Barany have been asked by the Faculty Senate to participate in the annual Dean review, which this year is focusing on Dean Perdue and Dean Bagranoff. They will review the survey questions that will be sent to staff and faculty within the school, as well as a pool of “other” members of the community who work and interact with those schools. Kirsten also informed us that Cindy Stearns and Joseph Woodford are helping to develop a Dining Services version of PIT, a representative group for staff to discuss workplace concerns and questions. Lastly, Kirsten is still working on staff experts list.
- **Communications** – Amy shared that the committee met last month, and developed a new email blast for USAC members to send to constituents before meetings, in addition to Round-Ups afterwards. They are also investigating ways to broaden their communication efforts outside of email (printable flyers for example).
- **Elections** – Beth Ann Howard shared that nominations for executive board positions are due by the end of the month, current USAC members who are not rolling off are eligible. Currently, she has received one nomination per position. For general elections, nominations will be open from March 27-April 10. The committee will spend a couple weeks gathering acceptances and reviewing eligibility, then elections will be held May 15-May 31.
- **Affinity Groups** – Heather Sadowski gave an update on the caregiving group. It was determined the current group leaders will continue to program, but URWell Employee can provide support by promoting events in their newsletter. Kirsten asked for clarification on who ultimately “owns” the group. Carl explained HR doesn’t have the resources to program a full caregiving track, so they will provide some support but current leaders will continue to run the support group and invite speakers.
- **Volunteer and Engagement** – Brittany received a request from HR for USAC presence at the upcoming Wellness Fair on March 22 from 9am-4pm in the Alice Haynes Room.

The group agreed this would be a worthwhile endeavor and an email sign-up sheet will be sent to the group.

PIT (Plant Involvement Team)

Paul Lozo gave a summary of what was discussed at the last PIT meeting on January 25. Topics included low flow commodes, communication about MRSA, parking issues, and how Facilities will begin reporting and tracking work orders. Lastly, it was discussed how staffing for snow removal is determined.

Web Submissions

Five new web submissions and two previous submissions were reviewed and discussed. Submissions and responses are posted as a separate document on usac.richmond.edu/meetings.

What's Upcoming

Kirsten reviewed the next few months and some important items to keep in mind:

- March – Nomination process for Elections begin
- April – Final review of Strategic Plan and USAC endorsement
- May – Spiders in the Know, General Elections, Gelato Day (TBD)
- June – Year End Celebrations, transition to new USAC

Announcements

The floor was opened for announcements:

- The Women and Leadership Reading Group is hosting a **Women and Leadership in Higher Education Panel** on February 21 at 4:30pm in Jepson Hall 118. The panel will discuss challenges, achievements and issues related to the topic of gender and leadership in higher education.
- The annual **Staff Service Awards** will take place February 15 from 2-4pm in Camp Concert Hall.
- Alumni are encouraged to donate \$5 for **Battle for the Capital**, a giving competition with VCU. - \$5 to beat VCU.
- March 14 is **National Spider Day**, a day to celebrate and promote school spirit.

Closed Session

The Council entered into closed session from 2:21 to 2:41 p.m. No actions or votes were taken.

The Council adjourned at 2:41 p.m. The next meeting will be March 14, 2017.

Submitted by
Kate Sirc
Recording Secretary and Treasurer