



University Staff Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 13, 2024
Special Programs Building, Room 156

[Link](#)

In attendance:

Shani Buchholz, Meghan Harris, Tammy Alexander, Dafne Luna, Cort Schneider, Monica Smith, Darrell Tyler, Jason Cope, Jasleen Singh, Veronica Clinton, Haley Herrmann, Lauren Withrow, Aaliyah McLean, Aesha Uqdah, Stephanie Fillman, Melody Wilson, Jacqueline Carrell, Joy Heinzman, Maribel Street, Sarah Orr, Caitlin McBride, Iria Jones, Derek Miller

Mina Zatelli, Cassie Price, Jess Oliver, John Shines, Jennifer Phillips, Matt Dewald, Mary Wheaton, Justin Woodson, Holly Blevins, Monica Booker, Amanda Boyd, Holly Blevins, Mirinda McCants, Erica Modeste, Ashley Blount, Carole Yeatts, Wendy Sheppard, Kirstin Stacia

1. Call to Order by Carole Yeatts at 1:01 pm.
2. Introduction of Board and committee announcements:
 - Jess Oliver - Benefits Committee Representative
 - Amanda Boyd – Food Service Involvement Team (FSIT) Representative
 - John Shines – Plant Involvement Team (PIT) Representative
 - Miriam Blackmon - P&P Representative
 - Dr. Cort Schneider – Faculty Senate Liaison
 - Dr. Shannon Jones - the Faculty Representative to USAC

The following are the Committees and their members, each serving a one-year term.

Communications Committee:

Kolby Ferguson
Meghan Gill
Erin Lowery
Mary Wheaton

Elections Committee:

Holly Blevins
Monica Booker
Matt Dewald

Volunteer and Engagement Committee:

Ashley Blount
Mirinda McCants
Jennifer Phillips
Julia Trachtenberg
Justin Woodson
Mina Zatelli

3. Call for invitations of invitees to meetings and breakfasts. Geraldine Sullivan has agreed to present at USAC meeting in October. Carole called for ideas for speakers and breakfast hosts. There is a plan for Monica Smith (VP of Inclusion and Belonging) to appear in the future.

Possible speakers were suggested:

Upen Malani – New Executive Director of Dining Services
Sr. Women’s Administrator DEI and Deputy Athletic Director – LaRee Sugg

- Carole Yeatts introduced the draft goals and paper copies were distributed. There was a discussion and adoption of the goals.
 1. First, Carole introduced the possible breakout of Volunteer and Engagement committee into two separate committees, given there are six members and significant efforts as listed in the draft goals. Some of the initiatives are discussed such as campus tours given by staff. (In closed session, the committees were split.)
 2. Enhance the visibility of USAC to be seen as a conduit of information, voice for all staff, and leader in community efforts – ensure that staff know who their representative is.
 3. Solidify processes and institutional knowledge within USAC – Elections committee to review board structure to ensure representation; right-sized according to staff levels

Some questions were raised about the initiatives:

Ashley suggested adding a note for new staff members with the swag saying that the flyer was not in the envelope.

Jennifer Phillips suggested that the reps write the notes for the staff members that they represent.

Note – each piece of swag has a USAC flyer sent with it in the envelope. Wendy Sheppard suggests putting the USAC flyer in the water bottle to avoid it being separated in the envelope.

Mary Wheaton suggested Item 2 – c) change USAC board to “Council”.

A question was raised by Erica Modeste if everyone knows who their representative is and what USAC is.

Carole responded that USAC has no true authority, but is a representative/advisory council.

Wendy agreed we need to do a better job of representing the departments and divisions that have changed – USAC needs to be changed to represent the changes that have occurred over time.

As part of the communication improvements, we should do a better job of identifying who represents who – who to reach out to for questions instead of web submissions.

Also, examine the Website to see if there are opportunities to make USAC more visible and easier to use.

Carole responded that because we serve 3-year terms, some people may not have participated in an election and people do not know who represents them.

Jennifer Phillips made a motion to accept the goals, seconded by John Shines.

Jess Oliver announced the first Benefits meeting on Thursday.

John Shines had no announcements from the Facilities Committee.

1:35 Web Subs were discussed.

Wendy Sheppard read a summary of the Web submissions and the responses from HR.

Idea/Question: *When is HR conducting exit interviews for staff departing the University?*

Rationale/Reason: *My small department has lost 2 employees in the last 2 months. One for retirement and one for another opportunity. I was surprised that neither was asked to conduct an exit interview with HR, but only met with our supervisor. This will be the third time the position has been posted in the last 3 years, and there are some internal issues that neither would voice to our supervisor.*

Response:

The Office of Human Resources offers every departing employee the opportunity to participate in an exit survey and an exit interview. As part of the checklist sent during their offboarding, we give departing employees the option to complete a survey or have an in-person meeting with their HR Business Partner. The gathered information is shared with department leadership unless the individual requests confidentiality. In cases where patterns emerge, feedback is communicated to leaders to help address any systemic issues. Not all employees take the opportunity to participate.

Mary Wheaton asked the question if the policies or opportunities for exit interviews are not being used or if people do not know about them. Wendy said that HR said that many people do not take advantage of the option for an exit interview.

Meghan Gill said that she recently left a different employer and, depending on the timing, the employee may not have had the time to do an exit interview.

Jennifer Phillips said that within 24 hours of submitting a letter of resignation, an email should be received from HR for exit procedures that gives the option for an exit interview; and reminds that the HR Business partner is there as a resource before the staff member has reached the

point where they want to leave, and the staff member should not wait until the exit interview to share issues.

Matt DeWald said that possibly that exit interviews were confidential and that is why someone did not know about them and whether or not they were done.

Jennifer Philips and Wendy Sheppard agreed that HR is trying to improve the process.

Second Web Submission – Workday role changes and communication:

Idea/ Question:

With the Workday transition imminent, there have been hints of changes to job descriptions and financial responsibilities within departments. There are rumors of all financial-type staff reporting to OPB, not their current department heads. What are the details of these changes and when will they be communicated to the people they affect? With recent staff resignations, it appears that some staff know what is going on and some do not. Will UR leadership communicate about these changes to alleviate some of the anxiety caused by the lack of transparency and understanding of upcoming changes?

Rationale/Reason:

For a successful transition to Workday, there needs to be buy-in at all levels of the organization. Withholding key information does not translate into a successful transition but harbors feelings of unease and resentment. That is not the norm for UR.

Response: *We anticipate that the transition to Workday will modify responsibilities/duties for those who have Divisional or School fiscal management responsibilities. Those changes will result from the enhanced capacity of Workday Finance and will be coordinated and led by both the Office of the Controller and the Office of Planning and Budget and are an important aspect of the transition from Banner to Workday.*

As part of the FY 25 budget development process, which includes significant participation of the Planning & Priorities Committee, a position was added within the Office of Planning & Budget to focus on the University's necessarily increasing expenditures and investments in Information Technology Systems to support our mission. Similarly, last year we added a position to support the Provost's Office portfolio.

While future modifications are always possible, at this time, the University has communicated any planned changes of responsibilities/reporting lines to impacted individuals, schools, and divisions as we approach the new Academic Year.

Wendy Sheppard said that she understands concerns and there should be comfort in that when you need to know you will know, and recognizes the anxiety that change can bring.

Mirinda McCants suggested that a Workday rep, Julie Farmer, be one of the speakers for USAC meetings to answer questions. Workday October Town Halls will be announced soon.

Workday Training is planned closer to when it is going to be used.

Mina Zatelli suggests that it should be considered to have someone speak about Workday after the processes are in place because the system is being tested and more communication about changes will be coming out.

Mirinda McCants - Process change and application; send out Workday demo for application and the process changes are different and would need to be communicated.

Jennifer Phillips reminded that several Change Ambassador Network members on USAC.

4. Carole Yeatts shared her email and encouraged staff members at large to join committees;
5. The open session was concluded at 1:50 pm, and the group broke out into committee groups for the closed session.