



University Staff Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Tyler Haynes Commons, Room 305

[Zoom Link](#)

In attendance:

Geraldine Sullivan, Ilana Lavine, Theran Fisher, Jillian Zemp, Julia Trachtenberg, Cort Schneider, Mary Wheaton, Upen Malani, Miriam Blackmon, Holly Blevins, Justin Woodson, Mina Zatelli, Amanda Boyd, Mirinda McCants, Derek Miller, Carole Yeats, Wendy Sheppard, Kirstin Stacia, Sandy Turnage, Louise Janes, Andrea Vest, Bill Galaspie, Brittany Schaal, Ashley Buffay, Emily McGlamery, Emily Janto, Heather Ervin, Erin Lowery, Latrina Lemon, Monica Booker, Lauren Withrow, Leslie Stevenson, John Shines, Kolby Ferguson, Melissa Joyce-Rosen, Caitlin McBride, Meghan Harris, Megan Gill, Oliva Wilkinson, Emily Phaup, Melissa Ailsworth, Elisabeth Donaldson – Advancement Rep, Iria Jones, Jennifer Phillips, Joy Heinzman, LeeAnn Neeley, Matt Dewald,

1. The meeting is called to order at 1:00 by Carole Yeatts.

Welcome by Carole. She introduced CHRO Geraldine Sullivan who will review the results of the Great Colleges to Work For Survey.

2. CHRO Geraldine Sullivan noted that the last time the survey was done was 2018. Since then, there has been new leadership: President, Provost, HR, DEI, etc. The survey has 12 themes with 70 questions. The survey was open for a three-week period and had a 63% response rate.

See the link for the survey results and summary. [2024 Engagement Survey Summary](#)

Points to note:

- *The extra custom questions were focused on Inclusion and Belonging.*
- *UR received Honor Roll Designation.*
- *Five themes stood out as strong: 1) Mission and Pride, 2) Faculty and Staff Well-being, 3) Job Satisfaction and Support, 4) Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, 5) Confidence in Senior Leadership.*
- *Three themes for potential opportunities for improvement: 1) Performance Management, 2) Collaboration, 3) Communication.*
- *Of 216 peer colleges UR was in the top 10%.*
- *Most improved areas since 2018: 1) Performance management up 18%, 2) Regularly recognized by contributions up 14%, 3) Recognition and awards up 10%*
- *Cort Schneider asked: The results show the least satisfaction among non-exempt employees. Was it the same as 2018 or was there a shift? The response is that prior institutions also saw lower numbers, which tends to be an industry norm, with no job-family benchmark.*
- *Emily Phaup asked: For the top twelve areas, could there be a Covid skew on communication with management? The response is that performance management had 5 questions, and looked at data for peers for areas that went up and down; peers increased as well, but UR had more drastic increases. Flexibility came up a lot in the 2018 survey which was pre-pandemic. The UR decrease in several categories was consistent with our peers.*

- Geraldine commented that UR Engaged has hopefully contributed to improved numbers with communication, and that Work Day may positively affect it since the processes are changing.
- *Upen Malani asked in what category were the 2018 special questions.* The category was not identified, but there were about 7 custom questions that did not match back to 2018.
- *Staff asked if the meeting participants would have access to the survey results.* The Deans will be sharing information locally with their staff and faculty.
- *Mirinda McCants asked: How will leadership use these results to work on their areas for improvement?* Geraldine responded that division leaders have been asked to review and share their data and choose one thing that they can work on.

3. Geraldine responded to questions posed before the meeting via the staff Qualtrics survey:

- *Question: Why was the annual raise so low this year?*

Response: In preparation for the decision-making about the annual merit, HR looks at data from World At Work and Mercer SHRM and use their data points. They look at budgetary data, and changes in the staff landscape. During the budget process, there were 2-5 FTE budget requests for new positions for several schools, 12-18 new positions were approved. They look at how tuition is growing, need to be fiscally responsible, 3-3.5% was typical from the market, UR was 3.25%, Mercer data just came in today's Top Story- 205 Salary Projections are consistent with 2024. Basically, they use many data points to inform the merit % decision.

Derek Miller commented that satisfaction with pay was down across the board, and the dissatisfaction may be more market-wide.

- *Question: Overall it seems like employees on campus like working here, but do not feel like compensation is up to par. One thing that is very true is that we are bringing in people at much higher rates than people currently working here, for the exact same role/title which is causing disgruntled employees and causing people to look for other opportunities. How do we plan to make pay more equitable and retain top talent who have been here for years and no longer feel valued?*

Response: When new hires are made, HR looks at the job description against the market. The compensation team works with the hiring team to determine the grade and where they will fall in the range; internal equity is considered and new hires can be in any part of the grade range.

Every year the job families are pulled and data reviewed for adjustments – in certain pockets depending on market information – analysis is done.

- *Mirinda McCants asked if the analysis is done on a yearly basis?* The response is that in preparation for the Board of Trustees, market data is compiled for adjustments and fluidity.
- *Kirstin Stacia asked about the fact that staff are expected to advocate for themselves if their position responsibilities have changed. There is no set time-period for job description reviews or regrading. Some supervisors are not responsive to requests for this. Is it possible to build in a guideline for when positions should be reviewed instead of putting all of the burden on staff to advocate for themselves and to convince their supervisors and HR that it needs to be done?*

Response: Leaders and managers should be reviewing positions regularly and taking things to the compensation team, but if that doesn't happen, then staff should self-advocate for the manager and

compensation team to do it. HR would like to have a more standard review cycle for job descriptions. There is currently nothing in place, but that should be considered by HR. Geraldine is a fan of a regular cycle for position description reviews.

- *Derek Miller asked the question about the fact that salary information gathered may not reflect true financial spending power in different markets which may create a disadvantage for previously hired employees as markets vary in their financial status.*

Response – Mercer and other companies do take into account market conditions.

Upen Malani commented that inflation and market conditions are being considered.

Derek commented that there may be drastic changes due to shifting market, or due to technology changes over time.

Geraldine noted that when new staff are being brought in, the compensation team looks at internal status for current employees, as well.

- *Mary Wheaton asked if local real estate conditions are considered when deciding compensation.*

The response is that HR is not looking at local rental/real estate market conditions, but they use several companies and labor stats. Dave Hale's office looks at budgetary constraints, too.

- *The question was asked if the job review process be a part of the annual review process.*

Geraldine responded that it could be considered as they look at the processes after the Workday integration.

- *Someone asked if Student employees are included in this survey.*

The answer is no because students are surveyed about their work experience separately; students are surveyed in the spring and there is a grad survey done as well.

- *Melissa Joyce-Rosen asked about new hires with extensive experience who are hired but not given additional vacation than current staff.*

Response: A full benefit review was done and staff were given 2 days of vacation less than the median for peer institutions; however, staff were given one more, additional holiday than the median. This is on HR's radar.

- *Miriam Blackmon asked if UR sets goals for surveys such as this.*

Response: Since UR is on the Honor Roll, we want to keep that status. Overall, these are great scores and there are lots to be proud of in the results. Geraldine reinforced that we make the culture together and all should be proud of these results.

- *The question was asked if Geraldine thought that the Continuum of Contribution could be more transparent.*

Response: HR has not yet heard of it being a pain point. There could have been more clarity in the past with previous ratings. The UR engaged program was a result of focus groups. The performance management 18% increase is good, but still one of the lowest scoring areas.

It was asked if the disappointment in compensation on the survey was part of the issue with this sliding scale which is not labeled at all.

Emily Phaup commented that the Goal setting part of UR Engaged is disconnected, and there is no clear connection between the Continuum of Contribution and the Goal Setting.

Cort Schneider commented that the sliding scale is not helpful from an accessibility standpoint. It lacks numbers and visual acuity.

Mary Wheaton commented that the number rating is not labeled and can be very subjective.

Response: The sentiment was heard from the Managers; they would like more definition around the sliding scale.

Geraldine ended her presentation at 1:50.

4. Carole reminded everyone about the Workday Town Halls on Thursday.
5. Committee Reports:
 - Carole asked for approval for the meeting minutes from the last meeting. Miriam Blackmon made a motion to approve the minutes and Mina Zatelli seconded the motion.
 - P&P report: Miriam Blackmon shared that they had first meeting, but overall no new information to share yet.
 - Faculty Senate: Cort Schneider shared that the first meeting is Oct 18th.
 - PIT: John Shines shared that there was no update.
 - FIT: Amanda Boyd shared that communication is still an issue; sharing information via the digital screens and email is not enough. There is a definite disconnect with dining staff, and they are not getting information, for example, not many knew about the Octoberfest. HR is holding a separate meeting for Dining Services for benefits because the staff may not be able to attend the Benefits There may be more internal solution, and hopefully having Workday on phones may help this ongoing problem.
 - Kirstin Stacia brought up the lack of lighting in the back of HDC issue – it was a Web Submission and will be addressed in the next meeting.
 - Benefits Committee : Jess Oliver said that medical benefits will be being finalized next week. Staff are reminded to attend the Benefits Fair and to sign up for the mammogram truck.
 - Communications Committee: Mary Wheaton updated that USAC is active on Socials FB and Instagram. They are planning to post Representative spotlights and need responses turned in to the Qualtrics survey. Wendy Sheppard asked for the survey to be resent. The committee had the print shop make flyers with QR code for hanging in buildings. They are targeting areas with staff traffic. They have asked for volunteers to put up the flyers where colleagues gather. Carole Yeatts pointed out that this aligns with our goals to better communicate with more staff.
 - Elections Committee: Holly Blevins is in person and Monica Booker and Matt Dewald are on Zoom and the committee will review the number of staff with the representation. USAC requested the number of staff per department on campus. Geraldine Sullivan sent the information quickly, so the review is the next step. It is noted that there are currently 60 job postings that may affect the elections numbers and representation.

- Volunteer Committee: Justin Woodson announced that the Benefits Fairs on Oct. 31st and Nov. 8th will need volunteers to staff the USAC table.
- Events Committee: Ashley Blount announced that the first USAC luncheon will be scheduled soon. The committee is meeting at the end of today's meeting.
- Carole announced the Breakfast with Dave Hale sponsored by USAC on Oct. 29th for 25-30 attendees. Questions will be submitted in advance.
- Elizabeth Donaldson, the new Advancement Representative was introduced. She has been with UR for ten years. She is looking forward to getting out of her bubble and working with others on campus.

6. 2:05 Web Submissions were presented by Wendy Sheppard:

Idea/Question: *Every evening when I leave, whether it be at 5 or 5:20, there is a line of cars trying to pull out from UR Drive to River Road. Is it possible to have our police direct traffic from 5:05-5:20? If not ours, Henrico Police?*

Rationale/Reason: *Every evening when I leave, whether it be at 5 or 5:20, there is a line of cars trying to pull out from UR Drive to River Road. It's backed up to where the Police Department is and takes a long time to wait your turn to pull out - sometimes 10 minutes or so. Cars often get tired of waiting and will make a U-Turn in the middle of the road to find another exit (College Road). I have often watched people feel the pressure to pull out just to keep the line moving in an unsafe manner and I have watched the coming cars have to quickly brake due to one pulling out too quickly so not to run into them. Might there be any chance the police could come to River Road to direct traffic for 15 minutes in the evenings (5:05 - 5:20)? It takes 24 minutes to get to work but 50 to get home due to this back up that could easily be prevented after a long day's work. I, and I'm sure others, would greatly appreciate any assistance that could be provided. ! Thank You!*

Response: *URPD will respond to assist with traffic control if there was some type of obstruction such as an accident in the immediate area of this intersection.*

However, we are not able to provide a daily traffic control plan at this intersection. I would suggest a few extra minutes to use the College Road entrance or Campus Drive entrance.

- Comments: Cort Schneider confirmed that this is on the campus plan radar. They are looking at it seriously because many students drive to campus and traffic flow is a concern that the Campus Plan is considering.
- Mary Wheaton pointed out that there was a SpiderByte about it.
- Wendy Sheppard confirmed that a traffic-calming effort on campus is happening in the near future.
- Carole Yeatts reminded staff that URPD cannot go into River Road to stop traffic for daily departure, only for special events.

Idea/Question: *Can we allow all students (part-time, continuing studies, etc) have access to TimelyCare instead of just full-time students?*

Rationale/Reason: *Every student, no matter what their registration status is, should be able to receive mental health care provided at the university.*

Response: *Administration determined that they would replicate accessibility for services so those who are full-time have access to all support services as they pay per student (including Timely Care). I have attached a list of low-cost counseling options to this email. We will advocate for this when the contract is up for renewal (which is in three years).*

- Timely Care for Part-time students – UR Leadership is revisiting this issue and the current contract. It will be addressed seriously. Students who don't qualify for Timely Care are provided low-cost alternative which can be accessed by staff to disseminate the information (see below). Links can be provided via email. Holly Blevins submitted the question about the student and wanted to make sure that the students are taken care of and concerns are addressed.
- Carole Yeatts confirmed that while this is a student not staff issue, USAC and staff can be a conduit of information to get the student help.
- Cort Schneider commented that as part of the Threat Assessment Team, if the student is legitimately at risk, an online form can be completed to assess and help the student. Here is the link [Threat Assessment Form](#). The Threat Assessment form is a great way to pass on the information and the issue is elevated appropriately.
- Kirstin Stacia commented that one of USAC's roles can be to make sure staff are empowered to get assistance for students either through the Threat Assessment Team or the low-cost options.

Resources:

Calming Wind Counseling

<https://www.calmingwindcounseling.com/>

804-416-5052

- Offers free therapy sessions with their counseling residents.
- Clients have to be screened in advance and approved.
- Clients can call to schedule or use this link <https://calmingwind.clientsecure.me/> however, to confirm availability of free services it is probably best to call

New Life Journey

<https://www.newlifejourneyva.com/>

804-874-9929

- Residents provide \$40 sessions
- Free sessions with Interns soon (in training for master's degrees) *cannot take complex cases*
- Contact Di Hayes, LPC regarding potentially meeting with an intern: 804-874-9929

Commonwealth Catholic Charities

<https://www.cccofva.org/>

804-545-5907

- \$35 flat rate for all sessions
- No insurance

Health in Mind

<https://www.healthinmind.net/>

804-277-9355

- Living Beyond Anxiety group has reduced cost
- Therapy for Black dudes (call to confirm if it's currently running) 8-10 free sessions
- Individual with residents-\$45
- Individual with interns-\$25
- *see rate sheet in box

Health Brigade

<https://www.healthbrigade.org/>

804-358-6343

- If you meet certain criteria you can use their resources
 - If you have NO insurance of any kind
 - Not eligible for Medicare B, C, D; Medicaid, or Veterans Benefits
 - Lived in services area for at least 6 mo *
 - Income is 139-200% below Federal Poverty Line *
 - * see link for details on service areas and the income chart
<https://www.healthbrigade.org/patients-and-clients/eligibilityforservice/>
- HIV, Hep C, STI testing is always free: 804-358-6343 dpryor@healthbrigade.org
- PrEP is available for anyone who wants it. Must be screened but don't have to meet the above criteria: 804-533-2796 latilano@healthbrigade.org

Center for Psychological Services and Development (CPSD)

<https://cpsd.vcu.edu/>

804-828-8069

- **Apply for services:** <https://cpsd.vcu.edu/apply/>
- Individual
- Group: For Us By Us, a process group for Black clients led by Black clinicians \$10 a session, anytime a seat is available (max 8 per meeting) Wednesday evenings from 6 - 7:30 p.m. **Teletherapy group is accepting new members.** [Apply](#) now and select 'Group Therapy.'

Idea/Question: At the monthly FIT meeting it was brought up several times that it is very dark behind HDC, can lights be installed?

Rationale/Reason: In the winter it is very dark and scary and the am staff have to walk around to the front. Plus, there are animals that hang around like peacocks, raccoons, deer and snakes.

Response: Facilities has been contacted and is looking into solutions.

No further discussion about this submission.

7. The Open Session concluded at 2:20 pm.

Closed Session Notes:

- Carole Yeatts announced the lunch with the Faculty Senate and USAC Board on Friday, October 25th. The format will be to mix faculty and staff with discussion starter questions on each table. The lunch will be provided by the Provost's office. Please remember to submit your lunch choice.
- There was no additional discussion about web submissions in closed session.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.