

**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, racoons, deer and snakes.

Thank you for sharing your concern about lighting near the HDC. The safety and security of our campus community is a top priority, and our Facilities and Public Safety teams have already taken steps to address this issue:

- **Replaced Lighting:** A bulb in the parking lot that was out has been replaced.
- **New Lighting Installed:** Three additional wall pack lights have been installed at the back of HDC.
- **Further Assessment Planned:** We'll also evaluate if adding another light on the corner of Gray Court would be helpful.

With the recent time change, please be cautious about using unlit footpaths through wooded areas, as the likelihood of falls and trips greatly increases in the dark.

If you have additional concerns about campus lighting or safety, staff members should not hesitate to contact URPD or Facilities directly.

*After following up with several dining staff members, the consensus is that if a flood light could be added to the shed out back pointed towards the walkway will solve the issue.*

From URPD/Facilities: 4 lights within 20 yards of the shed, 1 directly in front, and 3 on the pathway, with 1 directly behind the shed have been put up. Please let us know if this is not sufficient.



**Don't wait to report safety issues through web subs – report to URPD and they can help or direct you to the best way to move forward to address the issue.**

**Idea/Question:** How do our PTO benefits for non-exempt staff compare to our peer schools? And, how do we have flexibility in an unfair practice of allowing five additional days for those who have a spouse with health insurance and opting for theirs instead? And no flexibility to increase number of days for those coming to UR with far more days from previous employers and based on years of experience?

As part of extending an offer to new hires, the recruiter reviews benefits with candidates to ensure they can make an informed decision based on the total rewards package (compensation and comprehensive benefit offerings). Our time off offerings are part of our benefits package and include vacation, sick time, holidays, and more. A recent benchmarking survey of peers within higher ed and non-higher ed shows that our overall time off benefits are competitive.

We are pleased that beginning in 2025 we will be adding two floating holidays to the University's benefit package. Floating holidays add to the total number of days employees will have available in any given year, and offer added flexibility for religious holidays, personal observances, family birthdays, volunteering, or well-being needs.

Employers typically provide health insurance as part of an employee benefits package. We allow employees to opt out of health coverage if they have alternative health insurance, such as through a spouse, a parent (for younger employees), or a government plan like Medicaid. We require employees to sign a waiver certifying that they have alternative coverage. This is a practice in place to try to control the total cost of health insurance for the University and all employees. When we can find ways to contain costs, it benefits all our employees who participate in the insurance programs.

**Idea/Question:** Consideration of Leave Policy Changes

**Rationale/Reason:** Currently, our separation of sick and vacation leave does not align with contemporary HR best practices. Many organizations have shifted towards a one-type PTO system, allowing employees greater flexibility and autonomy in managing their accrued time off. This approach not only empowers staff to make informed decisions about their well-earned leave, but also promotes a healthier work-life balance. Additionally, the current policy's stipulation that maxing out sick days necessitates the use of two sick days to equal one vacation day is inequitable. Hours accrued should remain hours accrued, regardless of their classification.

In a recent benchmark survey that the University conducted all but one of our peer higher education institutions had a traditional sick and vacation plan, only one had a PTO program.

There are pros and cons to each approach. Research shows that in cases where PTO is offered, it can have unintended consequences such as:

- In a traditional system, sick leave is specifically designated for health-related issues, while vacation time is for personal enjoyment. A PTO program blurs these lines, which may make it difficult for employees to manage their time off effectively, especially if they are unsure how much time they should reserve for illness versus leisure.
- Employees may feel pressured to save their PTO for vacations or personal time, leading them to come to work when they are sick. This can negatively impact their health and the health of their coworkers, as contagious illnesses may spread in the workplace.
- Employees may worry about using their PTO in the event an unexpected illness arises. This can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. In contrast, traditional sick leave and vacation policies may encourage employees to take necessary breaks for their well-being.

**Idea/Question:** Why doesn't the university increase the \$500 dollar medical waiver that they give to people who don't use the university's health care plans?

**Rationale/Reason:** I only wonder this because now the university gives employees at least a \$1000 dollars towards their HSA accounts if they have the high deductible plan.

Employers typically provide health insurance as part of an employee benefits package. We allow employees to opt out of health coverage if they have alternative health insurance, such as through a spouse, a parent (for younger employees), or a government plan like Medicaid. We require employees to sign a waiver certifying that they have alternative coverage. This is a practice in place to try to control the total cost of health insurance. When we can find ways to contain costs, it benefits all of our employees who participate in the insurance programs. Employees can choose between \$500 or five vacation days. Most employees who waive choose five vacation days.

Benefits consultant – is \$500 enough of a benefit anymore??? HR will look into this issue at some point

**Idea/Question:** Why is UR charging for a CPR course when it is about the well-being of our community and possibly saving the life of a student or coworker? This should be a free course like stop the bleed. It doesn't make sense that an institution like UR should charge employees for this life saving training.

**Rationale/Reason:** Spiderbytes notification: \$30 fee for certification

The recent CPR course advertised in Spiderbytes was a **certification-specific class** sponsored by the student-led UREMS (University of Richmond Emergency Medical Services) volunteer group. The \$30 fee covers the cost of certification through an accredited organization, such as the Red Cross, which is standard for courses requiring certification for roles like lifeguards or other positions with specific CPR requirements.

For those interested in CPR skills without formal certification, UREMS and other campus organizations regularly offer **non-certification training sessions for free**. These sessions provide hands-on learning at no cost and are an excellent resource for the broader community.

Offering certification on campus is a way to provide a convenient, close-to-home option for students, faculty, and staff who may need this credential.

Waiting for responses:

**Idea/Question:**

I am writing to urge you to consider incorporating multiple language options in the university's ordering machines and applications, as this change would significantly enhance accessibility and inclusivity for our diverse campus population.

**Rationale/Reason:**

I was using one of your touch-screen menus and noticed that UR workers could not access the menus as there are no language options. With a growing number of international individuals from various linguistic backgrounds, offering multiple languages would not only improve the user experience but also demonstrate the university's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment. Multiple language options could be provided in the following ways:

- **Language Selection Menu:** Before entering the ordering section, provide a language selection option, allowing users to choose their preferred language before they begin ordering.
- **Voice Recognition:** I am aware that individuals may not have the literacy skills to access text. Voice recognition may therefore be a useful option to include. This will also be key for individuals with visual impairments.

By providing these options, we can alleviate barriers that non-English speakers often face, ensuring they can fully engage with campus facilities and services without confusion or frustration.

This initiative would not only promote equitable access to resources but also strengthen the sense of community on campus, reflecting a true commitment to diversity that aligns with our university's values.

**Idea/Question**

Can we have an option for health insurance or receive a stipend for health insurance for part-time workers (who work >1000 hours a year)?

**Rationale /Reason**

Other big companies/organizations offer health insurance.