University Staff Advisory Council Meeting  
March 10, 2015  
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
THC 305

The meeting was called to order by Maya Vincelli, USAC Chair, at 1:11 p.m.

Members Present: Katie Bell, Patrick Benner, Paul Brockwell, Mickie Campos, Tracy Cassalia, Stephanie Charles, Michele Cox, Gina Flanagan, Debbie Hardy, Iria Jones, Susan Kirby, Ebony Kirkland, Jackson Knox, Roger Mancastroppa, Cynthia McMillan, Tim Meacham, Andi Minor, Tom Parfitt, Bob Plymale, Nancy Propst, Bianca Spurlock, Marti Tomlin, Maya Vincelli

Non-Voting Attendees: Carl Sorensen

Members Absent: Du’Neika Easley, Lynn Robertson

Announcements

• USAC will be assisting staff members complete the Great Colleges to Work for Survey. USAC volunteers are needed. The survey will be conducted March 23-April 6. The Boatwright Computer Classroom on Basement Level 2 has been reserved for the following dates and times:

  Friday, March 27, 2 – 4 p.m.

  Monday, March 30, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Follow up on closed session questions

• Question regarding names not being given when calling the Solutions Center  
  - Pending

• Knowing who is responsible for what role when calling the Solutions Center  
  - Although the Solutions Center should be able to answer 80% or your questions, you should be able to be directed to the proper place if the center cannot answer your question.

• Funeral Leave  
  - The policy can be explored for any possible changes

• How HR will be handling raise letters  
  - Most employees will receive an email, except Facilities and Dining Services who will be receiving a paper copy. Information dissemination is dependent on department structure

• Problems January prescription coverage  
  - Call the HR Solutions Center for benefit issues or call Anthem
Web Submissions

- Question: Has the University/Information Services ever considered utilizing an internal instant messaging (IM) system? Considering how broad the campus is, just seems like a nice tool to have at our disposal. Sometimes you don’t want to call or email… but a quick IM can get the job done. I have used this at past companies and it was a nice feature. People don’t have to use it, if they don’t like it… don’t turn it on. But would be nice. Just an idea!

-Response: 1. IM is also a component of another popular communications acronym – Unified Messaging (or UM or UC for Unified Communications…) We have been evaluating UM platforms for some time. We’ve looked at solutions that more closely aligned with our campus telephony solution, solutions associated more closely with our email solution (MS Exchange) and solutions from other major communications/networking providers like Citrix and Cisco (also our primary network vendor), and yet another option that we could pursue would be something cloud based. All propose basically the same thing; a tighter/seamless integration of your various communications tools – phone, email, mobile device connectivity, and IM capabilities to include audio, video, chat functionality… At the enterprise level, this would be a pretty big undertaking, and while we are projecting the possibility of deploying something like this in the future, we haven’t made any final decisions on a direction, specific timeframe, or submitted a budget request….

2. Even as we have considered a true “enterprise” solution, the world around us has changed, and now our abilities to connect (or IM) with business or personal contact points anytime, anywhere, can be as simple as choosing from a variety of free apps. It is not required that a central IS organization provide you with a tool like that; the average consumer or worker has a whole slew of communications/collaborative tools to choose from. As coworkers, if you and I wish to “chat” it is pretty easy for us to do, as long as we choose to use the same tool (Facetime, Google, Skype, etc.) – most are free, but even the premium services are pretty cheap.

3. Bullet 2 provides a nice transition into my point 3… Should IS define a campus wide IM strategy, or should we just support the use of your own preferred tool. We’ve seen this play out in several ways over the last several (or more) years. Cell phones, PDAs/Tablets, and even computer preferences have become more consumer driven choices, not something so tightly controlled by a central IS department. I think that most schools by now have adapted to the growth of Macs on their campuses, but it doesn’t come without occasional complications. One way in which those complications may show up is with the use of “enterprise wide”
applications. Macs and PCs don’t always work the same way with an enterprise app. We would certainly want to be sure that we chose a solution that was OS agnostic! These same compatibility issues play out in the mobile device world as well – iOS versus Android, versus Windows devices.

4. Security is also important, and that will often drive our decisions about what kinds of products to support, or how to scale those services on campus. IM has often showed up in tech news as having some security concerns. I’m not saying that we couldn’t choose a solution that would meet our security requirements, but it is something that we definitely consider strongly before rolling out, or announcing support for an enterprise solution.

IM can be an invasive tool... As long as each user is comfortable with their status being available to others, that’s fine; but in reality, we have many users on campus that don’t like the fact that people can see and book available time on their calendar. To the point made in the submittal, if you don’t want to use it, you don’t have to. I guess people tend to want to be connected when they want, but then disconnected when they want...

Affinity Groups

- USAC Affinity Groups will be hosting a table at the UR Wellness Fair March 24.
- Spring Break at the Cellar will be held Thursday, March 12 4:30pm-6pm.
- For Affinity Group events please visit https://usac.richmond.edu/affinity-groups/index.html.

Voting

- Look for more information in Spiderbytes regarding nominations for USAC voting

USAC Closed Session

Hearing no other announcements, Maya adjourned the regular meeting at 2:31pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Ebony Kirkland, USAC Secretary