

Web Submissions – May 2024

Idea/Question: The general idea is to add bird-friendly window treatments to large windows on campus to prevent unnecessary bird collisions that result in injury and death. Cornell University recently launched a project to retrofit windows on campus to reduce bird casualties. A group of staff, alumni, students, and volunteers came together to complete the work. I propose that UR studies the Cornell project to determine if a similar project is feasible here at Richmond.

Rationale/Reason: Many of my colleagues are concerned as we frequently witness birds hitting our office windows. We have added stickers on the windows for visual distraction, but it still happens. "Windows, buildings and other structures are major risks to birds, with an estimated 1 billion birds colliding with buildings and windows annually in the U.S. and Canada alone. After habitat loss and cats, windows are the third largest human-caused source of mortality for birds." - Krishna Ramanujan, Cornell Chronicle Cornell has provided a proof of concept that is cost-effective and builds community around care and concern for wildlife. With our commitment to sustainability, community engagement, and well-being, an effort like this supports our values and strategic plan. Sources and relevant information:

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2023/05/group-works-make-campus-windows-bird-friendly>

Response: Still waiting on response, to be discussed more in June Meeting

Idea/Question: Allow staff to utilize the TLC's multimedia equipment in the summer months, when use by faculty and students is likely much lower.

Rationale/Reason: I just became aware that University staff members are no longer able to use the TLC's multimedia equipment. Setting aside the fact that policies like this make University staff feel like second-class citizens, and that this change in access was not communicated to affected constituents, I understand the need to prioritize our core academic mission. The amount of equipment is limited and students/faculty needing it for courses should come first. In the past I have been able to utilize TLC equipment to create media for key programs that bring the student and academic experiences together, such as the Pilgrimage program; One Book, One Richmond; and TEDx events. For student affairs and similar staff, often multimedia work occurs in the summer months when we have more time to plan. If use of the TLC's multimedia equipment by faculty and students is lower during the summer months, which I believe it likely is, might it be possible to allow staff to utilize the equipment during this time? If use during the summer is not possible, it would be helpful to outline alternative pathways for staff to access multimedia equipment for University purposes. Does Information Services have equipment/licensed software that staff can use? Is the only option for offices to buy these items outright? Thank you for your consideration.

Response: It is confirmed that the TLC policy with respect to the staff has not changed, i.e. the TLC continues to support staff and will continue to do so until we can find an alternative source of support. The policies for multimedia equipment can be found here:

<https://provost.richmond.edu/academic-initiatives/tlc/index.html> and

<https://spidertech.net.richmond.edu/TDClient/1955/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=35373>

Idea/Question: As part of the PFD or continuum, is there a reason why staff are not asked to evaluate their supervisors or at least have the supervisor's supervisor ask us for feedback on how they are doing as managers?

Rationale/Reason: The rationale and reason are obvious - employees would like the opportunity to give their feedback without fear of retribution and would like an opportunity to evaluate their supervisors.

Response: UR Engaged, the University's performance management process, involves four check-ins between managers and employees that take place throughout the year. Each of these check-ins is intended to help employees and managers engage in regular dialogue with one another and promote feedback. The first check-in at the start of the performance cycle prompts managers and employees to clarify expectations of one another, while the second and third check-ins prompt employees and managers to provide each other with direct feedback. Presently, the fourth and final check-in does not prompt the employee to provide feedback to their manager, though employees and managers are free to discuss additional topics outside of delivered prompts and questions during check-ins. We appreciate feedback on our processes and work to improve them over time. We will take this suggestion into consideration as we prepare for the next performance cycle.

Idea/Question: Will SPCS expand the online partner course offerings again or is the current availability the new norm?

Rationale/Reason: In reviewing the SPCS online partner catalogs recently I noticed a large segment of the classes that were available in January are no longer showing on the sites. Is this a permanent change or is SPCS working with the online partners to update and expand the catalog? The 5 non-credit classes provided annually as part of our benefits package are a great opportunity for professional development but the current offerings are very limited compared to prior years.

Response: Thank you for your question. Starting last summer, our office launched a full review of our online partners focusing our decision on which partners and course offerings to retain based on student feedback and the student experience. We also took into consideration accessibility of our course offerings, ease of navigation on our website versus their partner portals, and our staff's ability to keep current and educated about all the courses we provide. As part of this process, we also solicited independent student feedback and conducted a course-by-course audit of our enrollment history. We culled programming that did not meet our student satisfaction expectations and retained the courses that have a higher measurable value to participants. We are always open to requests for specific courses, so if you would like to see classes offered in a specific area, please let us know by emailing profed@richmond.edu. Upon receiving such requests, we can potentially enroll students in classes offered by our partners, but that are not currently listed on our website. Our primary focus moving forward will be to develop homegrown programming based on industry needs and in collaboration with industry professionals, instead of online education offered in partnership with third party providers.