WHAT DO YOU THINK THE STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL SHOULD FOCUS ON FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

Representation Model (non-exempt, employees from all divisions/departments)

Understanding Benefits – helping to educate staff on how to make the most of working here

Continued Communications Efforts and better awareness of USAC (be proactive)

- Better ways to communicate about USAC events – more creative ways of thinking through how to tell different groups about USAC, particularly Dining/Facilities
- Affinity Groups – advertising a big kick-off for all the groups
- Employee newsletter
- Retiree communications
- A USAC “Comment Box” in some locations?
- Campus Map

Staff Professional Development

Affinity Groups / Elder Care

Breaking Down Silos/Learning More about the entire University

Advocating for an Employee/Staff Handbook online – HR owning and updating content

WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT/HOPEFUL FOR DURING THIS TIME OF TRANSITION IN INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

Many staff reported they are excited about the fresh ideas and diversity of leadership, experience among many of UR’s top leaders. They’re curious to see the sort of tone and change that happens from the beginning and also how that resonates through various levels of the University over time. At least two staff members, specifically, are quite taken with and excited about Mrs. Dr. Crutcher and her investment in the university and its students already. There is also curiosity about the impact on the arts for the University given Dr. Crutcher’s expertise. Many are excited about the fresh perspective and both this time of internal and external evaluation of the institution.
WHAT ARE YOU NEVROUS ABOUT/ANXIOUS FOR DURING THIS TIME OF TRANSITION IN INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP?

• The expectations of staff keep growing, but the staff is challenged to meet them at every level. Would like to know the priorities of the new leadership in each sector of the university’s staff divisions.
• Watching what changes happen in the academic realm and how that effects faculty, students, and ultimately staff.
• What policies will continue or change? Who will be part of that conversation?
• Observing the other levels of transitions too – what will that look like? Would like to know the priorities of the new leadership?
• How USAC will be affected by a new rep model

IF YOU COULD SPEND AN HOUR TALKING TO DR. CRUTCHER ABOUT ANY PARTICULAR ISSUE ON CAMPUS, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

• Where he thinks the biggest opportunities are, what his perspective is as a “new” person, and his ideas for the university and the directions in which he’d like to take our community.
• How to respond to the continually increasing demands for students who aren’t resilient or ready for the stresses of college life (See recent Chronicle cover story)
• Title IX
• Coordinate Colleges
• Cross-School Collaboration
• Acknowledging that we are all advocates for the entire university when we are out in public.
• The Strategic Plan (how long – 5 years/10 years) and ways to connect and define departmental goals to larger plan
• Continuing Education
• Staff personnel concerns: Attracting and affording top talent (employee and students), and the search process and hiring process – the length of time
WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR HOW TO MAKE UR AN EVEN GREATER PLACE TO WORK?

Continuing the recent work to benchmark compensation/competitive pay

Making sure employees understand and use available resources

More staff unifying events (Squirrels Game, volunteering with the food bank, Habitat)

  o Teambuilding throughout the university

Admissions would like faculty to actively participate in admissions process.

Professional Development – generally encouraging more conversations within departments about what growth looks like within individual positions and within relatively stable organizations.

  • Administrative Staff Professional Development (professional certification/training, in-house training on the changing nature of roles – switch to a tech-natured workplace)
  • Broadening existing efforts for staff study abroad – (Faculty Seminar Abroad includes some staff with faculty status and Weinstein Grants are a wonderful opportunity, but reach few staff who could benefit from a global perspective when working with students and supporting them after their return.)
  • Staff Sabbaticals – with the intent that this time would be used to work on major projects to benefit UR operations
  • Expanding the UR Well model to include how to make the most of working at Richmond – walking through the rec center or library as a new employee is not enough; staff would love to see more in-depth introductions to resources available (e.g. many staff may not realize exactly how much our libraries offer for personal fulfillment if they aren’t involved in projects that require them to use Boatwright or other locations for class or work projects. We’d love to bring our various departments closer together in one body – that understands and appreciates the contributions to our campus community.

An actual employee manual with all of the policies/benefits/leave information organized in one easy-to-find and use place. (Note: the current HR site is scattered, and this project is a work in progress, but we feel following the print model of how to organize policy and benefit information relevant to staff is a way to start – not printing it, but returning to that organizational schema.)
Dedicated space for SPCS Summer youth classes – even in 3-4 classrooms during the 8 weeks before undergrads return. Believe F/S would be grateful – M. Raymond of SPCS

Employee Ideas for Benefits:

- Graduate school exchange for employees
- Child Care on Campus
- Career Services for Employees (skill sets for employees, resume work and professional development for promoting from within opportunities)
- Supervisor Training 2.0 for employees who don’t currently supervise people but who would like to develop the skill set for future career growth. (USAC note: HR is hard at work on launching their first iteration of the supervisor training. We’re excited to see where this goes and, with HR, hope that it will eventually be a requirement of all supervisors.
- A new health center – including employee health
- Paid leave for community service – a certain number of hours a year specifically available for staff to use in the community – whether volunteering with their organizations or choice or with their children’s schools.

On a lighter note, some long-term employees noted that each of the past two presidents have added a paid University holiday to the annual calendar. Dr. Ayers, in fact, added two — the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and Martin Luther King Day. The staff would like to encourage, with a wink and a smirk, that this is an expected tradition from each UR president.