USAC Meeting Summary
April 10, 2012
1:00 – 3:00 PM

Meeting was called to order by David Curtis at 1:00 pm.

Members Present: Mark Brooking, Cheryl Burns, Holly Caruso, Ray Causey, Glenice Coombs, David Curtis, Shelle Flowers, Manny Haines, John Jacobus, Katybeth Lee, Lisa Miles, LaQuashia Pegeas, Martha Pittaway, Andy Gurka, Andrew Morton, Adrienne Piazza, Michael Torquato, Karen Turner, Joe Testani, Paul Witten

Members Absent: Crista LaPrade, Chrissy Poindexter, Francine Reynolds

David Curtis began the meeting promptly at 1 p.m.

I. General Updates

Great Colleges To Work For Survey closes April 13. Please encourage co-workers, peers and friends to complete the survey, if they have not. Valerie Wallen can help if anyone didn’t receive the email for the survey.

Career and Compensation manager training is currently ongoing. Staff training will follow. Letters to employees about their positions as a result of the compensation study will be distributed May 11th. An important message to pass along is the current grades have no bearings on the old grades. They have compared positions not people. Salaries will not go down if the market dictates that.

On April 18th there will be a Zimride raffle for an IPOD for anyone who registers a ride for that day.

Twenty people took advantage of the Richmond Kickers tickets.

II. Elections-Lisa Miles

There are a great number of nominations with a total of 128 separate nominations with 64 being non-exempt vs. 61 exempt. Simply Voting has their own unique URL and it is easy to import all the voters. The election should start around April 30th. We are now ready to contact everyone who has been nominated so they can send in a blurb as to why they want to be on the council.

III. Committee Updates

Communications- Andy Gurka

Andy will be posting Affinity group information via spider-bytes every Monday.

Staff Involvement-Adrienne Piazza

Andy & Adrienne met with Megan Zanella-Litke to discuss “Green Living” Affinity group. They received great feedback concerning the different groups.
IV. Open Forum-David Curtis

There will be 3 different ways to participate in the open forum. First is an on line form on the USAC website where people can submit information between April 30th and May 18th. Second, a session will be held in the Alice Haynes Room on April 30th, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. and lunch will be provided. The third option is to attend a session in the Richmond Room on May 15th, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

USAC members will help facilitate 3 different questions. Each question has value to USAC and will help the 2012-2013 council with the direction for the upcoming year.

Question 1:
What is your understanding of the Role of USAC?

Question 2:
I like working at UR because?

Question 3:
What would you like to see USAC do in 2012-2013?

V. Web Submissions-Holly Caruso

See Below.

VI. Constituent Concerns

Can there be dedicated lactation locations in each building?

Further review will take place concerning shift differential for employees that work at night in the fall.

VII. Other

There were additional conversations concerning telecommuting/flexible workplace. The council decided a letter to the cabinet would benefit our constituents.

The next meeting is May 14th.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelle Flowers,
Recording Secretary
1. During the annual performance review process, it would be useful if employees could provide feedback on our supervisor's performance to that individual's supervisor. This information would then provide a different perspective on a manager's performance that that individual's supervisor might otherwise not have access to. Are the opinions of those managed taken into consideration by the manager's supervisor? If so, how is this information gathered?

The Senior Administration staff does have 360 reviews on a rotating 3 year schedule. This has not been moved any further down the organizational chart.

During discussion the council agreed that staff should be able to offer feedback if they wish.

Some questions did arise during the conversation:
- Should/could this be for all supervisors?
- Could staff opt out?
- Would/could this be a safe place to give feedback? It needs to feel and be very safe for employees in order to be effective.
- Training would need to be provided on how to both provide and accept feedback.

This is a starting place for a conversation with HR about the possibilities.

2. USAC should lobby for increased contributions to retirement and/or healthcare benefits for employees who do not have children. It is useless to have tuition benefits if you will never have children.

Tuition benefits for dependents are not the only education benefit offered at Richmond. There are excellent tuition benefits for the employee and spouse at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. USAC has also been advocating for tuition benefits for graduate programs outside of the University where such classes would benefit the employee’s position. Carl Sorenson, AVP for Human Resources has stated this is something the senior administration is considering.

We currently have a very robust benefit package, and while not everyone can take advantage of all University benefits to the fullest extent, everyone should take advantage of what is available to them as much as possible. The employee dependent tuition benefit is just one of many benefits offered at the University including non-credit and personal and professional enrichment programs which are now and unlimited benefit for staff. USAC has advocated for Human Resources to continue to research how benefits might be made more flexible for employees and this will continue.
3. Will there still be "Community Days" for the University? I remember a few years back when my office helped with the Build-It program for Habitat for Humanity. Will we still have chances to participate in things like that this year or next?

USAC got in touch with the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement to check in about the status of a house build through the Build It program. We received this response: “At this time the University does not have plans for another UR-sponsored Habitat for Humanity build. The builds were indeed a great way to build camaraderie among staff members, but they were an add-on to the ongoing work of Build It, which has always had a primary focus on consistent, weekly volunteering in Northside Richmond nonprofits and schools. In fact, this semester Build It has more participants than ever before: More than 200 students are volunteering with Build It on a weekly basis as tutors, mentors, and administrative support in Northside Richmond nonprofits and schools. A few faculty, staff, and alumni have also volunteered on a weekly basis with Build It during the last 18 months. However, if staff are interested in volunteering, all CCE programs (including Build It, Pathways to a College Experience (PACE), and Richmond Families Initiative) are open to staff members. Additionally, if your department is interested in integrating civic engagement into your work, CCE staff members can help you and your colleagues connect with various community organizations. You can learn more about the CCE programs at www.engage.richmond.edu."

A couple of years ago, USAC members worked with Human Resources to develop a proposal for paid-time off to volunteer at an organization of the staff members’ choosing. At the time that it was submitted, there were many competing priorities for staff benefits. The current USAC membership will revisit that proposal and hopes to continue to find ways to connect staff members to the Greater Richmond area in meaningful ways.

4. I wonder if USAC would consider a change to its by-laws that would allow a part-time staff member to serve on the Council. Currently there is no "voice" on the Council to represent the viewpoint of the part-time staff member. Although there are not many of us, workforce trends of job-sharing and work/life balance may lead to more part-time positions in the future. It would be great to see USAC reach out to this group.

Part time employees can vote for USAC and hopefully are represented by those elected to the council. This is something that will be looked at during the coming year in conjunction with other by-laws considerations.

5. I just want to comment this USAC committee for making an excellent effort to trying to reach out and be inclusive to the entire staff at UR. Even though I don’t attend many things, it is wonderful to see that you are trying to meet everyone’s needs. So, if you get complaints from other staff, that nothing is being done, do not take it to heart, as I think you are doing a great job. Thank you for caring, and trying to make it work and meet the needs of as many as you can. Kudos to you all. Thanks.

Thank you very much.