Meeting was called to order by Andy Gurka at 1:03 p.m.

Members present: John Butt, Tracy Cassalia, Carrie Caumont, Andy Gurka, Denard Hall, Lindsey Love, Jerry Robinson, Maya Vincelli, Blake Widdowson, Manny Haines, Denise Johnston, Crista LaPrade, Keith Mitchell, Martha Pittaway, Sadie Simmons, Michael Torquato, and Paul Witten. Ex-officio members David Curtis and Carl Sorenson were also present.

Members absent: Adrienne Piazza, Cheryl Poston, Molly Field, Bill Chappell.

Welcome to our new members

Andy welcomed Council and introduced the new members of Council.

What’s the mood?

Members felt that the overall mood was happy, due to the recent winter celebration and upcoming winter break. A question was asked about the status of shift differential. Carl Sorensen said Tracy Kitt is looking into this issue.

Web submission review and discussion (See complete web submissions and any official responses at the end of the minutes.)

1. Tuition remission
   Andy Gurka summarized the web submission and mentioned that it was a repeat submission from last year. One member commented that this is a common question in the School of Continuing & Professional Studies, and asked Carl Sorensen if there was any chance for funding in future budget years. Carl Sorensen said he would bring this topic forward next year as a budget item, although he noted that there is an unknown factor in regard to overall use and cost of the total benefit.

2. Rewards and Recognition program
   Members had no additional comments on this web submission.

3. Workplace Survey results
   Andy Gurka stated that the results should be available to the full campus in the spring. A member recalled that previous year’s results were available much earlier in the process. Carl Sorensen confirmed this and said that this year’s timeline was pushed forward due to workloads across campus. Information will be processed at the Vice President level, then made available to the full campus in spring.

4. Blood drives
   Andy Gurka read Liz McCann’s response to this submission. Overall, USAC members felt the number of blood drives offered is currently sufficient. Depending on their location on campus, some members were very aware of blood drives, while others hadn’t heard or seen much about them. Members felt that marketing efforts could be increased in order to maximize campus knowledge about the drives; suggestions included postings on USAC’s website and advertisements in departments not located near blood drive locations.
5. **Staff reviews**

Andy Gurka summarized the recent submission, with a note that Human Resources may not have had ample time to prepare a response to this topic. USAC members discussed the current system and the way it applies to their respective offices. Some offices that meet frequently find the review system to be awkward, other offices feel that the goal system doesn’t represent their day-to-day workload; other offices reported that encouraging face-to-face conversations with supervisors is very important. Overall, it appeared that current experiences with the system vary greatly by office and by supervisor. Other members suggestions included: continued supervisor training and allowing flexibility if the mid-year review didn’t fit with an office format. Carl Sorensen mentioned that a formal reply from Valerie Wallen would be coming soon. He did add that a formal committee met and developed the current review system based on best practices and on feedback from staff that suggested staff and supervisors do frequently talk about work, but not about performance. The current system allows conversations about performance in person and online through ongoing documentation and progress updates, which also allows employees to create a “me” file. In response to member comments, Carl explained that the mid-year reviews could be informal but should still be documented. Carl emphasized that the overarching goal of the system is to encourage framed conversations about performance throughout the year.

6. **On-campus Healthcare for Faculty/Staff**

Andy Gurka summarized the recent submission. USAC members were very much in favor of the addition of campus healthcare services for employees; however they were unsure of the feasibility of adding these services to the existing Student Health Center. Paul Witten mentioned that the Police Department receives many health-related requests (such as blood pressure checks), that would be better suited to an employee health center. Tracy Cassalia mentioned that as Manager of Health Education and Wellness, she is able to check blood pressure and can also offer other health screenings in her office (with advanced notice via email). (Employees must see their physician for interpretations of results.) The Recreation & Wellness Center also offers other health-related programming for employees.

**Bylaw revision discussion and voting**

Council reviewed Article IV: Membership, Section 8 (c. The staff member responsible for staff appreciation and recognition events in the Office of Events, Conferences and Support Services) clarifying the concerns from the previous meeting as listed below.

- What happens to the voting rights of this ex-officio member if they happen to be voted onto Council and,
- Council needs to confirm that participation of this role in USAC activities is approved by the supervisor of this role
- Council may choose to further define the role of the ex officio member

**Article IV: Membership, Section 8 – Approved**

**Discussion Topic: How can USAC facilitate a culture of appreciation on-campus?**

Andy Gurka suggested members meet in small groups to discuss three questions:

1. What does it mean to appreciate?
2. What are ways to appreciate?
3. What can USAC do to appreciate peers?
USAC engaged in a small group and large group discussion of these questions.

**Additional Discussion:**

Martha Pittaway reminded members that the USAC Affinity Group open houses are Tuesday, December 18th from 12:00 to 1 p.m. (includes lunch!) in the Tyler Haynes Commons room 305 or from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in the Westhampton Room of the Heilman Dining Center. All are encouraged to attend (RSVP to Martha Pittaway: x6442 mpittawa@richmond.edu).

Andy Gurka congratulated members on completing half of academic year and thanked them for their service thus far.

**End of semester social with snacks**

Meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 in Tyler Haynes Commons, Room 305.

Respectfully submitted,

Lindsey Love, Parliamentarian

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**Web Submission 1: On-Campus Blood Drives**

**Submitted: November 29, 2012**

| **suggestion** | Has USAC ever considered hosting regular blood drives? I am very passionate about donating blood, but the opportunities to do so at UR are few. From what I understand, you're allowed to donate every 6 weeks... but I'd be thrilled if UR would have blood drives every 3 months. Thanks for considering my suggestion! |

**November 29, 2012:** Submission sent to Liz McCann, Events Office, with the question about frequency of blood drives each semester.

**December 3, 2012:** Reply from Liz McCann:
According to the Events Office, there were fifteen blood drives that occurred since 2010 on campus. Here is a breakdown of who sponsored blood drives on campus and the number that they have sponsored:
- APO: four drives
- Athletics: two drives
- Recreation & Wellness: five drives
- Kappa Alpha Fraternity: three drives
- Law School: one blood drive

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**Web Submission 2: Great Colleges to Work Survey**

**Submitted: November 14, 2012**

| **suggestion** | Will the results of this spring's workplace survey be available to staff again this time around? Is there a timetable for releasing the results? Thanks! |

**November 15, 2012:** Submission sent to Carl Sorensen, AVP for Human Resources for reply.
Submitted: November 26, 2012

**suggestion**
Is there any update from the President and/or his Cabinet about the results from the most recent Great Colleges to Work For Survey? My VP has stated that he/she has received them. Any time line on when these results will be released to the rest of the UR Community?

**November 26, 2012:** Submission sent to Carl Sorensen, AVP for Human Resources for reply.

**November 29, 2012:** Reply from Carl Sorensen, AVP for Human Resources:
"Look for campus presentations of the survey results in the spring."

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**Web Submission 3: Tuition Remission at Other Institutions**

**suggestion**
Several staff members at the University of Richmond have approached me and asked, Why can't we use our degree seeking tuition remission benefit outside the University? The University of Richmond offers a limited number of degree programs. Many staff members may like to pursue a degree in an area of study not offered by the University. Also, some staff members already have undergraduate or graduate degrees and would like to pursue a higher degree in their chosen field, but the University of Richmond does not offer coursework these fields of study. Currently, the University allows use of our non-credit tuition remission benefit through approved external like CFP or Massage Therapy. In addition, the University allows dependents to use tuition remission and tuition exchange for degree program at other institutions. It's unclear why these tuition remission benefits can be used outside the University when faculty and staff are ineligible to apply tuition remission benefits to degree programs not covered by the University's offerings. While the University demonstrates its commitment to continuing education through its current policy, it would seem a logical extension of the policy to be expanded that enables full-time faculty and staff to use tuition remission benefits toward external degree programs in cases when the University's programs don't cover the desired course of study.

Web Submission forwarded to Carl Sorensen in Human Resources. Reply by Carl Sorensen:
I do realize that many people would find this to be a valuable addition to our benefit offerings but, there is not enough flexibility in the fringe budget for FY 14 to bring this forward as new program request during the budget cycle.

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**Web Submission 4:**
Submitted: December 9, 2012

**suggestion**
I know UR has been discussing the feasibility of on campus healthcare services for employees. I just want to remind USAC of the requests the SHC frequently receives from staff for medical assistance. Examples include, but are not limited to, allergy shots, blood pressure monitoring, minor illness, injections of medications needed on a regular basis, information about individual's prescription medications and an oncampus pharmacy kiosk. Reasons cited include time away from work, lost wages, convenience, cost/copay (avoid appt with a clinician), transportation difficulties getting to their doctor. I encourage those contacting the SHC to write USAC explaining how significant the need is for such services. Respectfully submitted, Lynne Deane, MD
Discussion took place in USAC meeting regarding the positives and negatives of on-campus provided healthcare for staff. Responses were overall positive, when Carl Sorensen asked if staff would be interested in an on-campus clinic on campus.

Note: Dr. Deane was contacted and approved including her name with the submission

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**Web Submission 5: Rewards and Recognition**  
**Submitted Data: November 15, 2012**

| suggestion | I was wondering when the rewards and recognition program will be rolled out. It was first studied in 2008 and recommendations were made but nothing came of them. In 2011, after the workplace survey was done and rewards/recognition were found to be an area of concern, another group began studying options. At the USAC forum that spring, a pilot for the summer was announced, to be followed by a full roll-out in the fall of 2011. I am not aware of anything being rolled out, though. Some of the suggestions were nearly cost-free and did not involve a lot of time for implementation, so it seems they, at least, could be rolled out even if bigger projects had to be postponed. Does USAC have access to an update on this initiative? Thanks! |

**November 15, 2012:** Submission forwarded to Carl Sorensen in Human Resources for reply  
**December 2, 2012:** Reply from Carl Sorensen in Human Resources:  
We are working on a recognition solution but I'm not able to provide an implementation date at this time.

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**Web Submission 6: Staff Reviews**  
**Submitted Data: December 7, 2012**

| suggestion | Recently A&S tenured faculty has been given an option of being reviewed every three years. All staff, on the other hand, is supposed to be using the latest review system UR Talent to track progress of staff members twice a year. Why has staff gone from once a year review to twice a year in the last few years, and faculty goes from once a year review to one every three years? My suggestion would be that if UR Talent is to be retained, an evaluation should be performed soon on the effectiveness of this latest review system - are all departments using this review; has a noticeable increase in staff productivity and personal growth been shown; is this review system a tool for the salary increases or not? I believe these questions might reveal that staff is not necessarily motivated by these two reviews each year but perhaps just the opposite. I propose that a yearly review of staff is sufficient and hope this will be considered. Thanks for your work, USAC! |

December 10, 2012 – forwarded submission to Carl Sorensen in Human Resources  
January 10, 2013 – response from Valerie Wallen in Human Resources:  

The current UR performance review process was designed by staff who represented all areas of the University. This group of individuals carefully researched best practices in higher education and designed the process to be built on regular performance conversations rather than a once-a-year look back on performance. The tool for documenting these conversations has been updated each year but the principles and philosophy of the best practices remains the same – having regular performance conversation between a supervisor and employee is the most effective performance review process. The employee group felt that planning, mid-year, and end-of-year documentation of these conversations was appropriate and doable for the UR community.
As for monitoring the documentation of these conversations, HR reviews the information at each of the three points in the cycle for compliance and works with any departments or offices that may be lagging behind compliance deadlines. The new UR Talent Web will also allow HR to work with offices to improve the quality of these performance conversations and the resulting documentation. The Vice Presidents do review the performance review information when they make decisions regarding salary increases.