March 15, 2005 USAC Meeting Summary

Submitted by Carole Mitchell, 2004-2005 USAC Chair

Thanks to all who submitted suggestions/questions/concerns to the USAC this past month. Please join us in our discussions by continuing to post messages through the staff advisory council website: [http://oncampus.richmond.edu/staff/usac/request.html](http://oncampus.richmond.edu/staff/usac/request.html)

Chair’s Comments:

Minutes from February 8, 2005, meeting were approved as written. Carole reminded council members about Service Awards that are scheduled for March 24, 2005. Carole pointed out that this event showcases staff personnel and everyone should attend.

Comment from Katherine Douglas:

Katherine reminded council as well that Service Awards are Thursday, March 24, 2005. Katherine will introduce council at the Service Awards and she asked for council members please be present at the Service Awards.

Old Business:

- **Web Submission Committee**

1. Suggestion: It can be dangerous to cross the street at the bus kiosk at Richmond Way. Is there anyway to have GRTC come into the campus to drop off people? The area is well-marked to warn cars about pedestrians, but the cars zoom right by. It's very scary trying to cross the street.

Discussion: Council feels that this is a Police matter and they should handle this.

2. Suggestion: Would it be possible to add Microsoft Access to the classes offered for the staff? This is a very valuable tool and used throughout campus. Otherwise I would be hard-pressed to find a class to attend that I could apply to my work

Answered by Kevin Creamer & sent to the requestor. (Reprinted)

Thanks for forwarding the message. There are two primary reasons we're not offering training classes for Microsoft Access. One reason is that the complexity of the program makes it very difficult to teach in a short period of time. Access is at least one order of magnitude more complex than Microsoft Excel. That complexity would require a much greater time commitment from the participants, while still not possibly addressing everyone's needs since there are so many different things that can be done in different ways in Access.

Another reason we've not offered Access classes is that we find with very few exceptions that Access has been used when Microsoft Excel was the better
tool for the job. It is hard to determine whether an overall lack of experience with Excel or some other issue drives the decision to store information in Access, but we are hopeful that one of the outcomes of our Excel classes will be that Excel is chosen more often as the appropriate place to store information.

The goal of the Microsoft Office classes has been to increase proficiency and productivity with the core technologies used throughout the campus. Access - when used appropriately - is less like Microsoft Word, Outlook, PowerPoint and Excel. It is more like programs used by smaller groups of users on campus, such as Microsoft Publisher and FrontPage. The program should only be included in the Office classes if there were a general consensus that all clerical staff should become proficient in the functions of Access (including database design, form creation, query writing, report generation and more). I don't think that this is the consensus.

While we don't include Access as part of the Microsoft Office classes, support is available through the Technology Learning Center, which offers books and online video tutorials that show you how to accomplish specific tasks. TLC specialists are also available by appointment for consultation on specific issues in Access. Anyone who is interested can send an inquiry to tlc@richmond.edu.

Response: 6 Asked and Answered. VTC, the online training system that Kevin Creamer refers to can be accessed through the website below: https://secure.vtc.com/multiuser/index.php They do cover all of the MS Office products. Questions can be submitted to tlc@richmond.edu

Discussion: As we continue to receive questions/concerns regarding the administrative assistants training, DeAnn O'Dell volunteered to work with Pat Schoknecht as a representative from USAC.

3. Suggestion: Follow-up from minutes in January 11, 2005 which read:
Letter to the President regarding staff salary increases- A letter will be sent to President Cooper asking that consideration of staff salary increases and a review of all departmental staffing models is added to this list of possible uses for the tuition increase. (This letter was sent on January 24, 2005.) “I was eagerly awaiting a response in the Feb Council meeting minutes; however, I didn't see anything mentioned about the above. Was a response ever received from the letter sent to Dr. Cooper regarding salary increases? Even if there was no response, please pass that information along as well.

Response: We have since received a response which is reprinted at the end of this summary with permission from Dr. Cooper.
• **Early Retirement Committee**

Report was given by Ginny Carlson, Chair of the Early Retirement Committee. We have had 50% response to the survey. The committee will look into the possibility of expanding the survey to another target group of schools and businesses. A draft report will be available at the next USAC meeting.

• **Election for 2005-2006 USAC Members**

The lists of candidates have been completed. The nomination process in which each employee is allowed one (1) nomination in each category will remain the same. Currently employees are allowed one (1) vote within their job category (i.e. Administrative, Clerical and Service/Maintenance). A suggestion was made that perhaps council should allow additional votes outside an employee’s job category. (i.e., if we have 3 vacancies within the Clerical category, allow the employee within the Clerical category to vote up to three (3) votes. It was pointed out that the election process could be swayed by voting more than once.

Motion was made to keep the election process as is, allowing for only one (1) vote per employee and each employee must vote within their job category.

Motion was seconded. Motion passed to keep election process as is.

A council member questioned the breakdown of membership representatives to council. Currently the breakdown is this: Clerical/Support Services staff has 5 representatives, Managerial/Administrative Staff has 7 representatives and Service/Maintenance Staff has 7 representatives. Katherine Douglas stated that the election balance was to ensure balanced representation in each category. The guidelines were established by % of the total number of employees in each category. (Exempt employees are represented by 7 council members while hourly paid employees have 13 representatives on council.)

**New Business:**

• New benefit – Term Life Insurance purchase opportunity:

Laura Dietrick provided information regarding Fortis/Assurant Voluntary Life Insurance. In order to offer this life insurance we must have 20% (260 employees) participation. Laura provided the following information:

**Fortis/Assurant Voluntary Life Insurance**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

➢ How much voluntary life insurance coverage may I purchase?
Eligible employees may purchase 5x’s their annual salary, up to a maximum of $150,000 for themselves.
Spouses may purchase up to a maximum of $50,000, not to exceed 50% of the employee amount.
Dependent children may purchase up to a maximum of $10,000, not to exceed 50% of the employee amount.

- May I purchase coverage for my family members?
  You may purchase coverage for your spouse and dependent children if you purchase coverage for yourself. **Dependent children must be under the age of 25 and unmarried.**

- How many children may I enroll in my policy?
  You may enroll all of your dependent children, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. The cost for dependent child(ren) coverage is a single rate, regardless of how many children are on your policy.

- When can I enroll and/or cancel my voluntary life insurance coverage?
  Full time employees may enroll at their time of hire, promotion to full time status or during the annual Open Enrollment period. You may also enroll if you have a change in family status (ex. marriage, birth or adoption, divorce, etc). You may only cancel your coverage during the annual Open Enrollment period.

- Will I have to answer medical questions if I enroll later?
  All “late entrants” to the plan will be required to complete an Evidence of Insurability and answer a medical questionnaire. A late entrant is any full time employee who does not enroll at their time of hire or promotion to full time status. **All medical questions are being waived during this initial enrollment period.**

- Do I have to list my spouse as my beneficiary?
  No, employees are not required to name their spouse as their beneficiary. The employee will automatically become the beneficiary for their spouse and dependent children’s policies.

- May I list a child who is a minor as a beneficiary?
  Yes, you may. If the beneficiary is a minor at the time of a claim, the claim payment will be held in an interest-bearing account until they are 21 years old, or will be given to a guardian if that is designated in the deceased’s will.

- Will my premium rate ever increase?
  Yes, premium rates are affected by the employee’s age. Employees move into a new age bracket every five years, and any resulting rate changes will take effect January 1st of the following year. Fortis/Assurant has guaranteed our premium levels for 2 years. After that, they will renew the premium each January 1st and have the option to change premium rates if our group experience warrants it.

- If my salary increases, will my voluntary life insurance amount automatically increase?
  No, your voluntary life insurance will only increase if you apply for additional coverage. You may apply for an additional $10,000 of coverage each year without answering any medical questions.

- If I leave employment with the University, may I continue my coverage?
Yes, coverage is portable if you terminate employment prior to age 65. You have 31
days to decide to continue your coverage. Employees may port coverage at the same age
banded rates for three years. After three years, you may convert to an individual policy.
You may only port coverage up to age 65.

Laura and Michelle reminded everyone that they have scheduled a series of informational
meetings at which time individualized packets will be available for all employees. Please
encourage everyone to attend.

**Reminders:**

SpringFest 2005 is fast approaching. We encourage all departments to participate.

New recreation/wellness center –Wendy Burchard asked for suggestions/comments
regarding the new recreation/wellness center that will be built on-site in the next few
months. Suggestions included covering the windows, more space and additional lockers.

175th Anniversary open house is scheduled for April 2, 2005.

**Response from Dr. Cooper regarding our request for consideration of staff increases in
light of the tuition increase:**

February 17, 2005

Ms. Carole B. Mitchell, Chair
Staff Advisory Council

Ms. Wendy L. Burchard, Vice Chair
Staff Advisory Council

Dear Carole and Wendy,

Thank you for your letter recommending that funds be allocated to shore up staff salary
levels that have not kept pace with the market and, as you note, have fallen below the
25th percentile in market comparisons in some cases. I am keenly aware of the
contribution our staff members make every day in support of Richmond's quality
education experience and our continuing advance. Attracting and retaining top talent is
one of the key building blocks of our current strategic plan, and we revisit this goal
every year as budget allocations are counterbalanced against available resources. This
is an exceedingly complicated matter. There are many needs that are competing for our
available resources and you can be sure that we are aware of the staff salary issue.

I appreciate your bringing this matter forward on behalf of the Staff Advisory Council.
I expect to hear more about this need from Herb Peterson and Katherine Douglas.

Best wishes,
William E. Cooper
President
WEC:kb

cc: Herbert C. Peterson
    Katherine R. Douglas

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next USAC meeting will be held April 12, 2005

We want to hear from you!
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