The meeting was called to order by Tracy Cassalia at 1:110 pm.

Members present: Katie Bell, Chantelle Bernard, Mickie Campos, Tracy Cassalia, Carrie Caumont, Bill Chappell, Molly Field, Debbie Hardy, Melody Kimball, Lindsey Love, Roger Mancastroppa, Keith Mitchell, Adrienne Piazza, Robert Plymale, Jerry Robinson, Sadie Simmons, Ebony Smith, Carl Sorenson, Marti Tomlin, Maya Vincelli, Paul Witten, Blake Widdowson.

Members absent: Kerrie Clarke Michele Cox, Lynn Robertson, Anna Kay Travis.

**Employee Wellness Program**

Heather Sadowski, Assistant Director of Wellness, presented about the new employee wellness program.

The program is a collaboration between Rec and Wellness and HR to provide a more comprehensive program and address the needs here at UR.

The program hopes to foster better disease management, happier and healthier employees, better productivity, better recruitment and retention and reduction in medical claims.

A wellness committee will be formed to analyze claims data (no personal information is listed), research best practices, and develop incentives and tracking systems. The committee will also develop a brand and conduct survey and focus groups. The committee hopes to launch the employee wellness program in January 2014.

Not many people are aware that HR pays for the “working on wellness” (WOW) program, health advocate program, the faculty/staff weight watchers program, discounted and free flu shots at the benefits fair. The fitness classes were also moved from the tuition reimbursement/SPCS program which created increased opportunities for faculty/staff exercise classes.

**Executive Board Update**

There will be a USAC table at the Benefits Fair which will be held on (November 7, 13, and 15). USAC will staff a table from 11 am –1 pm only because that is the time most people are there. We will hopefully have the plinko game and giveaways to hand out in addition to information about USAC.

The division of business affairs would like for a few USAC representatives to attend their next meeting on October 3 to give an update. Please see Paul if interested.
University Faculty Council (UFC) asked for USAC to review a survey that they are interested in circulating to gather feedback on the Deans’ performances. This was done in an effort to reach the staff members that work in the five various Dean’s offices instead of just the faculty of the five schools. USAC members provided feedback that was gathered by Tracy Cassalia that will be passed on to UFC.

Roger Mancastroppa, Parliamentarian, asked for USAC members to join the elections committee. He said that it is helpful to have those involved from areas that typically do not have a high voter turnout. Please let him know if you would like to join the committee, they will begin planning for April’s elections soon.

Carrie Caumont, Affinity Group Chair, provided an update on the activities of the various affinity groups. She asked that all USAC members continue to encourage people from their areas to participate. The Elder Care group will be having events in September, October, and November. The LGBTQ group will be having an event on September 25 and a Pride kick off event on September 27. The Parenting group will have a speaker from HR to discuss benefits for parents on September 24th. The Health & Wellness group and the UR Involved group are finalizing their schedules for the semester—be on the lookout for events coming soon!

A suggestion was made to have the March 2014 USAC meeting at UR Downtown. The executive committee will look into possible logistics for this and will present options for the council at the next meeting.

Tracy Cassalia, Chair, then asked the group to make recommendations for topics or people they are interested in hearing from in the future. Several topics were recommended: Andrew McBride to discuss campus building projects, David Hale or Spider Management to discuss endowment spending and how the University is doing financially, Keith Gill to discuss UR athletics and the Robins Center renovation, Lori Schuyler to discuss cabinet goals and projects for the year. Tracy and the executive committee will work to bring some of these suggested topics to future meetings.

New Business

Roger Mancastroppa, Parliamentarian, presented a proposed bylaw change to the Council for a vote.

Article V, Section 1

Current: “The officers of USAC shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, Parliamentarian, and Communications Chair. These officers serve as the Executive Board and shall perform the duties prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by USAC.”
Proposed: “The officers of USAC shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, Recording Secretary, Parliamentarian, Communications Chair, and Affinity Group Chair. These officers serve as the Executive Board and shall perform the duties prescribed by these Bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by USAC.”

Roger then made a motion to open the proposal up for discussion. It was seconded. Discussion revolved around reasons for the addition of the position of Affinity Group Chair to join the executive committee. Since much of the work of USAC now involves affinity group activities, it is helpful to have the person serving in this position in attendance at executive committee meetings.

Molly Field then made a motion to vote on the proposed bylaw change, it was seconded. The vote was conducted by hand and passed unanimously so the affinity group chair will now serve on the executive committee. The bylaws will be updated and posted on the USAC website.

Guest Speaker

David Hale, VP Business & Finance, joined the meeting to introduce himself to the group as he is new to the University. Mr. Hale comes to UR from Colgate University where he served as VP Finance and Administration since 2001. Colgate is about 10% smaller than UR but has a similar student body. His impressions of UR are that it is a very well-run University and that the staff have a big impact on that.

He gave an update on the campus master plan and that much of phase 1 and 2 is underway. Phase 1 has an emphasis on student residences. The plan for next summer will include removing four of the apartment complexes and re-positioning the road. Finishing Robins Center is also a priority because it is needed for basketball by November 8 and then more construction will continue through 2014. The Queally Center for Admissions and Career Services will break ground in late summer 2014 and will hopefully open in early 2016. Other projects include Richmond and Ryland halls and there are HVAC and accessibility issues in the arts centers.

Announcements

The last order of business was for USAC members to share announcements from their areas. Several promotions/new hires were shared with the group and will be shared on the USAC facebook page.

Tracy also announced to the group that Aubrey Pettaway will be attending the October USAC meeting to speak to us about how to handle difficult conversations that may come up with our constituents. There may be homework to do beforehand so be on the lookout.

The meeting adjourned at 2:46pm

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Field, Recording Secretary
Web Submissions

Web Submission 1
Submitted 9/5/2013: I would like to request more transparency about the tuition remission policy and tax implications at the university. I have been taxed on $3975 of "educational assistance" on August 1, 2013 and August 30, 2013 for my grad school classes. I'd like to suggest the university consider offering the benefit in a way to avoid tax implications (scholarships).

Action Taken: 9/6/2013: Forwarded to HR (Carl Sorenson) for a reply.

9/6/2013: Reply from Carl Sorenson:

“I’m responding to your question to USAC about tuition remission taxability. The IRS has set a pre-tax limit of $5,250 for tuition remission. Any waived or remitted tuition above that must be counted as taxable income. The excerpt below is from our policy which can be found at this link: http://hr.richmond.edu/benefits/education/remission/index.html

Employees with an undergraduate degree enrolled in classes will be taxed for the tuition remission amount exceeding $5,250 for the calendar year at the end of each semester in which a year to date excess of $5,250 exists.

Hope this helps explain it - though it probably doesn’t reduce the pain.”

9/10/2013: Nothing further to add.

Web Submission 2
Submitted 9/4/2013: UR has a beautiful campus and our centerpiece is the lake. The path around the lake from the bridge, in front of Lakeview, to the Commons is very unattractive. No grass, duck droppings on the asphalt, dirt/gravel on the asphalt, not to mention the aggressive Chinese geese that hiss, nip at, and chase people, make walking the lake a very unenjoyable experience.

Action Taken: 9/4/2013: Forwarded to Landscape (Steve Glass) for a reply.

9/4/2013: Reply from Steve Glass:

“Paul, the big problem is the geese. It is very difficult, if not impossible to keep grass with the geese and shade from the trees along the banks of the lake. We have sodded a numbers of times, but the grass is short lived. We will check the dirt and gravel on the paths this week and I will refer the aggressive geese to Campus Police. The bare ground and geese droppings will be ongoing with the existing population of geese and trees.”

9/10/2013: USAC member Bill Chappell also added that the geese used to stay by the gazebo but people feed them by the bus loading area so they tend to congregate there now. Perhaps some signage should be put up to discourage people from feeding the geese in the transportation hub.
area. Paul Witten will handle informing the bus drivers to feed the geese in the gazebo area, not the bus loading area.