

University of San Francisco Staff Council 2022 – 2023 Annual Report





About this Report

This document describes the undertakings of the USF Staff Council from June 1, 2022 through May 31, 2023. As this was the inaugural year for the Staff Council, it will also serve as a historic record of the creation of the council.

Purpose

The Staff Council will build community, identify concerns, and advocate for the needs, vision, and well-being of all USF Staff in service of the mission and vision of USF.

Mission Statement

The Staff Council is committed to serving the interests and concerns of all staff members by contributing their voices into campus conversations on non-collective bargaining issues.

We will act as a conduit to engage and support our fellow staff members and the surrounding community, empowering excellence through growth and learning opportunities, staff recognition, workshops, trainings & events, and collaborative partnerships that promote and enhance our experience at USF.

As inclusive representatives we will actively participate in shared governance to facilitate positive and collegial communication in support of the University's Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.

Vision Statement

The Vision of the Staff Council is to be an inclusive and transparent voice for all staff members at USF and to be a deliberative body offering appropriate recommendations to the University President and Cabinet that address staff concerns while providing enriching and informative experiences for staff to better contribute towards the University's Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan.

Setting the Stage for Success

What did we do to set the council up for success?

COUNCIL CREATION

The University of San Francisco (USF) Staff Council was created in response to the efforts of the USF Staff Community-building group (2019-on), the [Magis project](#), the Campus Climate report (2017 & 2018) and its subsequent reading group.

An inaugural Staff Council Steering Committee was formed in 2020 to draft a charge and bylaws, and subsequently ran an election to populate the first Staff Council.

The committee drew from models across higher education, engaged the USF community through focus groups to gain input, and collaborated with the USF President and members of the President's executive team to create the inaugural Staff Council bylaws.

The report containing national benchmarks on staff councils generated and presented by the staff community-building group laid the groundwork for the creation of the Staff Council bylaws, which were adopted December 15, 2021 by Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J., USF President.

The steering committee determined the need for 23 representatives comprised of both represented and non-represented staff members. A call for nominations resulted in exactly 23 staff members (inclusive of represented and non-represented staff) who accepted their nomination to serve on the inaugural Staff Council; therefore, an election

was not held and all 23¹nominees were appointed to the Staff Council. Those appointed were from the following divisions/departments:

- College of Arts and Sciences
- School of Nursing & Health Professions
- School of Management
- Financial Services
- Registrar's Office
- Alumni Relations
- Information Technology Services
- Student Life
- Office of Development
- Center for Institutional Planning & Effectiveness
- Office of Assessment & Accreditation Support

GETTING STARTED

The Staff Council established an interim working group to determine both immediate and long-term processes for electing an Executive Board, determining subcommittee chairs, and setting a schedule for staff council meetings.

The working group was comprised of Melissa Thompson, Michelle Santana, Jill Ballard, and Elisabeth Merkel. The working group recommendations were unanimously approved by the Staff Council on April 20, 2022.

¹ Due to attrition, as of May 2023, the Staff Council was comprised of only 17 members. Elections were not held to replace the empty seats because the council still met the threshold for membership per the bylaws.

Electing the Executive Board

The Executive Board election was conducted by the Staff Council Steering Committee from May 13, 2022 through May 17, 2022. The results were as follows:

- Melissa Thompson, President
- Michelle Santana, Vice President
- Gina Alvarez, Clerk

Determining Subcommittee Members & Chairs

The Interim Working Group recommended that subcommittees should have at least three (3) and no more than five (5) members on each committee. Council members were asked to provide the Executive Board with their top choices for the subcommittees they would like to sit on via a Google Form. The Executive Board then reviewed the choices and determined the subcommittee membership. Subcommittees then met and determine their Subcommittee Chair.

The Subcommittee Chairs were as follows:

- Angelika Williams, Elections & Governance
- Danielle Castillo, Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability
- Jill Ballard, Institutional Effectiveness & Safety
- Lamonte Stamps, Janice Chuakay, and Elisabeth Merkel (Rotating Chairs) Awards & Recognition
- Michael Fraley, Professional Development
- Steph Carter, Communications

Setting Meeting Schedule & Creation of the Executive Committee

The Staff Council unanimously selected the second Wednesday of every month as the date for the Staff Council open meetings; however, because the meetings were open to all staff members, it was determined that

there was a need for closed, working meetings. In order to accomplish this, an Executive Committee was formed comprised of the Executive Board and all Subcommittee Chairs. The Executive Committee met monthly in advance of the open Staff Council Meetings.

Developing Staff Communication Methods

In addition to providing a set time during Staff Council meetings for staff to raise questions/concerns and provide feedback, the council instituted multiple methods to engage staff and solicit feedback. This included:

- Staff Council official email address
- Webpage
- Email updates
- A monthly newsletter
- An anonymous “Contact Us” field on the webpage

Determining Communication Methods with Leadership

In August 2023, the Executive Board met with Diane Nelson, Associate Vice President, Human Resources, to discuss how the Staff Council would communicate recommendations to Leadership. It was determined that all recommendations should be sent to Diane Nelson, who would review and communicate the recommendations to President Fitzgerald and/or appropriate members of the Leadership Team.

Determining Document Retention Methods

A shared Google Drive was created by the Staff Council Steering Committee, which the Executive Board determined would be the primary repository for all documents related to Staff Council.

Council Activities

What did we accomplish? How did we respond to staff feedback?

DETERMINING PRIORITIES & RESPONDING TO STAFF FEEDBACK

Staff feedback and concerns were recorded by the Executive Board in a Google sheet stored in the Staff Council Google Drive and assigned action items to the appropriate subcommittees. Priorities were often determined in Executive Committee meetings or by the Executive Board when concerns were raised by constituents. Subcommittees then researched current information and practices, identified gaps, determined needs, and made recommendations on behalf of staff to applicable university administrative parties via the Staff Council Executive Board.

All actions taken by the Staff Council were communicated to staff via Staff Council meetings as well as the monthly newsletter.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LEADERSHIP

Staff Constituency Representation at the Board of Trustees

One of the first orders of business that the Staff Council was tasked with was responding to staff's concerns that they did not have representation during the Board of Trustees (BOT) meetings. Efforts to gain staff constituency representation began in August 2022.

On December 13, 2022, Diane Nelson notified the Executive Board that President Fitzgerald was working with BOT leadership to request that a Staff Council representative be invited, parallel to the other university representatives, to serve as a guest at BOT plenary meetings. The Staff Council would also be invited to the social occasions of the Board meetings (a dinner and a lunch) for informal interaction with Board members. In

that email, the Staff Council was asked to determine a representative to attend these meetings. The Executive Committee of the Staff Council unanimously voted and determined that the Staff Council President shall be the staff constituency representative.

On January 31, 2023, Diane Nelson notified the Executive Board that the Staff Council President would begin attending the BOT meetings beginning with the first meeting in the fall of 2023.

University Masking Policy

On September 27, 2022, Staff Council was asked by Diane Nelson to provide input on the subject of updating the USF on-campus masking policy to reflect declining COVID transmissions in San Francisco.

The Executive Board requested feedback from Staff Council members and on September 30, 2022 sent a formal letter to the President's Cabinet which included the feedback we gathered and a recommendation to continue the current mask mandate for the remainder of the fall 2022 semester and reassess prior to the beginning of the spring 2023 semester. (See Appendix A)

One Card Recommendation

Staff Council heard ongoing concerns voiced by staff about the difficulty of receiving physical One Cards, either as replacements for lost cards or for new employees. After considerable research from the Institutional Effectiveness & Safety Subcommittee, a formal recommendation was sent to Diane Nelson that requested USF return to its former policy and practice of providing a physical One Card to staff members when requested and replacing lost physical One

Cards, upon the request of the employee, with no special case-by-case review. (See Appendix B)

This recommendation is pending review by Leadership.

Mental Health Resources Recommendation

Staff expressed concerns during the Staff Council meetings about the mental health benefits offered to staff members. The Inclusion, Diversity for Education, and Accountability Subcommittee conducted research to determine the mental health offerings at other institutions, especially those within the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). Based on their research, a formal recommendation was sent to Diane Nelson on May 16, 2023. to expand mental health benefits for USF staff to at least 10 sessions, similar to other AJCUs; promote Parentline Services to the USF community; subsidize mental health sessions if a staff member requires more than 10 sessions; and expand in-house services by collaborating with PsyD and CPSY programs to offer in-house mental health services. (See Appendix C)

This recommendation is pending review by Leadership.

AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

The Staff Council made two amendments to the Bylaws. The first was voted on and approved by the Staff Council on September 14, 2022. This amendment to Article IX.E removed the requirement to send the Staff Council newsletter monthly, removed the requirement to maintain minutes (this was in Article VI, Section 2. And was duplicative), and changed "University updates" to "Staff Council updates."

The Executive Board, in conjunction with the Elections & Governance Subcommittee,

conducted a review of the bylaws with a goal of streamlining them. The Staff Council determined that a full review and revision of the bylaws was more advantageous than submitting multiple amendments. The revisions were made by the Executive Board and reviewed by the entire Staff Council. On May 10, 2023 the revised bylaws were unanimously approved by the members in attendance at the Staff Council meeting.

COLLABORATIONS

Spotlight Speaker

Based on feedback from staff, in early 2023, the Staff Council instituted a Spotlight Speaker series with the goal of inviting various campus leaders to the Staff Council meetings to highlight the work they are doing on campus. In March 2023, Sabrina Kwist, Associate Vice Provost for Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, attended the Staff Council meeting as the first Spotlight Speaker. She discussed ADEI's initiatives to build out an antiracism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI) plan with every college/school and throughout the university.

Happy Hour with ADEI

As a result of the Spotlight Speaker series, Sabrina Kwist reached out to the Staff Council in March 2023 to and invited Staff Council to collaborate by co-hosting a gathering on campus for staff in partnership with the Provost's Office.

A happy hour was held on April 4, 2023 in the Koret Lodge. This was a wonderful opportunity for staff to come together on-campus and get to know both Staff Council and ADEI.

STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Meeting with SPAC

On September 21, 2022 the Strategic Plan Advisory Council (SPAC) invited the Staff Council to a brief presentation and discussion

of the implementation of the Strategic Plan to strengthen staff participation. Subcommittee Chairs were then asked to determine how their subcommittee goals aligned with the strategic plan so that the Staff Council could assist with strategic planning priorities by outlining any current efforts or future plans staff council had for supporting the Strategic Planning actions.

Appointment to Strategic Planning Working Group

The Staff Council also worked with Anastasia Vrachnos, Vice Provost, Global Education, Immersions, and Strategic Initiatives and Co-Chair of SPAC to ensure that a Staff Council representative was appointed to Strategic Planning Working Group #6: Develop Inclusive and Participatory Shared Governance Structures.

Staff Council members interested in being the representative to WG#6 provided a brief statement of interest in the position to the Executive Board who then reviewed the statements and selected Amy Joseph as the Staff Council Representative. Amy provided updates on the Working Group’s progress at the monthly Staff Council meetings.

Meeting with Dean of CAS

In December 2022, the Executive Board met with Eileen Fung (then Dean of CAS), per her request, to discuss CAS focused goals and initiatives and how to partner with the Staff Council to work on solutions regarding issues on engagement, retention and ADEI (as well as all initiatives).

In an effort to collaborate with CAS to create solution driven discussions around staff engagement and help ensure that all staff feel pride and gratitude for working within CAS and the university as a whole, the Executive Board provided Eileen with a copy of the Staff Council action items related to staff engagement.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Lamonte Stamps, Janice Chuakay, Elisabeth Merkel

Purpose of Subcommittee

In partnership with HR and other relevant university-wide departments and teams, the Awards and Recognition Subcommittee is tasked with conducting activities and programs that boost the morale of university staff members, such as staff awards and recognition, and to identify gaps and establish equity between Staff and Faculty across all awards and benefits; i.e. to recognize and honor university staff members for their valued commitment and dedication to enriching the University and community.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the Awards & Recognition Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Met with HR (Mara Krasts) to discuss Annual Merit Awards and address concerns about pandemic year merit awards and staff desiring public recognition of their service. Through our discussions, HR agreed to recognize those that contacted her directly to indicate they would be present and that this public acknowledgment was important to them. Awards & Recognition Subcommittee members were also asked to contribute to the ceremony by assisting in handing out the awards. We believe this work has helped bolster staff morale.
2. Worked to gather information on the annual awards and/or other recognition mechanisms/processes offered within each school/department with an eye towards equity and inclusion (i.e. staff vs faculty; school to school; etc.) and created a google sheet which was shared with

appropriate stakeholders/liaisons in the following schools/departments: Student Life, Strategic Enrollment Management, ITS, Development, CAS, SOM, SONHP, SOE, and SOL.

3. Worked to address staff concerns over the closure of the Faculty / Staff Lounge by determining why it had not reopened after the COVID closure. The Subcommittee reached out to appropriate personnel and discovered that: the Lounge did not reopen for use due to lack of BonApp personnel; the lounge was briefly opened for use as a space for faculty and staff to bring their own lunch; and the rainstorms that caused flooding in the university mailroom and their office was relocated to the lounge

This information was relayed to staff at Staff Council meetings.

4. Worked with the Communications Subcommittee to create a form on the Staff Council webpage for staff to submit staff accomplishments that would be highlighted on the Staff Council web page and in the monthly Staff Council newsletter.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Steph Carter, Donna Creasman, Amy Joseph

Purpose of Subcommittee

The Communications Subcommittee facilitates communications from and about the Staff Council, including producing a monthly newsletter, maintaining the Staff Council web site, and assisting the Executive Board and other Council subcommittees with their communications needs, as requested.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the Communications Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Launched a monthly newsletter, starting in October 2022. Newsletter analytics provided through the EMMA communications system showed that between October 2022 and May 2023, an average of 1,400 staff received the newsletter, with a 66% open rate (or, about 900 staff opened the newsletter) and an over 8% click rate. According to Mailchimp, good email engagement benchmarks average a 21% open rate and 2.6% click rate. By these measures, there was strong staff engagement with the Staff Council newsletter.
2. Edited and maintained the Staff Council website, including making changes requested by the Staff Council Executive Board, creating new pages and menus, organizing existing information, working with Web Services to create new forms for staff submissions (general comment form that routes to the Staff Council email, and to gather staff accomplishments for publication on the website and in the newsletter). Regularly posted Council agendas, minutes, and published newsletters.
3. Assisted the Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability (IDEA) Subcommittee with communication to university affinity groups to introduce IDEA members and offer assistance and support, if needed.

ELECTIONS & GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Angelika Williams, Elisabeth Merkel

Purpose of Subcommittee

The Elections & Governance Subcommittee sets up and supervises the election of Staff Council members and officers of the Executive Board and oversees updates to bylaws.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the Elections & Governance Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Assisted the Executive Board with amendments to the bylaws.
2. Set-up and supervised the Staff Council elections for the 2023-2024 Staff Council.
3. Conducted the University Budget Advisory Council staff representative election in 2023.

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY FOR EDUCATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY (IDEA) SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Danielle Castillo, Luwei Xie, Joshua McDermott

Purpose of Subcommittee

The IDEA Subcommittee supports staff and wider university diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability, investigates opportunities for improvements in diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability, responds to staff inquiries into IDEA resources, and facilitates conversations in an effort to bring answers.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the IDEA Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Compiled a list of all staff affiliate groups across the university and sent outreach to all staff affiliate groups notifying them of IDEA as an additional resource.
2. Based on feedback and concerns from staff around wellness and mental health resources available to staff, composed a recommendation to HR to provide staff with additional counseling sessions beyond the 8 currently offered (See Appendix C).

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & SAFETY (IE&S) SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Jill Ballard, Mary Bussi, Tim Swift

Purpose of Subcommittee

The IE&S Subcommittee provides staff a voice for their concerns to address campus safety and emergency response planning for human-made and natural disasters, health emergencies, and active intruders, and for their call to leadership for transparency, forethought, and clear communication in response to staff needs in these circumstances.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the IE&S Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Researched and wrote recommendations for providing the option of a physical One Card; submitted to Staff Council Executive Board, which was forwarded to Human Resources for consideration. This issue is still pending.

2. An IE&S Subcommittee member attended the USF Health & Safety Committee monthly meetings.
3. Began research for two pending action items: institutional staff remote work policies and communication; and active intruder emergency preparedness, plans for staff training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Subcommittee Members

Michael Fraley, Danielle Castillo, Luwei Xie

Purpose of Subcommittee

The Professional Development Subcommittee identifies current professional development opportunities within the colleges and divisions, gathers suggestions for professional development which the staff would like to see offered, and work with Human Resources to promote existing programs.

Accomplishments

Over the year, the Professional Development Subcommittee accomplished the following:

1. Created a list of various types of professional development for use in categorizing what is offered by colleges and divisions, which could also be used when polling staff on what kinds of professional development are most needed.
2. Compiled a list of LinkedIn Learning courses and USF links for professional development.
3. Hosted Suzanne Kisylia, Senior Wellness Manager, who spoke on the USF Wellness program at the January 27th Professional Development meeting.
4. Requested that the Communications subcommittee include information on the Managing Bias training offered by HR in a Staff Council newsletter.

Appendices

Appendix A: Staff Council Response to Masking Policy Change 09.30.22

Appendix B: Staff Council One Card Recommendation 03.31.23

Appendix C: Staff Council Mental Health Resources Recommendation 05.16.23



To: President's Cabinet

From: Melissa Thompson, Staff Council President
Michelle Santana, Staff Council Vice President
Gina Alvarez, Staff Council Clerk

Re: Updates to University Masking Policy

Date: September 30, 2022

On September 27, 2022, Staff Council was asked by Diane Nelson to provide input on the subject of updating the current USF on-campus masking policy. It is our understanding that the President's Cabinet is looking at the possibility of updating the current USF policy due to declining COVID transmissions in San Francisco.

The Executive Board of the Staff Council requested feedback from the Staff Council on September 27, 2022. Unfortunately, due to time constraints a formal poll of staff was not possible, though, Staff Council members informally reached out to their colleagues to gain a better understanding of staff's thoughts regarding changing the masking policy. It is important to note that people have differing opinions on this topic, and we cannot speak for all staff, but can relay the general input we've received and provide a recommendation.

While some staff members indicated they were comfortable with optional (though recommended) masking because it aligns with other local and CDC mask mandates (i.e. optional masking in restaurants, elementary schools, and other indoor activities) and it may encourage those who do not want to mask to come to campus more frequently, **it is recommended that the current mask mandate continue for the remainder of the fall 2022 semester and that the Cabinet reassess prior to the beginning of the spring 2023 semester.** Additionally, should the Cabinet choose to lift the mask mandate it is recommended that this coincide with the beginning of a semester.

There were several rationales given for this (in no particular order):

- Previous years have shown that rates of COVID-19 transmission tend to rise in October and November, and once we make masking optional, it may be difficult to reinstate it if numbers rise again.
- Flu season is starting, raising vulnerability for transmission of both flu and COVID-19.
- For those staff who also teach, when they agreed to teach in-person this semester it was with the understanding that masks would be required for in-person classes.



There were other concerns regarding lifting the mask mandate that we ask the Cabinet to consider:

- While faculty and staff are currently encouraged to be fully vaccinated, including boosters when eligible, vaccination is not a requirement. Some staff members do not feel comfortable being indoors on-campus without required masking.
- Should the Cabinet choose to lift the indoor mask mandate, masking should be encouraged (especially for unvaccinated persons).
- Some staff suggested that, if masks become optional, we require proof of vaccination for staff, faculty, and students, and require visitors to show their vaccine status or acknowledge a policy that masking is strongly encouraged if you are not vaccinated.
- Some are concerned that the [long-term effects](#) on one's health of contracting COVID-19 are still largely unknown; that, according to the CDC, COVID-19 is, as of today's writing, still killing nearly [350 people a day nationwide](#) and [85%](#) of the nation is still seeing high or substantial community transmission rates.
- Some believe that a continued mask mandate would not be overly burdensome given that it has been proven that masks, if worn correctly, greatly reduce transmission of COVID-19 (a largely airborne virus).
- Some staff members who themselves have significant medical complexities and diagnosis or who live with others who do, must take extreme caution when it comes to COVID-19 and would like us to consider a continued mask mandate in order to protect our most vulnerable.
- It was also noted that continuing to wear masks on-campus aligns with the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis — care of the whole person. Cura personalis is meant to be a guiding principle that inspires USF's proactive and compassionate approach. If, indeed, USF believes that one's physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social, environmental, and spiritual health are integral to one's success at USF an argument can be made that continuing to wear masks aligns with the Jesuit principle of one's responsibility to protect the vulnerable amongst us.

Those who are in favor of lifting the indoor mask mandate largely indicated that they believe this should be done in alignment with local and CDC guidelines, that masks should be recommended in crowded situations, and that USF should closely monitor infection rates in the community and update masking policies to reflect any increase in transmission rates.

We thank you for the opportunity for the Staff Council to provide feedback on this important decision.

Regards,

Staff Council Executive Board

To: USF President's Cabinet
From: USF Staff Council
Re: Physical One Cards
Date: March 31, 2023

The USF Staff Council has heard ongoing concerns voiced by staff about the difficulty of receiving physical One Cards, either as replacements for lost cards or for new employees. The purpose of this recommendation is to make permanent the option for new or replacement physical One Cards for staff. This recommendation aligns with those from OPE and USF Workers United.

The Current State

Staff must use USF One Card to unlock doors and gain entrance into university buildings and facilities. Since the university moved to mobile credentials, employees are expected to use the GET Mobile App, on their personal mobile devices, to access their One Card. For many employees, access through the GET Mobile app has proven problematic and the option for staff to obtain a physical One Card either as a replacement for a lost or damaged One Card or as a new employee has proven very challenging. The [USF website](#) notes that “*any physical card replacement requests will need to be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis as the University has moved to mobile credentials.*” Recent experience by staff has shown that it can take significant persistence and advocacy to arrange for a new physical card. This should not be the case.

Recommendation and Rationale

We are requesting a permanent option for new or replacement physical One Cards for staff for the following reasons:

- **Reliability:** If the GET Mobile app is not working staff are unable to enter campus buildings. This can happen for a variety of reasons: older phones, the phone may run out of power or shut down, or the technology may simply not be working at that moment. We do recognize that those using an iPhone XS, XS Max, XR, or newer devices, may be able to use Express Mode and still access the Mobile USF One Card from their Apple Wallet for up to 5 hours after the device's battery needs to be charged, but not all employees have compatible iPhones and the employee will not have access after the 5-hour window of accessibility if they are unable to charge their phone during that time.
- **Safety:** If a staff member needs to quickly enter a campus building (late at night or in a difficult situation), relying on an app that occasionally doesn't work creates a serious safety concern.
- **Privacy and employer obligation to provide work-related equipment:** Employees should not be required to use their personal mobile devices for work access.
- **Equity:** Not all employees have personal mobile devices that support the Get Mobile app.
- **Sustainability:** Wristbands are not a good permanent physical solution. The wristband is no more environmentally friendly than the plastic card and can be awkward and undesirable (including, for some, an allergic reaction to the material).

For all of these reasons, we respectfully request that USF returns to its former policy and practice of providing a physical One Card to staff members when requested and replacing lost physical One Cards, upon the request of the employee, with no special case-by-case review.

Sincerely,

Staff Council



USF Staff Council
2130 Fulton St.
San Francisco, CA 94117

To: USF President's Cabinet
From: USF Staff Council
Re: Mental Health Resources
Date: May 16, 2023

The Staff Council at the University of San Francisco wishes to express concerns brought forward by staff during the staff council meetings regarding the current mental health benefits offered to our staff members.

During our staff council meetings, we have discussed examples of mental health offerings at other institutions, especially those within the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). We have learned that [Seattle University](#) and [Santa Clara University](#), both AJCUs, are able to cover up to ten (10) counseling sessions. However, USF only provides eight (8) sessions, which we believe is too short. If a staff member attends sessions weekly, they would receive only two months of coverage. As you may be aware, the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at USF is only available to students, and we would urge USF to consider having mental health services available on campus for staff.

Given the significant hardship our staff members have gone through during the pandemic, we believe it is essential to adjust and expand our mental health benefits to better support staff well-being. We are aware that mental health is more critical now than ever, and we need our benefits to reflect the times we are currently in by providing more mental health resources.

Therefore, the Staff Council, on behalf of staff, would like to make the following recommendations to expand mental health benefits for USF staff:

1. Request for more sessions: We urge USF to offer at least 10 sessions, similar to other AJCUs.
2. Promote Parentline Services to the USF community: We believe that promoting Parentline Services (<https://usfblogs.usfca.edu/parentline/>) would provide additional mental health resources for staff members who are becoming parents.
3. Subsidize for sessions beyond 10: If staff members need more than ten sessions, we suggest USF subsidize the cost of the additional sessions.
4. Expand in-house services: We recommend that USF collaborate with PSYD and CPSY programs to offer in-house mental health services.

We understand that implementing these recommendations may take some time, and we appreciate your efforts in considering them. We believe that by expanding our mental health benefits, we can provide a more supportive and caring environment for our staff members, which will help USF achieve its strategic goal of ensuring USF is an equitable and extraordinary place to work. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and possible timeline for these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability Subcommittee
USF Staff Council



Report Completed by
Melissa Thompson, Staff Council
President
June 2022 through May 2023