

## **STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, January 8, 2025**

### **Voting Members Present:**

**Executive Board:** Carolina Martinez (President), Will Vitagliano (Vice President)

**Staff Council Members:** Alexandra Schaeffer, Corey Kowalczyke, Gustavo Cabezas III, Ken Yoshioka, Kimberly Bruno, Luca Ameri, Pedro Gonzalez, Steven Bosso, Tina Ricafrente, Vincent Hom, Daniel Tayakin, Andrew Palos, Nicholas Ynami

**Voting Members Absent:** Hannah Ogden, Jessica Li

**Guests in Attendance:** Staff Members

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### **Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum [9+]) – Carolina Martinez (12:00 - 12:05 PM)**

- Meeting called to order at 12:02 PM by the Staff Council President.
- Notice made that the meeting is recorded for note-taking purposes.
- Bylaws state meetings are open to all staff including the President's Cabinet and Leadership Team and there will be a Q&A/open discussion session during the meeting for all staff in attendance.
- Staff Council Member roll call conducted: 15 present, 2 absent, quorum reached.

### **Motion**

- Meeting minutes from the December 11, 2024 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Ken Yoshioka. Second motion was made by Will Vitagliano. Motion carried.

### **Updates from Executive Board – Carolina Martinez (12:05 - 12:15 PM)**

- **Review December Meeting with Diane Nelson**
  - The Executive Board met with Diane to share what each subcommittees are working on. Following this, there was a discussion about potential changes to the facilities and how these changes might impact each office. Carolina has reached out to the Facilities team for further details and is currently awaiting their response.
- **Open Staff Council Positions**
  - Currently, 17 out of 24 Staff Council positions are filled. We hope to encourage more staff members to join in an official capacity to foster shared governance and ensure that staff voices are represented throughout the University.
- **2024 Non-Union Staff Performance Review**
  - The non-union staff performance review period will take place from January 6th to January 24th. Staff are expected to complete their reviews within the designated deadlines outlined on HR's webpage, which can be found [HERE](#).

### **Update on Staff Council Subcommittees – Will Vitagliano (12:15 - 12:25 PM)**

- **Awards and Recognition (Ken)**
  - **Establishing an Awards and Recognition Program.** The subcommittee met before the winter break and is currently in the research phase, exploring how other universities structure their awards and recognition programs. This research will serve as a guideline for developing an official program for our departments.
- **Communications (Nick)**
  - **Newsletter.** No newsletter has been sent out yet this month due to the short turnaround time following the winter break. The subcommittee aims to send one by the end of the week and encourages members to contribute announcements or updates from their subcommittees. Additionally, the newsletter will highlight Staff Council initiatives to promote transparency and encourage greater staff participation.
- **Elections & Governance (Daniel)**

- There are no new updates, as the subcommittee has not met since the previous meeting. Their top priority remains working with the Staff Council to increase awareness and encourage more staff to get involved.
- **Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability (Corey)**
  - **Expanding Sick Time Definition.** The subcommittee met before the winter break, with Ainsley Shellcross joining as a non-Staff Council member. They discussed Paid Time Off (PTO) and sick time, specifically looking at what comparable schools are doing in terms of defining and structuring these benefits. The subcommittee is also exploring the possibility of expanding sick time and whether mental health could be included in that definition, considering the varying cultures across departments.
  - **Protecting Freedom of Speech and Expression.** The committee is still researching what other schools have in place to protect staff's freedom of speech and expression.
- **Campus Accessibility and Safety (Luca)**
  - **Open Spot.** Luca will no longer be part of the Staff Council as he is leaving USF for another opportunity. This will create a vacancy for the Staff Council, and a new chair will be appointed for this subcommittee.
  - **Staff Accessibility Services.** The subcommittee is still in the research phase of exploring what USF can offer full-time staff members in terms of accessibility, without overlapping with Student Accessibility Services, which operates as a separate department. Through their research, they have compiled a list of accessibility offerings from other universities. Based on this, they will assess what is feasible and begin drafting a proposal for HR.
    - [Research On Staff Accessibility Services](#)
- **Professional Development (Kimberly Bruno)**
  - The subcommittee met on December 19th, marking Jessica's last meeting with the group. Ani Mora-Rogers and Kevin Collymore joined as non-Staff Council members and contributed valuable ideas and suggestions to the projects the subcommittee is working on.
  - **Staff Sabbaticals.** Kevin shared additional information with the subcommittee regarding staff sabbaticals at other universities. The goal of this project is to establish resources and a clear framework that staff members can use to discuss sabbatical eligibility with their managers, when appropriate.
  - **Brown Bag Lunches.** The subcommittee is currently brainstorming potential topics that staff would like to see covered. They are in the discussion and research phase, and plan to launch a Google Form to gather feedback on topics, preferred dates, and times. The goal is to have the form ready by February.

#### **Update on Other University Committees (12:18 - 12:23 PM)**

- UBAC – Will Vitagliano
  - There has been ongoing discussion to gain a sense of the budget and where the financials are heading. A key focus has been on "right sizing" – evaluating new programs for potential investment, as well as considering mergers and collaborations of existing programs to identify cost savings. Difficult conversations about the possibility of closing some programs are also taking place. The goal is to ensure the right balance of students, staff, and faculty to meet the university's goals and continue providing services to students. There is also a focus on increasing student yield, with ongoing efforts to create attractive and innovative programs that can draw more students in. Conversations have also centered on the operational budget shortfall, which currently stands at approximately \$7 million. At this time, departments are not being asked to make cuts. Instead, discussions are focused on balancing vacant roles and reducing operational costs where appropriate to offset the shortfall.
  - During the discussions, staff raised concerns about job security, particularly regarding the potential for furloughs. However, it was noted that furloughs were not mentioned during the UBAC meeting.

### **New Business/Open Forum/Q&A (12:23-12:33 PM)**

- **Indigenous People's Day.** An anonymous comment suggested that the University consider observing Indigenous People's Day. The Executive Board brought this up to HR, and the discussion centered on how to make this feasible within the University's current budget and how to cover the cost for staff and faculty to have the day off. A realistic date for this observance could be in October, aligning with the second Monday of the month, which often coincides with students' fall break, making it a potential possibility.
- Carolina asked the group who would be interested in pursuing this idea further and mentioned the possibility of submitting a proposal for 2025, potentially for October 13th. A suggestion was made to look at how Juneteenth was recently established as a paid holiday in 2020 as a model for this proposal. The IDEAS subcommittee is willing to explore this further.
- **Evaluations Performance Review.** There is a positive reception to moving beyond just "meets expectations" and one level above, "exceeds expectations," in performance evaluations. However, staff still have concerns and confusion around these definitions and how to properly rank performance, particularly the difference between "meets expectations" and "exceeds expectations." Staff members emphasized the importance of recognizing others for their hard work to ensure that employees feel valued.
  - *"Meeting Expectations" means an employee reliably delivers on the key duties of their role. This level is the foundation upon which higher performance ratings are built. Employees who exceed this baseline demonstrate exceptional contributions beyond these established expectations. Use this guidance to assess if the employee has met, or occasionally exceeded, the expected performance in their role."* - [Defining Expectations in Performance Reviews 2024](#)

### **Announcements (12:33-12:35 PM)**

- **Go Move Challenge 2025 Kick-Off Event (January 30th).** Kick off the 13th annual [Go Move Challenge](#) with happy hour and women's basketball! Provident Credit Union will sponsor our reception at the Sobrato Club (4:30-6). Afterward, cheer on the women's team against LMU at Sobrato Center (6pm).
- **Go Move Challenge Information. (Feb 1 - Feb 28).** It's time to register for the 13th annual [Go Move Challenge](#). In this challenge, faculty and staff from all the AJCU Institutions compete by tracking their physical activity minutes to see which is the most active. Throughout the month, players will track their physical activity, defined as light, moderate or vigorous activity where your heart rate and/or breathing increases.

### **Adjournment (12:35 PM)**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, Noon-1PM.** Click [here](#) to join the meeting (same link as above).

### **SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

- Meeting minutes from the December 11, 2024 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Ken Yoshioka. Second motion was made by Will Vitagliano. Motion carried.

### **DOCUMENTS REFERENCED DURING MEETING**

- [Research On Staff Accessibility Services](#)
- [HR Performance Management Program Information](#)
- [Defining Expectations in Performance Reviews 2024](#)
- [13th Annual Go Move Challenge](#)