

## STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, January 10, 2024

### Voting Members Present:

Executive Board: Domonique Crosby (President), Jill Ballard (Vice President), Amy F. Joseph (Clerk and Meeting Recorder)

Staff Council Members: Claudine Bibeau Parks, Steven Bosso, Danielle Castillo, Kimberly Bruno, Erin Echols, Ella Frazer, Corey Kowalczyke, Carolina Martinez, Elisabeth Merkel, Mark Papadopoulos, Tina Ricafrente, Alexandra Schaeffer, Will Vitagliano, Luwei Xie, Nicholas Ynami, Ken Yoshioka

**Voting Members Absent:** Janice Chuakay, Joshua McDermott, Melissa Thompson

**Guests in Attendance:** Staff Members

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### I. Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum)/Approve Staff Council Meeting Minutes 12/13/23 – Domonique (3 min)

- Meeting called to order at 12:01 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: 19 present, 3 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council meeting minutes for December 13, 2023 meeting.

#### Motion

- Meeting minutes from the December 13, 2023 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Domonique Crosby. Second motion was made by Amy Joseph. Motion carried.

### II. Updates from Executive Board – Domonique (7 min)

- The President updated the Staff Council on the Executive Board's most recent monthly meeting with Staff Council liaison Diane Nelson. First, the Executive Board is hoping to secure a budget for a Staff Council social event in late February or early March. The event was discussed with Diane and a formal proposal for the event will be sent to Father Fitzgerald next week. We hope the event will give the Staff Council more visibility and help recruit new people for the upcoming election.
  - The Executive Board followed up on the emailed questions they had about the planned Pay Equity survey for exempt staff. Diane reported that the email had been forwarded to Donna Davis, General Counsel, and that she would follow up with Donna. The Executive Board asked that the update be given to us by the end of January.
  - As mentioned in the December meeting, while the Staff Council declined to undertake the entire Service and Merit awards event, we would like to support the process and partner with HR where we can. We pledged to have some members give out awards at the May ceremony. The President also volunteered to serve on the nomination committee. (Please see additional comments by the Awards and Recognition chair, below.)
  - Diane asked the Executive Board to let staff who are currently working on appraisals in Work Day know that HR is here to support them. If staff have any questions about the process, they can write [humanresources@usfca.edu](mailto:humanresources@usfca.edu). There are HR staff who can assist.
  - The Vice President provided an update on an upcoming pilot to welcome non-Staff Council staff to join a subcommittee. The Executive Committee is still discussing exactly what it might look like—for example, there may not be one person for every subcommittee by the end of the term in May—but anyone who is interested in possibly sitting on a subcommittee should write [staffcouncil@usfca.edu](mailto:staffcouncil@usfca.edu). We hope this will provide more opportunities for staff-at-large to have their voice heard on Staff Council. More information will be forthcoming.
  - The Vice President reported that the Executive Committee will be discussing subcommittee action items and priorities in light of the [Staff Survey Report](#).
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- The Clerk reported that the Executive Board had reached out to the Elections and Governance subcommittee about this spring's election for new Staff Council members. The Clerk noted that the bylaws state the Staff Council should have approximately 23 members. This spring, we have nine openings for new Staff Council members: eight members who are finishing their terms and one opening due to a member who resigned last summer.
- The Vice President encouraged everyone to connect with their peers/cohorts to spread the word about the need for new Staff Council members for 2024-25.
- The Clerk added that the bylaws state we should have a minimum of four union-represented members on the Staff Council, but we currently only have two. Please encourage union-represented staff to consider nominating themselves when the time comes.

### III. Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Jill (10 min)

The Vice President reminded the subcommittees to turn in their spring meeting schedules to her, if they haven't already.

#### Awards and Recognition – Ken Yoshioka (Chair)

- No updates, but the subcommittee did have some questions about how tasks are assigned to Awards and Recognition. Are there projects that departments and divisions want to undertake, but haven't yet? How can Awards and Recognition learn about such projects and possibly lend support to them?
- The chair reported that they would be reaching out to Mara Krasts in HR to offer the subcommittee's assistance with the Service and Awards event.
- The chair praised the the new Work Day process for appraisals, which has standardized the evaluation process across all departments. The chair noted this is a big plus.

#### Communications – Ella Frazer (Chair)

- The chair encouraged the other subcommittees to submit items for the monthly newsletter.

#### Elections & Governance – Carolina Martinez (Chair)

- The chair reported that the subcommittee is currently ensuring that they use the resources available to assist them in running the upcoming election in March/April. They will also explore if any improvements can be made to the process this year.
- The chair echoed the Vice President in encouraging staff to get the word out about the Staff Council election.

#### Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability – Corey Kowalczyke (Chair)

- The chair reported that the subcommittee was able to meet with Ifeoma Nzerem from the ADEI office at their last meeting. They arranged to meet with ADEI once a semester going forward. Topics discussed included strategic priorities, goals, determining where overlap exists and trying to consolidate efforts, and future work to identify any staff affinity groups that need to be updated on the website.
- The chair noted that the subcommittee talked about how to best support staff affinity groups, since usually the groups are run by a single staff person who takes on most of the work. IDEA wants to explore how they can lessen that workload.
- The Clerk reported to the chair that an anonymous suggestion came through the Staff Council website form asking about an affinity group for staff with disabilities. The staff member suggested one might be started, if one doesn't exist yet.

#### Institutional Effectiveness and Safety - Claudine Bibeau Parks (Chair)

- The chair was unable to connect to the meeting, so another subcommittee member provided an update. The member noted that they had participated in the monthly USF Health and Safety Committee meeting the day before. One item they can share from that meeting is that Health Promotion Services reported that 98% of the USF student body is vaccinated for COVID, which

is excellent. HPS also has many COVID tests for students on-hand; so many that any staff or faculty who need a test can stop by and pick one up at the HPS office in UC 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

#### Professional Development – Kimberly Bruno (Chair)

- The chair reported the subcommittee completed the Staff Council Welcome Letter for new staff and sent it to the Executive Board for feedback.

### **IV. Update on Other University Committee(s) (2 min)**

#### **University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC): Elisabeth Merkel**

- As mentioned in the last Staff Council meeting, UBAC entered the process to review discretionary and non-discretionary budget requests from all departments across the University. There were eight discretionary requests. UBAC members asked a lot of questions. UBAC sent all the requests to vote (Yes, No, or Abstain). All eight requests passed with a Yes, so they were approved. One of the largest requests came from undergraduate Strategic Enrollment Management to prioritize their digital marketing campaign. This aligns closely with the initiatives and priorities of the University, so it was approved. The next UBAC meeting is next week.

### **V. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (32 mins)**

#### **Topic: Vacation Cap Raised for Exempt Staff**

- The Clerk asked HR to clarify if exempt staff who were not Executive Officers also had their [Vacation Cap](#) raised, as HR recently announced. Director of Benefits Diane Sweeney confirmed via email: “Administrators covers administrative staff (non-union) so the cap has moved to 30 days.” The Clerk had found the wording on the website a little confusing, so she wanted to pass this on to other staff in case they needed clarification.

#### **Topic: CAS Forming an Exempt Staff Council**

- The Clerk reported that the College of Arts and Sciences is forming an Exempt Staff Council, along the lines of the existing CAS P.A. Council. The Clerk attended the planning meeting, where it was explained that similar to the P.A. Council, the Exempt Staff Council would work closely with the CAS Dean’s Office on a regular basis. The Clerk wasn’t aware if there are similar councils that exist in USF’s other Colleges/Schools, as she is a part of CAS, but hopefully all such councils can eventually be in communication with us. This way, we can collaborate across campus and check that we are not doubling up on similar tasks as well.

#### **Topic: USF Strategic Plan and Staff**

- A Staff Council member noted that the [Strategic Plan dashboard](#) has very little in it about staff. There isn’t really anything about improving staff working conditions or worker satisfaction. Last year, Working Group #5 addressed the strategic priority, “Ensure USF is an Equitable and Extraordinary Place To Work” and made recommendations that are not reflected in the dashboard. The member asked if Staff Council can have a voice in promoting the recommendations for inclusion on the dashboard. They noted that staff put in a lot of hours and work really hard, and some may feel like they are just cogs in a wheel. We want to promote a culture change, long-term, in how we value staff. The member confirmed they spoke with Linda Wong, liaison to SPAC. Linda was in attendance at this Staff Council meeting and confirmed the information discussed was passed on to SPAC. Linda noted that SPAC welcomes feedback.
- The Vice President suggested that the Staff Council/Executive Board might consider connecting with [SPAC](#), particularly with Advisory Council member Vice Provost Anastasia Vrachnos, to talk about having recommendations pertaining to staff included more specifically. Perhaps if the Executive Board has another meeting with Provost Eileen Fung, they can raise the issue. The Vice President agreed this was an important matter.
- The President concurred and noted the important distinction between the recommendations made by all the working groups and the current dashboard, which reflects what Leadership has chosen to focus on. Worthwhile questions include, “Where are the recommendations from Working Group #5? When will staff be a focus for our campus?” The President acknowledged the

difficult situation regarding the University's budget, but there is a real need to focus on staff. There needs to be an investment in the people who work here, in order to keep us working here. Staff roles are equally important in all the things we do to make sure that our students are okay.

### **Topic: Increasing Union-Represented Staff on Staff Council**

- An OPE staff member in attendance followed up on the Clerk's earlier remarks about needing to increase union-represented staff on Staff Council. The staff member noted that it's clearly stated in the bylaws that the minimum number of OPE union representation required is four. In a recent quarterly meeting with Provost Fung, the question of why there is no OPE representation on the Staff Council Executive Board was also raised. We need to do a better job of promoting nominations for OPE staff. The staff member volunteered to make announcements to this effect on the OPE Canvas site. It is imperative we get the word out to meet the requirement of the bylaws and to increase OPE representation. The Communications subcommittee might help with this; the staff member is willing to work with them.
- A member of the Elections and Governance subcommittee concurred about doing more outreach to union staff. He suggested that Staff Council might undertake two elections within the election cycle to ensure sufficient OPE representation. This is something that can be discussed at a future Executive Committee meeting.
- The President thanked the staff member for bringing this up, and noted that at the previous institution where she worked, the Staff Council had lots of representation categories that had to be filled very specifically. It may indeed involve another election to ensure proper representation. It is imperative we hold to the numbers the bylaws require.
- Another Staff Council member noted that it can be challenging to attract OPE staff, as they have so much on their plate and may not feel that they have the time to devote to this kind of service. Ensuring union staff have support in their work life to take on something like the Staff Council is a critical cultural change that has to happen.
- The Clerk mentioned that when she was a PA she looked for cross-campus service opportunities to help with her professional development and advancement. Perhaps Staff Council might be attractive in that way. But she concurred with the concern the Staff Council member raised.
- The Vice President noted that it's important how department managers view and support staff service such as sitting on the Staff Council. For some staff, their managers may see it as a positive, while other managers may see it differently. It's important that staff have managerial support for this service, including allowances for the time commitment required. How can we change the culture so that all staff are supported for such work?
- A Staff Council member mentioned that there is an admin cohort in Student Life/UC 5<sup>th</sup> that is mostly made up of OPE staff. There have been a recent wave of new hires who are eager to get more involved. The member will help promote Staff Council to them.
- Another Staff Council member encouraged the members to think about how can we get more people involved? And how can we show the community our efforts? We have the newsletter, but are there other ways to showcase our work? For example, it could really get people's attention if it was better known that we are working on proposals for Friday summers off or the return of staff sabbaticals. How do we use the results of the Staff Survey and ensure we get consistent feedback regarding if we're on the right track or not?
- The President noted that the Staff Council Executive Board sends out letters to all new Staff Council members' supervisors to let them know of their service and that the employee needs time to devote to the Council. Maybe we could post details about what's involved on the website for people to look at beforehand? For example, the website might outline the time commitment involved, so staff can have those conversations with their supervisors ahead of time. The supervisor letter is signed by the Staff Council President, but perhaps an administrative stamp of approval or another signature on the letter might give it more weight. How do we outline this service so staff can have a conversation with their supervisor about what the staff is taking on. Service to the University is so important, how do we get supervisors to encourage it?
- A staff member suggested perhaps Diane Nelson's signature could be on the letter as well, so the letter would be stamped by HR in some way and perhaps have more weight. Or perhaps even Father Fitzgerald or Provost Fung's signature.
- Other Staff Council members concurred that staff service to the University needs to be better acknowledged and supported. Staff Council might help start a cultural change towards staff service.

### **Topic: Staff Survey Report**

- In response to a staff member's question about the [Staff Survey Report](#), the President encouraged staff to share the report with their colleagues. The President noted that she had her team read and reflect on the report; the more ways we find to circulate

the report, the more helpful it will be. In terms of where we go from here, the Executive Committee will be reviewing the Staff Survey Report and discussing action items that align with staff's priorities and how we can pivot, if need be, to better address staff concerns. Ultimately, the Executive Board will write to the Administration this semester with requests and recommendations to help USF meet some of these pressing priorities.

- The staff member noted that what OPE bargained for in the summer exactly aligned with the Staff Survey's top priorities, which included exempt staff concerns. This emphasizes how important it is to get this report read and followed through with by Leadership.

## **VI. Announcements (0 min)**

- Senior Wellness Manager Suzy Kisylia announced in chat that there are a lot of educational seminars coming up related to sleep, decluttering, and other topics. Staff can check out [gousf.usfca.edu](https://gousf.usfca.edu) and register to get the weekly GoUSF newsletter for the latest news and [offerings](#) within wellness and with our wellness partners.

## **VII. Meeting Adjourned at 12:55 PM by Domonique Crosby, Staff Council President**

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, February 14, 2023. Click on this link to join (registration no longer required):  
<https://usfca.zoom.us/j/87396988358>

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)

### **SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

- Meeting minutes from the December 13, 2023 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Domonique Crosby. Second motion was made by Amy Joseph. Motion carried.

### **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

- The Executive Board will follow up with SPAC regarding including staff recommendations on Strategic Plan dashboard.
- The Communications subcommittee will work to spread the word to encourage union-represented/OPE staff to run for the Staff Council and Executive Board.
- The IDEA subcommittee will determine if there's a staff with disabilities affinity group.
- The Executive Board will look into bolstering the supervisor letter that gets sent to new members' managers, as well as consider posting more information about what the commitment to Staff Council involves on the website so staff can look at it before committing.
- This semester the Executive Board will be writing a document to Administration addressing the priorities that came out of the Staff Survey from last semester, including any recommendations or requests.