

STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Voting Members Present:

Executive Board: Carolina Martinez (President), Will Vitagliano (Vice President), Jessica Li (Clerk and Meeting Recorder)

Staff Council Members: Corey Kowalczyke, Gustavo Cabezas III, Ken Yoshioka, Pedro Gonzalez, Steven Bosso, Tina Ricafrente, Vincent Hom, Daniel Tayakin, Andrew Palos, Hannah Ogden

Voting Members Absent: Kimberly Bruno, Alexandra Schaeffer, Nicholas Ynami

Guests in Attendance: Staff Members

Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum [9+]) – Carolina Martinez (12:00 PM - 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: 13 present, 3 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council Meeting Minutes for Jan 8 meeting.

Motion

- Meeting minutes from the Jan 8th, 2025 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Ken Yoshioka. Second motion was made by Wil Vitagliano. Motion carried.

Updates from Executive Board – President (12:06 PM -12:10 PM)

- **Report on Monthly Staff Council & HR Liaison Meeting**
 - **Leadership Searches**
 - **President:** The search is ongoing, with the goal of filling this position by summer 2025.
 - **Vice Provost of Strategic Enrollment Management:** The search committee is currently screening candidates and is pleased with the selection process.
 - **Vice President of Development:** This search is on hold until a new President is appointed, allowing them to be part of the selection process.
 - **Upcoming Trainings:**
 - **Heat Illness Prevention (via USFWorks Learning).** This Workday training covers workplace heat illness prevention in compliance with [OSHA regulations](#). Staff members are required to complete the training by mid-March.
 - **Annual Information Security Awareness Training (via KnowBe4).** The purpose of this training is to educate employees on security best practices, reinforce company policies, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements to mitigate potential cybersecurity risks. Please complete it as soon as possible.
 - **State of Staff Report for Subcommittees**
 - The Executive Team for Staff Council will distribute staff report templates to each subcommittee within the Staff Council. These reports will be used to compile the State of Staff Report for the Board of Trustees. Subcommittees are encouraged to highlight their accomplishments and outline future assignments. The deadline for submitting these reports is March 2025.
 - **Staff Council Renewing Terms & Recruitment**
 - **Renewing Terms.** As the current term comes to an end, staff members completing their two-year service are eligible to renew their term for an additional two years, in accordance with Staff Council bylaws. If you are reaching the end of your term and wish to renew (or decline renewal), please email
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staffcouncil@usfca.edu by April 2025. Your response will help us determine the number of open positions and assist with recruitment efforts.

- **Per Bylaws:** Section 4. Term Limits. All Staff Council members shall be elected for two-year terms. Members may be re-elected for a maximum of three consecutive terms or a total of six consecutive years. Terms of office shall begin June 1 and end May 31.
- **Renewing Term Intention Deadline:** Email to staffcouncil@usfca.edu by April 2025
- **Recruitment:** Staff Council is working to expand its membership to ensure a diverse range of voices and perspectives, strengthening shared governance. Members are encouraged to engage with colleagues in person to promote participation, as word-of-mouth has proven to be more effective than email communication. Additionally, the Executive Board is refining meeting structures to provide clearer guidance and focus, helping to advance initiatives that support and enhance the staff experience across USF.

Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Will Vitagliano (12:10 PM - 12:29 PM)

- **Awards and Recognition – Ken Yoshioka (Chair)**
 - The subcommittee is actively working on proposals focused on protocols and processes in collaboration with HR. Some of the key challenges include staff morale, with considerations for alternative options if initial proposals are not approved. Additionally, concerns have been raised about a loss of community due to hybrid work schedules, contributing to feelings of disconnection. To foster a stronger sense of community, awards and recognition are being explored as a way to celebrate staff contributions and reinforce a culture of appreciation.
 - Concerns have been raised about a perceived loss of community due to the hybrid work schedule. Staff members may have fewer opportunities to engage with colleagues if they are not in the office on the same days, leading to a sense of disconnection. There is an interest in exploring ways to rebuild community and strengthen connections among staff, with discussions on potential strategies to address this challenge.
- **Communications - Andrew Palos (Chair)**
 - Nick is currently on leave, and Andrew is undergoing training to be able to compose and send out newsletters to the broader community. Once training is completed, Andrew hopes to create a straightforward newsletter. He is also considering adding a Subcommittee Spotlight to highlight the work each committee has done, aiming to increase engagement and support recruitment for the Staff Council. Members interested in submitting content for the newsletter or being featured are encouraged to email Andrew directly at apalos@usfca.edu.
- **Elections & Governance - Daniel Tayakin (Chair)**
 - There are no updates from this committee at this time. However, a staff member expressed support for the idea of fostering in-person community building across campus and increasing awareness of the Staff Council.
 - **Comment/Question:** A staff member inquired about the possibility of creating a document or flyer that includes a QR code to easily share information about Staff Council with colleagues. This could serve as a resource for distributing key details and encouraging participation. Carolina agreed with that point and will be adding this as an action item for the Executive Board to look into.
- **Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability – Corey Kowalczyke (Chair)**
 - **Project 1: USF Recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ Day.** Corey met with Erin to gather historical context on Indigenous Peoples’ Day (IPD). In most years, the holiday has fallen during Fall Break in mid-October, when students have the day off, but staff does not. Since 2022, there has been no formal recognition of IPD at USF. Additional meetings are planned to refine language and explore potential recognition efforts.
 - **Project 2: Proposal on Expanded Definition of Sick Time.** A proposal is being developed to broaden the definition of sick time. The goal is to incorporate language that acknowledges mental health, wellness, non-traditional family members, and other considerations, including potential adjustments to the cap on sick time.
- **Campus Accessibility and Safety - Steven Bosso (Chair)**
 - With Luca, the former Chair, leaving USF, Steven has stepped up as the new Chair for the Campus Accessibility and Safety Subcommittee.

- There are no updates from the Health and Safety Committee, as the February meeting was canceled. At the next Health and Safety meeting, Steven plans to inquire about the ADA compliance of the Lone Mountain South doors, specifically ensuring that the handicap button is functional for those who need it.
- **Professional Development – Tina Ricafrente (Kimberly Out) (Chair)**
 - There are no updates at this time, as the subcommittee has been unable to meet recently. Work is still in progress on staff sabbaticals and brown bag lunches. The team hopes to collaborate with communications to promote the brown bag lunch sessions and plans to meet by the end of the month to discuss further. A special thanks was given to non-Staff Council members who have been assisting with the subcommittee’s efforts.

Update on Other University Committee(s) (12:29 PM - 12:36 PM)

- **University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC): Will Vitagliano**
 - The subcommittee has not met since the last Staff Council meeting but expects to provide updates next month.
 - A staff member raised concerns about a lack of transparency and limited information being shared with the committee, making it difficult to provide meaningful insight and advice. There is a growing trend of decreased advisory roles and reduced engagement between leadership and the committee.
 - A second staff member, who previously served on UBAC, echoed these concerns, noting that transparency has continued to decline. They observed that the committee’s role has shifted towards being more of a rubber stamp, which has raised significant concerns among community members.
 - A suggestion was made to develop a brief request, outlining 2-3 key points documenting changes over time and identifying ways to restore transparency and strong shared governance.

I. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (12:36 PM - 12:40 PM)

Topic: Koret Lounge Wednesday Lunch

- Staff are invited to join Wednesday lunch at Koret Lounge, where flatbread pizza and salad will be available for \$10 (not free). This serves as an opportunity to encourage community building and bring people together in an informal setting.

Topic: ETS Generative AI Certificate

- USF is offering a Generative AI Certificate Program for staff and faculty, consisting of five workshops focused on how to use AI, why it matters, and security considerations. More details can be found here: [Generative AI Certificate Program](#).

II. Announcements (12:40 PM)

- No announcements at this time

III. Meeting Adjourned at XX PM by Staff Council President 12:40 PM

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)

DOCUMENTS REFERENCED DURING MEETING

- [OSHA Heat Prevention Regulations](#)
- [ETS Generative AI Certificate](#)

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

- Meeting minutes from the January 8th, 2025 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Ken Yoshioka. Second motion was made by Will Vitagliano. Motion carried.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- Carolina will add the creation of a document or flyer with a QR code as an action item for the Executive Board to explore. This resource would help share information about the Staff Council, distribute key details, and encourage participation among colleagues.