

STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Voting Members Present:

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

Staff Council Members: Gustavo Cabezas III, Ken Yoshioka, Kimberly Bruno, Steven Bosso, Tina Ricafrente, Vincent Hom, Daniel Tayakin, Hannah Ogden

Voting Members Absent: Corey Kowalczyke, Alexandra Schaeffer, Nicholas Ynami, Andrew Palos, Pedro Gonzalez

Guests in Attendance: Staff Members

Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum) – Carolina Martinez (12:02 - 12:04 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: 11 present, 5 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council Meeting Minutes for February 12th, 2025 meeting.

Motion

- Meeting minutes from the February meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Will. Second motion was made by Ken. Motion carried.

Updates from Executive Board – Carolina, President (12:04 - 12:11 PM)

- Report on Monthly Staff Council & HR Liaison Meeting
 - **HR Trainings**
 - **OSHA Heat Training.** A few staff members shared feedback that taking the indoor and outdoor training for heat illness may not be applicable if they work most indoors. A communication has been sent to update staff that the outdoor training will be reserved for those who do work outdoors. To access the training, please log into USFWorks through Workday.
 - **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.
- Staff Council Renewing Terms & Recruitment
 - **Staff Council Membership Standing.** There have been six resignations from the Staff Council due to members no longer being employed by the university, as they have accepted opportunities elsewhere. Additionally, one member stepped down due to the expanded responsibilities of their new role. As a result, there are currently between six and ten open positions on the Staff Council.
 - **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 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
- **Election Process for Staff Council**
 - **Nominations for Staff Council.** (Now until March 21st, 2025)
 - Community members and current Staff Council members are encouraged to nominate themselves or others using the [Staff Council Nomination Form](#) by March 24.
 - **Executive Board Election.** (May 2025)
 - Elections for the Executive Board positions—President, Vice President, and Clerk—will take place in May 2025, once the final number of Staff Council members is confirmed. The nomination process will follow a similar format to the general Staff Council nominations, followed by a voting period. For those interested in these positions or seeking more information about their responsibilities, please reach out to the current Executive Board.
- **State of Staff Report.** Last month, each subcommittee submitted a State of Staff report detailing their completed and ongoing work. The Executive Board compiled these reports into a comprehensive State of Staff report, which was sent to the Board of Trustees and will be presented on March 28. Carolina will deliver the presentation, highlighting the current state of staff, key priorities, and planned actions to address them. A special thank you to the subcommittee chairs for submitting their reports on a tight deadline—we appreciate your efforts!

Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Will Vitagliano, Vice President (12:11 AM - 12:31 PM)

- **Awards and Recognition – Ken (Chair)**
 - The committee continues to refine the award and recognition template, guidelines, and protocols.
 - One committee member has stepped down due to leaving the university, leaving the committee smaller in size.
 - **Service & Merit Award** – It is still uncertain whether this award will take place, as leadership has not yet confirmed their decision. The committee is prepared to offer support if needed.
 - **Ken's Retirement** – Ken will be retiring at the end of December 2025.
 - **Comment/Question from Staff:** Staff is wondering why there hasn't been any communications for a clear yes or no for the Service and Merit Award. Staff are inquiring whether there are any alternatives to the Merit Award or if it has been delayed. Clear communication on this matter is requested. There is a desire to better understand why the award is not taking place. Staff are asking for clarity on the decision-making process and suggest setting clear parameters for HR to ask Cabinet for accountability. This would help ensure that any decisions regarding the award are communicated in advance and with greater transparency.
 - **Comment from Staff:** A suggestion was made to reframe the question regarding the Merit Award. Rather than asking whether it will occur this year, HR could be asked to request clarification from the Cabinet on the decision-making process and establish clear guidelines. The goal is to create transparency by outlining a structured pattern for the award, including specific criteria or exceptions, so that each year it is clear whether the award will take place and under what circumstances. This approach would hold Cabinet accountable and provide clarity in advance.
- **Communications - Nick (Chair)**
 - No members from this subcommittee were present at the meeting. The Staff Council President encouraged members to continue submitting newsletter content to the subcommittee for inclusion in the next issue.
- **Elections & Governance - Daniel (Chair)**
 - The Staff Council election process is underway. Community members can nominate candidates now through March 24, 2025, using the provided [Google Form](#). Following the election of new Staff Council members, the process to nominate and elect the next term's Executive Board (President, Vice President, and Clerk) will begin. Please help spread the word across campus to encourage nominations!
 - **March 24:** Nominees will be notified of their nomination.
 - **March 28:** Deadline for nominees to accept or decline.

- **March 31 – April 11:** Current Staff Council members will vote.
- **April 18:** The Elections and Governance Subcommittee will announce election results.
- **Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability – Corey (Chair)**
 - A staff member provided updates on behalf of the IDEA Committee, as the subcommittee chair and other members were not in attendance. The committee is currently working on two initiatives:
 1. **Advocating for Indigenous People's Day** to be recognized as a paid holiday.
 2. **Revising the wording for sick time** to make it more inclusive.
 - **Staff Concern/Comment:** A question was raised regarding the research supporting the request for Indigenous People's Day as a paid holiday. Staff inquired whether similar policies exist at other institutions and how the university compares to other Jesuit institutions that do or do not offer this holiday. Additionally, there was a suggestion to identify potential funding sources and include this information in the proposal before formally making the request.
- **Campus Accessibility and Safety - Steven (Chair)**
 - **Updates from Monthly Health & Safety Meeting**
 - **Workplace Violence Prevention Program:** Since July 2024, no incidents have been reported.
 - **Heat Illness Prevention Training:** HR has consolidated the training into a single video based on feedback that the outdoor heat illness training is not relevant to most staff working indoors.
 - **Gas Leak Incident (Feb 14):** A gas leak occurred near McLaren, University Center, and Malloy-Cal due to wear and tear on a 1966-era pipeline. While repairing the gas line, it was determined that the water pipeline also needs replacement. A quote is being obtained, with replacement planned for summer to proactively prevent future issues.
 - **Spring Fire Alarm Inspections:** Staff are reminded to exit the building and stand at a reasonable distance during scheduled fire alarm tests.
 - **AQI Policy Review:** The current air quality index (AQI) thresholds are under review to determine if adjustments are needed.
 - **Ergonomics Webinar (April 2):** Travelers Insurance will present a workspace ergonomics webinar for staff. [More details here.](#)
 - **Staff Concern:** There have been multiple reports of elevators being out of service. However, this issue has not been widely addressed in Health & Safety meetings. Staff Council is encouraged to follow up on elevator functionality and communication updates regarding outages.
- **Professional Development – Kimberly (Chair)**
 - **Staff Sabbaticals:** A document is finalized and ready for discussion with HR regarding staff sabbaticals.
 - **Brown Bag Lunch & Learn Events:** Plans are in progress to organize informal learning sessions. A Google Form will be sent to all staff to gather ideas and assess availability for Lunch & Learn sessions.

Update on Other University Committee(s) (12:31 PM-12:59 PM)

- **University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC) Update-** Will Vitagliano
 - **OMC & Enrollment Presentation:** Reviewed USF's marketing strategies and efforts to rebrand in response to shifting enrollment trends to attract a broader student base.
 - **Marketing Budget Adjustments:** The budget has been reduced from \$4.2 million to \$2.6 million, prompting the need for creative marketing strategies in a competitive environment.
 - **FY26 Budget Balancing Schedule:**
 - Reviewing anticipated savings and expenditures for FY26.
 - Currently, there is roughly a \$36 million budget gap going into FY26, including \$9 million allocated for employee compensation as part of the shortfall.
 - **Overall Deficit:** Estimated at \$55–56 million, with approximately \$18 million in one-time base savings.
- **Staff Concern/Comment:** Staff raised concerns about the recent building purchase near the School of Education, noting that it was not discussed in the previous UBAC meeting. This issue will be brought up at the

next meeting to seek clarification. Additionally, two UBAC members were unaware of the purchase, which led to broader concerns about the lack of transparency in major financial decisions. Staff questioned why such decisions are made without informing UBAC and emphasized the need for clearer communication. There is also growing frustration that UBAC's advisory role has diminished, with the committee increasingly being used only as a platform for announcements rather than meaningful discussion. Staff highlighted that this ongoing lack of communication and inclusion reflects a lack of respect for committee members and university employees. They stressed the importance of restoring UBAC's advisory function to ensure that staff voices are heard in financial and institutional decision-making.

- The Staff Council President shared that she has relayed concerns about the lack of shared governance within UBAC to Fr. Fitzgibbon and Provost Eileen Fung. Leadership has been made aware of staff's desire for greater transparency and inclusion in decision-making. However, when asked about leadership's response to these concerns, there was little to no reaction. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for next month to revisit the issue.
- Staff raised concerns about the ongoing lack of budget transparency, which has been challenging for staff. A staff member shared that their division's leadership had been transparent about a 6.5% budget cut for next year, and staff appreciated this openness. They expressed a hope that other departments would follow suit and provide similar transparency. Additionally, staff reiterated that UBAC is not being utilized as originally intended and is primarily being used for announcements rather than meaningful discussions.
- A concern was also raised about the Strategic Plan Working Group on Shared Governance. Staff questioned whether a previous working group had formally defined shared governance and whether a similar approach, involving all stakeholders, could be replicated to establish a clearer governance structure moving forward.
- Another suggestion was made to frame discussions around both the benefits and risks of lacking staff representation in decision-making. Staff acknowledged that the university is at a point where it must evaluate next steps and consider ways to empower the Staff Council to be a more effective governing body.
- Staff requested that Will (UBAC representative) provide clarity on which other programs may be sunsetted to ensure greater transparency in academic program decisions.

I. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (12:59 PM- 1:00 PM)

Topic: Petition to Preserve the PsyD Program at USF

- Regarding **academic program closures**, concerns were raised about the **School of Nursing and Health Professions Dean's announcement on February 19**, which recommended **sunsetting the PsyD program**. Faculty and students are actively opposing this decision and have launched a **petition to preserve the program**: [Petition to Preserve the PsyD Program at USF](#).

II. Announcements (1:00 PM)

III. Meeting Adjourned at 1:01 PM by Staff Council President

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)

DOCUMENTS AND LINKS REFERENCED DURING MEETING

- [Heat Illness Prevention Plan](#)
- [Staff Council Nomination Form](#)
- [Workspace Ergonomics Webinar - April 2](#)
- [Petition to Preserve the PsyD Program at USF](#).

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

- Meeting minutes from the February 12th, 2025 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Will Vitagliano. Second motion was made by Ken Yoshioka. Motion carried.