

## STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, May 8, 2024

### Voting Members Present:

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

Staff Council Members: Steven Bosso, Danielle Castillo, Kimberly Bruno, Janice Chuakay, Erin Echols, Ella Frazer, Corey Kowalczyke, Carolina Martinez, Elisabeth Merkel, Mark Papadopoulos, Tina Ricafrente, Will Vitagliano, Nicholas Ynami, Ken Yoshioka

**Voting Members Absent:** Claudine Bibeau Parks, Alexandra Schaeffer, Melissa Thompson (Immediate Past President)

**Guests in Attendance:** Staff Members

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### I. Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum)/Approve Staff Council Meeting Minutes 4/10/24 – Domonique (2 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: 17 present, 3 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council Meeting Minutes for April 10, 2024 meeting.

### Motion

- Meeting minutes from the April 10, 2024 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Domonique Crosby. Second motion was made by Will Vitagliano. Motion carried.

### II. Updates from Executive Board – Domonique (6 mins)

- The Clerk reported that the Elections and Governance subcommittee had started the nomination process for the next Executive Board for 2024-25. Nominations are being accepted through Friday at 12 pm, after which the election will be held. Staff Council members entering their second year as well as new incoming members are eligible and encouraged to run for the Executive Board. The bylaws have been changed to ensure represented staff have equal representation on the Executive Board, so they are particularly encouraged to run. We hope to have a new Executive Board in place by May 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The Vice President announced the Staff Council is hosting a "Bring Your Own Sip" social on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm in the Faculty/Staff Lounge. The event is open to all staff; a notice went out in the newsletter.
- The Clerk reminded the subcommittees that any updates to their annual report of activities is due May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The President provided an update from the Executive Board's monthly meeting with Staff Council liaison Diane Nelson. The outstanding One Card issue is now resolved. New hires now have the option of securing a physical One Card. Current employees who need to replace their One Card can also do so for a fee. Sunny Kaido, the Director of Administrative Services for Public Safety, is the contact for this process. The Executive Board will also follow up with Sunny to determine what the process is and circulate it to staff in a future newsletter.
- The Clerk welcomed the Staff Council's incoming new members for 2024-25 and thanked the outgoing members for their service. The new members are: Luca Ameri, Gustavo Cabezas III, Pedro González, Vincent Hom, Jessica Li, Hannah Ogden, Andrew Palos, and Daniel Tayakin. Outgoing members are: Jill Ballard, Danielle Castillo, Janice Chuakay, Amy F. Joseph, Elisabeth Merkel Baghai, and Melissa Thompson.

### III. Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Jill (22 mins)

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

- o The Chair reported the Awards and Recognition subcommittee assisted HR at the Service and Merit Awards ceremony, and thanked those Staff Council members who volunteered. The Chair acknowledged the enormous amount of work HR staff Mara Krasts puts into the event and encouraged Staff Council members to volunteer in the future.

#### Communications - Ella Frazer (Chair)

- o The Chair reported the subcommittee is working on its end-of-the-year report and prepping features for the next year. The Chair asked about newsletters in the summer. The Clerk responded that a June newsletter usually goes out, but last year the July newsletter didn't give the new subcommittee time to get organized. Therefore, when the subcommittee re-forms for the new term, they might want to do the same.
- o The Chair thanked everyone for their submissions to the newsletter this past year.

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

- o The Chair re-emphasized what the Clerk reported about the Executive Board elections and how important they are. Members can nominate others (after securing permission) or self nominate. Everyone who is interested is encouraged to run.

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

- o The Chair acknowledged the work of outgoing subcommittee member Danielle Castillo and thanked her for her service over the past two years, including serving as chair.
- o The subcommittee met last week to discuss how to support staff in the context of the student protests taking place across college campuses nationwide, including at USF. The subcommittee discussed potentially drafting a free expression document for staff in the future. USF currently has one for students, but what type of freedom of expression do staff have? Are there guidelines or policies? The subcommittee is concerned about preventing staff from receiving reprimands if staff peacefully express a point of view.
- o The subcommittee also explored supporting a regular space where staff can discuss issues students bring forth. Staff are oftentimes the first people to respond and talk with students. While the subcommittee doesn't have capacity to run the space, they would be interested in logistically supporting one so staff can come together to process things going on on campus.

#### Campus Accessibility and Safety - Claudine Bibeau Parks (Chair)

- o Another subcommittee member reported on behalf of the Chair, who was absent. The USF Health and Safety Committee will be meeting next week, so there will be updates in a future Staff Council meeting.

#### Professional Development – Mark Papadopoulos (Chair)

- o The Chair inquired about the status of the Staff Council welcome letter to new hires, and if the letter is published on the Staff Council website. The Clerk reported that HR set up a new hire list to be exported to the Clerk's Workday account at the beginning of each month. The Clerk has sent welcome letters to the new hires for April and May, and this process will continue going forward with the next Clerk. The welcome letter can be posted on the Staff Council website as well, if desired.
- o The subcommittee continues to brainstorm ways to get staff involved/connected to Staff Council, including creating a resource page on the Staff Council website as another place staff can consult for support. They also discussed have socials where staff can meet in the Faculty/Staff Lounge at a certain hour for free-flowing conversation.

- o The Chair inquired about how long a member can participate on Staff Council. The President consulted the bylaws and reported that staff can be re-elected for a maximum of three consecutive terms (six years), and then they must take at least a one year break before being eligible for election again.
- o The Vice President added that the potential pilot of having staff-at-large participate in the subcommittees is still a possibility to get more staff involved.

#### IV. Update on Other University Committee(s) (4 mins)

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

- UBAC's April meeting was canceled due to a light agenda, but they are looking forward to meeting in May. In May they will be reviewing the fiscal year's division savings and narratives that are submitted by the Deans and department heads. They will also review the FY24 operating forecast updates. April Crabtree will give an update from Strategic Enrollment Management about enrollments.
- A staff member asked why there was a light agenda in the midst of budget cuts and enrollment issues. Elisabeth replied that a lot of UBAC's work depends on receiving reports and information from other offices. They were hoping to receive such reports for the April meeting, but they did not come in time.
- The Clerk announced that Will Vitagliano will be the Staff Council's next UBAC member, starting the next term.

#### V. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (17 mins)

##### **Topic: Physical One Cards**

- A Staff Council member inquired if staff would be allowed to have a physical One Card alongside using the mobile One Card app. Other staff confirmed that's allowed.

##### **Topic: Staff Survey Recommendation Letter**

- The Clerk noted that Staff Council liaison Diane Nelson reported that Father Fitzgerald is bringing the Executive Board's recommendation letter to his Cabinet and a response is in process. The response will go to the Staff Council email and may possibly come in after the term ends on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

##### **Topic: Staff Sabbaticals**

- A staff member inquired about the status of the Staff Council's research into staff sabbaticals.
- The Professional Development subcommittee had a preliminary, informal conversation with HR. HR reported that there aren't staff sabbaticals, per se. Staff could go through their departments for any such leave requests. The department would have to pay for any paid leaves, including salary reductions (depending on what's agreed upon).
- A Staff Council member noted that the majority of the community are unaware staff sabbaticals can be inquired about. Like housing opportunities for staff, it would help if staff resources like this were written down somewhere. The President concurred this would be helpful; if staff don't know about possibilities, that ensures they will never be used.
- A discussion about the purpose of staff sabbaticals ensued. Staff mentioned that some corporations offer sabbaticals as part of merit; perhaps USF could offer even a couple of days as recognition of staff's tenure. USF used to have staff sabbaticals—what were the parameters back then (pre-2004, when sabbaticals were paid)? Others mentioned it would be valuable to have a sabbatical to do research in their discipline, work on their doctorate research, or work on projects that could benefit their department while also contributing to their professional development. Time periods could vary—whether it be a couple of months or two weeks or something else. Sabbaticals can also be unpaid. A staff member noted there are different types of leaves currently available to staff.
- The President noted that there are staff members who do research; faculty aren't the only ones.
- The Professional Development subcommittee noted there are other aspects to research regarding staff sabbaticals. What is the history? What do other institutions do? What evidence needs to be provided regarding tasks done on sabbatical? Once questions are clarified, the next step is to get the information out there, such as on a resource web page. It's a lot of research to do, so the subcommittee is just in the beginning stages. They appreciate it being brought up.

- The Vice President noted that it doesn't necessarily have to be a Staff Council task to get the information circulated; it could be asked of HR.
- The President remarked that it's important to explore every possibility that exists and not to limit ourselves in having this conversation. A Staff Council member concurred, as it can be hard to have these conversations within departments or with certain people at the University, due to budget impacts. But having these conversations are valuable and important, and they should be allowed to happen. Conversation is often stopped before it's constructive, which can bring down morale. How can we hold such conversations outside of this space (Staff Council)?
- The President noted that when things are just up to departments, it can be hazy how equitable it will be for staff across the board. So how do we also have equitable practices on campus? We know that some departments operate differently, despite what's clearly written down.
- The Vice President commented that it can be said that something is not available now due to budget constraints, but we still should have the conversations, even if something is not currently available. A clear message of the parameters, even if something is not available yet, is important.
- A Staff Council member noted that the IDEA subcommittee's discussion of safe spaces for staff to talk and process productively is relevant here. The President remarked she would be interested in hosting such a space. The Vice President also reminded staff of the Staff Council Social on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

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

- None.

#### **VII. Meeting Adjourned at 12:52 PM by Domonique Crosby, Staff Council President**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 12, 2024**

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)

#### **SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

- Meeting minutes from the April 10, 2024 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Domonique Crosby. Second motion was made by Will Vitagliano. Motion carried.

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS**

- The Executive Board will follow up with Sunny Kaido as to the One Card physical card replacement process and circulate in a future newsletter.