

STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Voting Members Present:

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

Staff Council Members: Danielle Castillo, Kimberly Bruno, Janice Chuakay, Erin Echols, Ella Frazer, Carolina Martinez, Elisabeth Merkel, Mark Papadopoulos, Tina Ricafrente, Will Vitagliano, Luwei Xie, Nicholas Ynami

Voting Members Absent: Claudine Bibeau Parks, Steven Bosso, Corey Kowalczyke, Joshua McDermott, Alexandra Schaeffer, Ken Yoshioka

Guests in Attendance: Staff Members

I. Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum)/Approve Staff Council Meeting Minutes September 13, 2023 – Domonique (5 min)

- 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: 16 present, 6 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2023 meeting.

Motion

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

II. Updates from Executive Board – Domonique (20 min)

- The President updated the Staff Council on attending the Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting. Before beginning the update, the President explained that there are other constituency representatives similar to staff. Specifically, there is an undergraduate student representative, a graduate student representative, an alumni representative, and a faculty representative.
 - The Staff Council president is a non-voting member of the BOT, but is able to participate and listen in on most discussions.
 - The President attended a training the day before that was geared toward new Board Trustees to ensure they get acclimated to the institution and understand more about USF as they talk about the Jesuit mission. This included a virtual tour and reviewing a work chart.
 - The Staff Council President is not assigned to any committees. The Chair of the BOT, Jack Boland, asked the Staff Council President why this was the case, as he was not under the impression that the President wouldn't be assigned to sit on a committee. The President responded that it was her understanding that Father Fitzgerald had made the decision that the Staff Council representative couldn't sit on a committee.
 - The Staff Council President noted to Staff Council members that every BOT committee has a student representative, and those students can be any student at large. So currently staff are the only ones that don't have a representative. While there are staff members in some committees, they are not necessarily representing staff in the way a Staff Council member would. Since the committees are where a lot of work happens for the Board, it would be good to be assigned a committee. The Chair Jack Boland mentioned he would follow up with Father Fitzgerald about this issue.
 - The President was able to sit in on the rest of the BOT meetings, with the exception of the Executive Session, which is standard. No non-Board of Trustees member can be in the Executive Session.
 - Some presentations included the Cabinet presenting their plan for future strategic plan items and what they hope to accomplish moving forward. The Board of Trustees also has a plan called an enterprise plan, which focuses on what they would like to see
-

for the institution over the next five years. The BOT plan is focused on the finances of the institution, student success, and marketing/branding. The BOT would also like us to grow the University endowment to 1 billion dollars by 2028 and for the University to establish some acquisition criteria, so if the institution was to acquire anything else—e.g., any major real estate purchases—the Board would like to review those things ahead of time.

- The Cabinet then broke things down into some goals that involve redesigning the business reporting model to improve the BOT's understanding of the institution's performance and how it works.
- The University wants to improve student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. They are hoping to lower our admission rate by 2026 to make us a little more competitive.
- An emphasis on branding was also discussed to help increase brand identity and quality association. The University wants to be more students' first choice.
- The last major topic was the development campaign. The BOT identified two chairs from the Board to chair the campaign and ensure we have a 500 million dollar campaign as the next goal for development.
- The President reported that during breaks and mealtimes, Board members had lots of questions about staff and seemed invested in our experiences. They were welcoming and were open to having more staff involvement in the BOT.
- The next BOT meeting is on December 8th. That is the meeting where projected fees and tuition for 2024-25 will be discussed.
- The Clerk announced that the Executive Board was able to establish regular monthly meetings with the Staff Council liaison Diane Nelson.
- The Clerk mentioned that Diane asked the Executive Board to emphasize that staff should take advantage of the Open Enrollment period (10/30 to 11/10) to update or add any beneficiaries for their life insurance and retirement accounts. This is really important and helps your estate.
- The Clerk also passed on from Diane that the University negotiated a good deal with a pet insurance vendor so staff can have access to reasonable pet insurance. While it's not subsidized by the University, the University vetted vendors carefully and is excited to offer this benefit. More information is forthcoming soon.
- Diane also told the Executive Board that staff trainings will be noted in Workday now, which means there will be a record of staff participation that can also help during evaluation time. This is due to roll out October 16th and more information is forthcoming about that.
- The Clerk reported that things are looking good for making physical One Cards available to staff again. The University has been able to locate a vendor who can supply the card and bracelet materials again; this supply chain had been an issue holding things up. Staff will receive more information about this matter as soon as things are finalized.
- The Clerk reminded staff that the staff survey was released this morning and asked staff to both take the survey and encourage others to take it. Staff have until 10/25 to take the survey. A staff member asked if there was a response percentage rate that was needed to validate the survey, as with the Climate Survey some years ago, but there isn't for this survey. The Immediate Past President mentioned that a 10% response rate is generally acceptable.
- The Clerk mentioned the [Staff Council Action Items table](#) is live on the website and will be updated as needed to keep staff up-to-date on where tasks stand.
- Circling back to Diane Nelson updates, the Vice President added that the Executive Board received a question about the timing of staff evaluations. The timing for union members is in their contract. For non-represented staff, HR will be moving to a calendar year timeframe, rather than an academic year timeframe. This means evaluation deadlines will be shifted earlier to start in January 2024 (with the calendar year 2023 being evaluated at that time). More information will be forthcoming from HR. Additionally, all departments will use an expectations scale that includes "exceeds expectations" or something similar. In the past, some departments had stopped using "exceeds expectations." This will no longer be the case.

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

Awards and Recognition – Ken Yoshioka (Chair)

- No updates.

Communications - Nick Ynami (Chair)

- The monthly Staff Council newsletter continues to be produced. Staff and Staff Council members are welcome to submit items for the newsletter to staffcouncil@usfca.edu.

Elections & Governance - Will Vitagliano (Chair)

- The subcommittee has started reviewing the [recommendations](#) from the staff- and shared governance-related workgroups from the strategic planning committee work done last academic year. The subcommittee is also looking at a current list of campus committees and working groups to determine staff representation opportunities. The Staff Council's current survey will help set priorities as well. Questions about these committees will be explored, such as who is responsible for staffing committees, what the committees' charges are, and how staff can play a role. The subcommittee also raised the issue of requesting a budget for Staff Council to support our shared governance activities, with the understanding that there are issues to figure out, including programming, realistic expenses, etc.

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

- A subcommittee member provided the update as the Chair was unable to attend today's meeting. IDEA is reaching out to current affinity groups to determine how they can support them, or help re-start some that are no longer meeting. IDEA will also be taking its cues from the results of the staff survey.

Institutional Effectiveness and Safety - Claudine Bibeau Parks (Chair)

- A subcommittee member provided the update as the Chair was unable to attend today's meeting. The subcommittee continues to follow up on staff reports of non-working push-buttons to open doors for accessibility. One reported button is now working, and the subcommittee just has to follow up on a few others. Key card access has been troublesome in some places as well (particularly Cowell), so the subcommittee is going to check in on that too. They also want to find out if having doors locked across campus, which was started during COVID, will continue or if there will be any adjustments to that practice.
- Greg Yee in Public Safety has extra masks in the office if needed.
- The USF Health and Safety Committee did not have their meeting yesterday, but the Staff Council member who sits on that committee should have an update next month.

Professional Development – Kimberly Bruno (Chair)

- The subcommittee is working on the welcome letter to newly hired USF staff, which will be part of the onboarding materials. The subcommittee are discussing a timeline for giving the new staff the letter, as in the beginning staff get so much material it might get lost. So the subcommittee is thinking a slightly later timeline to ensure the Staff Council welcome letter is noticed and read.
- Research on staff sabbaticals has begun. If any long-time USF staff have information about staff sabbaticals, which were offered in the past, please write the Chair, Kimberly Bruno, at kbruno@usfca.edu. Additionally, if staff have previously worked at another Jesuit institution where staff sabbaticals were offered, that information is welcomed as well.

IV. Update on Other University Committee(s) (5 min)

University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC): Elisabeth Merkel

- [UBAC](#) and Staff Council member Elisabeth Merkel reported UBAC had their first fall meeting in mid-September. One main project between now and December is looking at tuition and fee raises. UBAC will look through different tuition and fee comparison reports and then provide recommendations to leadership.
- The second item is the budget assist request. This is when different departments put forward requests for funding programming, new lines, etc. It is part of UBAC's job to review these requests and similarly put forward their recommendations, then vote on which ones they feel should be budgeted or not, looking at mission and strategic plan alignment.
- UBAC received an educational workshop from Angelika Williams, Assistant Vice Provost of Student Financial Services, about the University's efforts to retain students through financial aid. The workshop is posted [here](#), along with other workshops.
- The next UBAC meeting is October 19th.

V. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (20 min)

Topic: Staff Compensation Equity and Advancement

- A staff member raised a concern on behalf of both represented and non-represented staff across the University: What is USF doing to ensure greater pay equity and consistency for staff across campus in ways that are resonant and consistent with the [Strategic Plan](#)? [Strategic Plan Workgroup #5](#) focused on USF being an equitable and extraordinary place to work (see recommendations of all workgroups [here](#)). This is especially pressing for many longer-term employees, who often encounter what we can call a responsibility creep, or the expansion of their roles or responsibilities over time without being professionally acknowledged, or having this expansion reflected in either their title, job description, or compensation.
- The staff member noted other important corollary issues that should be addressed. For example, ensuring equitable access to avenues of promotion and advancement for all staff across different areas of the University; ways to address revisions to job descriptions, job classifications, expanded formal and informal roles and responsibilities; what to do when employees are often or routinely outperforming their role or regularly performing work outside their formal job description; how to better recognize and promote employees and enhance a culture of advancement within the University.
- OPEIU have reportedly been attempting to address some of these issues for their members, but for other staff colleagues, i.e., non-represented staff, is it possible for the Staff Council to be a vehicle for all staff to ensure that these issues are being addressed by the University in a transparent way? This also connects to concerns and challenges the University faces around attraction and retention of extraordinary employees.
- HR gave two very informative presentations on compensation to UBAC, both of which can be found [here](#). It is worthwhile for staff to familiarize themselves with these presentations. However, with USF's leadership increasingly recognizing pay equity and staff retention as significant challenges to address, many USF staff members are increasingly concerned with knowing what is being done to meaningfully address these issues.
- As it was reported to UBAC and also appearing in the current Board Budget [here](#) (FY24 University Planning Priorities, page 3), a Budget Assist request was approved for this fiscal year to conduct a \$250,000 pay equity study, albeit focusing on exempt/non-represented staff. In the interest of increased collaboration between Staff Council and University administration, can the Staff Council inquire and clarify to what extent this study will seek to address some of the aforementioned issues and concerns, and the ways in which this study could ultimately and hopefully result in positive structural changes benefitting all staff across campus, improving retention and advancement of current staff at all levels? What can current USF staff members and the Staff Council expect and learn from USF conducting this significant study?
- The Clerk shared some thoughts in response to these questions, noting that while she does sit on the Executive Board, she is speaking as a Staff Council member and a staff member at USF more generally. The Clerk was a union member for thirteen years and currently works a non-represented position. She noted these have been pressing issues for all staff at USF for a long time, most particularly in terms of fair compensation and professional advancement, such as reclassification (as it is known in the union) and exempt staff promotions with corresponding title changes. How staff are promoted and compensated has always seemed an opaque process and can vary greatly from department to department. There are also different challenges for represented and non-represented staff in terms of advancing themselves. Not just in terms of professional advancement, but acknowledging work that's already being done that is above and beyond someone's job description.
- The Clerk acknowledged the serious financial issues facing USF, but this needs to stay on the table in terms of social justice and equity. The Clerk expressed that this is a high priority issue for her.
- The Clerk added that she has questions about the \$250,000 equity survey. Who will be brought in to conduct it? What will the survey ask/look like? Will Staff Council specifically be given more information?
- The President thanked the staff member for bringing these issues to the Staff Council's attention and agreed this is a good topic for the Executive Board to discuss itself and then bring to a monthly meeting with Diane Nelson. The President concurred with the Clerk that pay equity is something she is really concerned about, both personally and for campus staff as a whole. These issues can get swept under the rug, because staff will express how much they love the mission and how important it is to their dedication to the work, but the mission doesn't pay the bills. Like others, the President expressed her love for USF, but pay inequity should be a priority issue for the Staff Council. The Executive Board will try to get as much information as we can to drive the conversation. The staff survey will also undoubtedly show this is a concern for staff.

Topic: Shared Governance Meeting with Father Fitzgerald and Others

- A staff member inquired about a shared governance meeting that was scheduled by the President's Office for October 18th. Several staff members asked about the meeting but no one is familiar with it or what it's about.
- The President confirmed the Executive Board was invited to such a meeting on October 18th, but does not know much more than that it relates to shared governance. Father Fitzgerald and Interim Provost Eileen Fung will be in attendance, as well as representatives from the Faculty Association (full-time and part-time) and the Law Faculty Association.
- The Clerk noted one of the invitees asked about more specifics to help prepare for the meeting, but the group never received a response.

Topic: Non-Staff Council Staff Participation in Staff Council Work

- The Clerk reported that the Executive Committee (made up of the Chairs of all the subcommittees and the Executive Board) is exploring ways non-Council staff might get involved in Staff Council activities, if desired. Some ideas included working on specific issues with corresponding Staff Council subcommittees, one-off projects, attending subcommittee meetings of interest, and more. We know everyone has significant workloads, but we wanted to provide an opportunity for those who would like to give more direct input to shape the Council's work, or simply want to explore what it might be like to sit on the Staff Council in the future. It is totally optional. We welcome your thoughts.

Topic: Campus Safety Announcement Protocol

- The President received a staff concern regarding the recent incident at Lucky Supermarket involving an armed suspect. While not directly on campus, it was very close to campus. The individual threatened people with knives inside the store. No alert was sent out to the campus about the incident as it was happening, which concerned the reporting staff. Lucky is in very close proximity to campus, as well as close to well-traveled bus routes to and from campus.
- Given this, questions have arisen: What dictates what makes an alert necessary? What is the protocol? Campus community members could have found themselves entering the area without knowledge of an active incident that took place over hours, which is of concern.
- A Staff Council member agreed this is of concern and would like to better understand the protocols. What is alert worthy? Is there a checklist?
- Another Staff Council member was not sure if off-campus incidents should qualify for an alert, as it is a reality of living in a city that things happen. If it didn't happen on campus, do we need to address it if it's 100 feet away or a quarter-mile or more?
- Several staff members responded that the proximity of the Lucky shopping area, and given how many staff and others travel there for lunch and other errands, makes such an alert warranted.
- The Staff Council member did recall after a particular campus incident that Public Safety was going to update their alert protocols, but wasn't sure if that happened or not, or if it happened and is just not publicly available
- The Clery Act requires institutions to report certain off-campus crimes that occur on public property immediately adjacent to campus property. The Act requires timely warnings if there is confirmation of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the campus community for crimes occurring within Clery geography that pose a serious or ongoing threat or on-campus emergency.

VI. Announcements (5 min)

- The Clerk made the following announcements on behalf of other staff/departments:
 - There is a Go Fit Challenge/Twilight Walk and Social Hour hosted by GoUSF on Wednesday 10/25, 4:30-6:30 pm. Suzy Kisylia, Senior Wellness Manager, said it's a fun challenge and hopes staff will participate and join the social hour.
 - The Warriors LGBTQ+ Night link is posted to the Staff Council [website](#).
 - The annual USF Thanksgiving Food Drive will be starting soon. Please go [here](#) for the information/how to donate.

VII. Meeting Adjourned at 1:01 PM by Domonique Crosby, Staff Council President

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 8, 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 September 13, 2023 meeting were approved. The motion to approve was made by Domonique Crosby. Second motion was made by Amy F. Joseph. Motion carried.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- The Executive Board will further discuss staff compensation and advancement issues, including following up with Diane Nelson about pay equity survey.
- The Executive Committee will work on non-Staff Council member opportunities to get involved with the Council
- The Staff Council will look into the protocols for campus alerts.