

STAFF COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES - Wednesday, December 10, 2025**Ex Officio Members Present:** Jessica Li, Sam Bethel, Corey Kowalaczyke**Voting Members Present:** Mosha Ainsley, Christopher Witte, Daniel Tayakin, Emily Gove, Gustavo Cabezas, Hannah Ogden, Jordan Demos, Kellie Samson, Kimberly Bruno, Madeline Meininger, Sara Rinaldi, Selin Ozguzer, Stephanie Heim, Tina Ricafrente, Vincent Hom, Ifeoma Nzerem**Voting Members Absent:** D. Perez-Sornia, Lisa Mayorga, Tyler Marie Weber**Non-Voting Members Absent:** Andrew Palos**Guests in Attendance:** Staff Members

Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum) – President (12:01-12:04)

- 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, 4 absent, quorum reached.

Updates from Executive Board – President (12:04-12:24)

- I. HR Monthly Updates
 - a. Active Searches: VP Development and CFO
 - i. CFO Search will have interviews in February/March 2026
 - b. Exempt Staff Performance Review will begin in January 2026
 - c. No meetings with HR until after the holidays, likely to have updates in February
- II. Board of Trustee Meeting Updates
 - a. Primary goal for President Aceves is stability, enrollment and long-term sustainability
 - i. VPs will be submitting financial plan and budgets by February 28th
 - ii. President Aceves is conducting financial listening sessions. He is keeping it to about 10 to 15 participants.
 - b. The hiring freeze is currently in effect with limited exceptions for critical roles like CFO.
 - i. Search firm has been changed but there is still an anticipation of finalists to be on campus in February or March
 - c. The Presidential Welcome Tour will begin January through February. He will be traveling internationally (<https://www.usfca.edu/alumni/presidential-welcome-tour>)
 - d. Finance Committee Report
 - i. The board approved a one-year operating budget. The board will continue to look forward two years and try to think more of a three year financial framework.
 - e. Discussion about AI across academic and administrative operations
 - i. Intended to be used for enrollment management and recruitment
 - ii. Also discussed about providing support to our current students in student innovation and interdisciplinary learning
 - iii. Three goals for implementation in Fall 2027 include AI Literary, Interdisciplinary Learning and Entrepreneurship
 - f. Current Indicators for Enrollment

- i. 10,000 first year applications and about 8,600 completed applicants for early action and early decision.
 - ii. Good indicators that students are applying
 - iii. Graduate School enrollment discussed about retention and the GradPlus Loans
- g. State of the Faculty
 - i. Presentation by Brandi Lawless; highlighted challenges from a survey conducted last year. Low moral, feeling powerless and unsustainable workload. Summarized by burnout and disengagement.
- h. Discussion -
 - i. Comments about the President's budget listening sessions include - highlights about transparency of answers to frank questions about situations. President made it clear that all options are available, and he is open to suggestions.

Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Vice President (12:25-12:35PM)

- Elections & Governance (Daniel Tayakin, Chair)
 - Two bylaw amendments were successfully passed last month. They are updated on the bylaws
 - Beginning preparation for new election/nomination cycle
 - Nomination open the first business day of February, acceptance window ends 5 business days after the close nominations
 - Elections begin during the first full week of March.
 - January the subcommittee will be working on operational improvements to make academic year elections more clear and accessible to staff
- Awards and Recognition (Sara/Emily)
 - The subcommittee will begin processing submissions for awards and options for recognition that were submitted via google form last month.
- Communications (Kellie Samson, Chair).
 - A December newsletter was sent the morning of the meeting.
 - Not as many events to include because we're finishing the semester.
 - Subcommittee will review analytics of newsletters
 - A shared document was included for added "did you know " sections [Did You Know Section](#).
- Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability (D. Perez-Sornia, Chair)
 - Priority for next subcommittee is set a strong agenda for Spring semester
- Campus Accessibility and Safety (Ifeoma Nzerem, Chair)
 - The subcommittee is creating a survey to understand what staff experiences are with safety and accessibility.
 - Total of 12 survey respondents for Fall survey about future programming
- Professional Development (Maddy Meininger, Chair)
 - Continuing to promote professional development subcommittee survey.
 - They will be analyzing the survey results ahead of the state of the staff presentation.

Update on Other University Committee(s) (12:35 -12:40)

- UBAC – Elisabeth Merkel (Sam on behalf of Elisabeth)
 - Last meeting Desmond Dare provided an update on the University's financial statements.
 - The statements are delayed because the university did not meet one of the financial conditions, which is known as a debt covenant.
 - Debt covenants are rules the university agrees to follow when borrowing money.

- The unmet condition is tied to broader financial pressures, including declining net income.
 - The university must obtain a waiver from the bank before the auditors can finalize the financial statements. The university has received one year waivers in the past.
 - Desmond highlighted the capital spending has decreased significantly even though depreciation remains high. He clarified that depreciation reflects the aging of assets but does not create new funds for capital investments.
 - Review of cost-reduction survey.
 - Over 280 suggestions were submitted. Those 280 were consolidated into 35 representative ideas.
- [Federal Updates Task Force](#) - Kellie Samson
 - Plan to meet before the end of year.

III. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion (12:41- 12:50min)

- Community Service and Mission Time off
 - Is there a way that the Staff Council can facilitate community service projects so staff feels more comfortable with exercising the time off.
 - Discussion includes that volunteering is open and accessible, but needs to be documented.
 - Development is planning on having an engagement event with the Salvation Army, available spots still remain for volunteering.

IV. Meeting Adjourned at 12:51 PM by Staff Council President

Next Meeting: Jan 21, 2026

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

n/a

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

➤ n/a