

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

Welcome/Roll Call (Determination of Quorum)/Approve Staff Council Meeting Minutes – Vice-President

- The meeting was called to order at 12:03 PM by the Staff Council Vice-President.
- Notice was made that the meeting is recorded for note-taking purposes.
- Bylaws state that meetings are open to all staff, including the President's Cabinet and Leadership Team. A Q&A/open discussion session will be held during the meeting for all staff in attendance.
- Staff Council Member roll call conducted: 19 present, 4 absent, quorum reached.
- Approval of Staff Council Meeting Minutes for the 8/20 meeting was approved via Google Form, with a majority vote of 17 members.

Updates from Executive Board – President

- HR updates from Staff Council Exec Board meeting with Diane Nelson
 - Human Resources is introducing succession planning in Workday.
 - Purpose: Identify key university positions and develop internal talent to fill them when vacant.
 - Functions as a professional development pathway for staff.
 - No timeline yet; suggested the Professional Development Subcommittee explore and champion this initiative.
- Active Searches
 - Search underway for a new CFO following Charlie Cross's departure.
 - Search is also ongoing for a VP of Development.
- President Aceves' Inauguration (October 18, 2025)
 - Part of Celebrate USF (Parent, Family & Alumni Weekend).
 - Open to all staff, faculty, and students; registration required through Celebrate USF site.
 - Events include inauguration, food and music festival, and Nicole Kidman speaking at the Silk Speaker Series.
- Meeting with President Aceves
 - First meeting scheduled for tomorrow (9/11) with President Aceves.
 - Goals: Introduce Staff Council, discuss shared governance, build rapport, and strengthen communication with university leadership.
- Board of Trustees Engagement
 - Jessica will attend the Board of Trustees dinner and meeting (9/18-9/19) in two weeks and will connect with trustees and cabinet members.
- Notion Board Updates

- Reminder was shared for subcommittee chairs to keep project updates current in the shared Notion board.
- Board will be shared with all staff via the Staff Council newsletter next month.
Aim: Increase visibility of projects and provide transparency on progress/status across Council initiatives.

Update on the Staff Council Subcommittees – Vice President

- Awards and Recognition – (Vincent Hom)
 - No formal updates
 - Asked for suggestions and ideas from staff
 - Will have the Project Board updated, reflecting subcommittee progress
- Communications - (Selin Oguzer)
 - Subcommittee coordinating promotion of upcoming events in the monthly newsletter.
 - Each issue will highlight a different subcommittee; October will feature IDEA.
 - Council noted the newsletter is thorough and effective.
 - Action: Communications to feature IDEA in the October issue and continue event promotions.
- Elections & Governance - (Daniel Tayakin)
 - Next meeting scheduled for September 24, 2025.
 - Primary project: update the election timeline.
Proposal presented to move election results release from mid-April to mid-March; to be brought forward for a bylaws amendment vote by the Council.
 - Action: Draft bylaws amendment language and place on the agenda for Council vote
- Inclusion, Diversity for Education and Accountability (D Perez-Sornia)
 - USF recognition of Indigenous Peoples' Day: communications sent to co-chairs of the Indigenous Engagement & Native American Student Success Working Group (Sabrina Kwist; Kouslaa Kesser-Mata) for language review.
 - Collaboration with CAS subcommittee on an ICE presence on campus workshop.
 - PTO policy: inquiry to HR regarding updated language to increase inclusivity.
 - Question raised on changes to DEI terminology in light of federal updates; request that records of official language changes be shared with all staff.
 - A Federal Updates Task Force member noted plans to update the myUSF webpage with relevant information.
 - Actions
 - Incorporate feedback from Indigenous Engagement co-chairs into Indigenous Peoples' Day communications.
 - Coordinate with CAS on ICE workshop planning.
 - Follow up with HR on PTO language and share updates broadly.
 - Federal Updates Task Force to proceed with myUSF page update.
- Campus Accessibility and Safety (Chris Witte)
 - Planning a talk on interacting with ICE, in collaboration with IDEA; speaker identification underway.
 - Developing a proposal for a **Staff Disability Services** office; stakeholder outreach in progress (ETS met; SDS meeting pending).
 - **Actions:**
 - Identify and confirm speaker(s) for ICE workshop..
 - Continue consultations (incl. Student Disability Services) and draft proposal
- Professional Development (Kimberly Bruno)

- Staff Professional Development survey included in this month's newsletter.
- Survey open for 10 days; results to be shared with staff after close.
- **Actions:**
 - Promote survey participation during the open window.
 - Publish aggregate results post-closure

Update on Other University Committee(s)

- University Budget Advisory Council (UBAC): Elisabeth Merkel (absent)
 - UBAC has been asked by the Provost and President to convene earlier than scheduled in order to accelerate the review of annual tuition increases.
 - The Council will vote on its recommendation, which will then be shared with University leadership prior to the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting.
 - Final decisions will be made following the Board of Trustees' deliberation later this month.
 - A Budget Timeline resource, previously forwarded by Elisabeth Merkel, was shared with Staff Council for reference.

I. New Business/Q&A/Open Discussion

- ICE Protocols and Campus Preparedness
 - A staff member raised concerns about the lack of clear, widely communicated guidelines for responding to ICE presence on campus. Suggested simple, accessible training similar to existing safety/active shooter protocols.
 - Staff emphasized the need for practical guidance (e.g., what a signed warrant looks like), as well as building a sense of communal responsibility.
 - It was noted that while policies were communicated in early 2025, much has changed, and there is an opportunity for clarification under the new presidential leadership.
 - Discussion highlighted balancing transparency with protecting vulnerable student populations (international, DACA).
 - Public Safety confirmed no ICE presence to date and clarified that any incidents would be handled by Public Safety, with an emphasis on protecting students.
- Staff Council Budget
 - A staff member asked whether Staff Council would raise the issue of a dedicated budget with the President.
 - General agreement that a budget would increase flexibility and responsiveness, particularly for programming such as training or speakers.
 - Council leadership confirmed budget will be introduced in the presidential meeting but recommended a proposal outlining specific uses.
- National Higher Education Trends
 - A staff member shared a recent incident at another university where faculty and administrators were dismissed over classroom speech related to gender identity.
 - Council agreed it is important to stay aware of such developments nationally, as they could influence higher education climates more broadly.

II. Announcements

- President Aceve's Inauguration is on October 18, 2025, as part of Celebrate USF.

III. Meeting Adjourned at 12:54 PM by Staff Council Vice-President.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Full schedule on [staff council webpage](#)