UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Business Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2021
Carmen Zoom
8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

In Attendance
Chrissy Sprouse, Steven Loborec, Shea Ryan, Justin Lahmers, Tina Bogac, Debbie Pond, Jennifer Elliott, Annie Bingman, Ferdinand Avila-Medina, Sandy Otis, Steven Blalock, Elizabeth Hosket, Emily Kelley, Katie Watkins, Danielle Jennings, Faith Kline, Holly Davis, Patrick Weeks, Brittany Crall, Courtney Gandy, Brittany Savko, Stacey Houser, Lauren Gannon-Evans, Drew Miller, Jacob Hollar, Brandon Gibbs, and Laurel Van Dromme.

Call to Order
Adoption of the Agenda
Approval of the Previous Meetings’ Minutes March 10, 2021

Executive Committee Reports
Chair: Chrissy asked USAC to please review your portions of Annual Report. The agenda for Local and Regional SAC Retreat is set for April 9, and will be most of the day with breaks built in throughout the day. If you’d like to lead a breakout session at the retreat, please let Chrissy know and she will send you an invite. She is thinking that we can hold a USAC Business Meeting in person (and physically distanced) at a park in June, for everyone who is comfortable, so that we can finally meet our first year members in person and properly thank our outgoing (third) members, too.

Chair Elect: Steven mentioned that the New Member Task Force is reviewing the applications at this time. Regarding the national search for new SVP for Talent, Culture, and Human Resources, Steven is sitting on the search committee representing USAC. Please visit this link https://hr.osu.edu/hrsvp-search/ to learn more about the committee and its charge.

Communications: Shea stated that plans for Spring Commencement is big topic across the university right now.

Secretary/Treasurer: Laurel mentioned that she met with our B&F liaison to review business reports recently. She was able to see that the CampusParc refund of $1300 did reach our account in December, and that payments to PRI for live captioning of events in late 2020 did occur before the end of 2020. We weren’t yet able to pull new reports for after January 1. Laurel hopes to have a new, full business report for USAC in April, including 2021 transactions, such as payment for live captioning of our Conversation with the President several weeks ago.

Subcommittee Reports
Inclusive Excellence (IE): Ferdinand noted that their 3rd or 4th meeting with an ERG will occur next week, and they’ll be updating their portion of USAC website in April. Dr. Moore has asked that IE wait to launch its Pride & Ownership Series until after the university’s new Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities report is released. Ferdinand is already scheduled to interview William L. MacDonald, Dean of the Newark campus for the first installment of the series.
Governance: Steven mentioned that they recently hosted (in conjunction with OHR) a good webinar on completing SCDG applications with 30-40 attending. Staff Senator selection will occur later this spring. More on USAC Bylaws discussion will occur later in the meeting.

Outreach & Engagement (O&E): Lauren noted that 446 participants in the President’s Conversation series. She expressed thanks to Chrissy and Steven for hosting the event. Dr. Johnson tweeted about the event, and we had a good news article about it. That will be our last major event of the year, unless a second Diversity & Inclusion panel conversation is planned. Chrissy asked Dr. Moore about this, and is also following-up weekly with President’s office about our request to send an all-Staff USAC email. It will need to be updated again. O&E is also happy to help assist with the Local and Regional SAC retreat as needed.

Staff Affairs (SA): Sandy announced that they selected 2 Staff in the Spotlight from 5 new and previous nomination. Nominations will remain in the pool for selection for 90 days. No news on Winter Recess discussions.

Task Forces
Wellness: (please see notes below)

OHR Liaison Report:
Brandon reported on OHR’s portion of the university’s Reactivation Task Force, which is looking at long term and short term goals for returning staff to university offices. HR has four working groups on workplace flexibility, benefits and leave, benchmarking and long-term policy, and change management communications.

- Ferdinand asked if there will be a transition period that allows staff to smooth into their return to work, perhaps 2 days/week in office and 3 days/remote; and if there can be an arbiter between employees and supervisors who may disagree on how to return. Brandon responded that he hopes these considerations are made, especially for staff with child care responsibilities and that there will be guidelines for best practices. Brandon added that he didn’t think there will be a formal group to make determinations, given how large the university is, but rather OHR will want to make it known that if an employee wants to talk further about options for flex work then the employee is recommended to speak with their dean or unit leader.

- This and other guidelines may be put together in a FAQ or tool kit to help employees and managers for making decisions to return to campus offices. Stacey Houser also sits on the HR Reactivation Task Force, and reiterated that all of these topics are being addressed, while peer institutions and corporations. Laurel suggested to Brandon and Stacey that word be shared across university about this work and/or timeline, because the same conversations and related decisions are occurring at lower levels w/o guidance from university leadership.

- Laurel inquired about general conversation in OHR at a high level about burnout and low morale, especially among HR staff, as she knows a few HR employees who are really struggling with their workloads given the major changes dating from HR Service Delivery, Workday implementation more recently, etc. Brandon replied that he is not privy to particular conversations at a high level, but he is also seeing that same fatigue across OHR. He recommends staff talk openly with supervisors about challenges in hopes that a shift of some kind can be made. He noted that even HR managers and leaders are struggling to understand and utilize new kinds of data reports of Workday. Chrissy added that her HR task force is also talking about burnout and that they are frequently working more than 40 hours/week. She said a shift in culture has to happen from the top down. Kate added that WMC IT is also struggling, and she expects a major turnover in staff as the pandemic ends.
She stated that we have to be able to say no to new work, at some point, especially if it’s not prioritized by leadership. Chrissy added that CWO Bern Melnyk is suggesting “no meeting” days to lighten loads. Brandon agreed that the culture has to change and that the institution needs a philosophy from leadership that supports telework and flexibility. Then employees will feel like they can express concerns to their managers, and suggest innovations to do things better and differently, and then actually pursue those ideas.

**Items for Informational Purposes**

**Items for Group Discussion**

**USAC Bylaws Discussion & Staff Senator Selection process updates by Steven Blalock, Governance Subcommittee Lead**

Steven reminded us that we are continuing discussion of proposed changes in March, with votes planned in April or May. We will discuss 5 major changes today, and the proposed changes are not necessarily final wording. Steven asked that we use the “raise hand” reaction, so that everyone has a chance to voice their opinion. He noted that no changes are official until President Johnson approves and accepts what USAC votes in a month or so. Kate noted that these proposed changes are about process.

Additional proposed changes follow:

1. Rename Chair-Elect to Vice-Chair role, and this role will then have to apply and run for election as Chair the next year, and will no longer presume to become Chair in successive year.
   - General response from previous USAC Chairs and Governance Subcommittee Leads is not to change this bylaw, because it currently provides logistical process and continuity from year to year, as relationships between USAC leadership and senior leaders are shared over time. The Chair-Elect is like a chief of staff for the Chair and starts to participate as Chair-Elect in meetings with senior leaders, so the vision for USAC is shared and continued. This continuity hadn’t occurred before the current bylaw. Prior to 2011, USAC elected the Chair-Elect and Chair every year. The current bylaw was implemented in 2011. Other university committees also follow the same structure as the current USAC bylaw, even if the wording for their offices are different than ours. As it stands now, the Chair-Elect does not have to start from scratch, while some of our initiatives take years to achieve. There are relationships for USAC in place because of the current bylaw which helps keep major initiatives on track, and not be scatter shot from year to year.
   - A change to this current bylaw will affect the timeline of other activities: New Member Task Force, elections, bylaws review, etc. PPCW and Faculty Senate are both governed by a similar Chair-Elect + Chair model as our current bylaw states.

2. Add language to include our interest in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in USAC’s purpose. What this means can also be made more robust in the Operations Manual.

3. Reduce USAC membership eligibility to only 1 year of continuous employment with the university from 2 years of employment.
   - The current bylaw currently aligns with requirements to apply for SCDGs, eligibility for PPCW membership, and also to apply to serve the university as a Staff Senator. The university is a large complex place that takes time to understand. It may be difficult for first year employees to address their relevant knowledge and time availability with their supervisor, whose approval is required for employees to apply to USAC, before the employee has completed one year of employment.
   - In contrast, there are two checks already built in to the USAC selection process: the supervisor’s approval and the actual selection process, so that we should not
presume what an individual is capable of doing or understanding. Supervisors should be allowed to determine if their employees are qualified; and this can be a means to retain good staff. New employees can bring new ideas and energy to an organization.

4. Change the bylaw to allow USAC Alternate Members, who are appointed mid-year to finish a vacating member’s term, to not have to wait one year to apply for full USAC membership while they are serving as an Alternate.
   - We may want a different kind of review without a full application process to be completed by an alternate to become a full member, and this can be addressed in the Operations Manual.

5. Add a bylaw to clarify the process for how a USAC member is removed. The proposed change is that if the executive committee makes such a recommendation; then they meet with Governance Subcommittee and HR liaison, ensuring privacy of the USAC member is protected and that efforts are allowed for improvement in behavior for questionable actions or an explanation, etc.; and then, if all parties agree, advance to a full USAC vote for final decision.
   - This suggestion allows for an internal check and balance within USAC. Additional details (such as how to handle PIPs, investigation by university, and/or frequent non-attendance at USAC meetings, etc.) can be addressed in Operations Manual.
   - Alternatively, the new bylaw should simply grant powers to the Executive Committee to terminate a USAC member with a reference to the Operations Manual, where all processes should be addressed. This separates the authority from the process.

Steven Blalock added that the proposed changes discussed today are subject to change with edits based on today’s discussion and various points raised by USAC members. The Governance Subcommittee will work through possible alternate language, and any related removal of language by any particular bylaw change, in light of this morning’s conversation. These changes will be brought to USAC for review and discussion prior to voting.

Wellness Task Force Updates by Emily Kelley of Wellness Task Force
Emily gave an overview of their process. The group includes Brittany Crall, Emily Kelley, Debbie Pond, and Randall McKenzie. The charge from CWO Bern Melnyk at the beginning of this fiscal year was to determine how USAC might incorporate wellness into USAC structure. The group determined that we want to create a toolkit: a) to help staff advocate for their own participation in wellness, and b) to help managers can support their staff wellness. There are drafts being shared with Buckeye Wellness and OHR, and then the task force will share with USAC for feedback. The Wellness Task Force also wants to incorporate wellness into each of the USAC Subcommittees to share the overall ownership of wellness across USAC and for it to be addressed from different lenses by USAC members. This may also ensure that at least one subcommittee is always working on wellness, and enhance our advocacy for wellness by bringing multiple perspectives to bear on behalf of staff. Examples of how that might look include the following:
1. Governance – examine USAC rules and procedures and recommend or ensure that we are taking activity breaks in meetings;
2. IE – collaborate with BW to encourage diversity in programming and equality in access;
3. Staff Affairs – advocate for policy changes impacting staff wellness (e.g., mental health articulated as part of sick leave policy, option for vacation cash-out for staff facing financial hardship, etc.);
4. O&E – maintain and enhance the Wellness Toolkit; promote wellness programming.
USAC Subcommittees can determine how to add these kinds of goals to the Bylaws; then vote

- Steven Blalock suggested that these goals may fit better in the Operations Manual rather than the Bylaws; Emily agreed.
- Ferdinand is concerned that equity and wellness don’t always go hand in hand, and Emily responded that this is why the Task Force wants each subcommittee to determine its role relative to wellness. Steven also added that each subcommittee should be considering how each can be working to greater equity for supporting health and wellness among staff.
- Sandy asked if the Wellness Task Force will end or continue past this year. Steven Loborec responded that task forces are not generally intended to be permanent components of USAC and that termination this year seems to be suggested by the Wellness Task Force. He likes the varied approach that the Wellness Task Force suggests for USAC. Chrissy also answered Sandy’s question that the Wellness Task Force may end June 30, unless Randall and Steven see reason that the work needs to be continued.
- Steven Blalock stated that he is concerned about benchmarking within the Governance Subcommittee, relative to the SCDGs or selection of Staff Senators. He envisions a new wellness section in the Operation Manual with a list of goals for each subcommittee. Lauren added that O&E Subcommittee has already considered this given their history planning the Health & Wellness Expo, and completely restructured with the result being the wellness webinar series they’ve hosted this year, which actually engaged more staff members.

**Adjournment** 10:31 a.m.