

## Staff Council Minutes

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Grimes Haus Attendees: 10

8:00AM – 12:00PM

Members present: Abby Yates, Carolina Soria, Becky, Amanda Mitchell, Kelley Collazo, Bryn Best, David Huebner, Caitlin Woolsey, Gloria Butz, and Terri Kendall

Retreat began at 8:05AM.

No minutes to approve.

### Old Business:

- Reflected on the year's challenges and accomplishments
  - Discussed beginning dialogues with other parties prior to developing proposals
  - Discussed the potential for making the Staff Council Recognition Award bigger
    - It was noted we used Carter Hall in the past and hosted there; it was a larger affair with picnic games as well.

### New Business:

- Voted on and approved new role designations:
  - Abby – Chair
  - Caitlin – Vice Chair
  - Bryn – Secretary
  - TBA – Treasurer\*
- \*Voted to add a Treasurer position so long as there was not an issue with our bylaws
- Standing Committees:
  - Employee Relations (Abby is acting Chair until the council is at full capacity)
    - Abby Yates – acting Chair
    - Rebecca Yates
    - Kelley Collazo
    - Frank Nagy
    - Carol Soria
  - Economic Benefits and Communications Committee:
    - Caitlin Woolsey- Chair
    - Bryn Best – co-Chair
    - David Huebner – Secretary
    - Terry Kendall
    - Gloria Butz

- Chose to retain our previous meeting time for future meetings:
  - 1pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month
- Discussed the need for hitting recruiting hard in May 2025 for the council
  - The council is listed as functioning through the help of 20 members.
  - It was acknowledged it is hard to recruit in Fall.
  - Word of Mouth recruiting was said to have good effect.
    - In the past we also had an ambassador, but the weight of the work fell heavily on one person.
- Discussed available funds
  - Recalled how the funding was just about enough for the picnic and recognition but not more

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00PM.

## Staff Council Minutes

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

1:04PM – 1:55PM0

Members present: Bryn Best, Gloria Butz, David Huebner, Terri Kendall, Megan Knox, Claire Sinvil, Caitlin Woolsey, Abby Yates, Rebecca Yates

Guest Speaker: Tricia Teagan from Admin Senate

Members absent: Carolina Soria, Frank Nagy, Kelley Collazo

Retreat began at 8:05AM.

### Prior Business:

- July minutes – roles clarification
  - We need to know who is acting in what capacity.

### Old Business:

- Reflected on the year's challenges and accomplishments
  - Discussed importance of dialoguing with parties prior to developing proposals
  - Discussed the potential to grow the Staff Council Recognition Award
    - It was historically held in Carter Hall and a larger affair.

Guest 2024-2025 Chair of Admin Senate, Tricia Teagan, speaks:

- Open Admin Senate meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month from 3–4:30pm.
- Admin Senate is recently working on two IFC's with President Bridges.
  - Bereavement Policy – adding cousins to Part B
    - Caitlin says the policy needs updated and references a case study.
      - Caitlin motions to send the support of Staff Council.
        - The proposition is seconded by David Huebner.
          - The motion is passed.
  - Tuition Benefits may need another week or two
  - Also employee sickbank for starting employees
    - Maybe start them with a 2-day sickbank or bereavement allowance
      - If we have ideas, feel free to reach out!
- Events & Relations
  - First Year Instruction, Rice Library, Recreation
  - Make sure employees know about resources available to them
    - Slow getting orientation packets rolling
- They're hoping to make desserts for a monthly employee luncheon to build community.

## Current Business:

- We are still finalizing the duties of Treasurer
  - Once we have accomplished this, it will move to the President.
  - It will not be official until the next fiscal year and will require a bylaws update.
  - When consulted, Sarah said she could give advice but not have power over stuff.
    - Bylaws were last updated around 6/21/23.
    - We had Don serve on a role in a past point.
- In 2021 or 2022 the name of the Economic Benefits & Communication committee was adjusted; maybe it needs changed?
  - Abby will think about it.
  - Caitlin agrees.
- Ad-hoc committees
  - Nomination Committee
  - Bylaws Committee
- David notes that some rules may have been proportioned to the size of Staff Council.
  - We note that we have had trouble maintaining 20 people; historically, there used to be recruitment in Spring.
    - Abby notes that there is too much going on in the Fall and that 8-10 people will not develop our best results.

## Committee Reports:

- Old Business
- Meeting with Sarah
  - Staff council felt that having someone from HR as an advisor would be tricky, especially the HR Director. We agreed it was kind to offer, but it may not be best.
- New Advisor: Who we will have as advisor if not Sarah Will?
- Seeking Objectives: we could look at work-from-home policy
- Student Workers Wage Increase
  - Next action: maybe ask Sarah who advocates for students
    - Is this Student Affairs, SGA, the Dean of Students?
  - Historical Context:
    - Faculty Senate looked at making things \$14 / hr; it didn't work. They also looked at helping with reclassifying positions.
      - Starting a process to reestablish rank could help improve wage.
        - We can try to start, but we may be behind; the method could take up to three years.
  - The Ask: +\$2 is a good way to keep people. It's not competitive, but it's better.
  - Who will reach out?: Abby will get back to us; she says we definitely need to.

- Work From Home
  - Executive leadership & HR can approve you for 5 days a week
  - Staff Council had mixed feelings:
    - David notes he prefers here to home.
    - Caitlin notes that it seems like there are a lot of unnecessary rules.
      - Work from Home can be used very effectively in the summer.
    - It's noted as well that custodial staff are not able to use this benefit.
- Nominating Committee
  - Becky and Bryn are doing well with recruiting!
    - We're sorry to see Becky go.
- University Committees
  - We have not heard back from the Development or Safety committee; we *have* heard back from the wellness committee.
  - For the substance abuse committee, we can consult them but do not have a seat.
- Abby will meet with Faculty for SB 102 soon.
- Rule to not wear stuff on clothes like a cross or tied to PRIDE.

#### New Business

- O: Drive from Caitlin
  - The aim is to make sure we have a good system going forward. We'd like to center documents so that there's not lost knowledge and it is as easy as possible to pass information on.
    - We're hoping to return to something more cohesive & thrive rather than just hang on.
  - Previous minutes and agendas can be seen here.
- Fall Food Drive:
  - Claire is putting out drop boxes on Friday so that it starts on Monday.
    - Orr Center: it'll be in the hall at the main entrance
    - There is usually another one across from the advising center.
  - We can contact Claire Simil if it looks full & needs picked up.
- Spring: maybe another contest / championship can be brought back.
  - It was discovered that the cans for the food drive trophy were not empty.
    - This has been deemed a hazard.
      - We will make a new trophy and use cans without food.
        - If we want to help, reach out to Abby.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:55PM.

Staff Council Minutes  
Wednesday, September 18, 2024  
1pm – 1:59pm

Members present: Bryn Best, Gloria Butz, Kelley Collazo, David Huebner, Terri Kendal, Megan Knox, T Lance, Zoe Meuth, Claire Sinvil, Caitlin Woolsey, Abby Yates

Members absent: Frank Nagy

Member resignation: Rebecca Yates, Carolina Soria

Guest Speaker: Bob Gober from Facilities, Operations, and Planning

Guest Bob Gober of Facilities, Operations, and Planning speaks:

- Bob can be reached at [rmgober@usi.edu](mailto:rmgober@usi.edu) or via phone at ext. 5182
- Bob is helping representing Mpulse, the work request system.
- He notes it can be accessed via [usi.mpulse9.com](http://usi.mpulse9.com)
- The basic view appears somewhat like Outlook on the left side; it highlights the current job that you're looking at. Past requests can also be located in this system.
- The sequence of events is such that:
  - 1) staff put in requests
  - 2) FOP makes them into work orders & then assign the requests
- Making a New Request
  - A plus sign on the right shows us how to make a new request.
    - Technicians will only see the first 30 characters.
    - If you have a long request, you can put information in the box on the right.
  - Short description: Water on the floor
  - Choose the category that best fits for location:
    - Equipment – the old stuff hard-built into the building
    - Buildings – location of the building
    - Rooms – if it only affects a single room
  - The pieces are nested; some items will appear after you interact with the first set.
    - You can type items in, too, rather than simply selecting.
  - Zeroes get lost in room numbers, so RL0010 would translate to RL10.
  - Include the financial manager's email
  - If you mark urgent, then make sure to call. A pop-up will also populate.
    - You can't save the request until you acknowledge yes, you called.
- Work Order Status
  - The status can be found at the bottom of the page & in a tab near the top.
  - If a piece is missed and we need follow-up, we wait a day or two for response.

- Printing requests
  - There's a spot on the far right that lets you print out one you've sent.
  - A gear on the far right lets you manage the form view.
    - Try some of the different options to get it to look how you'd like it to
      - You can save it to pdf or print it out.
- David notes the audio video was helpful for knowing how to go about it

We will use an email approval for the minutes of last month.

#### Seeking a Finance Advisor

- Any ideas of a possible finance advisor for Staff Council?
  - Abby was thinking maybe her boss even though a VP
  - Kathy Oeth
  - Maybe someone from trio
  - Hesitant toward involving someone from HR
    - Caitlin thinks HR could be possible but not necessarily every meeting, and not the director since there could be a conflict of interest.

#### Treasurer / Advisor Being Sought

- Caitlin thinks maybe we don't necessarily need both a treasurer and advisor.
  - Maybe one or the other
- Kathy Oeth could be a good fit
  - An advisor to put in two cents couldn't hurt
  - Just someone to assist with the budget so that we don't overspend by accident
- We will let Sarah know we're not going to go for it for this time, but we'll let her know if it changes. We'll forgo the financial advisor now and focus on Treasurer as we get closer.

#### Committee Reports

- Exec committee
  - Abby will be meeting with Sarah on Friday
    - Caitlin was going to follow-up, too.
      - She didn't seem to know whether it was appropriate for us to work on student worker wages or not.
      - She didn't seem to click with our understanding of entry-level positions or on student worker items.
  - Abby will update everyone once I speak to Sarah on Friday with what she means pertaining to student worker wages.
- Employee Relations
  - Did around 153 or 135 donations

- Library had the most donations
- Econ Benefit
  - There's not too much for our meeting beyond having discussion with Sarah Will
    - Not appropriate to match ourselves to colleges larger like Purdue / IU
    - We're curious whether Institutional Analytics would have some data
  - Lance asked if we're helping faculty senate to update the bereavement policy?
    - Caitlin said yes & that we've gone ahead and sent our support forward
  - SickBank would be good for support staff if it's already used for admin / faculty.
    - Not the best idea to take away free dress Friday if they're not compensating people enough to get nice clothes for the rest of the week.

#### USI Presidential Search Committee

- This is Abby's first time on a search committee.
  - She'll try to keep us updated but knows it could be pretty private.
    - There will be a meeting with staff and more on September 25<sup>th</sup> UC 2220.
    - The faculty one starts a little later at 3:20.

#### Strategic Marketing

- Abby & Caitlin trying to work with strategic marketing to extend communication
  - Try to utilize special events or creative and print
    - Email is probably the cheapest way of sending out communications now
    - Note: going through university bulletin boards requires approval
  - Lance says email octopus is a free email marketing site they use at the gallery

#### Wellness Fair

- We're going to have wellness tips at our table.
  - e.g. Don't open your email after 4:30pm
  - If we have good tips, feel free to submit to Abby

#### Pumpkin Voting

- As far as the pumpkin table goes from 11:30 – 2pm, Abby will set up a sharepoint for people to go for it & it'd be like 20-30 minutes of time & be broken up between people.
  - Pumpkins can be 3D but don't have to be bio-pumpkins

#### Town Hall / Listening Session

- We could host one & we could send a sign-up form to see who all is interested.
  - For whom? For staff to meet with staff council
  - When? November
  - Do we want to host one? Yes
  - Abby will set up an email to collect things



- People can bring ideas / concerns
- Can also ask questions about what & how & why how it'd be addressed?
  - Kleymeier may be a good location
  - What issues do we want to hear?
    - Wages, turnover rate, unfilled positions
- Work with Rhonda Woolsey to see what's going on in the month of November
  - We might not even exist after the month of November

#### Unwritten Vacation Policy

- Ongoing investigation. Caitlin needs to contact Sarah to figure out if the unwritten policy regarding vacation time to internal job interviews was applied anywhere.
- See if there are plans to add it.
- Abby will try to let her know in the Friday meeting if it's possible

#### Open Items

- Someone has been dealing w/ abusive husband & working on getting divorced
  - USI claims to be friendly & helpful but no offer to help find a safe place
    - Person has slept in her car
  - Caitlin and Abby provided resources right away. YWCA was referenced as one potential place that can help.



### Staff Council Meeting Minutes - 2.28.25

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Abby Yates in UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Gloria Butz, Kelley Collazo, David Huebner, Terri Kendall, Megan Knox, Zoe Meuth, Claire Sinvil, Caitlin Woolsey, Abby Yates

Member Resignations: Bryn Best

Guest Speaker(s):

Jennifer Greene, University Archivist

Spoke about Archives Madness, taking place in March, and the local organizations that submit artifacts and what USI is submitting this year. The Archives has a blog, [amUSIngArtifacts.org](http://amUSIngArtifacts.org), that promotes the collection. Encouraged staff members to come visit the Archives for a tour.

Jennifer Roberts, Institutional Equity Office

Spoke about what the Institutional Equity office is, what they do, and ways to get involved as an employee (trained investigator, adjudicator, advisor). Volunteers will only work one case a year if there are any cases brought to the office. Jennifer asked if there were any concerns council members had heard in their offices, and those were discussed. DEI was discussed; internal policies will not be changing.

Old Business: The 3/19/25 Listen and Engage Staff Council session was discussed. It will be an open session where staff members can come and ask questions in a casual setting. Snacks will be provided. Will also try and spread the word on nominations and getting more members and will hold a regular meeting in the last half of the session that anyone can observe to gain a better understanding of Staff Council. If any sensitive information is discussed, non-members will be dismissed.

Current Business: Archie's Closet is looking mainly for hygiene products, such as mouthwash, shampoo, conditioner, floss, Q-tips, small first aid kits, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, and paper towels. Items cannot be opened, expired, or damaged in any way. If a flyer is made for Archie's Closet, specify no damaged or opened items and send the flyer to Claire.

New Business: Zoe will be the secretary until June.

Additions to the Agenda: DEI was discussed further. President Steve Bridges is open to having conversations with departments and students about concerns they have and what USI can do to help. Ways USI students and employees can protect and comfort students was discussed, as international students are worried, and USI being proactive in their approach will help with employee and student fears.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:57am by Abby Yates.

The next meeting will be held on March 19 at UC 2207.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth



### **Staff Council Meeting Minutes – 3.19.25**

**Opening:** The meeting was called to order at 1:16 by Abby Yates at UC 2207.

**Representatives in Attendance:** Gloria Butz, David Huebner, Terri Kendall, Zoe Meuth, Claire Sinvil, Caitlin Woolsey, Abby Yates

**Absent:** Kelley Collazo, Megan Knox

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

#### **Old Businesses:**

Archie's Closet Mini Drive was a success. A lot of products were donated, and the Orr Center had the most donations. Claire is in charge of Archie's Closet, but if she is ever unavailable, RFW staff and student worker managers are available to help.

The Support Staff Recognition Award is still being advertised, and nominations are encouraged. Communicate with people on campus and spread the word.

Staff Council nominations are still being accepted. Everyone needs to continue communicating with staff across campus and inform them of Staff Council, what it does, and how it is not as time consuming as many people think. Staff can nominate themselves or others. The goal is to get Staff Council back to full capacity, twenty people, because we are currently operating with nine.

The Pott College Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is discussing changing their language in preparation for possible changes at the state and federal levels. This is still an area of concern for many people across campus, but as of now, USI administration has not told us to expect any changes.

Wage increases, the effect of enrollment numbers on wages, and Human Resources' recommendation of Staff Council to determine fiscally neutral benefits for staff was discussed. USI leadership has said not to be worried about major changes in state or federal funding. Leadership will keep Staff Council informed on changes coming and any effects these changes could have. This year is a budget year, and the state is still needing to relay details to the

university, so budgetary decisions have not been made or advertised at this point in time. Staff Council is pushing for transparency in communication with USI leadership.

**Current Business:**

Three guest observers came to this month's Staff Council meeting to gain a better understanding of Staff Council. Current members explained what Staff Council does throughout the year, as well as the two subcommittees.

The EBC Committee has been searching for fiscally neutral policies and benefits since wage increases are not possible according to Human Resources. The idea of giving employees one free guest pass for an immediate family member or spouse was discussed, but this is likely not fiscally neutral due to the fact that guest pass revenue provides funding for equipment repair and replacement in the RFW. This idea will be discussed further in future meetings. The EBC Committee is also pushing for staff to take their breaks and lunches and to not work through them, as these are a benefit to all employees and are upheld by federal law. Advertising the USI Time to Get Fit benefit is also a goal, as it is not well advertised on campus as a benefit for staff. Employees must submit an electronic form to their supervisor, and their supervisor has the ability to deny the request. We are asking that the supervisor needs to provide a justification for their denial and that the employee be able to see the justification.

**New Business:**

The Provost has requested Staff Council members join HLC committees as representatives. Megan Knox, Zoe Meuth, Claire Sinvil, and Abby Yates will be joining the committees. Staff Council members are currently supposed to serve as representatives on multiple university committees, but many of these committees have not met regularly since COVID-19, so it is currently unclear of Staff Council's responsibility. More information is being obtained on the subject.

**Additions to the Agenda:**

USI is switching their phone system to Teams.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on April 16 at UC 2207.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth



## **Staff Council Meeting Minutes – 4.16.25**

**Opening:** The meeting was called to order at 1:01 by David Huebner at UC 2207.

**Representatives in Attendance:** Ella Avolio-Alschbach, Gloria Butz, Kelley Collazo, Sarah Hellenberg, David Huebner, Megan Knox, Ed Kromm, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Alyson Roblero, Claire Sinvil, Veronica Watkins, Caitlin Woolsey

**Guest Speaker(s):** Steve Bridges, newly elected 5<sup>th</sup> president of USI  
Steve Bridges introduced himself to Staff Council and explained his goals for the university and future engagement with administrative/employee groups at USI. He plans to be more engaged and available to Staff Council, open to having in-person conversations and answering questions we may have and being transparent in answers. He explored his staffing goals for the university, filling open positions in different departments and levels, and his enrollment goals, targeting non-traditional student populations.

**Absent:** Terri Kendall, Abby Yates

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

### **Old Businesses:**

Introductions were made to learn more about new and old members of Staff Council.  
The Support Staff Recognition Award is still being advertised, and nominations are encouraged. Communicate with people on campus and spread the word. Staff Council members cannot nominate anyone, so communicate with colleagues.

### **Current Business:**

Abby Yates nominates herself for Chair for July 2025 through June 2026. This was supported and will be discussed more when Abby is in attendance.

The EBC Committee has been searching for fiscally neutral policies and benefits since wage increases are not possible according to Human Resources. Staff Council is still encouraging

employees to take their breaks and lunches and to not work through them, as well as encourage the use of the Time To Get Fit program available to USI employees.

Future meetings with Steve Bridges will be planned. Members are asked to prepare questions and conversation topics for his next visit.

Abby is still looking into the various university committees Staff Council members are supposed to serve on, because regular committee meetings have not happened since the pandemic. Two Staff Council members, Zoe and Abby, are serving on Higher Learning Commission criterion committees.

#### **New Business:**

Claire Sinvil is leaving her USI position in late July, early August. She will be working on Archie's Closet to prepare it for the future handoff.

The Employee Relations Committee is planning the summer picnic.

#### **Additions to the Agenda:**

The USI employee tumblers and the unlimited refills for a semester for a flat fee was discussed. The possibility of extending the unlimited refills to a semester was proposed. Sodexo can be contacted to propose the idea and have a discussion about extending the unlimited refills from a semester to an academic year.

The possibility of summer hours, in which employees could work slightly less time during the summer months while being paid for full-time work, was discussed. Human Resources would need to be contacted to discuss this possibility.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 by David Huebner. The next meeting will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup> at UC 2207.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth



## **Staff Council Meeting Minutes – 5.28.25**

**Opening:** The meeting was called to order at 1:06pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

**Representatives in Attendance:** Gloria Butz, Kelley Collazo, David Huebner, Terri Kendall, Zoe Meuth, Claire Sinvil, Caitlin Woolsey, Abby Yates

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

### **Old Businesses:**

The winner of the Support Staff Recognition Award was selected by popular vote. The four anonymous nominees were reviewed and discussed, and voting for the award winner took place. After one round of voting, the winner was declared, and they will be publicly announced at the June 25 award ceremony.

For the 2026 award, we will try to get more than four nominees. Engagement with the nomination form was very low this year, and those that did nominate staff were sometimes short on details needed that made council members feel as if they got a good understanding of that nominee's exceptionalism. The goal for next year is to get more nominations and to have the recommendations contain more details about that person's service.

Discussed the possibility of having a third party on campus go through the nominations submitted to remove any identifying information so all Staff Council members can partake in the vote in a non-biased manner.

The possibility of raising the stipend presented to the winner of the recognition award from \$500 to \$700 was discussed.

### **Current Business:**

The summer social and award ceremony taking place on June 25 from 11am-2pm will be in Rice Plaza. A second location will be ready in case of rain. Admin Senate is providing a cookie platter, and they will also be announcing the Best of the Nest at the event. Catering for the event was discussed, and the walking taco bar for first shift and boxed lunches for second and third shift are most likely going to be ordered.

EBC Committee will not be having a meeting in June, and the university budget was briefly discussed. If anyone has any ideas for fiscally neutral activities or perks for employees, please bring them forward. Otherwise, the committee will focus on promoting the Time to Get Fit program and making it more accessible and well-known to support staff.

The end-of-year report draft has been sent. Please review the draft and send Abby any comments or edits you may have. The report will be finalized at the June meeting.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on June 18 at 1pm.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth