UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

Staff Council

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – August 19, 2025

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:02PM by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Danny Kloenhamer, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Alyson Roblero (virtual), Abby Yates

Absent: Krista Glenn, Sarah Hellenberg, Ed Krohn, Destiny Powell

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 July retreat was briefly discussed; no updates were needed.

Current Business: The Executive Committee has not met to go over their responsibilities and goals for this year; recruitment, communication with HR, and communication and invitation to future meetings with university leadership.
The Economic Benefits and Communications Committee leadership team was decided (Ed Krohn as Chair, Ella Avolio-Alschbach as Vice Chair, and Alyson Roblero as Secretary). The next meeting will focus on determining the goals of this year's committee.
The Employee Relations Committee discussed the success of Archie's Closet donations at the University Meeting and have begun to plan future events and donations. Advertisement and promotion of these events and donation drives was discussed.

New Business: The exploration of more concrete language around remote work as an employee benefit was discussed, as it is currently left up to department leadership and is not uniformly applied.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:31PM by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on September 17 at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
Staff Council

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – September 17, 2025

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:01pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Danny Kloenhamer, Ed Krohn, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Alyson Roblero, Abby Yates

Absent: Krista Glenn, Destiny Powell

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

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

Old Businesses: A grievance brought to the council's attention was discussed. An anonymous employee asked if university leadership could grant employees Monday, December 22nd off since the winter recess starts on December 23rd. They would like it to be announced sooner rather than later so holiday travel plans and family gatherings can be planned. Staff Council, and specifically the Employee Benefits and Communications Committee, will bring this up with the proper channels and get an answer.
Staff Council will have a table at this year's Wellness Fair on September 24th. If anyone has any health/wellness advice to give at the fair, please contact Abby Yates by the 23rd. Abby will be sending a sing-up form to council members for the table and asks that everyone to sit at the table for at least thirty minutes so all members are represented.

Current Business: HLC committees and their inconsistency in communication with members was discussed. Some committees have met and others have not.
The Executive Committee has not officially met as there have not been anything at this point that needs immediate attention.
The Employee Benefits and Communications Committee will be looking at the USI Faculty and Staff Survey data collected in August in order to determine this year's goals and projects.
The Employee Relations Committee has been working on the ongoing Archie's Closet Drive that ends this Friday. Help is needed on Monday, the 22nd, to collect the donations and bring them back to the RFWC. There have not been a lot of donations this year, so ideas to boost engagement with the drive are encouraged. Connecting with people and organizations in the

community, like Walmart, Meier, or Schnucks, was discussed as a possibility to further explore. The planning for this year's pumpkin decorating contest planning is underway, with the breezeway being booked on Halloween for voting. Changing the method of voting to increase engagement was discussed, such as voting through email. Umbraco and Qualtrics training for committee members was also discussed.

New Business: The USI Faculty and Staff Survey data has been sent to Staff Council, and it will be further discussed at next month's meeting. Upon first look, it seems like the newer employees are more willing to provide suggestions and engage with Staff Council. Some suggestions that were popular were introducing a PTO pool, paid day off for your birthday, and an increase in the number of credit hours on a tuition fee waiver. Six of the respondents said they were interested in learning more about Staff Council. They have been contacted and have been invited to next month's meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:44pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on October 15 at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
Staff Council

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2025

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:04pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Ed Krohn, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Alyson Roblero, Abby Yates

Absent: Krista Glenn, Destiny Powell

Resignations: Danny Kloenhamer

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

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

Old Businesses: We reviewed historical proposals and initiatives that Staff Council has led or supported over the last several decades. We will archive and keep in the O Drive and Teams channels. The 12/22 request for extended holiday was brought up again and the Chair reached out to the president's office with the request. Wellness Fair was a success and there were donations for Archie's Closet donated. Supervisor authority over council participation was mentioned and the suggestion is to have any denials to participate in Staff Council obligations be documented via emails, Teams or text messages. The survey results were placed in bar graphs and are available in Teams and O Drive for committee discussion and reference.

Current Business: HLC committees and their inconsistency in communication with members was discussed. Some committees have met, and others have not. The Chair will put events in the calendar and on Teams to serve as a timeline for events.
The Executive Committee has not officially met as there has not been anything at this point that needs immediate attention.
The Employee Benefits and Communications Committee will focus on employee handbook language and updates to sick leave and leave of absences.
The Employee Relations Committee members now have access to Qualtrics and Staff Council email. Avanly will confirm gift card amount for pumpkin winners (3.) The decorating contest information is on the webpage and USI calendar; Flyers have been made in Canva. Sign-up sheet

for Breezeway voting will be available soon. The Giving Tree needs more marketing to students, and the Chair will reach out to specific campus resources with more information about The Giving Tree and QR codes. Due to member participation, the entire council will support The Giving Tree initiative.

New Business: New marketing strategies for incoming members such as video campaign, highlight stories and testimonials were determined to be a good start for FY27-29 recruitment in the Spring. A panel or "open mic" to answer questions about what Staff Council does presently and what they have accomplished in the past was also discussed in December. Collaborating with the Administrative Associates and Assistants Organization possibly to keep relevance. Updates Bylaws to reflect current state of support staff and participation needs – possibly re-brand Staff Council.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:01pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on November 19 at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Abby Yates

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2025

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Ed Krohn, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Alyson Roblero, Abby Yates

Member Resignations: Krista Glenn

Guest Speaker(s): President Steven Bridges and Mr. Zachary LaGrange (VP for Government Affairs and General Counsel) met with Staff Council to discuss the grievance submitted to Staff Council about removal of diversity, equity, and inclusion language from USI's website and how there was not communication from university leadership on this change, and many employees found out via a Courier & Press article published on October 15, 2025. Increased communication from leadership was discussed. Fears over the strategic realignment of the Multicultural Center and it being absorbed into the Student Life Office was discussed. President Bridges proposed open communication between his office and Staff Council to promote transparency and get information out to staff members better.

Wages for hourly employees were also discussed, and an emphasis was made that the Staff Council survey found that employees that have been at USI for five years or more feel less respected in the workplace. Staff Council brought forward the issue of HR asking for fiscally neutral policies to institute, but so far our proposals have been denied, as things like increasing PTO accrual rates are not actually fiscally neutral. Made the president and VP aware of the frustration staff members are feeling with low wages. President Bridges discussed the fact that USI needs to generate its own revenue and that student enrollment numbers are a big factor in wage increases. He said Sarah Will is the main point of contact for these issues, as she will handle the operations side of the university while he focuses on the strategic side.

Section D.3 Rest Periods of the University Handbook was discussed, as it was found that lunch breaks are not mentioned in the handbook at all and are only mentioned on the Provisional Alternate Work Arrangement page. Upon reviewing that section of the handbook, President Bridges and VP LaGrange said it will need to be updated. Abby will contact Sarah Will and cc VP LaGrange on the email to discuss the issue.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

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

Current Business: Destiny Powell, due to not attending more than two consecutive Staff Council meetings, was voted to no longer be a standing member of Staff Council.
The EBC Committee is looking into improving PTO accrual, increasing the number of credit hours employees can take a semester, and the progress made by Admin Senate on the sick bank for employees.
The ER Committee has the ornaments for Giving Tree out, and they will remain out until the deadline of December 10.

New Business: Recruitment will need to be a topic, as numbers are low. President Bridges suggested work groups for different things that need to be addressed. Recruitment ideas will be further discussed at December's meeting.

Additions to the Agenda: Ed Krohn discussed the FOP's rule of replacing work boots every 18 months. He is trying to find the language that supports this rule and is looking into OSHA requirements for personal protective equipment, which includes work boots. Further research is needed into the topic to build a case that work boots need to be replaced more regularly.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:16pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on December 17th at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – December 17, 2025

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:04 by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, and Abby Yates

Absent: Ed Krohn, Alyson Roblero

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 Director and Assistant Director of HR are coming to the January meeting. Adding language to the employee handbook to protect breaks and lunch breaks will be discussed.

Current Business: Promoting Staff Council meetings and actively inviting visitors/employees to attend meetings was discussed. It is encouraged to have employees see the process Staff Council goes through to enact changes and handle issues brought to the council.
Executive Committee: President's Council has been discussing how wages are heavily based on student retention and recruitment, and with the uncertainties happening in the state and federal government currently, things are sort of up in the air at this point in time.
EBC Committee: Meal breaks and that language being added to the handbook will be a major focus for 2026. A discussion on supervisor training will also take place and brought forth to the council next year.
ER Committee: The Giving Tree is finished, and while it was rocky at times, they were able to push through and have a successful year. The committee will discuss ways to improve upon future Giving Trees to address the problems that arose this year. The USI Foundation will also be contacted for help with funds for gift cards.

New Business: Visitors were in attendance, so an overview of Staff Council and its duties were given. Questions were asked by the visitors and answered by current representatives.

Nominations for new Staff Council representatives will be accepted in March/April of 2026. The announcement of the new representatives will go out in May/June. Executive nominations for Staff Council will happen in February/March.
Everyone is encouraged to attend professional development sessions in the university spring meeting in January. While Staff Council was asked for PD suggestions, not all were accepted due to a shortage of instructors for the sessions. Make sure to RSVP for any sessions you wish to attend.
A Staff Council flyer will be approved and sent out to university employees inviting them to January's Staff Council meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2026 at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2026

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:08pm by Abby Yates at UC2218.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach (virtual), Ed Krohn, Zoe Meuth, Abby Yates

Absent: Sarah Hellenberg, Avanly Meuth, Alyson Roblero

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

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

Old Businesses: Possible future recruitment efforts were discussed. Workshop themes for support staff were discussed, as Human Resources wants to offer workshops for employees to go over benefits and handbook updates.

Current Business: This meeting was advertised in USI Today, inviting support staff to attend the meeting to show them what Staff Council does and how a meeting is run. Due to it also being the day of the Career Fair, only one guest attended the meeting and one came by after the meeting was adjourned.
The Employee Benefits Committee is focused on recruitment efforts, waiting on the addition of meal breaks to the employee handbook, and workshop topics with Human Resources.
The Employee Relations Committee is working on Student Worker Appreciation Week (March 16-20), and has partnered with the Campus Store to offer coupons of 20% off to student workers.

New Business: A parking grievance was submitted that requested employee-only parking, and the parking situation and rules on campus were discussed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:37pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on March 18th at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA
Staff Council

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2026

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Abby Yates

Absent: Ed Krohn, Alyson Roblero

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

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

Old Businesses: Possible future recruitment efforts were discussed. Update on adding lunch and other breaks to the employee handbook: At legal team level right now. The library needs help with advertising and spreading the word for voting during Arch Madness.

Current Business: This meeting was advertised in USI Today, inviting support staff to attend the meeting to show them what Staff Council does and how a meeting is run. TIAA was highly requested as the topic for the next information session. There will be a TIAA webinar available to all USI employees on March 26th. For recruiting, Staff Council has decided to split efforts with half of the Council focusing on inviting potential new members while the other half focuses on discussing accommodations with supervisors. The HLC visit is also coming up this year, which is a great way to reach out to other departments and improve inter-department communications. The new university budget was discussed in relation to salaries, wages, and employee benefits.
The Employee Benefits Committee is focused on recruitment efforts and workshop topics with Human Resources. The next recruitment information session needs to be moved to a new time. The Employee Relations Committee is working on editing the final bylaws to make the Giving Tree an official ad hoc committee as well as setting up the Qualtrics form and reservation for the Recognition Award Luncheon this summer. The Employee Relations Committee has also decided to cancel the Spring Archie's Closet Drive until the new location is ready.

New Business: A budget information session was proposed for mid-April with Jeff Sickman to help break down budget changes for Staff Council.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on April 15th at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Avanly Meuth

Staff Council Meeting Minutes - April 15, 2026

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:03pm by Abby Yates at UC 2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Ed Krohn, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Abby Yates

Absent: Alyson Roblero

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and amended. It will be approved via email at a later date once the amendments are made.

Old Businesses:
The Employee Relations Committee has been planning and scheduling information sessions that are in partnership with Human Resources. The Employee Handbook updates section has been scheduled for April 30th at 10am in UC226-227. An information session about Staff Council is still being planned and will tentatively be held in May.
Recruitment ideas are still being discussed, and members are encouraged to nominate people for Staff Council.

Current Business:
Bylaw amendments were discussed, and language is being written to address creating a Giving Tree Ad Hoc committee, updating the eligibility of staff on campus that can serve on Staff Council, and expanding when elections for Staff Council members will be held.
Constance Hermann, Associate Director of Human Resources, was appointed by President Bridges to be the Staff Council Advisor and Financial Manager.
Thursday, April 16 is the University Budget Kickoff Meeting where Jeff Sickman will discuss the university budget and financial projections. The meeting is open to anyone on campus.
A newsletter to keep all support staff on campus up to date with what Staff Council is working on and its goals was discussed as a way to encourage participation and increase visibility. It was proposed to send out the newsletter once at the beginning and once at the end of each semester.

The Employee Relations Committee is in the final stages of organizing this year's summer luncheon and recognition award. The award will also have an honorable mention this year.
On April 4th, Human Resources sent out a campus-wide email informing everyone of employee handbook updates. Section D.3 Rest Periods (Breaks) was updated to include meal breaks for support staff. Our data collected during the fall survey helped us approach HR about the issue and get this important update added to the employee handbook.
Staff Council is working with Human Resources to plan and host professional development workshops.

New Business:
Barbara Goodwin reached out to see if Staff Council is interested in participating in the Celebrate the Trails event in June. Staff Council members could participate in a guided trail walk and help make letterboxes to hide around the campus trails. She and Bob Gober want to add more letterboxes to the existing ones. More information on letterboxing can be found at https://www.letterboxing.org/ and https://www.atlasquest.com/. Abby will contact them and let them know we are interested.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:55pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on May 20th at UC 2205.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

Staff Council Meeting Minutes – May 20, 2026

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:07pm by Abby Yates at UC2205.

Representatives in Attendance: Rafaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Abby Yates, and Constance Hermann (Associate Director of Human Resources)

Member Resignations: Alyson Roblero

Absent: Ed Krohn

Approval of Minutes: The revised minutes from March's meeting were reviewed and approved. The April minutes will be reviewed at a later date.

Old Businesses: The 2026 Support Staff Recognition Award Luncheon is being finalized and it will be held on June 4 in Carter Hall. Ways to get the word out about the event and encouraging RSVPs for catering/dietary restrictions were discussed.

Current Business:
Nominations for the Support Staff Recognition Award were presented to members with redactions to combat any bias in voting. All nominations and the recommendations provided by the nominator were read by all Staff Council members, and voting for the winner of the recognition award was done by secret ballot.
Additions to the standing Staff Council bylaws were proposed and sent out to members to review before today's meeting. It was decided that further investigation needs to be done before the proposed changes can be adopted or discussed further

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:22pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on June 17 at UC2206.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth

Staff Council Meeting Minutes - June 17, 2026

Opening: The meeting was called to order at 1:01pm by Abby Yates at UC 2206.

Representatives in Attendance: Raffaella Avolio-Alschbach, Sarah Hellenberg, Ed Krohn, Avanly Meuth, Zoe Meuth, Abby Yates

2026-2028 Representatives in Attendance (optional): Cheryl Colston, Sharla Krohn, Tegan Ruhl

Guest Speaker(s): Barb Goodwin, Visual Content Specialist, discussed the USI nature trails found throughout campus. USI is home to 5.5 miles of trails (not including the USI-Burdette trail), making it the largest trail system in Evansville, and the trails can be found on AllTrails. The USI trails are home to letterboxes, which are small, hidden boxes with unique stamps inside. Clues to locate these letterboxes are found online, such as www.letterboxing.org. Barb wants to plan a time for Staff Council and other interested members on campus to get together to make unique stamps to hide around USI's trails and to take people on a walk through some of the shorter trails. She is also open to any ideas for how to get more people interested in and using the trail system. If you have any suggestions or questions, contact Barb Goodwin at bgoodwin@usi.edu. More information on USI's trails can be found at www.usi.edu/trails.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the April and May meetings were reviewed and approved.

Old Businesses: The first of several HR information sessions will be held on July 8, 2026 at 2pm, and it will go over the employee handbook.
New Staff Council members for 2026-2028 will be sworn in at the July Retreat on July 15.

Current Business: Due to university-wide budget cuts, the Staff Council budget had to be cut by 2.5%. The budget for the 2027 fiscal year was reviewed and approved.
Amendments to the Staff Council bylaws will be emailed to representatives to review and approve at a later date.

New for this year, a 2025-2026 End of Year Report was created to summarize and highlight the work Staff Council did over the past year. This will be looked at in further detail at the July Retreat.
The July Retreat will take place on July 15, 2026 from 8am to 12:30pm at Grimes Haus, near the USI Baseball Field.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm by Abby Yates. The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2026 at the Grimes Haus.

Minutes submitted by: Zoe Meuth