

UI Staff Council
Wednesday, November 10, 2021
2:30 – 4:30 pm
Kelch Conference Room (CBRB 1289) and Online via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Present

Brian Baxter, Mihaela Bojin, Matsalyn Brown, Brett Cloyd, Dawn Coffman, Jackie Curnick, Em Domingues, Jadvyga Gerasimovic, Zach Girazian, Shari Heick, Anne Hinkle, Erika Holm-Brown, Makur Jain, Molly James, James Jorris, Becky Keogh, Jackie Kleppe, Emily Milke, Heather Mineart, Brian Morelli, Evans Ochola, Debra O'Connell-Moore, Jamie O'Meara, Yelena Perkhounkova, Lisa Piper, Ted Potter, Tracey Pritchard, Molly Rechkemmer, Rubia Ruiz, Teri Schnelle, Lisa Schumacher, Mary Shumaker, Sonia Slevinski, Glenda Smith, Warren Staal, David Stenersen, Jennifer Yoder, Erin Turnis, Jessica Welter, Carrie Whittaker, Darrelle Wilkinson, Toni Woodbury, Kevin Zihlman

Absent

Wendy Askling, Damien Blair, Brian Douglas, Cody Howell, Liz Lara, Sarah Ling, Stephen Pacha, Jessica Padilla, Carlton Petty, Isaac Podolefsky, Jeremy Richardson, Jim Verry

Administrative Liaisons

Marla Rosenblum

Guests

Cheryl Reardon, Stephanie McKeen, Andrew Emry, Grace Kreber (media), Emily Delgado (media), Mike Weaver, Michael Pentella, Jody Kennedy, Katherine Perez, Sara Morelli

Presenters:

- Mike Birmingham, Environmental Supervisor, Hygienic Laboratory
- Rebecca Olson, Senior Director University Benefits

WELCOME, MEETING PROTOCOL, ATTENDANCE, MEETING MINUTES

Reviewed Zoom meeting protocol.

Minutes approval:

- November 2021 SCEC Minutes were provided to councilors prior to the UISC meeting; no questions or comments
- October 2021 UISC Minutes: Ted Potter motioned, Em Domingues seconded, motion passed with no changes.

PROJECT AWARE

Mike Birmingham, Environmental Supervisor at the Hygienic Laboratory, presented information about A Watershed Awareness River Expedition (Project AWARE).

- In his day job, Mike works at the Hygienic Laboratory, collecting and analyzing samples from Iowa rivers. He also volunteers for Project AWARE.
- The 6-day, 5-night float trip focuses on Iowa river clean-up and educational programs.

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- Began in 2003 and is open to paddlers of all ages and skill levels.
- Teams find items such as 55 gallon barrels, tires, and even a 1919 manure spreader, which was donated to a local museum. Most items are able to be recycled.
- Those interested in learning more can check out www.iowaprojectaware.org or email Mike (michael-birmingham@uiowa.edu).

BENEFITS UPDATE

Rebecca Olson, Senior Director University Benefits, presented on the current enrollment period.

- This process occurs every year and can be completed in self-service.
- If no changes are made, 2021 benefits will roll over, with the exception of the flexible spending program.
- Those enrolled in UI health plans should receive priority scheduling through UIHC. Questions about this can be directed to Rebecca Olson.
- More information can be found at the [Annual Benefits Open Enrollment 2022 website](#).

COMMITTEE UPDATES

UISC committee chairs presented information found in the November 2021 Committee Updates.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

UISC members discussed various topics in four breakout rooms.

In-room:

There is confusion over mask and vaccine requirements. The Board of Regents form sent to employees only required checking a box for those opting out. Over 90% of employees are vaccinated at UIHC and positive COVID cases are attributed to community spread.

There was a discussion over any potential compensation for those working remote vs in person due to a difference in costs, specifically commuting.

Breakout Group #1:

- Facilities receiving Medicare Medicaid payments requiring vaccines by Jan 4 - will that lead to walk outs like in other areas of the country? What would impact on patients and staff be? Many health care employees not vaccinated (or working remotely/if not on campus why is it required? attitudes)
 - Mayo recently required it, will be watching what happens with 20K non-vaccinated employees
 - No walk outs heard about in the area, closest was maybe western Iowa
- Positions funded by federal monies have different requirements than other positions
- University worried about Trick or Treating but not Football games?
- Staff prefer decisive decisions vs. last minute deadline driven decisions
- Different decisions for different places/departments sends inconsistent messaging about virus risk/health outcomes/etc.

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Breakout Room #2

- Attendees have not been seeing visible efforts of retention and resiliency and are not aware of any in their work areas.
- Concerns:
 - Cost of benefits creeping up.
 - Future of Work Program leaves some feeling anxious, remote workers experience feelings of distrust from supervisors.
 - Watching people leave for higher paying positions causes anxiety and more work for those remaining.
 - Inflation rising and raises aren't keeping up.
 - Short staff often means professional development is limited or cancelled.
- What could be done?
 - Money and flexibility trump everything.
 - System for career paths/promotions needs to address that career paths can max out. Not everyone wants to be a manager. Many jump ship at this point because there is no other future in their current area and need to bounce to move up. Suggest we find a way to fix this - keep people interested and moving forward.

Breakout Room #3

- We talked about being flexible for staff work and it's benefit toward retention and recruitment
- UI Units meeting in next week or two – expecting to talk about Future of work and the recent announcement from Cheryl Reardon about extending the pilot.
- Health care largely in person, but are there support staff positions that could be conducted in hybrid or work from home?
- College of Public Health is conducting a survey to hear from staff about how the hybrid pilot has been working
- Some staff have several monitors and a work set up and furniture that is built around in-person office settings. The first stage of the pandemic, people brought equipment home and were able to continue functions. Moving equipment back and forth is cumbersome for some.
- There's interest in UI offering financial and technical support to help staff have some type of workable solution if working from home is possible, and if a laptop is not sufficient for the work.
- We discussed possibility of P3 funding to support this transition.
- Student-facing experience will be important to maintain in person. However, this might depend on function. Units may be in best position to evaluate.
- Fairness across UI. People in similar positions should have similar opportunities for hybrid or work at home experiences.
- Meetings have moved to Zoom and in many situations this has been effective and appreciated.
- Building or rebuilding trust among staff and supervisors who may not be interacting regularly or sharing space.
- Opportunities for new staff to connect to colleagues as more work may move hybrid.

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FINAL UPDATES

UISC meetings will only have a virtual option for December, January, and February.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned: Jackie Kleppe moved to adjourn; Jessica Welter seconded motion; Kevin adjourned the meeting at 4:32 pm.

NEXT MEETING

- December 8, 2021 2:30-4:30 pm, via Zoom