

UI Staff Council Executive Committee  
Wednesday, December 4, 2023  
2:30 – 4:30 pm  
**Zoom**

## Attendance

**Present:** Neda Barrett, Nima Chaudhary, Makur Jain, James Jorris, Jackie Kleppe, Brian Morelli, Ashley Peters.

**Absent:** Molly James, David Stenersen.

**Liaison:** Kellie Digmann.

**Guest:** Josey Bathke, Abigail Schaver.

## Minutes

SCEC November minutes were adopted unanimously without changes. (Motioned by Chaudhary. Seconded by Barrett.)

## Discussion topics

### **Staff Council Agenda – Review December - Jorris**

Staff Council next meets on Dec. 13. This will be a hybrid meeting located at S030 College of Public Health and via Zoom.

Key topics include a presentation about the strategic plan for retention by Cheryl Reardon and Rachel Napoli; an athletics department update by Beth Goetz, interim director for athletics; a wellbeing update on family services and financial services by Diana Kremzar; an update on staff initiatives by the UI Ombudsperson Chanelle Reese.

### **Bylaws Update on Committee Goals – Josey Bathke**

Bathke reviewed progress on the Bylaws Committees goals with a focus on work in progress. One of the goals is incorporating DEI principles into bylaws. However, because DEI practices are under review, Bathke said the committee would wait and see what changes and impacts are in the works at the University level before proceeding. The committee has received a DEI style guide from the UISC DEI Committee and best practices advice and articles from Jan Waterhouse. Bathke offered to share out to SC members.

Bylaws committee has met with all SC committees but University Relations (expected on Dec. 8) to offer help in updating committee bylaws. Bylaws should be reviewed and updated periodically. Jorris said executive committee would need time to review its bylaws to determine if updates are need.

Bylaws has accomplished one of its core goals in changing SC bylaws to add additional members to align representation ratios. Bathke said the committee has a standing agenda Item to discuss where Mercy Hospital employees will land as part of the UI acquisition of the hospital. SC counts will likely need to be modified again once Mercy staff transition in to the UI system.

### **Health and Wellbeing Fair feedback – Jorris**

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Staff Council solicited feedback about how SC can better serve campus during the Health and Wellbeing Fair in November. Jorris presented the feedback and noted some key themes emerged.

- Who is my councilor or how do I find my councilor? This was the most frequent piece of feedback. There was a suggestion to create a quick link on the webpage to the Staff Council directory as well as creating a postcard or business card with QR code to the directory.
- Create a Staff Councilor and/or Subcommittee spotlight to include in the monthly newsletter. This would help with the “who is my councilor” piece as well as general awareness about SC and what it does.
- Another common theme was one of complimenting and thanks to SC for its work and service.
- There were a range of individual comments such as requests for meal discounts, how can nurses be more active, tuition benefits for staff families, wage increases to match inflation, landscape services have no heat for winter, like the wellness opportunities, retention bonus for long term staff.

**Mary Jo Small Awards – Abigail Schaver, HR Specialist, Organizational Development**

Schaver provided an overview of Staff Appreciation Grants, Mary Jo Small, and Improving Our Workplace Awards and led a discussion of ways they could be improved. SC provides funds for these awards.

Mary Jo Small Award defrays the cost of professional development opportunities on or off campus. Deadlines are Feb. 28 and Aug. 31. There is a requirement of two years of employment. The max request is \$1,500. In fiscal 2023, \$36,534.76 was awarded to 29 employees. Applications are made through Employee Self Services and reviewed by a 10-member committee.

Improving Our Workplace Awards target applications that meet three of the four: initiative, innovation, measurable results, and sustainable impact. The award comes in the form of a certificate for an individual or team. Deadlines are Feb. 15 and Nov. 1 with an impact of 120 employees in fiscal 2023. Annual cost is \$3,500.

Staff Appreciation Award application period opens at the beginning of the fiscal year and is available until funds are exhausted. It is available in increments of \$10 per person up to \$300 for the event. This program had \$21,160 requests in fiscal 2023 and 4,768 employees were impacted. The fiscal 2024 queue is \$28,910 requested over 118 applications, which would impact 6,131 employees.

The Schaver discussed a desire to expand the reach of the Staff Appreciation award because 40% of applicants are repeat. This means those that are aware of the program use it but overall awareness could be greater. In addition, because funding is exhausted on a first come, first served basis, it favors those familiar with the program and process. Ideas to expand included putting repeat awardees to the back of the line as well as spreading out disbursement periods. The largest users are UIHC and nursing.

There is a desire to create a communication strategy for all grant, improve the customer experience and make sure responses are timely. Schaver noted it may be beneficial to push back the application timeline because the program’s budget is often not known for a few months after the beginning of the fiscal year. This means events referenced in applications may have already occurred by the time funding

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is available. In addition, Schaver is seeking more description in applications to get better understanding of impact. EC members agreed with the suggestion to spread out disbursements to a wider spectrum of applicants.

**DC Lobbying visit – Jorris and Jain**

Jorris and Jain participated in the Hawkeye Caucus Day in Washington D.C. on Nov. 28. They met with staff for Joni Ernst, Charles Grassley, and Mariannette Miller-Meeks. They discussed science, space and technology, health care, and mental health. Jorris noted they were active voices at the various events they attended highlighting the value of UI staff. Jorris noted he was able to share his personal story.

**Tuition Assistance – Jorris**

Jorris and Jain have been meeting with Brian Baxter to fine tune the tuition assistance proposal. The proposal will highlight retention of staff, where promotions are occurring, as well as personal testimonials. Virtually all of the money in the program comes back to UI in terms of tuition dollars spent. The plan is to review the proposal with Peter Matthes and Laura McLeran and then present to President Barbara Wilson and Provost Kevin Kregel.

**Adjournment**

Jorris adjourns the meeting.

**Next meeting**

**Next Meeting**

**January 3, 2024**

**2:30-4:30p**

**2520B UCC or Zoom**