

UI Staff Council Executive Committee  
Monday, January 6, 2025  
2:30 – 4:30 pm  
Zoom

## Attendance

### Present

Neda Barrett, Nima Chaudhary, Brett Cloyd, Molly James, James Jorris, Sam Mitchell, Ashley Peters, David Stenersen, Donna Wong-Gibbons

### Administrative Liaison

Kellie Digmann

### Guests

Diana Kremzar and Erin Litton

## Approval of UISC Executive committee meeting minutes

Mitchell moved, James seconded. The December EC minutes were approved.

## Discussion topics

### Review of Agendas

Jorris reviewed the agenda for this EC meeting and Wednesday's Staff Council meeting. Time will need to be allocated for a bylaws reading of the Awards Committee.

### UI & Community Childcare Resources by Diana Kremzar, UI Family Services

Kremzar gave a short presentation of the work the UI is doing to help support staff with childcare needs. This is an important workforce issue for the University and families. During the pandemic, a number of issues effected the availability of childcare including the closure of childcare centers across Iowa (and the US). Costs have continued to increase, and a [Surgeon General's report](#) was issued highlighted the pressure and stress parents are experiencing. In the last decade there has been a 26% increase in costs. For a family making the median income, finding childcare for infants has required between 9-16% of family income (on average) for one infant. At the same time, childcare centers finances are also precarious.

The University partners with experts in the area. Kremzar highlighted work with local businesses to collaboratively address the issue. [4Cs of Johnson County](#) is an important partner. They played an important role during COVID-19 pandemic in providing space for virtual schooling and safe hubs for students. [HomeTies](#) offers childcare for families with income barriers. They offer different payment options based on family circumstance and some completely funded slots that provide temporary childcare at no cost to families that are at risk of homelessness. [Crisis Child Care](#) provides short-term emergency care for kids. [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) tracks openings and helps match families with providers. They worked with Iowa DHS to create a web-based search tool. UI can help with campus connected childcare centers within 1.5 miles of campus. Another resource is HANDI Care Handicare, Inc which offers back-up child care. There are no discounts available for UI staff, faculty or students.

Kremzar's office also provides a [directory of summer programs](#) for children, including UI programs and

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programs/campus in Johnson County and surrounding areas. Some programs support special needs and have scholarships. The office also sends out Welcome Baby Hawkeye Coupons for staff with new children: 729 in 2024. There is also a Health and Well-Being Resource Guide to help parents. More information can be found at the [UI Human Resources Childcare Page](#). Kremzar will attend the February Staff Council meeting to share information and take questions from Council members.

### **Staff Council 2025 Elections Review by Neda Barrett, Elections Committee Chair**

Barrett gave an update for the May elections of Staff Councilor Officers and At Large Members. The timeline is guided by the Staff Council Bylaws. In March (March 12), Barrett will share information about the open positions in the election. At the April meeting (April 9), the nomination timeline will begin, including a call for nominations at the meeting, and up to May 7<sup>th</sup>. Barrett and the Elections Committee will reach out to nominated candidates to ensure that nominations are accepted. At this point, nominees will be given a prompt for a written statement that will be shared with all Staff Councilors ahead of the election. [note: Barrett will review this with the Elections Committee who will facilitate the election]

At the May meeting, the election will take place. The EC preferred a Q&A panel model where candidates for each position will respond to questions from an Executive Committee member (i.e. a panel for Vice-President / President-Elect candidates; a panel for At Large candidates, etc. The amount of time and questions for each panel will depend on the total number of candidates.

The EC talked about some general ideas for questions at the Q&A but also was interested in the Elections Committee having input. Barrett will give a 5-minute update at the January 8, 2025, to Staff Council.

### **Communications with Constituents by Sam Mitchell**

In November 2024, Mitchell reported on the work of the Communications Committee to develop communication guidelines to provide Councilors with communication best practices and guidance on how to decide who shares what information. The executive committee provided recommendations to improve the clarity and useability of the guidelines. Mitchell returned this month to share the updates made and obtain the committee's approval to proceed with dissemination. In developing, the committee talked with OSC about new UI Communications Policy and Mass Email Approval. Staff Council is ok to share the Staff Council Advocacy in Action Newsletter, pre-meeting invites, and Council meeting updates in Iowa Now. The language Staff Council uses in messages to Councilors will change to share information with constituents: "Please Share" will become "Share" (to be clearer about sharing information). "May Share" will continue to be used.

### **Councilor's Corner by James Jorris**

Jorris led a review of feedback received from the December Council's Corner session. Included here in the minutes are highlights:

- Councilors would like to hear more from AOD, including Dr. Liz Tovar, at a future meeting. If possible, Councilors would like to submit questions prior to a meeting. Staff would like to make sure they are in compliance with recent legislation.

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- Hospital updates. Though Dr. Jamieson visited Staff Council in the fall, there's a lot of interest in the many construction projects taking place at the University and in the community. Staff would like to hear from another speaker in UI Healthcare and/or campus planner Joe Bilotta.
- FRIC, the Funded Retirement and Insurance Committee. Past Staff Council President John Laverty is a member. Explore inviting Laverty and/or another member to give an update.
- Continued interest in sharing Staff Council successes to help Councilors be effective and make meaningful contributions. EC talked about listening to colleagues concerns and being available, but maybe there is more to do. Look at having time at a Staff Council meeting or at the summer retreat to focus on practices and tools Councilors can use. Interest in having a Past President's panel to share their experiences, successes, and thoughts on how to advocate.
- BIG10 Staff Collaborative meets twice a semester. Jorris will invite Paulus to make a short presentation about topics the group discusses and help us see how it can help create a stronger sense of community across the schools.
- There is interest in placing more effort in helping committees succeed with their work.
- There was interest in the EC being more transparent about its activities. Jorris will highlight the SC web site and the section that features the EC minutes
- Interest in more Q&A time with speakers. Finding resolution by asking for questions from councilors prior to the meeting that are being shared with presenters.

### **Policy Revisions for Review as requested by Jan Waterhouse, University Human Resources**

Via email, Waterhouse shared updates of 3 UI Policy Documents: Conflicts of Commitments (Effort), Conflict of Interest in the Workplace, and Criminal Background Check for Point of Hire, and asked for EC review. Cloyd had a question about the Conflict of Commitments Policy, especially part b. Scope of Policy. He was not clear as to why the number (2) was removed. That paragraph describes several staff categories and seemed to be set separately to number (1) Faculty. Under definitions, "d", part (1) talks about faculty "academic activities," and part (2) describes "work-related activities" for staff. If under "b", does there need to be a number (1) faculty, if that section only contains one part? Could they just be two separate, unnumbered paragraphs?

### **Adjournment**

- Mitchell motioned to adjourn; Barrett seconded; motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:29 pm.

**Next meeting:** January 13, 2025, 11 am, Zoom.