

UI Staff Council
June 11, 2025
2:30-4:30 pm
UCC 2520-D and Zoom

Present

Marie Adams, Kesten Anderson, Neda Barrett, Josey Bathke, Brooke Bekeris, Amanda Bibb, Amir Bozorgzadeh, Nima Chaudhary, Xirui Chen, Michael Chimenti, Brett Cloyd, Molly Collins, Laura Croteau-Lopez, Kayla Faust, Michael Fletcher, Ashley Glassberg-Nazette, Dave Hartley, Tom Hicks, Anne Hinkle, Andrew Holland, Erika Holm Brown, Hilary Jensen, James Jorris, Emma Kirk-Alvarez, Liz Lara, Ann Lawler, Veronica LynnLee, Sam Mitchell, Brian Morelli, Michael Nosbisch, Evans Ochola, Alex Paternostro, Tammy Paulus, Ashley Peters, Kayla Rojas, Ali Romano- McClain, Jonathon Scanlan, Tony Senio, Lin Shuhui, Breno Silvestrini Rodrigues, Monica Smith, Lisa O Smith, Bridget Toomey, Rebecca Tritten, Heath Vignes, Adam Walsh, Casey Westlake, Gabby Wilson, Donna Wong-Gibbons, Kate Woods

Not Present

Hunter Floyd, Jerusalem Alleyne, Lindsay Lansberry, Mel Sanders, Michele Hogue, Tiffany Reaves, Vickie Roesner

Administrative Liaisons

Kellie Digmann

Presenters

James Jorgensen, Cheryl Reardon, Joni Troester

Constituents

Ellen Adams Jones, Susan Bailey, Diana Boeglin, Terence Cain, Paige Carlson, Patricia Cone-Fisher, Mary Cross, Carrie Damon, Danielle Danielle, Rooney David, Erin Deaton, Carey Dieleman, Alan Divishek, Emily Eggers, Lisa Ellenson, Andrea Emry, Sarah Ernst, Sonatina Fernandes, Jenny Fitzpatrick, Diane Fountain, Jadvyga Gerasimovic, Nate Gruber, Sara Hatch, Deb Henricks, Nicole Hoppenworth, M L Hudachek, Jody Jody, Emily Johnson, Molly Kucera, Sarah Lobb, Maria Lukas, Frankline Matanji, Amy Mattix, Cathy McGinnis, Merrie Merric, Taylor Miller, Shonda Monette, Jessica Muschaweck, Brooke Nuckolls, Adriana Ojeda, Corey Pass, Alicia Peden, Lily Phonphiboun, Travis Pogmore, Rachel Rachel, Molly Rechkemmer, Cooper Reitinger, Haley Resewehr, Sherry Roe, Shawna Saad, Emily Stagman, Naomi Stewart, Kim Stoltz, Angie Tiedt, Brenda Van Dee, Adele Vanarsdale, Daniel Vorwerk, Jennifer Wagner, Jean Willard, Linda Wilson, Norah Wolfe, Ke Yu, Yan Zhou

Leadership

Cheryl Reardon

Past President

James Jorris

Minutes

The May Staff Council Minutes were approved. motion by Evans Ochola, second by Molly Collins. [approved with no edits]

Meeting

President Barrett welcomed everyone to the June UI Staff Council (UISC) meeting which was held in person and via Zoom. She encouraged in person presence, reviewed meeting protocol, emphasizing professionalism and respectful language when engaging with presenters.

May minutes were reviewed and approved by councilors.

President Barrett presented past president, James Jorris, thank you gift for his hard work and dedication.

Shaping 2025-26 Human Resources Engagement with Staff Council

Cheryl Reardon, Chief HR Officer • UHR Administration

Cheryl welcomed UISC to a new year. She provided her background with the university and as a past SC president outlined her support to SC and what impact SC has on the university and its constituents. She acknowledged the special access that SC has with UI leadership and how important it is to embrace shared governance.

Cheryl spoke of the UI strategic plan. She indicated how important it is to optimize operations so we have time to focus on the important, strategic initiatives. She encouraged councilors to complete the survey sent from Kellie in regard to what HR topics you most want to hear about. She is welcome to new and different ideas, focused on the goal of having councilors well informed so they can answer questions from their constituents.

Shaping 2025-26 Well-Being Engagement with Staff Council

Joni Troester, Senior Asst VP • Benefits Health & Productivity

Joni provided updates on the Well-Being & Mental Health Campus Collaborative (WBMHCC) accomplishments, launching of the Well-Being at Iowa website (<https://wellbeing.uiowa.edu/>), expanded crisis line to faculty, staff and postdocs, RUOK program to name a few. She indicated that the ongoing efforts are promoted and monitored so we can sustain the impact of the programs we have available. Joni discussed that year 4 will also focus on engaging, expanding and building capacity in areas of financial well-being and connections and support with the campus community.

Questions:

- SC can often be the dot connector, how can we engage staff?

Joni advised that spreading the word to our constituents can be impactful. She also outlined the importance of time on the SC agenda, those just in time bites of information. She asked us to be champions in these areas and to provide feedback when received from your constituents.

- Do you have data on the crisis line usage?

Joni indicated low usage where people are identifying themselves as UI staff, maybe 8-10 per month. Joni emphasized the importance of getting these resources in front of people. She outlined that the QPR suicide prevention training is full every month and understands that supervisors are looking for these types of trainings and resources to help their staff.

Welcome Our New 2025-26 Staff Council Members

Neda Barrett, Staff Council President

Executive committee members and new staff councilors introduced themselves. During July SC retreat we will do more a get to know your councilor activity.

President Barrett presented her vision for the 2025-2026 SC year – Leading with Purpose and Compassion in an Age of Disruption. President Barrett started out focusing on the power of community, the importance of camaraderie and celebrations, where staff support and grow with each other. She outlined a people centered vision where SC represents over 9300 non-bargaining staff members. President Barrett addressed the challenges we're all facing with burnout, work-life balance and feeling disconnected in your work. Although there are challenges, she plans to focus on the opportunity to make change with our ever changing higher ed landscape, where we have to reimagine how to work and collaborate together. She highlighted UI's unique strengths with highest student retention in Big Ten, being a nationally recognized university in research and innovation and celebrating life-changing work across disciplines. President Barrett wants to continue to focus on advocacy and action, to help ensure all staff voices are being heard. She promises to show commitment to the future, by leading with heart and promising to listen and lead.

Volunteer Highlights & Opportunities Overview

Molly Collins & Anne Hinkle, SC Community Outreach Committee

Molly presented SC volunteer of the month – Brian Morelli with 8.5 hours! A core mission of the University of Iowa Staff Council is giving back to the University and surrounding community through volunteerism. Between June 2024-April 2025, 34 councilors volunteered, to 33 different community events, for over 529.8 hours! Molly shared impactful councilor quotes on why they volunteer. She shared what types of events we volunteer for and how the committee will communicate to the council. Molly reminded councilors to log their volunteer hours. She also shared some upcoming events, food pantry, downtown IC block party.

Question/suggestion: provide a calendar of events, for example exam proctoring and healthcare week are scheduled in advance. Mark them on the calendar so councilors and block time on their calendars.

Iowa Civil Rights Act & UI Policy Update

James Jorgensen, VP, Legal Aff & General Counsel • General Counsel

Jamie presented on the recent law that passed, file 418 – removing gender identity under the Iowa Civil Rights Act. He provided the following talking points.

- The UI nondiscrimination policies will no longer include gender identity as a protected class. This reflects a change to Iowa law (the Iowa Civil Rights Act) that takes effect July 1.
- However, discrimination based on gender identity continues to be unlawful under federal employment and housing laws which interpret “sex” to include gender identity. This means the changes in Iowa law and UI policy do not affect the employment and housing environments.
- Sex and sexual orientation remain as protected classes under both Iowa law and UI policy in all contexts – employment, housing, academics, student life.
- Apart from any law or policy, the UI is committed to promoting and maintaining a civil and respectful environment for everyone in our community.

Questions:

- When will this officially be updated in the policy manual?

On or about 7/1/25.

- What language is going out to campus about the policy update?

Unsure on when that will be communicated broadly. There is a thought to wait until closer to Fall semester when students and faculty return.

- What can councilors help communicate?

Talking points that Jamie provided.

Council Corner Break-Out Session to Discuss Issues/Concerns

Neda Barrett, Staff Council President

President Barrett asked non-councilors to drop off the call. She outlined we want to continue with council corners this year, provide time to share what we’re hearing from our constituents, provide ideas to executive committee for topics. Please have someone take notes and provide them to Kellie Digmann.

Staff Council Quick Tips & Reminders

Sam Mitchell, Staff Council VP/President Elect

President Elect, Mitchell provided new monthly segment on how to keep us on track to meeting our council goals. Working through our mission and some of the goals within our mission: advocating on behalf of represented staff and inform the UI community of the activities of the council. Sam asked that all councilors get set up by adding your staff council rep mailbox to Outlook ([Staff Councilor Reference Guide](#), page 20. (Teams: General>Councilor Resources>Resources and Tools)) and by updating your email signature.

Next Action for all councilors: Please send out introductory emails to your constituents.

- Org rep – send by 7/1/25
- Function reps – send by 7/31/25
 - Set up a time to meet with all the function reps
 - Take a group photo

Questions:

- When will mentors be assigned?

By 7/1/25, will meet before July SC meeting.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chaudhary and seconded by Wong-Gibbons.

Next Meeting

July 9, 2025

2:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Closed session – SC retreat

UCC 2520-D