

UI Staff Council
August 13, 2025
2:30-4:30 pm
UCC 2520-D and Zoom

Present

Marie Adams, Jerusalem Alleyne, Kesten Anderson, Neda Barrett, Amanda Bibb, Amir Bozorgzadeh, Nima Chaudhary, Xirui Chen, Michael Chimenti, Brett Cloyd, Molly Collins, Laura Croteau-Lopez, Kayla Faust, Michael Fletcher, Ashley Glassberg-Nazette, Brittany Grabe, David Hartley, Tom Hicks, Anne Hinkle, Michele Hogue, Andrew Holland, Hilary Jensen, James Jorris, Emma Kirk-Alvarez, Liz Lara, Ann Lawler, Shuhui Lin, Sarah Livesay, Veronica LynnLee, Sam Mitchell, Brian Morelli, Michael Nosbisch, Evans Ochola, Alex Paternostro, Ashley Peters, Alysha Robinson, Vickie Roesner, Kayla Rojas, Ali Romano-McClain, Mel Sanders, Jonathon Scanlan, Tony Senio, Monica Smith, Lisa Smith, Bridget Toomey, Rebecca Tritten, Heath Vignes, Casey Westlake, Donna Wong-Gibbons, Kate Woods

Not Present

Josey Bathke, Brooke Swain (Bekeris), Hunter Floyd, Erika Holm-Brown, Lindsay Lansberry, Tammy Paulus, Tiffany Reaves, Breno Silvestrini Rodrigues, Adam Walsh, Gabby Wilson

Administrative Liaisons

Kellie Digmann

Presenters

Joe Bilotta, Melanie Cuchna, Justin Fraase, Michelle Kongable, Erin Litton, Rebecca Olson, Todd Rent, Joni Troester

Constituents

Miranda Ablett, Lisa Abuka, Ellen Adams Jones, Shawn Albaugh Kleppe, Staci Anderson, Ifeoma Anyaoha, Heidi Arbisi-Kelm, Christy Bardell, Brian Baxter, Ben Beeson, Heidi Bodensteiner, Edward Bracken, Allie Brandriet, Kelli Brommel, Bartley Brown, Jenn Brummond, John Bruno, Alyssa Campbell, Heather Carlson, Melissa Close, Jill Corlette, Andrea Cramer, Liz Crooks, Mary Cross, Jen Cunningham, Solange Decezare, Natalie Dejardin, Jeff DeReus, Carey Dieleman, Brenda Dodge, Lindsay Elliott, Chandra Etscheidt, Canan Ezme Tapia, Marc Falk, Sara Feldmann, Jen Ferguson, Jerrett Ferguson, Hannah Fink, Julie Fisher, Jenny Fitzpatrick, Diane Fountain, Andrea French, Denise Fuller, Vakshika Gadusu, Sonja Galligan, Joel Gavin, Sandy Gerard, Kara Gerardi, Deb Gilmere, Laura Goddard, Karen Grajczyk-Haddad, Kimberly Gray, Lisa Gray, Heidi Haines, Marissa Hardin, Shari Heick, Jan Heidemann, Valerie Hennessee, Deb Henricks, Kai Herkert, Julie Hiemstra, Julie Hierseman, Ed Hill, Chelsea Hillman, Courtney Hoffman, Robert Holmes, Eli Hotchkin, Renee Houser, Amei Hu, Ann Huss, Alexa Iben, Shannon Ingleby, H J Pedelty, Tara Jennerjohn, Emily Johnson, Jen K, Michael Kacer, Katie Kass, Matthew Kaufman, Becky Kick, Rebecca Kremer, Cassandra Kruse, Keanna Kubovec, James Kurtzleben, Jon Ladage,

Yalan Li, David Lippe, Ian MacMillan, Bob Manders, Frankline Matanji, Amy Mattix, Kathy Maxey, Cathy McGinnis, Martha McNulty, Kim Merchant, John Millsap , Amanda Moeller, Amira Nash, Alicia, Bart, Emily, NA, Sally, Tiffany, Vicki, Viki, Christine Norquest, Sara Novotny, Jennifer Noyce, Jean O'Donovan, Paul Oh, Mary Owens, Corey Pass, Kevin Pellinen, Sam Perez Gonzalez, Yelena Perkhounkova, Ansley Philby, Lily Phonphiboun, Melia Pieper, Saivamshi Pinisetty, Travis Pogmore , Tracey Pritchard, Shane Pulliam, Rachel Quinlan, Meredith Rahn-Oakes, Hillary Ramaker, Cooper Reittinger, Michelle Ribble, Lisa Ringen, Seth Rockafellow, Dolores Rodriguez, Sherry Roe, Kristine Roggentien, Blake Rupe, Laura Ruplinger, Blake Sanor, Matt Schaefer, Kristen Schlawin, Natalie Schreffler, Allyson Schulte, Laura Seegmiller, Jamie Sexton, Kevin Shea, Deanna Snyder, Colton Spaur, Warren Staal, Morgan Stillmunkes, Danelle Stipes, Kim Stoltz, Andrew Stoneking, Abigail Sullivan, Svetha Swaminathan, Trent Tappan, Kelly Taylor, Sarah Thuente, Tawny Tibbits, Julie Troendle, Yoko Tsoi, Mayzie Tucker, Brenda Van Dee, Jane Van Loh, Kyle Vanderploeg, Jeramy Viet, Wendy Walker, Elizabeth Wallace, Julie Weber, Kathy Welsh, Trish Welter, Barb Wester, Vanessa Wiest, Danielle Wilbanks, Julia Woodiwiss, Olivia Wulf, Shannon Yost, Trevor Youngberg, Ke Yu, Chris Zehr

Leadership

Cheryl Reardon

Past President

James Jorris, Michael Hesseltine

Minutes

The July Staff Council Minutes were approved. Motion by James Jorris, second by Kayla Faust. [approved with no edits]

Meeting

President Barrett welcomed councilors and constituents to the August SC meeting. She reviewed basic meeting protocols, the agenda and advised that the councilors will have time in council corner to discuss recent media events. Bibb present the July Volunteer of the Month to Anne Hinkle with 12.5 hours. Bibb provided overview of the book and school supplies drive where SC helped donate 700+ books, 1500-2000 school supplies, ready, set, school event where United Way is partnering with local organizations. She provided upcoming events for August - On Iowa! - still in need of many volunteers. Lot of volunteer opportunities, Shelter house in September. Bibb reminded all to log your volunteer hours and take pictures!

Grievances, Administrative Reviews, FMLA, ADA, IPPL, and Other ELR/FSDS Related Policies

Todd Rent with Michelle Kongable provided overview of Employee and Labor Relations (ELR) outlining that their focus is on ensuring policies are administered in a fair, thoughtful, objective, and respectful manner. The ELR team works with employees in many different contexts and scenarios. Rent indicated that ELR works very closely with the Threat

Assessment Team (TAT). Rent advised that within the last ten years he has seen a significant increase in safety concerns. TAT's presence embedded in ELR has been imperative in managing safety concerns arising in the workplace and across the broader campus community. He indicated that treating employees with fairness, respect and dignity is an underlying thread in all ELR interactions.

Rent provided an overview of new Iowa Paid Parental Leave Policy (IPPL). IPPL went into effect on July 1, 2025. IPPL offers paid leave for state employees that bring a child in their home through birth or adoption. Rent outlined the duration of leave for birth, non-birth and adoptive parents, which was defined by state legislature. Rent explained that there are Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements that need to be met in order to be eligible for IPPL. He outlined that generally leave must be taken within first year of birth or placement, carving out a special provision for events that occurred 7/1/2024-6/30/25. Rent advised you work with Faculty and Staff Disability Services (FSDS) on campus and Leave and Disability Administration (LDA) on the healthcare side.

Rent provided an overview of changes to the sick leave policy effective July 1, 2025. The changes to policy are in alignment with HF 889, signed into law in May 2025, which reduces the threshold for sick leave transfer to vacation during the first four years of employment from 30 days (240 hours) to 10 days (80 hours). After four years of employment the threshold for sick leave vacation transfer reverts to 30 days (240 hours).

Rent provided an overview on the University of Iowa Grievance and Admin Review Procedures. He outlined that the many different policies available are dependent on employee classification which drives the filing deadlines, however the substantive process is similar for each policy. He provided a table to help better understand the different policy filing deadlines, steps and possibility of arbitration.

Questions:

- Business or calendar days?
 - Calendar days
- For IPPL the non-birthing parent gets 1 week, birthing/adoptive 4 week – what do we tell people?
 - Non-Birthing parent gets 1 week is IPPL, however that is in addition to other time off – Family Caregiving Leave, vacation

Retirement Plan Modernization

Joni Troester presented on the modernization of the UI retirement plan. She provided an overview of the upcoming changes to the retirement plans under TIAA. She reviewed the three plans that fall under TIAA (403 (b) Mandatory, 403 (b) Voluntary and 457 Deferred Compensation. Troester provided overview of the Retirement Fund Investment Committee (RFIC), which is comprised of UI executive leadership. They meet quarterly to ensure the retirement plan is acting the best interest for our staff. RFIC identified CAPTRUST as a third party investment advisor to provide expert guidance in fulfilling committee's fiduciary responsibility. The modernization will go into effect on September 5, 2025. Troester

provided talking points for councilors to use when speaking with constituents: CAPTRUST chosen after extensive review process, no change to 10% contribution from UI, new enhancements will deliver positive results to staff and faculty. Resources available for participants - webinars, 1-1 counseling, on site seminars, UI benefits website, TIAA microsite

Questions:

- Q: will staff need to reselect?
 - No, as long as you're okay if a fund is going away and you're remapped - you always have the choice to go in an reselect.
- Q: Staff worried about fewer benefits and less money in their account, why is this being modernize?
 - Not making better for UI, lower fees mean more money in staff accounts, no cost savings mechanism for UI
- Q: What if I didn't receive packet?
 - Contact UI benefits

Resilience Programs

Melanie Cuchna, Manager, UI Wellness presented on the variety of resilience programs the University of Iowa offers. Cuchna outlined that supporting our staff's mental well-being is in alignment with the strategic plan for holistic well-being and success and supports promoting population health. Cuchna gave an overview of Breathewell (starting Fall 2025 - 60 minute online workshop), Recharge (5 min assessment with regular follow up text messages), Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (8 weeks group program, partners with company in community), Health coaching (helping employees make health choices, manage stress, in person and virtual appointments available)

Questions:

- Q: Looking for healthy meal ideas?
 - Cuchna provided resources for healthy meal ideas, dept physical activity challenges, LiveWell points, rec membership incentive, blue 635 active (if not local, browse discounts)
- Q: Why did the MBSR program stop with UI healthcare?
 - Individuals that led the program retired, UIHC decided not to continue program.

Discover Your University (DYU)

Justin Fraase, Senior Director of Strategic Communications provided update on DYU Fall 2025 dates. DYU offers sponsored visits to various campus sites and supports engagement among staff and faculty. Fraase encouraged staff to sign up for Fall 2025 dates - registration is now open.

Questions:

- Q: Who do we send recommendations to for ideas and options for other people to host?
 - Hosts are key, ideas and connections you can bring are important. Send all requests to Fraase.
- Q: During the Spring session there was virtual offering, will there be another?
 - Not listed to Fall, something to keep in mind, space out throughout day, spring virtual was successful. Update: DYU has added a virtual tour for the [Law Library's Rare Book Room](#)
- Q: Love the pins, can we make it a game of collecting pins?
 - Won't have pins for Fall. Have gone through very quickly.

University Master Plan: Strategic Planning & Development Efforts

Joe Bilotta, Lead Campus Planner returned with updates on developments since his last visit in March 2025. While change has been gradual over the past 5–6 months, he highlighted several key planning initiatives and shifts in capital development strategy:

- **Major Planning Initiatives:**
 - Focus areas include Nursing, IMU, UCC, Burlington/Melrose corridor, and the water tower.
 - Efforts continue to renew the river as a campus asset, including plans to vacate Gilmore Hall, expand the College of Business (COB) into the courtyard.
 - The Department of Computer Science is expected to move into the IATL river-facing side.
- **Capital Development Slowdown:**
 - Since January/February 2025, capital development has slowed due to economic conditions, funding constraints, and strategic reassessments. Some large-scale projects are currently paused.
- **Nursing Program Advancements:**
 - Academic spaces currently shared with the hospital will be relocated.
 - A second simulation center is planned for campus. This allows both programs to expand as necessary.
 - Options under consideration include repurposing the gymnastics wing in the Field House or constructing a new facility or addition.

Questions:

- Research services currently donates supplies for nursing students, with the change, is this being taken into consideration?
 - Yes. Partnership will continue with departments.
- Is the Wendell Johnson building being raised?
 - Yes, it's currently paused, however it may be a swing space while they work through other hospital projects.
- What is going on with UCC?
 - Reevaluating space use. This includes the review of conference rooms at UCC and across campus.

- What is going on with Iowa River?
 - There are 3 phases under design. River clean up, areas around Dance and Graduate buildings and Lagoon Shelter House.
- How will the Burlington Bridge construction go?
 - Not UI project, will take 5-6 years, need to replace bridge, impacts utility, bikeways, peds ways, rebuilding, traffic concerns. UI is a partner in project.
- Changes in rollerdam?
 - Improvements to increase safety downstream.
- How is flooding taken into consideration?
 - The 2008 flood was a 500 year event. UI plans to add 2 feet of protection above the levels of that event (500 year).
- Plans for Carver, Duane banks field, still on hold?
 - Another phase coming for baseball to improve fan experience in planning and design, behind home plate. Carver - concourse level studied for improvements.

Council Corner

Barrett thanked and excused constituents and presenters. Mitchell presented on July council corner feedback on best practices for gathering feedback from constituents. For the August council corner councilors were asked to provide feedback, concerns, and questions they're hearing from constituents about the recent news about our institution. Councilors broken into small groups and were asked to provide feedback to Digmann.

Staff Council Quick Tips & Reminders

Mitchell reminded councilors about the Communications Committee and how all the sub committees on Staff Council should collaborate with them through their liaison. If sub committees have ideas or articles, they should work with the Communications Committee to publish in monthly Advocacy in Action newsletter. The Communications Committee won't write the articles, however, will help guide and edit.

Adjournment

Jorris motioned to adjourn, Sanders seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Next Meeting

September 10, 2025
 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM
 2520-D UCC