

UI Staff Council Executive Committee
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
2:30 – 4:30 pm
2520-D UCC and Teams

Attendance

Present

Neda Barrett, Josey Bathke, Amanda Bibb, Hilary Jensen, James Jorris, Sam Mitchell, Ashley Peters, Mel Sanders, Bridget Toomey

Not Present

Kellie Digmann

Administrative Liaison

Kellie Digmann

Guests

Makenzie Kirby, Paige Busick

Approval of UISC Executive committee meeting minutes

Minutes approval:

February 3, 2026 – UISC Executive Committee Meeting – motion by Jorris, second by Sanders, [approved with no edits].

Discussion topics

Strategic Plan Listening Session

Facilitator: Makenzie Kirby, Educational Support Services Specialist, Provost Office Administration, Paige Busick Admin Services Manager Provost Office Administration

Purpose: Gather early-stage, institution-wide feedback to inform the 2027–2032 Strategic Plan, with a focus on university-level strengths and opportunities. The planning process is iterative, ongoing, and includes multiple opportunities for stakeholders to contribute.

Discussion Summary

1. What distinguishes the University of Iowa from its peers?

Key Themes:

- Inclusive Leadership: Leadership demonstrates openness to hearing all voices.
- Strong Shared Governance: A well-established culture of shared governance contributes to institutional collaboration.
- Community Integration: The university is deeply connected to the Iowa City community, fostering a strong sense of belonging.
- People-Centered Culture: Individuals were identified as the institution's greatest strength, supported by systemic structures and values.
- Mission-Driven Identity: Clear institutional mission and values guide decision-making.
- Integrity and Humility: The campus community exhibits a strong sense of honesty and modesty.

2. Which parts of the current strategic plan should be removed because they are completed or no longer align with institutional priorities?

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Key Themes:

- **Lack of Measurable Ties:** Several current priorities do not clearly connect to measurable outcomes.
 - **Overlap in Well-being Priorities:** Holistic well-being and success priorities feel duplicative and could be consolidated under a more streamlined framework.
 - **Insufficient Staff Representation:** Current goals do not sufficiently address or represent staff priorities and contributions.
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3. What priority areas or emerging opportunities should guide the next strategic plan?

Key Themes:

- **Sustainability:** Participants expressed strong interest in elevating environmental stewardship and resource sustainability as institutional priorities.

Welcome, Agenda Overview, and Minute Approval

Barrett welcomed group and we reviewed key agenda items for March, including updates on recognition programs from HR, ergonomics initiatives, Recreation Services, and the Hills Bank liveWell partnership. The committee also previewed the agendas and anticipated topics for April and May.

Staff Council Forum Tomorrow & Upcoming Elections

Mitchell provided the committee an update on the upcoming elections, with the elections forum scheduled for March 5, 2026. Sanders and Jensen will be providing testimonials during the forum to support engagement in the process. An overview was shared outlining the available openings for both functional and organizational representative roles, along with key timelines for nominations and voting.

Update on Recent Joining & Leaving Councilors

Mithcell provided an update on new councilors that have joined mid year. New councilors: Abbie Beadle, Ali McCue, Amy Burklund, Anna Gaw and Ashly Lagneaux.

Upcoming Meetings/Agenda

Committee briefly reviewed upcoming President Wilson agenda. Asked members to review questions for upcoming March meeting presenters once Digmann has them added to slide deck.

Open Discussion & Constituent Concerns

- **Hawkeye Caucus**
 - The committee discussed the upcoming event, noting that university relations chairs, as well as the Vice President and President, may attend. Attendance in 2025 was significantly lower than in previous years, with only three Staff Council members present. Although the event was not structured as a tabling opportunity for Staff

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Council, many other departments had tables available. The group will follow up with Toomey to confirm whether she has received a response to the submitted participation form. If Staff Council is invited to attend this year, the committee agreed to request a table and emphasized the need for a more intentional plan to improve visibility and engagement.

- Awards (Hilary – Awards Co-Chair)
 - Jensen provided an update on the Awards Committee, outlining several challenges experienced this year. The data compiled in Qualtrics for the selection process requires someone with strong knowledge of the system and careful attention to detail, which contributed to the workload. Jensen noted that serving as chair adds significant responsibility, prompting a call for additional committee members who may be interested in taking on the role. The committee briefly discussed whether Digmann could assist with the data component, but that option was quickly ruled out. Peters emphasized the importance of maintaining clear documentation on procedures and expectations; while the Awards Committee already has solid documentation, Jensen will review and update it with the committee as a potential goal for 2026–2027. Jensen also plans to meet with the council member who supported the data review this year to identify areas for improvement and ensure strong processes moving into next year. The group additionally discussed broader committee structure considerations, including whether co-chairs should be required, the need for chairs to have previous committee experience, and the importance of maintaining balanced councilor representation across committees—an area that showed improvement this year.
- Food Drive (Amanda)
 - The committee discussed the request from the Food Pantry, noting that they would prefer a reliable, direct annual donation rather than relying solely on the traditional food drive. Members considered whether recurring funding could be designated for this purpose, especially given the significant time and effort required each year to organize the food drive. The group agreed that additional discussion with the Outreach Committee is needed, as providing monetary support versus physical items reflects two distinct approaches to meeting the Pantry’s needs. It was also noted that if the Food Pantry seeks financial support from Staff Council, the appropriate next step would be for them to submit a formal funding request.
- Health Care Week (Sam)
 - Mitchell provided overview on Health Care Week, noting the events that will take place across all healthcare campuses and discussed the need for adequate volunteer support. It was proposed that the Outreach Committee be asked to partner with the Healthcare Committee to help provide volunteers for tabling at these events, ensuring broader coverage and improved visibility.
- Longevity (how it works) - Kellie
 - Barrett provided an overview of how longevity recognition is currently managed, noting that Justin Fraase, UHR, has expressed interest in establishing a more standardized

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method for acknowledging employees who reach service milestones. She explained that Digmann is required to do a significant amount of manual work behind the scenes to verify accurate seniority dates, which adds complexity to the process. The group discussed the need for stronger collaboration between UHR and Staff Council to streamline and distribute the work involved in preparing and sending out longevity recognitions.

Adjournment

- Jorris motioned to adjourn, Bibb seconded; motion carried.
- Meeting adjourned at 4:27 pm.

Next meeting: April 1, 2026 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm