# Facilities Management Employee Council Minutes

Thursday, August 11, 2022

## Attendance

**Council members**: Christine Alencar, Jon Bruneau, Eric Cline, Les Givens, Michael Minor, Corey Poole, Chelsea Reynolds, Ashley Scruggs and AJ Young.

**Absent**: Randy Campbell and Bonita White.

**Guests**: Jane Centofante, Elsa Burnette, Laura Duckworth

## Agenda:

1. Updates from HR
2. Updates from Leadership with special guest, Laura Duckworth
3. Council and Senate updates
   1. Membership turnover
   2. Sustainability pitch for Staff Senate competition
   3. Upcoming meeting dates and locations

## 1. Updates from HR

**Elsa Burnette**

* Elsa has been at UVA for 17 years, 15 of those years with Facilities Management including with FM’s HR team before the centralization of UVA HR. As a UVA HR business partner, half of her time is assigned to FM, the other half is to support the Darden School of Business.
* August is when the students come back, keep an eye out for them around Grounds.
* Time for performance management mid-year check-ins. Managers can schedule these with their employees or employees can request one with their manager.
* Question about COVID/PHEL leave returning (Alencar): We have not heard anything from the state that they are going to provide COVID leave again.

**Laura Duckworth**

* Question about process for returning to work after a COVID positive (Bruneau): We are still asking FM employees to confidentially report a COVID positive, the reporting obligation is on the manager. We are still trying to track numbers to track the occurrence of any clusters and if we can implement any mitigation strategies. If we have three people who work together and have a positive result, we are required to report that to the Virginia Department of Health.
* We were much more rigid on reporting requirements early on, but it does still help us to know the numbers.
* The questionnaire does ask about close contacts, which is not always required to report to the Department of Health now but if they ask for it then we will have that information.
* Information about the reporting requirements is in the Occupational Programs newsletter every week, we’re working on paring some of the info down.
* Question about availability of a monkeypox vaccine through UVA (Young): They are looking at a vaccine but since it is not airborne and spread through contact, make sure to wash hands to prevent the spread. Liz Burnett does a beautiful job of highlighting this and other topics in the OP newsletter. That is how we get mass information out to employees.

**Elsa Burnette**

* Question about UVA health insurance allowing for spouses to be on plans (Givens): Spouses are allowed on health insurance plans if other insurance plans available to the spouse are considered too expensive. The [UVA HR affordability calculator](https://hr.virginia.edu/benefits/uva-health-plan/calculator) helps compare the cost of a spouse’s insurance plan and the spouse’s income. This calculator determines if a spouse is eligible to be included on a UVA employee’s health plan.
* Even if a spouse cannot be on the health plan, they can be included on a dental or vision plan as those are separate plans.
* Question about UVA matching contribution on retirement plans (Reynolds): If you are hired at FM under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) hybrid retirement plan, five percent of your income is required to be contributed to VRS, and you must contribute an additional four percent in order to open up a separate 403b retirement account plan (Fidelity or TIAA) and be eligible for UVA’s matching contributions. UVA will match 50 percent of employee’s contribution to a 403b plan up to $80 per month.

**Les Givens**

* Will there be an option for CC&R to change to a four-day, 10-hour per day work week? There was mention of a survey to gauge interest in this.

**Ashley Scruggs**

* We just received notice at the Service Desk that Central Grounds Zone Maintenance moved to a four-day, 10-hour per day work week, and I have had questions about if this would be offered to other groups.

**A.J. Young**

* In Energy & Utilities, we have been working that schedule for some time. We always have coverage on every day with some teams off on Mondays and others off on Fridays. As long as someone is always there to cover, I don’t see what the issue is.

**Elsa Burnette**

* We do have some employees who are working that schedule but not everyone at FM or UVA can be offered that option.
* If the business need is there it may be an option. UVA will continue to leave these decisions up to the schools and units to decide. Those conversations are going to work best up your management chain.

**Jon Bruneau**

* Is there consistency across FM communicating alternate work schedules? In CC&R we are required to place that information on our calendars, but I would like to know if someone in a different FM department is working remotely versus in-person.

**Ashley Scruggs**

* This is something we deal with a lot at the Service Desk. We typically call the supervisors, not knowing if when we are calling someone if they are working in person or not.

**Chelsea Reynolds**

* HSPP has a daily list that comes out every day that lists where people are working.

**Elsa Burnette:**

* There is not an overarching policy about communicating alternate work locations. It is up to the management team to communicate their team’s requirements. Units can create standards for what they are doing.

**Laura Duckworth**

* In regard to alternate work schedules, I agree that just because something has never been done doesn’t mean we can’t do it. It needs to be an informed decision done in partnership with departmental leadership and in alignment with business needs. We can try things out to see if they work. Leadership is really on board with people feeling like we’re investing in them.

**Chelsea Reynolds**

* Has there been any discussion about relaxing mask requirements at the hospital?
* Wearing masks makes it difficult to work if you must wear safety glasses because it causes them to fog up. But I understand the requirement, I know there was a recent outbreak of COVID that caused a lot of UVA Health staff to be out and they are already short staffed.

**Elsa Burnette**

* There is no discussion of relaxing mask requirements in the hospital, we are at a medium risk right now with cases going back up and that will likely continue in the fall. Relaxing the mask requirement would be decision by the head of UVA Health Craig Kent and UVA President James Ryan. As long as we still see cases rising, we are going to have employees mask for protection of patients, who are often immunocompromised.

## 2. Leadership Updates – Laura Duckworth

**Director Business Services position**

* Deputy Chief Facilities Officer Rick Rice recently retired, and leadership decided not to keep that position but instead create a new role in its place called the Director of Business Services. Leadership decided it makes more sense with our current business needs to not directly fill that role.
* Director of Finance Blake Watson has been chosen for this new role. This is more of an add-on to her current role as she will continue with her duties as director of Finance, but Chris Smeds (Technology & Innovation) and Mark Webb (Programs & Informatics) will report to Blake. Leadership continues to look at if any other organizational changes are needed.

**Apprenticeship program**

* New apprenticeship class of seven apprentices onboarded in early August. Tom Castellanos is now on Occupational Programs team as our in-house apprenticeship instructor.
* We hired a smaller class as we work through all of the changes to the program, such as offering in-house instruction and changing to the 2+2 program model.
* We are no longer offering the traditional four-year program. Now, during the first two years, apprentices get experience in all trades. At end of their second year, they pick their trade and spend the last two years in that trade.
* Question about 2+2 program model change to hiring specific trades based on business needs (Young): With the traditional four-year program model, it was always a best guess of what trades would be needed because anticipating four years out. It continues to be our intention to always to hire all of our apprentices. If for some reason we hit saturation, we do have partnerships with other companies in the community that may be a better fit. We don’t hire apprentices into specific positions anymore, they have to interview for their final positions. This helps us be more intentional looking at the needs of the University and figuring out the best match for our needs. Plus, the apprentices feel a stronger ownership and excitement that they may receive multiple job offers and choose the one that is the best fit for them.
* Question about concerns in the field that apprentices won’t be proficient in the trade with the new program model (Givens): We have heard some of these concerns. In the traditional four-year model, apprentices learned general trades education through all four years, we’ve taken that out and placed it all at the beginning. They are still getting 8,000 hours throughout the entire program. At the third- and fourth-year level, they will be the same proficiency as everyone graduating. We also never had hands-on testing before, but now apprentices will have to show proficiency hands-on. We are not going to graduate anyone from the program who doesn’t reach proficiency in the trade.
* Question about whether proficiency testing was started because apprentices were not skilled enough (Young): We have sometimes received that feedback in the past, but the testing is required by the NCCER, and our apprentices receive a credential when they take this test, so it’s an investment in our people. It does also give us proof that we are turning out the quality tradespeople we believe we are.
* Question about level upon graduation (Bruneau): Journey-level, graduates have six months to take their test.
* Apprentices have standard compensation adjustments each year that are separate from merit raises.
* We still have opportunities for improvement within the program and we are willing to meet with groups to explain how it works. Hopefully the 2+2 model will work, and UVA will set the standard for it to be introduced at other organizations.

**Additional updates**

* Occupational Programs has a new training specialist, Mark Orr. There will be more development opportunities coming from FM. Sarah Reed just joined OP as a safety and health technician.
* Weekly newsletter includes sections on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Apprenticeship, Training and Safety.
* Inclusive Excellence teams are actively meeting. Access & Success team is looking at consistency of promotions to better understand that process. The Climate & Intergroup Relations team is looking at appreciation events. The recent pastry and coffee deliveries made all over FM were meant as a thank you to our staff. There was also a way for employees to submit a thank you to others via QR code and we will post these in the OP newsletter.

**Christine Alencar**

* The Employee Council would like to be more involved with appreciation events, such as the coffee and pastry delivery. Planning to have the Employee Council wear identifiable T-shirts and mingle around the FM Fall Appreciation Event to chat with employees.
* Randy Campbell has been in conversation with the Continuous Improvement Task Force about council members helping to administer another survey to FM staff. We would like opportunities to meet with staff beyond email.

**Laura Duckworth**

* There are a lot of opportunities for the Employee Council to partner with Emily Douglas/DEI.
* As for a survey, I don’t know if I support another survey right now. We are obligated to do certain surveys in support of the Inclusive Excellence Plan work, and I think that survey fatigue is a thing, so we have to be intentional about what other surveys we want to do.

## 3. Council updates

**Christine Alencar**

* Starting in November, we will be moving our meeting times to 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. to accommodate Chelsea Reynolds’ schedule with her new position as HSPP zone coordinator.
* Sept. 8 meeting will have Rollie Zumbrunn as a guest, Oct. 13 will have Mark Webb.
* Randy Campbell is in talks with the Continuous Improvement Task Force to assist with any FM surveys. One of the big goals we have is to be more physically present because we have people at FM all over the place not in front of a computer and may have language or tech barriers.
* With Sarah Reed’s new position in Occupational Programs, there is now a vacancy on the council for the Landscape/Recycling representative.
* Staff Senate requires members to have been employed at UVA for at least a year, so we Chelsea Reynolds and Sarah Reed will be replaced on the Staff Senate with Christine Alencar and Les Givens.
* We also need to address in the council guidelines about what do when Staff Senate and council terms don’t align.
* The Staff Senate is partnering with the President’s Office this fall to get sustainability ideas from staff. Idea can get funded up to $100,000 with $1,000 cash prize to employee who came up with idea.