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# Facilities Management Employee Council Minutes

Thursday, March 9, 2023

## Attendance:

**Council members:** Christine Alencar, Randy Campbell, Eric Cline, Les Givens, Michael Minor, Corey Poole, Chelsea Reynolds J.R. Richardson, Ashley Scruggs and A.J. Young.

**Absent**: Jon Bruneau and Bonita White.

**Guests:** Elsa Burnette, Jane Centofante, Lori Pedersen and Derek Wilson.

## Agenda:

1. HR Questions – Elsa Burnette, UVA HR
2. Special Guest – Derek Wilson, Health System Physical Plant
3. Council and Senate work
   1. Education benefits
   2. Employee Council elections and retreat
   3. Staff Senate updates

## 1. HR Questions – Elsa Burnette, UVA HR

* **Question about recent email from UVA Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer J.J. Davis referencing UVA Faculty & Staff Salary Studies (Young):** My understanding is that the University is undergoing a review of salary ranges in comparison with the market. We try to do this on a regular basis. It does not mean there will be a change to employee salaries. In the future it could result in adjustments to salaries but that is not the purpose of this particular study. The study should be complete in early 2024.
* **Question about whether raises are given to employees at a specific time of year (Young):** Yes, we do performance review on a calendar year finishing in December/January and then merit raise time is usually effective at the beginning of the new fiscal year in July. We have not heard if we will receive merit raises this year yet.
* **Question about whether salary study would affect salaries of Classified employees as well (Richardson):** I do not know. I highly recommend keeping an eye on the website for updates: [Faculty & Staff Salary Studies Information webpage](https://hr.virginia.edu/careers-uva/compensation/uva-salary-studies).
* **Question about why some supervisors may have received an additional raise following the last pay increase for Facilities Management, but other supervisors did not (Richardson):** I am not aware of that, this would be a question for your supervisory chain to answer specific questions. We do keep an eye on compression which is when an employee’s rate is too close to a supervisor’s rate, and we may adjust a supervisor’s pay.
* **Question about whether a high school diploma is a requirement for all UVA jobs and that this can be a barrier for hiring refugees (Alencar):** Not all jobs at UVA require a high school diploma. I know an entry-level custodial position does not have any education requirements. There are certain positions where that is a minimum requirement, all trades positions do require a high school diploma or a GED. I would encourage individuals with specific questions to reach out to the recruitment team or the new Pipelines & Pathways team that works to assist people who may not have the education or background to get a job at UVA. As the University reviews the position structure and jobs we have here, this requirement is something to look at and whether there are opportunities to note that a high school diploma may be preferred but not required and allow someone to be hired without it and assist them in obtaining it once they’re hired. Custodial work is a good place to start, and education benefits can help people further their education.
* **Question about the former Career Paths program at FM (Young):** That was a program created by former Director of Operations Cheryl Gomez for custodial, landscape and recycling employees. It outlined certain steps for employees to take to move up in their current job profile. I know the program ended before Cheryl retired but I don’t have more information than that. I recall there was an issue with certain classes that had been required were no longer available locally. UVA HR is working on a program that examines how employees can progress in their careers.

## 2. Special Guest – Derek Wilson, Health System Physical Plant

**Derek Wilson**

**Overview of HSPP**

* I am the director of Health System Physical Plant, which supports the maintenance and care of all UVA Health facilities including the medical center, School of Nursing and School of Medicine.
* This totals 7 million square feet (UVA totals 18-19 million square feet), including all over Grounds – the MR buildings, Stacey Hall, the West Complex, etc., and also Fontaine Research Park and Northridge, as well as clinics as far away as Orange, Farmville, Zions Crossroads and more.
* About 400,000 square feet was added with the new hospital tower, at the time that was completed in 2020 that was the largest project ever for UVA.
* HSPP has about 200 people on our staff, hardworking people. We have to cover the medical center and it’s 24/7.
* The next big expansion for the medical center will be at Fontaine Research Park, the new Institute of Biotechnology building which is going into design now. It will be similar to MR buildings with a small portion of the building used by a private entity for research to support bringing a product to market.
* Paul and Diane Manning, who provided the initial gift for the project, are very interested in translating high level research into the marketplace.
* There will be 80-100 researchers working in the building, which will total about 300,000-350,000 square feet.
* The building’s basement will connect to Snyder. There will also be a new parking garage for about 1,200 parking spaces located on the plot next to 400 Ray C. Hunt Drive. The new Biotech building will displace some existing parking and provide for additional staff.
* There will also be some road improvements to add a roundabout which will allow buses to service the area.
* The total investment over the next few years will approach $500 million with a target to open Biotech in about four years. It is being designed to support UVA’s 2030/2050 sustainability goals.
* The project also includes a new central utility plant. There is some consideration of creating a data center nearby to capture the heat to help power that plant.

**Career background**

* I had a 20-year career in manufacturing before joining UVA. I first started working for George Southwell as a construction manager and later a project manager. Then, Tom Harkins with UVA Health, asked me to come work for Operations because it was very closely related to the work I had been doing. I started working as a hospital engineer and then later worked under the Director of HSPP at the time, John Rainey. About two years ago he retired, and I was hired into his position. I’ve worked here for about 15 years total.

**Council support of HSPP**

**Christine Alencar**

* I have heard in year’s past there are concerns that HSPP staff feel removed and separate from the rest of FM. It has been a challenge to foster a sense of oneness between the FM staff that serve the Academic side versus those that serve UVA Health. What can the council do for HSPP and how can we foster a sense of “One FM?”

**Derek Wilson**

* To give some background about why Academic and UVA Health are separate entities, a lot of it is because of how the money works.
* You may have heard people refer to the Academic side as “Agency 207” and UVA Health as “Agency 209” – those numbers refer to the line items in the Virginia state budget. There is a state law that says that Academic money cannot be used for UVA Health and vice versa. What that means is that I spend a lot of time separating the money, accounting for split funding for work orders and tracking money to make sure it’s spent properly.
* We do try to operate as “One FM” and in a lot of ways we do. Our Elevator crew, Fire Protection crew, Geospatial Engineering Services, Finance, etc. – all of these services are all encompassing to support all of FM. Systems Control does all of our monitoring and we have the Customer Support Center here for the daytime calls.
* But I do think there is some truth to HSPP feeling removed. I know we have sometimes had fewer HSPP folks attend certain events. I try to encourage my folks to attend events, such as the UVA Pancake Breakfast earlier this week, but it can be hard to do because of the distance.
* The things that help with attending events are providing transportation such as a shuttle and hosting an event for a block of time that is long enough that it would allow for half of the team to attend for the first half of the event and the other half to attend for the second half. That way we always have coverage. Also, accounting for travel time to attend an event is helpful.

**Regulatory challenges**

**Derek Wilson**

* Another thing that affects the organization of HSPP is due to certain regulations.
* The Joint Commission is a regulatory body that just finished a survey of our facilities, they visit every three years.
* Twelve people come for a week, and they go through everything. They look through all of our records and look at our physical environment – they are looking at anything that could detract from patient care. AALAC does the same thing but for the care of animals that are on site for research.
* One of the reasons we have a central refrigerator shop is because the Joint Commission is very specific about what PMs must be done and the documentation that is required.
* We live in a regulatory bubble over here and it’s a whole different ball game.
* Thank you again to the Employee Council for what you do because it does make a big difference to your colleagues.
* I know many of you are in here all the time, but I just want you to remember that when you are walking through the hospital and in our buildings, the patients that you see are probably on their worst day. Practice kindness and patience. They may be waiting for a family member in surgery, or their child is receiving treatment, or they are dealing with some other challenge.

## 3. Council updates

**Question about education benefits**

**Les Givens**

* An individual in Recycling reached out to me because they said they were denied a request to use their education benefits to pay for obtaining a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL). The person stated that their supervisor denied it, although they are driving a large truck so felt it was job related.

**J.R. Richardson**

* It’s my understanding that a CDL is not required to drive most Recycling trucks. We only have one truck in Landscape that requires a CDL. It depends on the dynamics of the truck.
* I was also told by HR previously that to use education benefits to pay for a CDL, the CDL must be a requirement of your job. And if UVA does pay for it, then it cannot be used outside of your work at UVA due to the waiving of the medical exam, which is typically required for a CDL.

*Council members brought up additional questions about the Education Benefit program at UVA including which types of courses are covered and concern about FM paying for trades licenses and whether it requires retention.*

**Elsa Burnette**

*Addressed in writing after meeting:*

* Regarding the denial of the CDL**,** I would need more information on this situation to provide guidance. Please ask the employee to connect with HR Business Partners, Elsa Burnette or Sarah McComb.
* According to the Education Benefits policy, Professional Development funding - courses or conferences must be job related, career growth related, or a developmental opportunity within their current field.
* The following Education Benefit program documents provide more information:
  + [Education Benefits Frequently Asked Questions](https://hr.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/IMPACT%20COE/Benefits/Education%20Benefits%20Combined%20FAQs.pdf) (PDF)
  + [Academic Education Benefit Program policy](https://hr.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/IMPACT%20COE/Benefits/ACD%20Education%20Benefits%20Program.pdf) (PDF)
* Elsa Burnette will address these questions in the next Employee Council meeting in April.
* Individual concerns can be directed to [AskHR@virginia.edu](mailto:AskHR@virginia.edu), using the subject line “Education Benefits Assistance.”

**Council elections and retreat**

**Christine Alencar**

* Our next regular meeting will be on April 13, then we will have our retreat on May 5 when we will discuss elections, reflect on the year and plan for next year.
* At the June meeting we will be joined by Don Sundgren to welcome new members and say goodbye to those who are rolling off the council. There will be no council meetings in July and August.

**Staff Senate updates**

**Christine Alencar**

* There will be a vacancy on the Staff Senate Advocacy Committee, but anyone who wants to join is welcome to; you don’t have to be a Staff Senator or an Employee Council member to be on that committee.
* They discuss topics like health benefits, education benefits and bereavement leave, which was recently added as a UVA benefit and came out of the advocacy committee.

**Ashley Scruggs**

* Just a note about the bereavement leave, it allows for three days of leave, but they must be used consecutively.

**Les Givens**

* I have been part of the working group that is working to improve our current health benefits and they are in the process of coming up with a survey for UVA employees and would like input about the survey questions.

**A.J. Young**

* I can’t stress the importance of filling out that survey when it comes out soon. We have about one month to provide feedback on the draft questions.
* During the work session, it was mentioned that the state of Virginia’s medical insurance plan is significantly better than UVA’s plan.

**Christine Alencar**

* During the last Staff Senate meeting, we met with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and split into break-out groups to discuss what DEI means to us.
* I found the work to be beneficial, it helped to put into words how we value and promote and support DEI.
* I believe the goal is for the DEI office to take that feedback and incorporate it into their programming.

**Uniform Committee**

**Les Givens**

* I have heard from employees they would like a visor option. They are also wondering about recycling old UVA clothing.

***Next Facilities Management Employee Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 13, 2023, from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Leake Building, upper-level conference room.***