



## STAFF COUNCIL

### Meeting Minutes

**August 13, 2025 | 8:15 a.m. - Noon | Mountainlair, Rhododendron Room | Zoom**

*Staff Council promotes a positive work environment for all Classified Employees through effectively advocating for our peers in the University's decision-making process.*

Name	Title	Department	Present
Barner, Sylvester	Supervisor Campus Services	FO Operations	Yes
Browne, Thea	Administrative Assistant Senior	University Libraries	Yes
Bucklew, Jay	Administrative Associate	Research Integrity & Compliance	Yes
Chittum, Martin	Program Assistant III	College of Creative Arts and Media	Yes
Crabtree, Joan	Manager, Physical Plant II	Auxiliary/Operations	No*
Fletcher, Louise	Traffic Enforcement Officer	Parking Management	Yes
George-Jones, Tara	Program Manager	Global Affairs	Yes
Henderson, Angela	Program Coordinator	CEMR Computer Science & Electrical	Yes
Joplin, Michael	Manager Physical Plant II	Auxiliary Operations	Yes
Lemine, Matthew (Brett)	Trades Specialist I	Auxiliary Maintenance	Yes
Leshner, Ryan	PRT Electronics Specialist I	AUX Personal Rapid Transit	Yes
Michael, Louise	Campus Safety Officer	University Police	Yes
Moore, Valerie	Academic Lab Manager II	SOM Pathology Anatomy & Lab Med	No
Rakowski, Caty	Program Assistant II	Libraries	Yes
Lautar Rhodes, Brooke	Administrative Associate	SOM Physiology & Pharmacology	Yes
Robinson, Shirley	Administrative Assistant	Academic Affairs Admin.	Yes
Seime, Sarah	Director, HR Partners	T&C, Employee Relations	Yes
Stewart, Dianne	Administrative Associate	Engineering & Mineral Resources	Yes
Toothman, Brandy	Program Specialist	SON	Yes
Twyford, John	PRT Technician II	AUX Personal Rapid Transit	No*

*\*Excused*

#### **Also in Attendance:**

Raelynn Regula, Director, Talent and Culture Employee Relations

Holly Leleux-Thubron, University Communications Specialist Senior, UR

#### **Coffee & Conversation Guest Speakers:**

Chief Sherry St. Clair, UPD and Lt. Brock Armstrong, UPD

Dr. Daniel Long, Director, Office of Student Accommodations

Amber Brugnoli, Associate Vice President & Executive Director, Office of Global Affairs

**Submitted By:** Janelle Squires, Administrative Secretary, Staff Council Office

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Shirley Robinson, at 8:29 a.m. and a quorum was established by roll call.

### **First Business**

Approval of June minutes motioned by Louise M. Tara seconded. All in favor and motion carried.

### **Treasurer's Report**

By Joan Crabtree, Secretary/Treasurer

No report. Joan was unable to attend the meeting.

### **Chair's Report**

By Shirley Robinson

Shirley reported she attended the Faculty Senate meeting.

She distributed a reference sheet for meetings and agenda item requests deadlines.

She also contacted the president's assistant to request that a Staff Council member be appointed to serve on the provost search committee. Dean Kreider reached out to Tara George-Jones, and she accepted.

There are some changes to the Athletic Council; mainly just setting a term limit of two years. She will provide the names of three individuals for consideration to the president: Thea Browne, Sylvester Barner and Brooke Lautar Rhodes.

### **Advisory Council of Classified Employees (ACCE) Report**

By Angela Henderson, ACCE Classified Staff Council Rep.

Angela reported she attended the ACCE retreat and got to know the other members plus was assigned to committees. She reported on the May minutes which focused on the language of the bill affecting the voting status of the BOG Staff Council members. Going forward we are keeping an eye on the PEIA changes with a possible special session in September.

## ***Coffee & Conversation***

### **University Police Department**

Chief Sherry St. Clair

Lt. Brock Armstrong

Chief St. Clair and Lt. Armstrong agreed to provide a brief overview of the University Police Department.

- They have just finalized the move to a new building, behind Sheetz on Rt 705.
- They are slotted for forty-two officers; there are currently thirty-eight
- There are fourteen dispatchers that run the dispatch center
- There are seven campus safety officers who conduct non-law enforcement functions
- There are several different divisions such as an investigation division who handle crimes, etc.; a training division; K9 division with two explosives service dogs they use for big events
- There is a forensic office in their building who handle any computers, cell phones, and any other confiscated items
- They conduct training outside of their department with the community, both WVU and Morgantown, which they enjoy doing such as verbal de-escalation as well as active shooter training and alcohol awareness goggles, to name a few
- The more popular training is the P.R.O.T.E.C.T. class which is self-defense that teaches self-awareness and how to defend yourself and they have a lot of fun doing that
- You can use the Adopt a Cop program to have an officer attend an event; they want the students to feel comfortable when they see a UPD officer and do not immediately think something is wrong; they are being more of a presence in the dorms during late nights
- They have a list of Do's and Don'ts for Campus Carry on their website
- Remember – see something, say something

They are revamping the training course list and will have that ready to be distributed in a few weeks. Louise M. will share with the group.

For more information, visit the [University Police Department](#) website.

### **Office of Student Accommodations**

Dr. Daniel Long, Director

Dr. Long agreed to provide an overview of the Office of Student Accommodations with a slideshow presentation.

- Accommodations are required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and BOG Policy 44
- Disability is a dimension of diversity
- OSA's mission is dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for students with temporary or permanent disabilities on all WVU campuses
- They service 12-13% of the student body with twenty-three full-time staff and host 60-80 student workers every semester
- Disability Support Services include
  - access to educational programs and activities
  - enhanced support services in academic coaching and support to students on the Autism Spectrum
  - collaborate with stakeholders on and off campus to promote disability inclusion and awareness
  - disability accommodations
  - transcribing and ASL interpreting
  - OSA Testing Center
  - assistive technology
  - MindFit
  - Autism Support Program

For more information, visit the [Office of Student Accommodations](#) website.

### **Office of Global Affairs**

Amber Brugnoli, Associate Vice President & Executive Director

Dr. Brugnoli agreed to provide an overview of the Office of Global Affairs with a slideshow presentation.

Units in Global Affairs:

- International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS)
- Education Abroad
- International Risk Management & Travel Registration
- International Agreements & Partnerships
- Intensive English Program (IEP)
- Immigration Compliance

OGA Personnel:

- 1 AVP
- 1 Director
- 2+ International Students
- 1 Student Advocate
- 4 International Employees
- 1 Visiting Scholar
- 2 Compliance

- 1 PR/Advancement
- 1 Passport Ops
- 2 Exchange Students
- 2 Faculty-Led
- 1 Risk Manager
- 1 International Agreements
- 2 Business Ops
- 1 Tech
- 1+ IEP

#### Passport Acceptance Facility:

- [Passport Acceptance Facility | Global Affairs | West Virginia University](#)
  - Free photos for WVU students, faculty, and staff
- Travel Registration
  - [Travel Registration | Global Affairs | West Virginia University](#)

#### Brief Overview of Academic Year 2024-25:

- 1,022 Degree-Seeking International Students
  - 553 also work for the University
  - 261 WVU graduates on OPT across the country
- 40 Upcoming Exchange Students
- 351 International Employees
  - Five different visa types, dependents and external OPT individuals
- Approximately 150 Visiting Scholars
- 68 Out-going Exchange Students
- 40 Faculty-led programs with 541 students participating

#### On-Going Concerns:

- Financial challenges, especially with graduate students
- Cultural confusion/Language barriers
  - Dealing with professors and other authority figures
  - Academic integrity
  - Resolving problems at lowest level
  - Perspectives on debt
- Home sickness
- Feeling unwelcome

#### Challenges:

- International Population
  - Visa “pauses” and delays
  - Increased visa costs
  - Perception of U.S. safety and welcome
- Education Abroad

- Financial aid and pursuance of a degree
- Behavior and expectations while abroad

They also have opportunities to serve as chaperones for trips abroad. For more information, visit the [Global Affairs at West Virginia University](#) website.

### **New Business**

Election of Officers -

Shirley called for the Election of Officers for the following roles:

Vice Chair candidates:

1. Sylvester Barner
2. Jay Bucklew
3. Michael Joplin

Parliamentarian candidates:

1. Tara George-Jones
2. Louise Michael

Two Members-At-Large.

1. Caty Rakowski
2. Brooke Lautar Rhodes
3. Brandy Toothman

Janelle distributed paper ballots. Sarah and Janelle tallied the votes. Shirley announced the winners:

1. Jay is the Vice Chair.
2. Tara is the Parliamentarian.
3. Caty and Brandy are Members-At-Large.

The role of Secretary/Treasurer was determined during the call for nominations at the retreat last month and Joan Crabtree was the only nominee.

Staff Council Retreat Recap -

Sarah provided a summary of the action items that were discussed during the retreat that was facilitated by members of the Learning and Organizational Development, Amy Metz and Hannah Stillman. She also provided this information to the group via email. This was also shared with President Benson's chief of staff.

- Jessie Barclay with the Purpose Center also facilitated the CliftonStrengths assessment for Staff Council members.
- President Benson and Mario Barge, Vice President, Talent and Culture came in to talk with the group.

- The group discussed some of the current successes of the past few years, such as the Hidden Gems and the Classified Staff Showcase initiatives.

Challenges and opportunities with action steps for the next year are as follows:

#### Increasing staff engagement with Staff Council

Proposed action steps:

- Collaborating with Strategic Marketing and Communications to create clear, consistent messaging for email and print, i.e., Staff Council newsletter
- Updating the Staff Council website and internal portal with headshots of new members and biographies
- Draft and send targeted email campaigns
- Explaining what Staff Council is – distribute an introductory video featuring Council members
- Ensure all employees know who their sector representatives are by posting a directory with photos at different locations
- Setting up tables downtown and Evansdale
- Organize and advertise informal events to build rapport such as meet and greets
- Actively encourage new members to participate in meetings, projects, and committees

#### Improving communication and transparency at state and university levels

Proposed action steps:

- Monitor legislative sessions and university policy change
- Think proactively about potential legislative or administrative changes and their impacts
- Organize in-person or email campaigns to share legislative updates that impact staff
- Invite local delegates to speak or attend Council meetings for open dialogue
- When discussing areas of concern, the staff document key takeaways and use those to illustrate the human impact of institutional decisions within stakeholders
- Take advantage of meetings with the university president by preparing key talking points, personal stories, and data or examples that support the staff perspective

#### Supporting our staff

Proposed action steps:

- Identify positions that have debris requirements not directly related to essential job functions
- Conduct a review of job descriptions and qualifications
- Research best practices from peer institutions
- Present findings to Talent and Culture to evaluate alternatives to degree requirements and determine acceptable combinations of both education and experience, if appropriate
- Promote to staff opportunities for career development and mobility, including courses offered by LOD, WVU Purpose Center, and other internal offerings
- Research and promote relevant trainings to staff from professional associations and organizations

- Highlight and promote internal job postings for staff

#### Benefits, pay and perks

- Conduct proposed action items, conduct a staff-wide survey to determine what non-financial benefits or perks are most beneficial; examples include flex time, remote work, wellness
- Organize and offer engagement opportunities to build morale and bridge gaps such as staff mixers, outings, appreciation events, or giveaways
- Schedule regular check-ins between reps and staff to gather feedback and focus engagement activities
- Keep compensation as a standing topic in leadership and Staff Council meetings
- Work with President Benson and leadership to connect student retention efforts to staff compensation advocacy
- Make the case that improved staff pay supports institutional success by using stories and data

#### Staff Council Newsletter -

Shirley called for two volunteers to work on a Staff Council quarterly newsletter. Martin and Thea volunteered.

The group discussed how additional members were recruited after the Staff Council election. For sectors lacking five representatives, an email was sent out to those sector emails asking to consider joining Staff Council. Some elected members also verbally recruited additional sector representatives and those interested sent a statement to Shirley about why they would like to join.

#### President's Meeting

The meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 25, 2025, beginning at noon, via Zoom. The agenda items were as follows:

- PEIA update
- Are there any plans for salary increases considering the rising cost of living?

#### Adjournment

Thea motioned to adjourn. Jay seconded. All in favor and meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.