



PennState
University Staff
Advisory Council

University Staff Advisory Council Meeting Brief and Updates July 2024

This brief highlights topics that should be shared widely with staff. Any questions can be directed to the linked resources or to askUSAC@psu.edu. For information on USAC, the Voice for Penn State Staff, visit the [USAC website](#).

A Message from the Chair

Dear Penn State Staff,

As we navigate these challenging times, I am inspired by the dedication and resilience of the Penn State staff community. I also remain in awe of the members of USAC, who, through their advocacy efforts, have demonstrated a commitment to Penn State's success through steadfast resolve, creative problem-solving, and collaboration. This commitment will remain essential as we work to support and uplift one another through unprecedented change.

In the upcoming year, USAC will develop and execute a strategic plan around three priority areas: 1) transparent pathways for career advancement, 2) inclusion of staff of all levels and from all campuses in decision-making, and 3) improved communication and engagement from leadership. Our collective efforts in these areas will shape the future of Penn State, ensuring that every staff member's voice is heard, valued, and empowered.

USAC remains dedicated to promoting staff welfare, enhancing work environments, and driving improvements that further the institution's mission and goals. Let us continue to embrace the principles of shared governance and remain responsive to the needs of the University and its staff. Together, we will shape a work culture that supports the institution's success while recognizing and valuing the essential contributions of Penn State staff.

I am grateful for your unwavering commitment and look forward to our shared journey ahead.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fegert
Chair, Penn State University Staff Advisory Council (USAC)

Important Update

The Penn State University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) recently voted to update its membership model to

include a representative from every college, campus and unit beginning July 1, 2025. The new membership model will more than double the total size of USAC and help to establish more direct lines of communication between staff at all campuses. The change was prompted in response to two of USAC's 2023-24 priorities: to increase representation of staff membership and strengthen the staff voice.

Learn more [here](#).

July Meeting Recap

The 2024-25 term for the University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) commenced July 1st, welcoming new members, new officers and committee chairs.

The new members attended an orientation session on July 15 to learn about USAC's mission, vision, goals, and organizational structures. Then, on July 18, the first general council meeting of the year was hosted at Innovation Park. During the session, leaders from Penn State IT led USAC members through a facilitated dialogue about their "[6 Working Geniuses](#)," a personal styles assessment. The session was designed to help USAC members learn how to leverage their passions to best support staff through their role in USAC and to help the council work more collaboratively and effectively.

USAC is pleased to introduce the 2024-2025 USAC officers, committee chairs, and new members:

2024-2025 USAC Officers

Elizabeth Fegert, chair
Matthew Heller, chair-elect
Rachel Galloway, past chair
Crystal Barna and Erin Loy, co-secretaries
Alice Puzarowski, secretary-elect

2024-2025 Committee Chairs

Christine Adams, Awards Committee
Patrick Dunne and Ashley Stauffer, Communications Committee
Nathaniel Geyer and Teresa McCloskey, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee
Amy Bockis, Logistics Committee
Rachel Galloway, Membership and Elections Committee
Leah Carraway-Justice and Paul Smith, Outreach and Engagement Committee

New USAC Members

Patrick Campell, college marketing coordinator, College of Agriculture Sciences
Caitlyn Catalfu, academic advisor, College of Education, Penn State Erie
Cheryl Knobloch, senior director, Women In Engineering Program, Center for Engineering Outreach & Inclusion
Yu Tai Chung, director of IT, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications
Kalene Faircloth, assistant director of student services, Dickinson School of Law
Jack Rumery, education & engagement specialist, Finance and Business, Penn State Sustainability
Jen Sholtis, lead academic advisor, College of Liberal Arts
Tina Weidele, assistant finance officer, Finance and Business, Penn State Lehigh
Rachel Zughuib, registrar, Academic Affairs, Penn State Beaver

Committee Updates

With the transition to the new year, membership for each standing committee is still being finalized. In the meantime, the following work has begun:

- **Communications** – The committee completed updates to the [USAC website](#), made multiple posts on USAC's social media channels, and drafted the monthly brief. The committee drafted press releases on the [new membership model](#) and upcoming blood drive and is working to finalize the annual report.
- **Logistics** – The committee assisted with the USAC staff retreat on July 18.
- **Outreach and Engagement** – The committee is planning to host 3 campus visits over the coming year; one in the central, eastern, and western region. Dates and details will be forthcoming.

Staff Facts or Benefits Highlight: *Annual Salary Increases*

Penn State leaders have shared that the process to provide an annual salary increase (ASI) to eligible non-union faculty and staff for fiscal year 2023-24 will commence in late July. ASI will be reflected in eligible employees' September 2024 paychecks, and increases will be retroactive to July 1, 2024. Read the [full article](#).

Important News, Updates, Reminders

- **New Employee Onboarding Information for Managers**
Check out the [New Manager Toolkit](#) that provides resources to support the new employee onboarding experience.
- **USAC advocacy leads to new HR policy**
The idea for a [new Penn State Human Resources policy](#) that allows employees who return to work for the University to receive credit for their prior years of full-time service began with USAC advocacy. The new policy, HR109, was created based on feedback that USAC provided to the HR team and establishes parameters for a one-time benefit crediting prior years of service for former full-time benefits-eligible, non-unionized employees who return to Penn State within five years of their last day.
- **Upcoming Blood Drive**
The staff advisory council at West Virginia University has challenged Penn State's University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) to a blood drive competition in advance of the Penn State football game at WVU on Aug. 31.
University Park students, faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday August 29, Heritage Hall, HUB-Robeson Center, University Park. The winner of the blood drive competition (whichever donates the most units) will be announced during the PSU vs. WVU football game on Aug. 31.
Download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](#), call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information.

Valuable Links

- Recognize a fellow Penn Stater by submitting a "[WE ARE](#)" shout out in Penn State Today
- Don't miss important announcements and news from [Penn State Today](#)
- Show a colleague how much you appreciate their efforts with a [Positive Paw](#)

About USAC

The University Staff Advisory Council consists of dedicated staff who act in an advisory capacity to central administration; explore issues, policies, and practices that impact staff; suggest revisions to policies and new policy initiatives; and advocate for staff welfare and development. USAC serves the PSU president and administration through the vice president of human resources and accepts new members annually.

Contact us: askusac@psu.edu

USAC Website: <https://hr.psu.edu/usac>

LIKE us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PSUUSAC/>

Connect with us on [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#)