



## University Staff Advisory Council Monthly Brief

### A Note from Our Chair

Dear Penn State Staff,

In times of uncertainty, it is important that we come together as one Penn State community.

Please know that USAC is here for you, and we remain committed to ensuring your voices are heard and elevated. We encourage you to reach out to us—your input is invaluable as we work together to advocate for outcomes that reflect the needs of staff.

We firmly believe in the strength and resilience of Penn State staff. Together, we will find the best way forward.

Please take care of yourself and one another.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Fegert  
Chair, University Staff Advisory Council

### December General Council Meeting Recap

- Membership Model: The Council voted to amend its new [membership model](#) to allow a unique representative for any business area with over 1,000 full-time staff.
- Committee Updates:
  - The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee gathered input on promotional strategies for the upcoming Listening Sessions.
  - The Membership and Elections Committee shared that new member applications will open in late March. Two seats will be open for the 2025-2026 term.
  - The Awards Committee requested promotional support for the [USAC Staff Recognition Awards](#).
  - The Outreach and Engagement Committee announced the next travel meeting will take place at the Wilkes-Barre Campus in March.
- Administrative Updates:
  - The officers met with President Neeli Bendapudi and Michael Wade Smith, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, to discuss progress toward and request continued support of USAC's goals of promoting transparent pathways for career

- advancement for staff, inclusion of staff at all levels and all campuses in decision-making, and greater communication and engagement from leadership.
- Additional updates were provided from meetings with university leaders including Sara Thorndike, Jennifer Wilkes, Margo DelliCarpini, and Tracy Langkilde. Updates referenced answers to questions submitted by staff or prompted by Council discussions. As always, USAC's goal is to increase communication and transparency between leadership and staff, so staff are encouraged to submit their questions to USAC if they seek additional information or clarification.

## Updates from USAC

- **Staff Recognition Awards, Nominations Now Open:** Nominations for the Annual USAC Staff Recognition Awards will be accepted through March 7. Eligibility criteria and [nomination forms](#) for three awards are available on the USAC website.
- **USAC Membership Model Discussions:** Under the new membership model, all campuses and colleges and designated academic/administrative support units with established Staff Advisory Councils will have the option to elect one full-time staff member to serve on USAC starting July 1, 2025. The [USAC website](#) will provide additional information about the new model in February.

## Ways to Engage USAC

- **Launching a Staff Advisory Council:** USAC's Outreach and Engagement Committee will facilitate a panel discussion of local Staff Advisory Council (SAC) chairs who will share the benefits of establishing a SAC and the process of starting one. The session will occur in February and be open to all Penn State staff. Details will be forthcoming.
- **USAC's Fourth Annual Listening Sessions** dates have been rescheduled for March 4 at 2 pm and March 5 at 10 am. Registration will go live in February.
- **Faculty Senate College Visits:** USAC leadership will attend Faculty Senate's College visits this spring semester, beginning January 28 and running through March 18. For the full schedule and details for remote login, see the [Faculty Senate website](#). During each visit, one hour is designated for staff to share what's happening in their unit, then Faculty Senate help advocate for their needs. Staff are encouraged to attend.

## Local Staff Advisory Council Spotlight

In December the Harrisburg Staff Advisory Council hosted a Cocoa and Cookie Bar. Staff, faculty, and administrators gathered to unwind and socialize, accompanied by hot chocolate, snacks, and a clay craft. Approximately 75 employees were in attendance and enjoyed the opportunity for connection and community building before the winter break.

Interested in spotlighting your campus/college's Staff Advisory Council? Contact us at [askUSAC@psu.edu](mailto:askUSAC@psu.edu).

## University Updates

- Reminder: A [Staff Satisfaction Survey](#) will launch in Spring 2025 for full-time and technical service employees. The survey will measure engagement and job satisfaction. USAC met with Modern Think, the organization administering the survey, to ask questions about how

data will be compiled, stored, and protected, and to provide suggestions for survey prompts. Five of the prompts USAC submitted were accepted for inclusion in the survey.

- THON 2025 will take place Friday, February 21 through Sunday, February 23 at the Bryce Jordan Center (BJC) on Penn State's University Park campus. [Learn more or show your support.](#)

## **Employee Resources**

- [2025 Holiday Schedule](#)
- [Employee Resource Groups](#) (ERGs)

**Send a colleague some kudos with a “[We ARE](#)” Shout Out in Penn State Today.**

Or show a colleague your appreciation by requesting [Positive Paw](#) sticky notes.

### ***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.

Connect with us: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [askUSAC@psu.edu](mailto:askUSAC@psu.edu).