



University Staff Advisory Council Monthly Brief

January General Council Meeting Highlights

- **Strategic Plan Engagement**
 - USAC continues to engage with Daniel Newhart, Assistant Vice Provost for Planning, Policy, and Measurement, to develop its multi-year Strategic Plan. To date, 668 staff members have provided feedback on the University's strategic plan. 249 participants from academic colleges, 141 from campuses, and 451 from administrative units.
- **Employee Years of Service Recognition Program Updates**
 - Staff have raised concerns about the sustainability of print yearbooks that are provided as part of the Years of Service program. HR has notified USAC that staff are not able to opt out of yearbooks. Employees may opt out of the gift if they choose.
 - USAC has asked HR to track program engagement looking at how frequently managers are sharing yearbook links to their teams so they can consider whether additional communication is needed to support engagement. Council members shared staff feedback with HR that the Years of Service emails aren't recognized as official emails. USAC discussed potential ways to improve communication, such as promoting [FAQs on the website](#) or providing an example email. HR will review the emails and make adjustments where possible.
- **Penn State Job Satisfaction and Engagement Survey**
 - On February 10 Penn State launched a [job satisfaction and engagement survey](#) for all full-time staff, technical service employees, administrators, academic administrators, and executives. USAC has engaged in conversations with HR around transparency of data use and results, emphasizing the need for meaningful action based on feedback.

Updates from USAC

- **Staff Recognition Awards, Nominations Open through March 7:** [Nominations for the Annual USAC Staff Recognition Awards](#) are open through March 7. Eligibility criteria and nomination forms for each of the three awards are available on the USAC website.
- **USAC At-Large General Council Membership Applications Open through March 10:** Full-time staff members can now [apply to serve on the USAC General Council](#) through at-large membership. Applications will be received through March 10. In support of its [new](#)

[model](#), USAC will accept two at-large membership roles for the 25-26 membership cycle while expanding its membership to include local councils.

Ways to Engage USAC

- **February 26 - Launching a Local Staff Advisory Council:** USAC will host a [virtual panel discussion](#) on how to launch a local staff advisory council and the associated benefits. Register in advance by February 24 for the virtual event.
- **March 4 and March 5 - USAC Listening Sessions:** USAC will host [two virtual listening sessions](#) as part of its commitment to ensure all staff voices are heard and valued. Advanced registration to participate in one the events is required by March 3. Anonymous feedback will be summarized and presented to the leadership to inform future decision-making.
- **March 27 - Eastern Region Travel Engagement Meeting:** The meeting will be held at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. Additional information and invitations are coming soon.

Local Staff Advisory Council Spotlight

The Berks Staff Advisory Council collaborated with campus leadership to enhance staff recognition, introducing three new awards with another planned for 2025-2026. To improve communication and transparency the Berks council also established regular meetings with the Chancellor, who also attends All-Staff meetings to provide updates and answer questions. Furthermore, the Berks Council Chair serves on the Advisory Board and key committees, including the Future State Integrative Design Initiative, to advocate for staff interests.

Interested in spotlighting your campus/college's Staff Advisory Council? Contact us at askUSAC@psu.edu.

Employee Resources

- [Penn State Instructor Led Professional Development](#)
- [Free Mental Health Webinars](#)
- [Training Sessions on the new DOJ Rule on Web/App Accessibility and the impact on your role at Penn State](#) (Penn State LRN Login required). This training discusses the new Department of Justice Rule revising the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and associated compliance requirements, tools, and training to ensure University compliance by April 24, 2026.

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.

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