UGA Staff Council meeting 5/6/20 via Zoom

Attendees:
Brittany Barnes; Charlie Bauder; Maria Berden; Lisa Chandler; Debi Chandler; Christopher Childs; Ryan Vogel (for Lesley Coffey); Melanie Crawford; Anjali Dougherty; Sara Ervin; Wade Fields; Tamala Foreman; Mary Formo; Sara Etilers (for Amanda Fox); Danielle Free; Jami Gilstrap; Elmer Gray; Savannah Hembree; Stuart Ivy; Wesley Johnson; Amie Jones; Laura Kelly; Jennifer Leyting; Emma Mattox; Ken McDaniel; Jackie Mitchell; Marie Mize; Paula Moon; Mary Moore; Leslie Morrow; Mathew Mundy; Jessica Owens; Rob Paltz; Neil Werfel (for Kathryn Reeves); Jacob Schindler; Ken Schroder; Leslie Sitz; Garrett South; Stevie Stigler; Dana Barnhart (for Jason Tiller). A quorum was present.

No minutes from March 14th meeting. Will approve two months minutes at the next meeting.


Learning Circles have been done on campus for some time. We were putting together a Remote Learning Circle Guide when all of this (COVID-19) happened. With the current situation, we added information on how to be a supervisor in this remote world; Zoom suggestions & distance-based education for individuals. Team development strategy: Learning should be team based & leader led. You don’t have to be an expert to lead learning. There is plenty of information out there. It’s important that teams learn and grow together and that leadership is involved. We’ve already had a great response from Development & Alumni Relations; Innovation Gateway; Student Affairs & lots of teams across campus. The Guide is intentionally a little vague to apply to the many different areas and not be more burdensome than a helpful guide to lead learning & encourage growth. Some of us have had the experience of when we go to a class at T&D or to a professional conference or team retreat and receive helpful information. There is valuable learning that happens in those environments. But then how do we translate that learning back into day to day work? The goal is to make learning a part of the daily routine.

What is RLC – a group of people who are learning and growing together. The goal is to create an open dialogue; allow people to reflect. It can be centered around certain material; on the job training; reflecting on life experience. It doesn’t require substantial time commitment to facilitate; it doesn’t require expert level knowledge. It can be structured around the same learning objective or everyone in the circle might have their own different learning objective and the circle gives them the space to discuss their objective or learning experience. They are a very flexible tool.

7 Basic Steps to Facilitate Learning Circle – doesn’t have to be done by team leader. It can be a great low risk entry level leading meeting/project exercise.

- Decide on topic, theme or resource
- Select a time & place for the discussion to occur and communicate it to the group in ample time to prepare
- Distribute any materials and meeting agenda
- Plan a brief check in, or icebreaker activity to start the meeting
- Have a discussion based on discussion questions or prompts given ahead of time; (use Ted Talks; articles, etc.) Languages of Appreciation – book based on 5 Love Languages for the work environment; or discuss chapter of a book
- Plan a final reflection activity
- Decide on the next learning assignment

Supervisors are encouraged to delegate responsibility for some of these steps to other members of the team.

**Q & A**

**Q** - Marie – What other units/groups are using the RLC’s & what their experience with them?

**A** – Joshua – Auxiliary Services is currently having 1-2 meetings per day. They’re having success in that they are engaging a certain number of their employees; but other employees are feeling pressured to attend all of the meetings. It’s a double-edged sword; you want to provide enough content & opportunities to keep people working & feeling connected without putting too much on their plate. Other groups like Marketing & Communications have enjoyed their structure of learning their own individual plan & coming back as a group & sharing what they learned to possibly help others in the group. Innovation Gateway is using a more structured approach by picking material, Ted Talk or an article, and then coming back to discuss it weekly or bi-weekly. Human Resources used it as a team building process.

The T & D schedule for new classes are listed online.

**Staff Council Elections – positions & nominees**

**Treasurer** – Jacob Schindler, it’s been an honor to serve as Treasurer & I look forward to serving, if voted

**Coordinator** – Jennifer Leyting; really enjoyed being coordinator this past year. Hopefully will be smoother next year because not doing graduate coordinator work now. I’m open to suggestions on doing better announcements/communication.

**Recording Secretary** – Lisa Chandler; this is my first year being active on Staff Council & I hope I can do the recording secretary tasks to your satisfaction & would like to give it a try.

**Vice President** – Anjali Dougherty; I have loved being on Staff Council & especially the last 2 years working with you all on getting the Staff Networking Program up & running & I hope I have the opportunity to continue finding ways to improve our lives at UGA; however big or small it may be.

**President** – Debi Chandler; I’ve been involved with SRG & Staff Council for 6 years & it has been a thrill to work with the entire UGA to put the staff closer to the front of the pack; to make us more visible and more understood. I look forward to continuing that trend as Staff Council President.

**President** – Savannah Hembree; The biggest thing for the next 2 years is, it’s going to be hard for all of us. We need to make sure that our leaders (whoever they are) are available and responsive. It’s going to be a lot of hard work to get through all of the potential budget cuts, which we don’t know anything officially yet. My biggest thing is to make sure we have good leadership as we go forward.

Marie - Open Floor for discussion –
Stuart Ivy – I’ve known Savannah for several years & been very impressed with her abilities. In her work with Emergency Preparedness, a critical area, she’s done an excellent job. I know her boss & he speaks very highly of her. As former Staff Council President, I am very pleased with her abilities and think she will do a wonderful job.

Marie – to the folks who are stepping down, Mary was VP this past year & has been a phenomenal mentor and help to me. Thank you, Mary, for what you’ve done. I feel really comfortable with whoever ends up being President next year. Both candidates have been F&A chairs. Debi’s work with Staff Resources Fair and Savannah’s worked with Staff Resources Fair this year. Anjali worked with the Staff Networking Program. Elmer’s helped make that a big success. Both the Staff Resources Fair and the Staff Networking Program have been great successes and the President’s office is tickled pink with both of them. Jennifer, thank you for being coordinator this past year. Jake with the finances, keeping us on track & getting reimbursements for things. Jami & Kelly for getting the nominations list together. Jessica will be sending out the Qualtrics survey for you all to vote by Monday at 5, giving a full 3 business days to vote. The vote results will go back to Jessica Owens.

Elmer – I’d like to start by thanking you, Marie, for all your contributions as President. Thank you for all your time and efforts in leadership. We are in a good spot for moving forward, even in these uncertain times. I’d like to thank Jennifer as the coordinator. Keeping us organized and the more information we can get out, the more we can all participate. The better the organization runs. That’s a key role that has probably been unrecognized in the past. She’s definitely stepped up our game & thanks for that. All these candidates are really awesome. I’ve been with the Staff council years for 7 years & this is the best group we’ve ever had. Both candidates for President would do an awesome job. I wish them both well with the election.

Marie – I’d like to say that Elmer keeps us straight. When I say something questionable, he lets me know or sends me a little e-mail – what were you thinking?

Ken – I’ve been with the F&A SRG & Staff Council for only about a year, but I’ve been super impressed with the whole thing. I’d like to say that both candidates will do a great job. I’ve worked with Savannah more than Debi; but when I’ve needed something, she got it done for me.

Marie – Ken Schroder is about to retire. He’s been with UGA since August 1988. He was involved with the group of staff members who are the reason we have a staff council today.

Ken – In spring of 1991 we had a big fiscal challenge. Gov. Zell Miller was talking about furloughs. We had a situation where faculty were getting raises & staff were getting none. We had a lot of really unhappy people.

Marie – We were fortunate that Ken came back to Staff Council a couple years ago. We were fortunate in that 1, we got to know him & 2, learning about where we began. I really appreciate everything. I’m also excited that he’s going to remain involved with UGARF Board.

Marie – Stuart & I & Savannah have been on the reopening working groups so hopefully we will get more direction in about a week or so. In response to the e-mail Friday night, Stuart set up a Zoom chat for tomorrow afternoon. It’s a way to give people the chance to ask questions & have a dialogue re: the budget cuts.
- We aren’t starting classes until 8/20 & they will want people on campus before then. Have there been suggestions on daycare not being open when we are required to come back. And, there is nothing that we can do about it.

Marie – it has been brought up in almost every meeting. I encourage y’all to continue to bring it up to ensure it is continuing to be discussed. Not only childcare, but also whether people are physically & emotionally ready to come back.

Mary Moore – In your discussions, has there been any indication of a “testing plan” that will be put in place?

Marie – It’s not been discussed in our group (it’s not been tasked to us) but it is being discussed in other groups.

Stuart – We are providing input/suggestions to President Morehead which will then go forward to the USG. It’s all still very much in the formative stages so we can’t speak to that.

Lisa – In the last meeting, you mentioned that they are looking at select people coming back June 1st & others returning on July 1st. Is that still the case?

Marie – Yes, they are calling it Phase I, II & III and my interpretation is that it will be up to the units. My assessment is that Phase I would be the supervisors coming back to assess the units & decide what needs to be done. My group is interpreting it that it will be very slow in bringing people back. I’m hoping that we’ve shown the University that working at home and flextime works. Laura will attest that years ago we kept bringing that up & we were stonewalled. My director is saying we can do more with teleworking & we might include more of that.

Jennifer – Do we know anything from undergraduate admissions if they are on target for fall?

Stuart – I’ve heard anecdotally that we are right on track for normal. That’s not confirmed.

Mary Formo – I’ve also heard that we’re expecting about the same as normal numbers for orientation as we’ve had in the past.

Elmer – Are they planning to have orientation on campus?

Mary – no, all orientation will be online. I’m an academic advisor & we’re getting prepared for summer orientation now.

Elmer – That will be very different. The whole concept of orientation is to see where you will be going to college. It’s not an ideal situation.

Savannah Hembree – It’s not ideal. I’ve been helping with our office. What they will do is the incoming freshmen will have different online modules that will take them through different departments and we will also do some Zoom conference times. For example, campus safety, there will be a couple sessions during the summer where we will do the presentations and chat with everybody. And then the sessions will be recorded for those that weren’t able to attend. So, it is extremely different, but we are trying to make it as close to being on campus without actually being here.

Marie – again congratulations to Ken Schroder on his retirement.