

**Staff Advisory Council General Council Meeting Minutes**  
Thursday, February 4, 2021 @ 10:00am - 11:30am, via Zoom

**Welcome** - 10:01am, call to order.

**Approval of Minutes** - approved by the majority via a poll by Jean.

**Discussion with Executive Leadership**

- Scott Cowen, Interim University President
- Carolyn Gregory, Vice President, Human Resources
- Katie Brancato, Chief of Staff, Office of the President

Scott Cowen began by providing a brief university update: 2200 students moved on campus after Winter Break. This is up 400 from the fall 2020 semester. The Covid positivity rate from the first week of testing is .8. Staff has consistently shown the highest rate of Covid protocol compliance compared to students and faculty. Veale Center is an approved Covid vaccination site and is staffed to provide 100 vaccines per hour once the vaccine arrives. The university has compiled a list of members who are 65 and older and provided it to the City of Cleveland. When the city has extra Covid vaccine doses they are to start calling staff and faculty on this list.

Scott asked the staff, “how are you doing?” SAC representatives shared their personal experiences of how they are handling the pandemic. Common themes were that we are grateful to still be employed, but staff are stretched too thin. Many are balancing full-time work, caregiving for children, and caregiving for aging parents. Others feel a bit isolated because we haven’t been able to see and support friends and families going through hard times. The lack of retirement recognition and celebrations was also raised.

Carolyn Gregory reminded staff about resources such as Impact Solutions.

Representatives thanked Scott for this “thinking out loud” emails to the CWRU community and have found them encouraging.

SAC leadership had provided Scott Cowen with a list of several questions submitted but representatives and constituents prior to the meeting. Scott answered the following questions but not all of them:

**1. What is the University’s primary goal with the Return to Campus process?**

Keeping staff, faculty and students safe and healthy, and keeping CWRU financially stable. Staff with health issues should contact the Office of Equity. Staff with an immunocompromised household member should contact HR. Carolyn reiterated the process that WFH requests are up to the supervisor, and if the staff member is unhappy with the decision to go to HR and HR will try to work something out. Covid policies and population density have worked so far. Some positions have to be on campus.

2. **Why, when reevaluating the child care subsidy, was it not expanded to younger children?** The response focused on the fact that it was expanded from 4th grade to 6th grade, the subsidy amount increased for \$600 to \$800, and extended drop off hours at 1x1 Fitness.
3. **When will raises, promotions, bonuses, etc. will come back?** He will have a better idea in April/May. Hoping raises, promotions and bonuses will come back next year.
4. **When will the University share the results of the staff compensation plan review completed by the hired consultant?** It was put aside during the pandemic but post-pandemic it will be picked back up.
5. **Pay disparity regarding internal vs. external hires.** Representatives voiced concerns that because of this policy and the 5% salary increase on new positions makes it difficult to retain staff. The university needs to place more value on staff with institutional knowledge, and this is a historical pain point. There is an appeals process that Carolyn discussed, but it is not well known by supervisors. Scott said a committee reviews staff salary exceptions bi-weekly and Scott makes the final decision. However, there were many instances brought up in the chat and in the conversation that shows this process does not work. Carolyn said she would have HR reach out to the individuals, and if there were concerns for individuals to contact HR.
6. **Medical coverage. Did HR complete a full analysis of the coverage between both Plans?** Yes, the plans were meticulously reviewed.
7. **For CWRU, where do you think the 'sweet spot' is, between centralization and decentralization?** Scott said it is not unusual for IT and University Marketing and Communications to be centralized. He said when he was Dean of Weatherhead he liked decentralization, but as President of a university it's difficult when these areas are not centralized.

Discussion session with staff:

1. **Lack of Covid compliance and possible consequences.** Scott said he wrote undergraduates a message since quarantine numbers are on the rise. Asked staff for feedback on how to enforce mask mandates. Cares reports for staff goes to HR, faculty goes to Provost, student reports go to the Office of Student Conduct.
2. **Uneven experiences with supervisors.** No concrete answer on how to solve this other than supervisor training sessions are offered and the general theme of, "there are just some bad supervisors".
3. **Staff vs. Faculty. Staff feeling "less than."** Scott said that this issue isn't unique to CWRU, but it's a feeling felt throughout higher education. He pointed out that staff and faculty have different job descriptions and benefits (tenure). Scott says he sees faculty and staff as equally important and takes the time to listen to us all. He recognizes it's not perfect.

**Note:** *Several HR-related questions and issues were raised in the chat throughout the meeting. Jean will send Carolyn a copy of the chat after and Carolyn assured the council that she would make sure that HR would follow up with individuals to address their particular situations.*

**Reports of Standing Committees** - The only report given was by the **Elections Committee** due to time constraints after the discussion with Interim President Cowen. Please review the committee reports provided prior to the meeting.

- **Elections**, Karyn Newton, Jim Prince
  - Official call for nominations for Vice Chair and Secretary for the 2021 - 2022 term. Nominations can be submitted to Jim or Karyn by Friday, April 9, 2021. Candidates to give nomination speeches at the Friday, April 16, 2021 SAC General Council Meeting. Electronic voting will open from April 16 and conclude on April 23, 2021.

**Reports of Ad-Hoc Committees and Liaisons to the University Committees** - reports were not given due to time constraints after the discussion with Interim President Cowen. Please review the committee reports provided prior to the meeting.

**Old Business** - no discussion

**New Business** - discussion of ideas after Scott Cowen, Carolyn Gregory, and Katie Brancato left the meeting.

- Supervisor 360 reviews. Supervisor training requirement for all managers with mandatory refresher courses. *(Jean let the council know that SAC leadership is raising this at every HR monthly meeting.)*
- HR should create a flow chart for supervisors so they are aware of various processes, including compensation review.
- **Crystal Sabol**: head a sub-committee to develop a Top 10 list for Pathway 4 leaders.
- HR should acknowledge how people feel and how this is a hard time. Even that would go a long way. *(Jean let the council know that SAC leadership is raising this at every HR monthly meeting.)*
- Staff survey - needs to be picked back up. Frustration because it feels as if HR is using Covid as an excuse for dropping the work on the staff survey and compensation study.

**Adjournment** - 11:34am.