



## University Staff Advisory Council Meeting Brief and Updates February 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](mailto:askUSAC@psu.edu). For information on USAC, the Voice for Penn State Staff, visit the [USAC website](#).

### February Meeting Recap

The February USAC meeting was rescheduled for March 1 due to weather-related closures. The council met with Sara Thorndike, who explained Penn State's road map to a new business model. She also answered questions about the budget impacts and hiring freeze on each campus, college, and unit. The council heard from nominees for USAC officer positions, including chair-elect and secretary-elect. The council will hear from candidates for committee chair positions in the next meeting.

### Committee Updates

- **Awards** – The committee has been collecting nominations for the USAC Staff Awards, which were due on March 6 per an extension due to a Microsoft Forms issue.
- **Bylaws Review (ad hoc)** – The USAC bylaws are under review by all committees, and the Bylaw Review committee is trying to identify a clear format to use. The proposed new bylaws will be shorter than in previous iterations, and other content will be captured in an accompanying document that is more flexible.
- **Communications** – The committee coordinated announcements and reminders in Penn State Today for the [USAC Staff Awards](#), [new membership applications](#), and the [USAC 2024 Listening Sessions](#), as well as updated the [USAC website](#). The committee also completed the January meeting brief that is emailed to all staff, posted it to the [website](#), and published an [announcement of the brief](#) in Penn State Today.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging** – The committee held two virtual listening sessions on February 28 and 29 aimed at gathering feedback and input from staff across the institution about their diverse lived experiences, challenges, and needs. The committee will begin aggregating the information to create a report on the trends and themes from the sessions. In addition, a committee representative attended the University Equity Leadership Council as a support staff liaison for USAC.
- **Logistics** – The committee is working on changes to sections of the USAC bylaws.
- **Membership & Elections** – The committee is working on the membership drive for the 2024-25 academic year. The application to join USAC has been updated, and the [announcement](#) went out to staff. The deadline for applications was March 8.
- **Outreach** – The Outreach committee continues to work on a Quick-start guide for Staff Advisory Councils to use when first organizing their group and activities. The committee is also planning the Regional Engagement meetings where all campuses local to the host are invited.

### Staff Facts or Benefits Highlight: SupportLinc

The new [SupportLinc](#) Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available around-the-clock, 365 days a year, to help manage life's challenges, at no cost to Penn State benefit-eligible employees and their families. There are [regular webinars scheduled](#) to learn more about these benefits.

## Important News, Updates, Reminders

- **Run, Hide, Fight: Community reminded of action steps if confronted with a threat**  
University Police and Public Safety is reminding all students, employees and visitors to familiarize themselves with the University's official [Active Attacker Response Program](#) to learn how to respond to a potentially life-threatening situation in any environment.
- **USAC Travel Engagement Meetings**  
USAC will visit the Lehigh Valley and Beaver campuses in the coming months, as it continues to engage with staff at every campus. The central region engagement meeting occurred last fall. Meeting details and virtual meeting links for the upcoming eastern and western region meetings will be available upon registration.
  - **Eastern Region:** Meeting will be held at the Lehigh Valley campus from 10 am – 2 pm on March 21. Staff from the Abington, Berks, Schuylkill, Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Worthington Scranton, Great Valley, and Brandywine campuses are invited to attend. Registration is now closed.
  - **Western Region:** Meeting will be held at the Beaver campus from 10 am – 2 pm on June 20. Staff from the New Kensington, Dubois, Altoona, Greater Allegheny, Fayette, Shenango, and Behrend campuses are invited to attend. [Register here.](#)
- **USAC Summit Scheduled for April**  
USAC will host its annual summit on April 18 from 10 am to 3 pm to bring staff advisory council members from all colleges, campuses, and units across the commonwealth together for a day of learning and networking. The USAC Outreach Committee is finalizing speakers and programming. More information will be forthcoming. [Register here.](#)

## Valuable Links

- Show a colleague how much you appreciate their efforts with a [Positive Paw.](#)
- 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.](#)

## 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](mailto:askusac@psu.edu)

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