MINUTES

Attendance: Liisa Laine, co-chair; Grace Young, co-chair; Amy Anthony; Sarah Brown; Geeta Chougule; Dawn Cummings; Laura Dobler; Daisy Ferreira; Tara Greenwood; Catherine Hanni; Marguerite Joutz; Annemarie Kennedy; Michael Leitao; Derek Lisi; Kristine Newson; Abigail Peterson; Jennifer Quiroz; Barbara Simoneau; Maria Sokolova; Beth Travers; Yi Vizard; Ray Windsor

Absent: Sarah Aneyci; Joel Hernandez; Laura Pleasants; Jessica Pontarelli; Felicia Raton

I. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2019

Liisa motioned for an acceptance of the 2/26 meeting minutes. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

II. Co-Chair Updates

Liisa, Grace, Mike and Jess met with Vice President of Human Resources Amanda Bailey, Deputy Chief Information Officer John Spadaro, and Director of Marketing Strategy John Martins on how to address staying in touch with Brown retirees. The resolution: retiring staff will sign up for the Brown digest during the offboarding process. A formal offboarding isn’t mandatory, but HR is looking for SAC assistance in spreading the word about the process and how HR can help with it. Once HR’s new platform is rolled out, we can include it in the SAC newsletter (perhaps also a Today@Brown announcement, although that goes to the same audience as the newsletter).

Human Resources received similar complaints about BEAR Day gifts to those discussed at the last SAC meeting and is asking SAC to gather information on the history of the gifts and when the monetary value of the gifts changed, as well as polling staff on what they would like to see for minimal 5-year and 10-year gifts in order to allocate more funds to the 25-year gifts. Barbara and Kristine will follow up with questions for Angel and the Bookstore about the history of gifts and the available budget. It was suggested that time off could be
discussed as an option instead of tangible gifts. Employees receive a bonus two weeks off when they have worked for Brown for 25 years; perhaps an extra day off for a 5-year anniversary and two days off at 10 years is an option?

The D&I report had expanded into a Town Hall discussion at the last SAC meeting. President Paxson is scheduled for a 30-minute Town Hall during Staff Development Day on June 11, but SAC would like to request an expanded, pre-moderated Town Hall that includes administrative heads (i.e., HR, OIED, Provost) to provide a “State of the University,” covering where Brown is heading in terms of HR and staffing. (Side note: the Biased Incident Response System will go live this Friday.) Lynn Hernandez had presented findings from the focus group from the last staff climate survey to SAC, but the broader staff community still has questions that trickle down to SAC. A public forum would allow Brown staff to ask HR and administrators questions such as whether 360 reviews for managers be implemented. SAC proposes this event within the framework of the strategic plan. This comprehensive public forum was suggested to Amanda Bailey, who advised that SAC work on a proposal. Important questions have arisen at past events without time for them to be addressed. An expanded, pre-moderated Town Hall would be a great opportunity for an open dialogue, and staff could supply questions in advance so those responding could prepare their responses. This would communicate in a real-time way that administrators are listening, making changes, and committed to transparency. The ideal length of this event would be two hours to accommodate approximately 20 questions from Brown staff.

SAC members have submitted questions to the draft proposal (and should complete this process by end of day on 3/13), and the next step is to refine and update the document to have a more formalized proposal to present to Amanda. (Examples of some questions that have been asked: What steps have been taken after the initial staff climate and focus groups to improve staff climate and working conditions? Are there any plans for implementing trainings around topics such as unconscious bias and gender in the workplace?)

III. Staff Concerns

ACAP: SAC received several inquiries about the ceasing of the Alumni College Advising Program (ACAP), a counseling program that provides three hours of guidance regarding college searches, applications, etc. The program was originally offered to students but was expanded as a courtesy by Alumni Relations to Brown faculty and staff. It isn’t a university-sponsored or official employee benefit, and HR wasn’t even aware of the program. Liisa is in touch with the alumni office, and Amy Anthony and Marguerite offered to help her, to find out more information, such as why the program is ending. (Update: immediately following the SAC meeting, Liisa shared an email from Vice President of Alumni Relations Andrew Shaindlin confirming that the last day of the courtesy program
offering general advising to students, faculty and staff will be June 30, 2019. Instead, Brown's Office of College Admission will provide a variety of resources designed to support the college advising interests of alumni families, if their children are applying to Brown.) SAC members being contacted with questions about college advising and planning will refer Brown staff to the free, comprehensive RI Student Loan Authority program available to Rhode Island residents.

Sidewalks: The sidewalks between Dyer and Davol remained unshoveled for three days after last week’s big snowstorm, forcing staff to trudge through snow to catch shuttles that stop right in the middle of that sidewalk. When Brown officials get complaints they must call the owner of the sidewalks, which is the City of Providence (except for the parcel owned by the 195 Commission). This was an issue last year, and once again the city won’t allow Brown employees to clear the snow themselves because of liability and property damage. SAC will ask Russell Carey to ask the city again to stay on top of clearing snow.

Workday Issue: Workday doesn’t highlight for managers which job candidates are internal. Dawn will reach out to HR to confirm whether there’s a way to highlight or draw attention to internal candidates in Workday.

Employee Education Program Affordability: Staff receive reimbursements of approximately $5600 in education funds for attending (non-degree) Brown classes and approximately $2,625 for attending professional development outside of Brown. Brown employees must pay sometimes exorbitant taxes on these classes, which are taxed because they are considered part of employees' salary as a bonus, and some staff are wondering if the model could be re-examined to make Brown employee education less cost-prohibitive. Ray and Maria volunteered to investigate; perhaps there could be a staff price on classes. Auditing is a free option, but some staff are seeking course credit and hope there is a way to better afford it.

Recent Article: Some staff have reacted to the student article in the Providence Journal about the annual dinner hosted by Marty Granoff with concern that President Paxson missed an opportunity in her response to discuss the benefits of having these donors and Brown and the wonderful things they fund. The article said that some employees in Advancement helped with logistics for that event, and the President responded that she and her staff were unaware of Advancement assistance to Marty Granoff, which has upset some staff in Advancement whose jobs have always included fundraising assistance to Mr. Granoff and other donors. In addition, students were upset to read the allegation that Brown had provided a curated list of students from wealthy or connected families for this dinner who were provided with networking access, rather than having the event be open to all. Details such as whether those dinners will cease or whether they will be made more inclusionary are not within the purview of the President’s Staff Advisory Council. It was
recognized that Mr. Granoff is trying to help Brown, and SAC could ask the president to clarify to the community why Brown seeks donors and how those donations benefit the community as a whole. Marguerite noted that the President had penned an op-ed explaining more about how Brown decides to accept a gift and what that process is like, and that could be shared with staff; she will also work with Amy to address concerns coming out of the Advancement Office. President Paxson’s letter to the Providence Journal had also clarified that staff should not support private events, as opposed to University events.

IV. Committee Updates

a. Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Nominees for the SAC Diversity Board include Lynn Hernandez (OIED), Eric Estes (Campus Life), Joseph Diaz (BioMed - Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs), George Barboza (Dining Services), Kelly Garrett (Director, LGBT Center), Cass Clatt (Communications), and others with space for write-ins as well. SAC members were asked to continue nominating four people from the list this week. (Laura re-distributed the nomination form immediately following the SAC meeting.) D&I will send out an email with the top finalists, and if there is no opposition from SAC, invitations will go out to the desired board members by next week.

b. Volunteer

The Climb for Air is March 23. Six people will participate, and Daisy is excited about the event.

The United Way children’s book drive: Grace reached out to Jess to check how many boxes we have; United Way wants to use the smaller box that hold reams of paper and requested that Brown try to keep a count of books. Grace will distribute a Google sheet where people can volunteer to host a box, and the pickup date is May 19. Daisy will include this in Brown Engage.

The Campus Cleanup is coming up, and May 27, 28 and 29 are the dates where most help is needed. There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers.

SAC used to print up t-shirts for its SAC members to wear at events while volunteering. The chairs will consider having t-shirts this year.

Only 5% of eligible blood donors in Rhode Island donate, and the Blood Center is eager to host a blood drive at Brown. They have a regular schedule on other months but are hoping to host additional drives in the summer. Daisy will look into the logistics of hosting, such as
whether a permit would be needed. South Street Landing was a suggested location to explore.

There is a Special Olympics in June and they want to work with us.

The committee is reaching out to hotels for materials to create Kindness Kits during Staff Development Day.

The zoo has two upcoming evening events: Zoo Brew and Zoobilee (fundraiser with food vendors and live music) in June or July. They are seeking volunteers for setup and breakdown.

c. Outreach & Communications

O&C is still working on access to social media. SAC members are encouraged to submit a form for anything they need posted, shared, etc. Felicia is working on the handbook and Amy is the lead on the newsletter. The newsletter will be sent to Marguerite for review before it is published.

d. Events

March 27 is Staff Bingo! SAC members are needed for setup and breakdown. It’s sponsored by the Stephen Robert ’62 Campus Center, who is doing the flyer, prizes and food but needs SAC help for setup. O&C can advertise it on Today@Brown that day.

Maria is in communication with the person in charge of booking volleyball fields at Pembroke for a May or June staff volleyball event.

VI. Faculty in Focus 4/3 Update

Faculty in Focus is a lecture series co-sponsored by the Office of the Provost and SAC, and the next event will be held on April 3 from 12-1:30 p.m. Beth Travers met with Marissa Quinn about the event. Associate Professor of Epidemiology Brandon Marshall will be this year’s speaker, and the event will be held at the Faculty Club. Beth will provide an Eventbrite, and there are 100 spots available for staff to register.

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for March 26 at noon at the Stephen Robert ’62 Campus Center, Petteruti Lounge.