MINUTES

Attendance: Liisa Laine, co-chair; Grace Young, co-chair; Sarah Aneyci; Sarah Brown; Geeta Chougule; Dawn Cummings; Kristine (Newson) Dodd; Tara Greenwood; Joel Hernandez; Marguerite Joutz; Annemarie Kennedy; Michael Leitao; Derek Lisi; Abigail Peterson; Jessica Pontarelli; Jennifer Quiroz; Felicia Raton; Ray Windsor; Yi Vizard

Absent: Laura Dobler; Daisy Ferreira; Catherine Hanni; Laura Pleasants, Barbara Simoneau; Maria Sokolova, Beth Travers

1. Acceptance of meeting minutes: May 21, 2019

There were no objections to the minutes and they were accepted by all present members.

2. SAC Volunteer/Activity Updates

- SAC collected 2,000 children’s books for United Way during its campaign that ended in May.
- The PawSox fundraiser event on June 8 raised $460 for BrownGives, and we are planning to repeat the event on Sunday, August 18.
- On Staff Development Day, we collected over $400 for BrownGives from the sale of raffle tickets.
- About 45 people attended the Staff Potluck on Monday, and people seemed to enjoy the discussions about different cultures. We hope to repeat this event on Monday, November 4, held again at South Street Landing.

3. Debrief about Staff Development Day

- Some staff were disappointed that the coffee truck ran out before the end of SDD. The coffee truck should provide for at least 300 employees next year.
- The Wall of Fame seemed to have more work than output; submissions were lower than expected. Mike suggested a submission process where the nominee’s name could be written on an identical visual item, like a balloon or star.
- Raffle tickets could be sold at breakfast; people were looking for them throughout the day. We should have the raffle table ready by breakfast time next year so people could see the prizes and enter their tickets.
- People arrived at 7:30 for breakfast but food wasn’t put out until 8:00. SAC
members were encouraged to add that feedback to the SDD survey emailed out by Human Resources so that Dining Services can be aware.

- The SAC Meet & Mingle on SDD had very low attendance; people don’t tend to stay after workshops and activities have ended. We should consider eliminating or changing this, perhaps turning the drink cart into a food truck event later in the afternoon on Staff Development Day as a social event. Joel suggested including the Meet & Mingle as a registered session for people to meet, perhaps have coffee/pastries, with other staff members during SDD.
- The Town Hall discussion with Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity Shontay Delalue was appreciated but too short. Kristine had asked Shontay about the first staff survey that was scrapped and adapted; Kristine worried that that might be a continuing trend and asked about transparency in survey changes and how they would be communicated to staff. Shontay had responded that the University is trying very hard not to do that again.
- The SAC panel received good feedback. Lisa, Laura, Felicia, Kristine, Mike, Barbara, and Laura all participated. Felicia didn’t need to ask the prepared questions because staff were so engaged and had great questions of their own.

4. Friends and Family Event Updates

The event, sponsored by the President’s Office, will be held on August 6 from 4-6:30 p.m. on the Main Green (rain location: Sayles Hall, perhaps a movie - it was noted that balloons are not allowed in Sayles). Activities will include a Kona ice truck, face painting, scavenger hunt, story time, and birdhouse painting, plus “touch a truck” with police and fire truck. There will be acoustic music, children’s activities, and the Parking Office offered to let participants park for free beginning at 4 p.m. at the Power Street Garage.

Grace will circulate a sign-up sheet for SAC volunteers to help run the event, and suggestions for any other creative ideas were welcomed.

The name could also change from “Friends and Family” to something referencing summer.

Tara had several ideas for lawn games that participants could play and will work with the chairs.

5. New Co-Chairs

Liisa and Grace are collecting nominations for next year’s chair and then will contact the nominees in the next few weeks. Keep an eye out for the Google form. SAC will vote for the top two candidates after hearing why the candidates are interested and what they hope to accomplish.

To ensure a smooth transition both as a SAC co-chair or committee co-chair, candidates should partner with everyone working on the various SAC events to learn the ropes.

6. Staff Concerns/Updates

**HR accessibility issue:** SAC received a letter from a staff member who was made to state a legal sex and name out loud in a Brown office despite having typed a preferred
name into the system. Can the HR process be more accessible to non-binary and non-confirming staff members? Liisa and Grace with Jess’ help discussed with HR; can someone else on SAC follow up?

Kelly described the onboarding process: Brown ask hires to email sensitive information like their gender, date of birth, etc. to the Brown Business Center ahead of time, so that information was in Workday originally. But the employee deleted the gender from Workday, which locked them of the account. The front desk person had to call IT and say the details verbally with the employee standing there, in an open space that others could have walked into and overheard. HR is aware and working to address this issue. It was wondered whether Workday could add another option or make gender not required for access. Brown has a federal responsibility to report gender, so that option cannot be removed, but other options are being developed for the gender field - which takes time and effort. Kristine noted that her department asks students to confirm the gender they identify as, and she suggested having Brown ask employees to sign a paper confirming a person’s gender without anything being spoken aloud; perhaps this could be suggested to HR. Mike volunteered to work with Jess on the issue.

Fellowship: There was an inquiry about a technical fellowship that’s akin to the administrator fellows program to explore a technical career path like the CDO, CIO, Director of Security, Systems Manager, etc. within Brown. Liisa reached out to John Spidaro, who will get back to SAC, and asked if a SAC member could pick up the conversation. It was suggested that Barbara, as a tech person, would be interested in following up.

7. Rhonda Hospedales, Senior Director of Employee and Labor Relations

Rhonda’s predecessor at Brown focused mainly on labor relations, but her job has evolved to encompass employee relations as a key focus. Rhonda was a chief HR officer at Arcadia University in Pennsylvania (formerly Beaver College) for 1,000 staff, faculty and adjuncts, and prior to that was at Princeton University for 7 years, growing from a labor relations specialist to an HR manager responsible for 1,000-1,500 employees as the head of a client services team. For a couple of years, Rhonda worked for the executive vice president at Princeton reviewing some processes and plans and recommending improvements. She grew up in the Virgin Islands and became an attorney, serving as an employment lawyer in various industries for 15 years largely representing management or corporations on things like discrimination. She transitioned into the labor field after noting ways employee concerns and grievances could have been addressed much earlier in the process; she preferred being proactive to reactive.

Since coming to Brown, Rhonda has gained a sense of many of the issues needing to be addressed, including a perception that HR hasn’t been responsive to employee concerns in the past. There is confusion about what could/should be brought to HR and about performance improvement plans (PIPs) being used for discipline. Rhonda has utilized PIPs as a management tool to help employees succeed and hopes they can be used only in that way at Brown. She would like HR be a place where Brown employees feel comfortable turning. Her desired end result is a better Brown experience for staff, and she wants respect to be a foundation for all interactions. She is here for everyone, union and non-union alike.
Questions:

When a big organization like Brown undergoes change, how do they get people to trust that a change is taking place?
Traditionally, higher education institutions are 20-30 years behind the times. Keeping up with best practices involves changing technology, regulations, and other things that must be responded to. One should ask, Just because we can, does that mean we should? Rhonda suggested being transparent as much as possible, seeking input from those doing the work rather than outside consultants, and letting people know WHY a decision has been made. Transparency is a mindset change in itself.

Do the managers at Brown go through training to ensure they’re being effective for their teams?
From what Rhonda understands, there’s no mandatory certification, but there are programs available through Director of Talent Development Judy Nabb plus plans to develop more robust programming.

Surveys show employees have issues. Does Brown have a specific way they’d like their managers perceived and how would that be achieved?
That hasn’t been explained to Rhonda. She is aware that management and job audits are two big issues on SAC, with little direction on how managers get reviewed and where employees can go if they cannot resolve in their department - especially when they are told they can’t go to HR. Rhonda wants to work to establish connections with the Brown community and help resolve these issues and questions. HR should be an advocate both for employees and managers.

SAC thanked Rhonda for sharing her story and goals with the Council and answering questions.

SAC will meet next on Tuesday, July 9th at 12 p.m. in the Stephen Robert ‘62 Campus Center, Kasper Multipurpose Room.