



Staff Council Update

I would like to acknowledge the newest members of the UGA Staff Council Executive Board, Dr. Beth Woods, Vice-President, Talia Locarnini, Recording Secretary, Ashley Weed, Treasurer, Matt Mundy, Parliamentarian, and Sara Ervin, Dr. Nontalie Morrow and Stuart Ivy, as our At-Large members. Jennifer Leyting is continuing as our Coordinator.

I would also like to thank our newest University Council committee members, Jessica Roberts, Human Resources Committee and Stacey Piotrowski, Libraries Committee.

The UGA Staff Council amended their bylaws this summer to make the Dismantling Systemic Racism Ad Hoc Committee a standing committee.

Like many of our faculty colleagues, staff are also feeling tremendous pressures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic based on factors both internal to and external from the University of Georgia. The Staff Council continues to strongly encourage staff to participate in the administration's health and safety efforts including free vaccinations through University Health Center, free surveillance testing in partnership with the Athens Diagnostic Lab, the encouragement of mask wearing and physical distancing while indoors, and cleaning/handwashing practices. We also continue to promote two-way communication with the University Council's COVID-19 Response Committee. This leads me to our two resolutions from this summer.

Staff Council Resolutions

This summer, the Staff Council passed resolutions 28-01 and 28-02. Resolution 28-01 is for the continued support, regular utilization, and communication of the USG telecommuting/telework policy to all UGA supervisors to promote uniform understanding and accessibility. This is especially important as we continue working through the pandemic.

The purpose of resolution 28-02 is to request a study on the overall productivity in business operations while utilizing teleworking and flextime schedules during the COVID-19 pandemic. This resolution was put forward by staff, many of whom saw benefits to their own departments and to the University of Georgia that teleworking provided during the pandemic.

Some of the potential benefits are decreasing employee turnover while saving institutional knowledge; attract and retain a diverse and competitive workforce through flexible scheduling; allow students access to certain offices outside of normal business hours; potentially decrease energy, phone, and water bills with fewer people on campus; decrease campus congestion and costs for maintaining overcrowded parking and buses; decrease amount of waste produced by the campus, which would also result in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly campus; and save on transportation/labor costs by allowing for remote meetings.

This resolution seeks to formalize these anecdotal benefits through a formal, potential third-party, assessment to report on the advantages and disadvantages of teleworking and flexible work arrangements for the institution and to aid data-driven decision-making at the University of Georgia as it pertains to the recruitment and retention of our capable staff workforce.