



November 19, 2014

TO: President Jere Morehead and the University Council

FROM: Michael Lewis, Chair, Staff Council

Across this university, these are times of rapid change, at least from the perspective of academia, with many new deans, vice presidents, and the president. Driven by the need to adapt to new funding stream realities and expectations of our students of ever-improving quality, we are all striving to improve our teaching, research, and service. To make this great university even better, every good idea and point of view must be voiced and considered.

The Staff Council of the University of Georgia is chartered by Article XVII of the University Statutes to “participate in the process of University governance by advising the President and by recommending to and consulting with the University Council in the establishment of rules and regulations deemed necessary or proper for the promotion of the general welfare of the University.”

Toward these ends, we have members apportioned from the classified staff of the university’s VP- and dean-level units, elected by those units’ Staff Representative Groups. Of the 30 such units, only 12 units have an SRG. Twelve more have an appointed representative on Staff Council, yet six units have neither.

As I interact with other staff around the university, I notice an elevated level of engagement, enhanced inclusiveness, a stronger sense of belonging, and a higher level of both productivity and accomplishment in those units that have an active staff participation in university governance. I do not think this is coincidental.

When a small group such as ours spends an hour with the president, provost, or a vice president engaged in frank conversation about issues, goals, and mechanisms of seizing opportunities, the group takes away a connection that lasts, an improved understanding of purpose, and quite seriously, become better employees. I have personally witnessed these results repeatedly, in academia and business.

The Staff Council motto is “Making a great place to work even better!” I urge every dean, every vice president, every administrator in this room to engage your Staff Representative Group, make sure you know what they are addressing, that they have your support, and the support of supervisors for their service. If you are not enjoying the benefits of an SRG with representation on Staff Council, I very strongly urge you to make it happen. This is an opportunity you can ill afford to miss. The members of the Staff Council Executive Committee are ready and willing to help you make your place to work even better.