

Staff Advisory Council Public Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2026

Call to Order

River Ashleigh Olsen called the meeting to order and explained that this would be a non-traditional SAC public meeting focused on the future direction of Staff Advisory Council. The meeting's purpose was to introduce newly elected officers, review structural changes, discuss opportunities for involvement, and gather feedback from staff regarding SAC programs and priorities for the coming year.

Welcome and Recognition

River recognized the upcoming True Blue Friday holiday and highlighted that the program was originally the result of a SAC initiative led by previous council members.

Special recognition was given to outgoing SAC members whose terms are concluding:

- Cassandra Cisneros
- Cate Pinckney
- Danielle Contreras
- Ken Olsen
- Michelle Cook
- Sarah Negovan
- Teresa Rogers

Members were thanked for their years of service, leadership, and contributions to Staff Advisory Council.

SAC Mission and Purpose

River reviewed SAC's mission and role within the university. SAC serves as:

- A voice for staff throughout the university.
- A communication bridge between staff and university leadership.
- An advocacy body for employee concerns and priorities.
- A forum for policy feedback and discussion.
- A resource for employee engagement and community-building opportunities.

The council continues to focus on ensuring that staff perspectives are represented in university discussions and decision-making processes.

Organizational Changes and Governance Updates

Executive Structure Revision

As part of a comprehensive restructuring effort, SAC has streamlined its executive leadership structure.

The executive team will now consist of four elected officers:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Several former leadership positions have been consolidated, with some responsibilities reassigned to committee structures.

Presidential Succession Change

SAC has eliminated the automatic Vice President-to-President succession model.

Under the new structure:

- Future Presidents must have completed at least one leadership term within SAC.
- Eligible candidates include current or former officers and committee chairs.
- Presidential candidates will be elected rather than automatically succeeding from the Vice President role.

Introduction of the 2026–2027 Executive Team

President: Stephanie LHommedieu

Stephanie expressed excitement about implementing the council's new structure and emphasized goals of effectiveness, efficiency, and engagement for the coming year.

Vice President: Colin Stark

Colin shared his enthusiasm for serving and supporting the continued growth of SAC while building on the work completed during the past year.

Secretary: Brian Dales

Brian introduced himself and expressed his commitment to improving communication, outreach, and engagement throughout the university.

Treasurer: Jeff McGarry

Although unable to attend the meeting, Jeff was recognized as the incoming Treasurer and future chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

River congratulated the incoming executive team and thanked members for their support throughout the year.

Committee Restructuring

Stephanne presented SAC's redesigned committee structure, which was developed to better align council activities with strategic priorities and staff needs.

A key feature of the new structure is that all staff may participate in committee work, regardless of whether they are official SAC voting members.

Service and Volunteer Engagement Committee

This committee remains largely unchanged and will continue coordinating:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Community service projects
- Clothing and food drives
- Adopt-a-Family programs
- Community partnerships

Summer volunteer activities will continue under the leadership of the committee.

Events and Community Committee

The former Mixer Committee and Community Building Committee have been combined into a single committee.

Responsibilities include:

- Planning the annual Mixer
- Employee recognition initiatives
- Community-building events
- SAC Showcase activities
- Outreach and engagement programs
- Statewide engagement opportunities

An appointed committee chair will serve as part of the Executive Council.

Staff Advocacy Committee

A new Staff Advocacy Committee has been created.

This committee combines elements previously handled through:

- Classified Staff representation
- Service Professional representation
- Staff surveying efforts

Responsibilities include:

- Receiving staff feedback and concerns
- Identifying institutional challenges affecting employees
- Exploring policy and procedural improvements
- Conducting surveys
- Supporting staff advocacy efforts

Stephanne noted that this committee represents one of SAC's greatest opportunities to create meaningful institutional impact in the coming year.

Ways and Means Committee

The Ways and Means Committee will oversee SAC financial programs, including:

- Employee Lumberjack Fund (ELF)
- Employee Book Scholarship Program
- Fundraising efforts
- Mixer sponsorships and donations
- Financial support initiatives

This change centralizes multiple financial functions that were previously managed by individual officers or ad hoc groups.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee, chaired by the Secretary, will oversee:

- SAC communications
- Newsletter production
- Website updates
- Communication strategy
- Future communication initiatives

Special recognition was given to Danielle Contreras for her extensive work producing the SAC newsletter during her term.

Voting Member Recruitment

Stephanne encouraged staff to apply for SAC voting membership.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must:

- Have completed at least one year of employment at NAU.

- Be in good standing with the university.
- Discuss participation with their supervisor.

The supervisor approval process has been simplified. Instead of requiring a formal recommendation letter, SAC will verify supervisor support directly if an applicant is selected.

Membership Term

Voting members serve three-year terms.

Stephanne encouraged interested employees to become involved and emphasized that SAC is seeking new members to replace those whose terms are ending.

Teams Community and Staff Engagement

Employees were encouraged to join the SAC Teams community to receive:

- Event announcements
- Volunteer opportunities
- Pulse checks and surveys
- SAC updates
- Engagement opportunities

Participation is open to all staff, regardless of SAC membership status.

Meeting Schedule

SAC intends to maintain its current public meeting cadence.

Meetings will continue on the third Thursday of each month.

No public meetings will be held during June or July, with regular meetings resuming in August.

Questions and Discussion

Voting Membership and Committee Participation

Questions were asked regarding the relationship between committee participation and voting membership.

River explained that:

- Voting members are required to serve on at least one committee.
- Non-voting staff may also participate in committees.
- Voting membership generally requires approximately three to four hours per month, including committee work and meetings.

Stephanne added that committee participation provides a flexible way for employees to become involved without committing to full voting membership.

Both presenters encouraged employees who are unsure about membership to first participate in a committee and explore opportunities gradually.

Feedback and Suggestions for Future Programming

Positive Feedback

Annual Mixer

Michelle Cook noted that the Mixer was well attended and successful and encouraged its continuation.

Additional suggestions included:

- Bringing back photo booth elements.
- Reintroducing Polaroid-style photo opportunities.
- Maintaining morning scheduling to improve accessibility for Facilities staff.

SAC Showcase

Attendees expressed strong support for continuing the SAC Showcase program.

Network NAU

Brian Dales reported increased participation in Network NAU and networking activities conducted with Employee Assistance and Wellness.

Feedback indicated strong interest in continuing those programs next year.

Statewide Staff Engagement

Brian suggested exploring fundraising opportunities that could assist statewide employees with attending Flagstaff-based events such as the annual Mixer.

Stephanne emphasized that increasing statewide employee engagement remains a priority for the coming year and encouraged staff to share ideas for making participation easier and more meaningful.

Additional Announcements

High Country Public Service Academy

River shared information regarding the upcoming High Country Public Service Academy, a professional development event focused on public-sector employees featuring workshops, networking opportunities, and educational sessions.

Auditoria Events

Stephanne shared upcoming Auditoria programming updates, including:

Jerry Seinfeld

- Performance scheduled for June 5.
- Ticket prices have recently been reduced.

Rock Orchestra by Candlelight

- Scheduled for October.
- Features a rock orchestra performance with theatrical effects and visual production elements.

Closing Remarks

River thanked attendees for their participation and support throughout the year and encouraged continued involvement through SAC committees, voting membership, and public meetings.

Stephanne offered special thanks to River, outgoing voting members, and retiring SAC members for their dedication and service.

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the accomplishments of the past year and excitement for the opportunities ahead.

Meeting Adjourned.