You've heard of the University Career Architecture Project by now. It’s a large initiative involving almost every college, division and department on campus. It will align the multitude of classified and appointed professional positions at the UA with the external market and with a clear job structure.

You will have opportunities in the coming months to learn more and connect with your direct leadership. If you want an overview of the project, the UCAP FAQ page [1] is a great place to start.

One goal of UCAP is to create a shared language at the UA by implementing the University Staff employment category. Two advisers on the UCAP project, Greg Hodgins and Kate Riley, have five facts they want you to know about becoming University Staff.

1. Your day-to-day working life won't change

The initial commitments of UCAP are still true. Your pay won't be reduced. Your vacation balance won't be reduced (for newer classified staff, vacation accrual will actually go up). Your retirement elections will remain as they are. And you can retain your current title as a working title.

"For a lot of the University, it's not going to make any difference in their daily life," says Hodgins, director of the Accelerator Mass Spectrometry Laboratory. "But it's going to serve people in career advancement. And it will serve them well."

2. You will have access to rational career ladders and pay ranges

Right now, advancing in a UA career can be like stumbling through a dark house full of furniture. Being University Staff will be like turning on the lights, arranging the furniture, and following green arrows on the floor.

"One of the elements of a healthy workplace is that it's fair and rational," says Hodgins. "By having a rational and transparent architecture, and giving people access to that information, it should drive things toward opportunity."

For University Staff employees, job descriptions, expected skill sets and salary ranges will be put into a logical, publicly available system. This will give you information and tools to make an informed case for salary and career advancement.
More importantly, employees and supervisors can start to evaluate careers and culture in the context of the whole University rather than just within a department or college. "I hope that my group sees itself as having a place within the larger University rather than just a part of my unit," says Hodgins.

Riley, director of finance and operations at the BIO5 Institute and member of the UCAP project team, agrees. "As a supervisor, if I'm looking at promotions or setting salary, I want to be able to ask, 'Who are your peers?' I have no way in the current system to know that for many employees."

3. UCAP implementation does not include pay adjustments either up or down

The new career architecture will define a pay range for each University Staff position. Most existing positions are mapped to positions that fall within these new pay ranges. However, some may fall outside them.

If you find that your mapped position is above or below the defined pay range, remember that the mapping result does not come with a salary adjustment. For positions that are below the minimum, the compensation team is currently in discussions with project governance and University leaders about possible options in the months following implementation on Jan. 27, 2020.

"By building this system, we are arguing that we want the market to drive salary," says Hodgins. "If someone is truly underpaid, then this system will reveal that and increase the pressure in the long run to bring salaries in line. This is building a solid foundation. We don't have that foundation right now."

Becoming University Staff gives you access to a transparent and informational structure for career discussions. Use the information as a launch pad to open conversations with your supervisor about your compensation or future career.

4. You will receive your position mapping results on Oct. 29

If you are an in-scope appointed professional, the results will be informational and can serve as an invitation to talk with your supervisor prior to implementation.

If you are Classified Staff, however, you will need to actively elect to become University Staff. You will have until Dec. 6 to opt in.*

For most Classified Staff, becoming University Staff may be a good option. If you do not opt in, you only will be able to maintain your current classification. Any future career progression would convert you to University Staff. By opting in to University Staff, you gain access to the new pathways for career and pay advancement.

In addition, if you are a Classified Staff member with fewer than five years of service, becoming University Staff allows you to begin accruing vacation time at a higher rate than you do now (22 days per year for full-time employees).

"If an employee intends to stay for more than a year, I think they will benefit by opting in," says Riley.
More information will be provided in the coming months to help you make an informed choice.

5. It's happening soon

Jan. 27 is less than half a year from now. After months of things happening behind the scenes, you will start to see a lot of movement in the coming months:

- Sept. 1-30: Educational webinars for supervisors
- Oct. 29: All in-scope employees notified of position mapping and salary ranges
- Oct. 29-Nov. 15: Additional review of position mapping, if necessary, by employee request
- Dec. 6: Deadline for classified staff to opt in
- Jan. 27, 2020: Go Live

Visit ucap.arizona.edu/implementation-timeline [2] for a full timeline.

The UA is serious about getting this right

"This was a lot more work than anyone looking at it from the outside will understand," says Riley. "There is a deep commitment to make something that will work better for employees. There will be bumps, but the project team has worked extremely hard to get this right."

Hodgins agrees. "It's like trying to change the direction of a super tanker," he says. "Thousands of thoughtful people are affected by it. I've been impressed with how it's been approached and who has been involved. UCAP has been an iterative process of thought, modeling, consultation and modification. I sincerely believe this new system will be better in the long run and make the University a better place to work."

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/5-facts-about-university-staff-employment-category

Links
[1] https://ucap.arizona.edu/resources/faqs