Goals for New APAC Chair: Being a Voice Amid UCAP, Championing Employees' Contributions

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Among the priorities for the new chair of the Appointed Professionals Advisory Council are representing appointed personnel and professionals amid the University Career Architecture Project and shining a light on the often behind-the-scenes work they do.

Jennifer Lawrence, who is manager of business and finance in the Department of Neuroscience, was elected chair at the council's May 22 meeting and assumed the role on July 1. She succeeds Sara Knepper, director of academic advising in the College of Education, who served as chair for two years.

Lawrence began working at the UA, as an administrative assistant, in 1987 while pursuing a bachelor's degree in history. She assumed her current position in 2013, the same year she completed a Master of Business Administration from the Eller College of Management.

Lawrence, who has been with APAC for five years, became secretary in 2015 and was vice chair for the last academic year.

"Working with APAC gives me the opportunity to contribute but also to benefit from all of the interactions I have with other people from parts of campus that I might not normally work with," she said.

Now, as she takes the helm, she sees representing the interests of appointed professionals in the University Career Architecture Project as a priority.

"Ultimately, it will be a good change," she said of UCAP, an initiative that will develop an easy-to-understand career framework that supports career progression and makes it possible to match UA jobs with jobs in the external market for compensation analysis. "APAC is working to ensure that the employees have a voice in the process and in what the final outcome will be."

Another priority for her will be to promote the work that the University's appointed professionals do every day? some of which goes unseen by many on campus, she said.

"Whether you're working directly with students or whether you're working in a support structure? like Sponsored Projects, Financial Services? or in a research lab, there is a lot of talent and enthusiasm from appointed professionals," Lawrence said. "I think that the biggest role of APAC is to make sure that we make it known, and that we represent the constituency well."
Knepper will remain on the council as a mentor in accordance with APAC's bylaws. She noted Lawrence's reliability and propensity to ask thoughtful questions in meetings.

"From her job, she brings that financial lens as well, so she'll be really good in critically thinking about how UCAP and the strategic plan get enacted," Knepper said. "She's not afraid to speak out, so I know that she'll be a great representative for shared governance and what that may look like moving forward."

In addition to representing appointed professionals on key University issues, Lawrence said other goals include increasing APAC's support of charitable initiatives. Those include the Campus Pantry [4] and the Employee Emergency Fund [5]. Lawrence said she envisions fundraising events for both services, and the fundraisers could serve as social events for appointed professionals.

"UCAP will probably feature heavily in what we do, but I don't want us to get overwhelmed and lose sight of other things that might be important," she said.

The other newly elected APAC officers are:

- Vice chair: Natalie O'Farrell, associate director of programs, Campus Recreation
- Treasurer: Sylvia Quintero, manager of business and finance, Department of Geosciences
- Secretary: Melanie Madden, senior academic adviser, CLAS Academic Advising Center

APAC meets on the last Tuesday of each month in the Student Union Memorial Center. Its next meeting is scheduled for Aug. 28 at 3 p.m. (location in Student Union to be determined). For more information, visit the APAC website [1].

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Links:
[1] https://apac.arizona.edu/
[4] https://campuspantry.arizona.edu/