

U.S. PROGRAMS STAFF ADVISORY GROUP

DESCRIPTION AND GUIDELINES

Throughout the past few years, USP has worked hard to build a culture that supports collaboration, collective problem-solving, learning and on-going quality improvement as a way to be more effective and advance our vision and programs. In line with this commitment we created, in March 2010, a Staff Advisory Group (SAG), to provide ongoing input and advice on a broad range of issues that may have an impact on the effectiveness and well-being of USP.

The Purposes of the Staff Advisory Group are to:

- “Build community” in U.S. Programs, acting as a mechanism for bringing staff together, nurture relationships and strengthen connections.
- Build a culture that supports collaboration, communication, collective problem-solving and peer learning.
- Offer a forum for U.S. Programs staff to safely raise and address issues, and share their opinions.

In order to achieve these purposes, SAG will:

- **Provide input and advice** on a broad range of issues that may have an impact on the effectiveness and well-being of USP.
- **Design and implement** concrete activities or projects.

While playing these roles, and in order to bring additional perspectives into the discussions, SAG members will proactively seek input from colleagues not participating in the group.

Who can be part of the Staff Advisory Group?

We hope that every USP employee will, at some point, accept to participate in the group. To ensure wide participation from all parts of USP, members rotate every six months and on a staggered basis. Each of the group’s cohorts is composed of ten staff members. The group’s membership is reflective of the wide range of skills and experiences within USP. Members bring their multiple perspectives to the table, including their perspectives from working within different funds and campaigns, in a range of staff positions, with multiple skill sets, and with different lengths of service at OSI.

How does SAG identify new members?

New members are suggested by members who are rotating off of the group, and are agreed to by consensus. In identifying new members, SAG strives for balance amongst the following criteria: experience, position, skills, diversity, gender, and length of service

at OSI. We are also mindful that staff from funds, campaigns or units that have not yet participated are given an opportunity to join.

Meetings and Communication

Members devote up to two hours per month to SAG. SAG meets once a month, for one hour. The remaining hour may be used for consultation in-between meetings. An online community has been set up in Karl to enable communication and work in-between meetings. Grantmaking Operations acts as convener and facilitator of the Group.

Working agreements

Participation:

To the best of their ability, members will attend all regularly scheduled meetings fully prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda.

If a group member is chronically absent, the group will discuss whether to replace the individual. No replacement will be made unless there is group consensus to do so. If the group decides to replace the group member, the group will decide how to do so.

Our time together is limited and valuable. Use of Blackberries during meetings is strongly discouraged unless it's absolutely necessary.

Decision making:

The group will make recommendations based on consensus.

If we disagree with the solution proposed by the rest of the group, we have a responsibility to try and find an alternative.

Group members are equal at the table, regardless of the position or title they hold.

Communication:

Issues discussed by the group are confidential unless there is explicit agreement to make them public.

The group will agree when and how to share information about the issues it is discussing or working on.