

Newsletter

Spring 2022



LETTER FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

The vision of Staff Senate is to provide all staff with a voice, a forum, and avenues for growth.

Since our fall newsletter, I have continued to bring your concerns to university leadership. Progress made in those areas of concern are outlined on the next page, which I hope you will review. Our senators and staff colleagues work to address many of these challenges through our committee work and advocacy across campus, as highlighted in their updates within this newsletter.

As we enter a new election cycle, we ask that you engage with the campus community, get involved with our committees,

and provide your concerns to us via email at staffsenate@ku.edu so that our new leaders can continue to advocate on your behalf.

As I've stated previously and will continue to emphasize, our university would not function without the hard work and dedication you put forth every day, and as such we will continue to bring forth your good deeds and shared challenges to university leadership. ■

Tim Spencer, President
tims Spencer@ku.edu

IN THIS ISSUE

2 Letter from the Incoming President

6 UPS/USS Joint Council Update

7 2022-23 Senators

Committee Updates

2 Professional Development

3 Diversity & Inclusion

4 Legislative Affairs
Personnel Affairs

5 Ad Hoc

7 Elections

AREAS OF CONCERN

Health and life

KU leadership is continuing to assess how the inclement weather policy balances the needs of staff and customers, as well as messaging to staff during inclement weather days.

Recruitment and retention

Both an external market study and internal wage study will address competitive pay with public and private sectors and salary compression issues.

Benefits

KU leaders continue to assess how hybrid arrangements are offered, and how future budgets can financially accommodate dependent tuition coverage.

Accountability

To address capacity, KU leadership is conducting an internal assessment that includes mandatory supervisor training, university governance's involvement in the search process for high-level university leadership positions, and overhauling university communication strategies for greater collaboration.

LETTER FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

We all continue to face incredible challenges due to budgetary constraints and societal upheaval, which has only been amplified by two years of pandemic. And while we anticipate these challenges to continue, as your elected representatives, Staff Senate will continue to serve on behalf of all university support staff and unclassified support staff on the Lawrence and Edwards campuses.

Our committees, consisting of both senators and staff colleagues, will continue their work supporting professional development, serving on university work groups, meeting with leadership, and drafting policies that are meant to support and protect staff.

This year, KU is joining our fellow Kansas Board of Regents institutions in partnership with the Fort Hays State University's Docking Institute to conduct an employee satisfaction and climate survey. The survey went out to staff on April 6, 2022. I strongly encourage every staff member to participate and provide honest feedback about your experiences, both good and bad. The anonymous results of this survey will serve to shape Staff Senate and KU leadership's goals over the next several years.

Please continue to communicate your concerns, challenges, and successes directly to your senator or by emailing staffsenate@ku.edu. KU would be nothing if not

for the incredible hard work and dedication of our staff, and I am honored to continue the work of Staff Senate presidents before me in advocating and advancing their interests.

Jessica Chilcoat, President
jchilcoat@ku.edu

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

The past academic year was a new kind of normal. Staff are now in a variety of working options: full-time remote, on-campus, and hybrid. Staff development is an integral part of making KU run smoothly.

This year, the Professional Development Committee was able to award \$4,725 to staff to help them further their skills and present at conferences. The committee plans to help partner with KU to make the Staff Leadership Summit in the fall a great success, and to allow more staff to attend and participate.

If you are interested in applying for funds, please contact either committee head or visit staffsenate.ku.edu/professional-development. ■

Kim Spencer, Chair
kimspencer@ku.edu
Kelly Banks, Chair-Elect
klbanks@ku.edu

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (D&I) COMMITTEE UPDATE

The D&I committee is charged with creating a more inclusive environment for staff at the University of Kansas. Working through a set of ACTION Teams, the committee continues to make progress toward that charge.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the committee continued to focus on the following areas:

1. Organize diversity, equity and inclusion training opportunities for committee members and staff senators;
2. Collaborate with standing Staff Senate committees and counterparts in Student, Faculty, and University Senate
3. Represent Staff Senate in campus and regional committees and workshops around diversity, inclusion, and equity;
4. Actively work to recruit a diverse and inclusive senate body through outreach and cooperation with relevant campus offices, departments, and organizations;
5. Support and promote campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Members of the Education ACTION Team hosted the “Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace” (UWitW) workshop series focused on the impacts of privilege and white-dominant culture on the work environment during the fall 2021 and spring

2022 semesters. By the end of this academic year, it is estimated that close to 400 individuals will have participated in one or more workshops, with participants representing over 60 campus departments.

As a supplemental education piece to the workshop series, the Communication ACTION Team distributes the Lens newsletter at least twice during the academic year to those who have attended the UWitW workshop series.

The committee offers a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) perspective and is actively engaged in the review of work being done by other Staff Senate com-

mittees and the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB). This will include the Engagement ACTION Team providing feedback to the Office of DEIB on the development of the new Staff Hiring Handbook.

For more information about the D&I committee, please visit staffsenate.ku.edu/diversity. If you are interested in getting involved on the committee, contact the chair or chair-elect. ■

Michelle Wilson, Chair

michellewilson@ku.edu

Marissa Marshall, Chair-Elect

marissa.marshall@ku.edu



LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

I cannot believe we will soon wrap up the academic year. It was another year of remote meetings, masks, boosters, and amazing teamwork in Staff Senate, the Legislative Affairs Committee, and across the university at all levels.

Ours is one of six Staff Senate committees that work to support the staff on both the Lawrence and Edwards campuses. We're specifically tasked with monitoring activities at the university, in the state government, and at KBOR that affect the staff experi-

ence at KU.

This year we worked primarily through action teams in three areas: civic engagement/voter registration, University Senate code evaluation, and general awareness around Staff Senate, and its accomplishments

Many of the tasks we work on each year are ongoing and carry into the next. This committee will need new leadership for the coming year, and we are looking for a strong chair and chair-elect to lead this committee. We have

many active members who return to help make our conversations productive and actions effective.

We wish you all a successful end to the year and a wonderful summer ahead. Keep in mind that whether you are remote, on campus, or working a hybrid schedule, Staff Senate is here for you. ■

Michelle Ginavan Hayes, Chair
mginavan@ku.edu

Monica Bradshaw, Chair-Elect
msbradshaw@ku.edu

PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Personnel Affairs Committee provides avenue for the regular exchange of ideas on employee benefits, university policies and procedures, and other matters that relate to university staff. Early in the spring semester, as part of the visioning process for Staff Senate, chairs reviewed how their committee's charges align with the mission and vision of the university and of Staff Senate. Our committee's standing and specific charges broadly align with many of the mission points, and is situated to continue advocating for initiatives that will better Staff Senate and the university as a whole.

Throughout the spring, committee action teams moved many initiatives forward, including the visibility and promotion of SEHP

benefits and non-compensatory benefits available to staff. The committee was recently asked to complete an employee benefits survey distributed by the HRM Collaborative. Our committee looks forward to learning how those results can inform our work related to employee benefits.

The committee has been vocal about finding an avenue to express staff appreciation and gratitude. Improved communication channels will hopefully allow for the regular intake and promotion of staff appreciation to be shared with colleagues universitywide.

Later this spring and early summer, the committee will continue collaborating with Erin Duran, Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion &

Belonging, and the Staff Senate Diversity & Inclusion Committee on the creation of a Staff Hiring Handbook, a counterpart to the Faculty Excellence in Diversity and Hiring Handbook. Erin has attended two committee meetings and shared project goals and a timeline, as well as the importance of a staff hiring handbook, and allowed committee members to share thoughts, ideas, and ask clarifying questions.

Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, recommendations, or want to get involved in the committee. ■

Leslie Wilson, Chair
lesliewilson@ku.edu

Todd Carpenter, Chair-Elect
tcarpent@ku.edu

AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES

Engagement Ad Hoc

Committee: Jessica Chllicoat

This committee was tasked with developing methods and means to increase engagement both within Staff Senate itself and with the campus community. Over the summer, work will continue, with the development of a Staff Senate handbook meant to provide important information and guidance to our members.

The work of this committee will resume next year in partnership with our standing committees to increase awareness of Staff Senate and the work that we do on behalf of staff. If you have ideas about how Staff Senate can better service and engage with staff, please consider joining a committee, attending senate meetings, or emailing staffsenate@ku.edu. ■

Roles & Responsibilities Ad Hoc

Committee: Tim Spencer

This committee was established this academic year to review and revise our shared mission, vision and values; review and revise our committee charges to align with our mission, vision, and values, all through a DEI lens; review and revise our committee chair and chair-elect responsibilities to align with committee charges; and to standardize monthly reports to address how committees are fulfilling their charges.

Since our last newsletter in the fall, our senators and staff

colleagues have completed a Human Resource Management visioning process which resulted in a revised vision for Staff Senate and five bold steps for Staff Senate to focus on over the next academic year. Staff Senate committee chairs and chair-elects then completed an assessment of how their current committee charges align with our revised vision, the five bold steps, Jayhawks Rising, and associated institutional priorities.

As we enter a new election cycle, new chair and chair-elects will continue to use this information to guide their committee work and evaluate how their chair roles support the work of their committees. ■

Technology Ad Hoc Committee:

Scott Cossel and Rick Evanhoe

During the 2021-22 academic year, the Ad Hoc committee on technology worked toward completing three primary goals. First, the committee was assigned to explore making Staff Senate meetings more accessible to staff across campus. To that end, the committee implemented live cap-

tioning for most online meetings and a livestream was instituted for open Staff Senate meetings.

The second charge centered on reviewing how Staff Senate used Microsoft Teams to complete senate and committee work, and exploring the use of Teams as a document repository. The committee's chair ultimately proposed restructuring the Staff Senate Teams site, including using it as an umbrella for all Senate subcommittees. The suggested restructuring would also lead to a new framework for storing senate-related documents and content. It is hoped the first two recommendations will assist in maintaining a more definitive "historical record" of Staff Senate activities.

Finally, the committee focused on migrating Staff Senate online content to the current KU CMS. Concurrent to migration, the committee reviewed, updated, and edited content for clarity.

Endless gratitude to all the members of the ad hoc committee, Staff Senate, and many others around KU for their help with meeting these goals. ■

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH KU STAFF SENATE

facebook.com/groups/kustaffsenate

twitter.com/kustaffsenate

USS/UPS COUNCIL UPDATE

The USS/UPS Joint Council meets once per month via Zoom to discuss topics of mutual interest to support staff and professional staff at all six Kansas Board of Regents universities (KU, K-State, Wichita State, Emporia State, Pittsburg State, and Fort Hays State). The councils started meeting jointly this school year due to the declining ratio of support staff and the large number of shared concerns.

Morale, compensation, and retention were major topics of concern for university staff across the state this year, along with the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, e.g. regarding the equitable application of remote work policies.

In several instances the joint council's discussions helped individual staff senates push their respective administrations in ways that benefited staff, such as creating more consistency regarding additional leave over winter break, as well as laying the groundwork for better communication and clearer expectations during inclement weather days going forward. However, there remains much room for improvement, and

the joint council looks forward to continuing its work in these areas.

To that end, the Council has compiled an extensive staff satisfaction survey, which was distributed to staff at all six universities via email on April 6. The survey results will directly influence the council's areas of focus over the next year, so please be sure to complete the survey when you receive it. Incoming KU Staff Senate president Jessica Chilcoat will present the survey results to the Kansas Board of Regents this fall.

Don't hesitate to ask any questions or suggest any topics to be raised at future council meetings. You can reach out through staffsenate@ku.edu or contact a representative directly.

Brian Moss, UPS Representative

bdmoss@ku.edu

Chris Wallace, USS Representative

ewallace@ku.edu

Todd Carpenter, USS Representative

tcarpent@ku.edu



ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

UPDATE

One of the biggest challenges this year has been to keep senate seats filled. We've gone through the backfill process for seven senators, and four chair-elect/officer positions. For the first time, we exhausted the list of available nominations from elections to serve as members at large. This has been a small portion of the high turnover we've all experienced this year.

A roster of staff senators for the next year is included here, and staffsenate.ku.edu/executive-council provides a list of executive committee members. ■

Jessica Brown, Chair-Elect

jjbrown@ku.edu

2022-23 KU STAFF SENATORS

President

Jessica Chilcoat

President-Elect

Chris Wallace

Academic

Liz Barton

Ryan Edmonds

Desiree Neyens

Michelle Wilson

Administrative

Deanne Arensberg

Kelly Banks

Teri Chambers

Marissa Marshall

Mary Murphy

Leslie Wilson

Administrative/ Management

Cady Bush

Kim Conard

Jena Gunter

Aaron Quisenberry

Robert Waller

Jui-Shen Wang

Latrina Collins

Scott Cossel

Sarah Wilson Merriman

Information Technology

Jeremy McLeod

Leslie Soden

Melissa Foree

Operations

Jessica Brown

Emily Foltz

Devon Milliken

Research

Joseph Andrew

Nikhila Gunda

Lindsay Elliot

Jorgenson

Kevin Liu

Kayla Wegley

Terri Hurtado

Erin Kelley-Garrison

Student Services

Anna Balmilero

Sara Chavez

Jordan Wade

Support

Todd Carpenter

David Day

Mary Dykmann

Brian Moss

Justin Runge

**This newsletter was
edited and assembled
by members of the KU
Staff Senate Public
Relations Committee.**