



# University Staff Senate



Spring 2019 Newsletter

## **THE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT**

The primary focus of the spring newsletter is to raise awareness about the upcoming elections for KU Staff Senate. Some of you might ask, “Why should I get involved in Staff Senate?” We would challenge you and ask, “Why not?”

Staff Senate represents all staff at KU, both University Support Staff and Unclassified Professional Staff. We speak for over 3200 staff, across every unit and every job category; one senator for every 75 staff.

KU is full of tradition and dedicated employees. We’ve heard a lot of talk across campus over the last year. From budgets models to budget cuts. From new buildings to town halls. Staff want to be heard and represented. Staff Senate is here to be that important voice in representing the best interests all KU staff. Being on Staff Senate provides opportunities to expand your network, to gain leadership experience, and to represent your colleagues across campus.

As the current President of KU Staff Senate, it has been my honor to represent you during this past year. It’s been an honor to represent your voices, and to bring your concerns forward to leadership. We’re working for a better life at KU, in the near future and in the distant future.

For more information about Staff Senate, please see our website at [staffsenate.ku.edu](http://staffsenate.ku.edu), or contact your representatives directly if you have any questions.

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## ELECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair: Chris Wallace

We encourage you to participate in the Staff Senate for the 2019-2020 year! The Staff Senate needs to fill 21 seats with new senators this year, as well as elect a president-elect. An email calling for nominations to Staff Senate will be sent out in the coming days with a link to the nominations form. You will be able to either self-nominate or nominate a colleague.

**Nominations should be submitted between Mon February 18<sup>th</sup> and Fri March 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.**

**Elections will be held from Mon March 18<sup>th</sup> through Fri March 29, 2019.** The April 17<sup>th</sup> Staff Senate Meeting will be an exchange of the current Staff Senate officially turning over the meetings to the newly elected Staff Senate. The May 15<sup>th</sup> meeting will be the first full meeting for the newly elected Staff Senate.

Why serve on Staff Senate? Here are a few great reasons:

- Meet new colleagues, network, and collaborate across campus
- Be a voice for over 3,000 KU staff at the Lawrence and Edwards campuses
- Only 15 to 20 hours of Staff Senate meetings per year (12-1:30pm on the second Wednesday of each month, usually in Memorial Union)
- Get involved with or chair a Senate Committee: <https://staffsenate.ku.edu/committees>
- Serving as a senator looks great on your annual evaluation and resume

The Staff Senate is the governing body for all staff at the University of Kansas. We advocate on your behalf for workplace improvements, professional development opportunities, employee recognition, and more.

The three main purposes of the Staff Senate are:

- Represent the interests of all university support staff and unclassified professional staff at the Lawrence and Edwards campuses.
- Serve as a forum for member presentation and discussion of common concerns of employment (e.g., opportunities for professional development, salaries/benefits, evaluation standards, and procedures).
- Provide a formal mechanism for communicating common concerns to appropriate University and State officials.

Senators come to monthly meeting to vote on issues that affect the staff. We need representation from all areas, all departments, and all job functions on the senate. For more information about KU Staff Senate, visit our website at <https://staffsenate.ku.edu>.

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## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Abby Ehling

The Staff Professional Development fund application is still being accepted on a rolling basis. Applications will be reviewed around the 20th of each month, and applicants can expect to hear about their application by the beginning of the next month. All staff represented by Staff Senate are eligible to apply for funds to use for professional development opportunities. More information can be found at [staffsenate.ku.edu/professional-development](https://staffsenate.ku.edu/professional-development). Additionally, the Professional Development committee/Staff Senate will not be hosting the Mini Wheat State Tour this year. Instead, we've been exploring a campus-wide mentoring program. More information to come!

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## **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Jenny Flinders

The Staff Senate Legislative Affairs Committee has initiated several conversations with Staff Senate and University leadership about important opportunities to expand support for staff and their families. This includes the drafting of policy for a new tuition assistance program for employee dependents and spouses, a review of current policies and procedures related to staff tuition assistance and career advancement, merit vs. cost-of-living salary increases, inclement weather policy clarification, and University Senate code review in support of increased

representation of staff in campus-wide committees and governance. The Legislative Affairs Committee is also partnering with other Staff Senate committees to identify professional development opportunities for staff, increase transparency of hiring practices, and build a response and inclusive environment on campus. Legislative Affairs members also continue to monitor state and federal legislatures for policies and actions that affect university employees.

Watch for updates to policies, including tuition assistance and inclement weather procedures, in the Policy Library ([www.policy.ku.edu](http://www.policy.ku.edu)).

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## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Co-Chairs: Michelle D. Wilson & Jeff Severin

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee has continued to make progress through a number of action teams. At the November Staff Senate meeting, the University Ombuds, Director of Institutional Opportunity Access (IOA), Vice Provost of Administration: Human Resources (HR) and Vice Provost of Diversity and Equity provided a brief overview of their role, function of their office, and how each works together. To learn more about how these offices can be of support to staff, please go to Pathway: <http://diversity.ku.edu/pathway>.

As part of a Senate-wide initiative to address staff needs that were identified by the 2017-2018 Staff Fellows program, the D&I committee is also studying the performance evaluation process for supervisors to recommend an option for staff to provide feedback about their supervisors and is examining opportunities for supervisors to more effectively support staff's personal and professional development around issues of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The committee also hosted an "Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace" workshop series in the fall. This two-part series focused on whiteness and privilege and how they contribute to office cultures that are oppressive to people with marginalized identities. Over 90 staff participated in Part 1 of the series and 50 staff participated in Part 2. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting that their participation changed the way they think about race in the workplace and inspired them to work toward creating more inclusive work environments. The series will be offered again this spring and will be expanded to include a 3rd component on risk and allyship.

In addition to this ongoing work, the committee will finish out the semester by developing a proposal for a "welcome committee" to greet new staff who hold marginalized identities as a way to better connect staff to communities and resources available at KU and in Lawrence. The committee also plans to hold an open meeting to gather input from staff on priority Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion challenges to consider for the 2019-2020 Staff Senate session.

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## PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

Co-Chairs: Ranu Pal & Annette Delaney

We are excited to share the following activities our Personnel Affairs Committee has been working on.

1. **Winter Weather Policy:** Both the Staff Senate Legislative Affairs Committee and the Personnel Affairs Committee reviewed and provided recommendations to modify the current Inclement /Winter Weather policy. We recommended the policy be clear that when inclement weather is called for classes to be canceled that campus should also be closed to reflect a fair and equitable concern for both students and staff. The recommended modifications are making their way through the KU administrative channels. Watch for updates in the Policy Library: <http://policy.ku.edu/provost/winter-weather-policies>
2. **KU Acronym Webpage:** An ongoing effort from our committee is in place to make staff aware of the KU acronym webpage and encourage departments to review the entries and submit additions, corrections and deletions on the webpage using the ‘Acronym Suggestion’ button. <https://publicaffairs.ku.edu/ku-acronyms>
3. The committee met on January 29 and discussed the staff fellows topics assigned to our committee:
  - a. Supervisor Review and Supervisor –employee relationship
  - b. Off-boarding process
  - c. New staff orientation.
  - d. Introduction to Supervision
    - a. **Supervisor Review & Supervisor Employee Relationship:** We discussed a 360 supervisor review or some other alternate tool to obtain feedback about supervisor’s performance. A healthy supervisor-subordinate staff relationship is important and so supervisory training should be central to work place environment. We’re working through options to propose.
    - b. **Off-Boarding Process:** The KU exit questionnaire is optional. We are discussing having it sent electronically directly to HRM once a resignation or transfer is submitted. We are discussing options.
    - c. **New Staff Orientation:** We are discussing options to enhance the Human Resources Management (HRM) onboarding.
    - d. **Introduction to Supervision:** The committee suggested creating an online resource packet for supervisors that contains all the pertinent information and resources supervisors would have as a resource.

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## DID YOU KNOW??????

### **Student Money Management Services**

As an employee of the University, you have access to services available at Student Money Management Services. Don't let the name fool you! SMMS offers free confidential consultations on how to create a personalized budget, managing credit, paying off debt and help with planning for expenses such as retirement. There is a web for for scheduling appointments: [Schedule an Appointment at SMMS](#). You can also call them at 785-864-1182 or via email at [money@ku.edu](mailto:money@ku.edu). Visit their website for more useful information: [Student Money Management Services](#).

### **LinkedIn Learning with Lynda.com**

Professional Development is frequently in the top five list of things that KU Staff indicate they would like more of. Located in the KU Portal under Employees is a link called Talent Development Login. Once in MyTalent you will see a link titled "Learning." By following "Learning" you will be taken to the MyLearning page. There you will see any training and courses assigned by your supervisor. Staff are able to choose their own courses as well. Click on the upper right hand corner "Browse all courses" in the Find Learning box and you have access to a plethora of training and learning opportunities. In addition to KU Human Resources training opportunities, KU has partnered with LinkedIn.com to provide staff with access to the LinkedIn Learning with Lynda.com content. Courses range from learning how to draw animation to equipment safety, from Android app development to mixing live music, from customer service to photography. Take advantage of this opportunity. KU has a one year contract that ends June 30. If there has been enough interest and use of LinkedIn Learning, the University will consider renewing this valuable resource.

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