

# Newsletter

## Fall 2020



### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT-ELECT

**Greetings fellow staff! We hope you are taking care of yourself and looking out for others in these unpredictable times.**

Know that the Staff Senate is listening and advocating for staff needs, whether you are working from home or on campus. Staff Senators are members of many campus-wide committees and councils, including the Task Force on Community-Responsive Public Safety; the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council; and the Employee Success, Jayhawk Cloud, KU Advocates and Champions, and Pandemic Project Management Design Teams (part of the

strategic planning process).

We are keeping an eye on the budget situation, as we understand that, in times of financial hardship, staff are hit the hardest. We will continue to advocate for transparency and early communication.

Over the summer and the past few months, we have pushed for clarity on the work-from-home situation, both for now and in the future. We have also asked that su-

**CONT'D ON PG. 2**

### IN THIS ISSUE

**1** From the President

#### Committee Updates

- 2** Personnel Affairs
- 3** Legislative Affairs
- 3** Diversity & Inclusion
- 4** Elections
- 4** Professional Development

#### Spotlight

- 4** Spencer Museum's Backyard Bash
- 5** Staff Senate membership

## PRESIDENT, CONT'D

Supervisors are given more support and training, not only now because of the pandemic, but because an employee's satisfaction in a position can be heavily impacted by their supervisor and there is no required training currently.

Much of the work in Staff Senate is done in one of our six committees. If you are interested in getting more involved, or even just listening in on a few meetings, please reach out to either the chair of a committee or our general Staff Senate email address.

Additionally, as a reminder, Staff Senate meetings are open and you are welcome to attend any time. The meetings dates are on the Staff Senate website. The agenda for each meeting will be posted on the website by the Monday before each the meeting, at the best of our ability. All meetings for the 2021 academic year will be held via Zoom, and the links can also be found on the website.

Lastly, the Staff Senate wants to hear from you! We meet regularly with campus leaders and will share common concerns with the appropriate university official. If you have a concern, please reach out to one of your Staff Senators, or contact either of us directly. ■

**Abby Ehling, President**

**[aebling@ku.edu](mailto:aebling@ku.edu)**

**Tim Spencer, President-Elect**

**[tims Spencer@ku.edu](mailto:tims Spencer@ku.edu)**

## PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Personnel Affairs committee strives to provide an avenue for the regular exchange of ideas on employee benefits, university policies and procedures, and other matters that relate to university staff.

Recently, the Personnel Affairs committee developed and finalized the Departmental Orientation Checklist. To build on the committee's momentum, the committee will, in collaboration with HRM, use the checklist to further develop what new employee orientation looks like in practice.

Another priority of the committee is to develop and share strategies intended to support those

in a supervisory role both pre- and post-employee evaluations. We also are exploring creative ways to express staff appreciation and gratitude as staff has gone to remarkable lengths to keep our campus operating and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Personnel Affairs Committee looks forward to cross-committee and cross-campus collaboration as we aim to enhance the employee experience. Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or recommendations for us. ■

**Leslie Wilson, Chair**

**[lesliewilson@ku.edu](mailto:lesliewilson@ku.edu)**



Senators have gathered exclusively over Zoom for the 2020-21 session. Here, the Workplace Improvement Team answers questions during the Oct. 14 meeting. *Screenshot: Justin Runge*

## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Legislative Affairs Committee is charged with monitoring activities in the state government, KBOR, and within the university that impact the staff experience at KU. We also coordinate all changes to the Staff Senate Code, and help promote voter and civic engagement activities for staff. At this moment, our priorities for the coming year include continued work on Staff Senate code to ensure our senate includes representation from Edward's campus and from USS Staff, also review code to formalize language to create a committee co-chair structure to share the workload and promote opportunities for more senators.

We will also continue to work with University Senate to expand staff and student representation in the University Senate structure.

Over the last few years, our committee has worked diligently to develop some form of tuition support for employee dependents attending KU. We are proud of the role we played in getting the Employee Dependent Tuition Assistance Scholarship implemented for the 20-21 academic year. The scholarship amount of \$1,000 was a welcome addition for qualifying families and students. We will continue to advocate for and explore opportunities for expanded benefits.

As we continue to navigate the pandemic, we will continue to work hard to represent and advocate for all staff, whether you're working on campus or working remotely. We want to give a particular shout-out to our Facilities Services staff for your tireless work to keep campus safe, as well as staff in Housing and other units who continue to make a safe and successful experience for our students, and others on campus.

If you are interested in joining our committee, please get in touch. Rock Chalk! ■

**Michelle Ginavan Hayes, Chair**  
[mginavan@ku.edu](mailto:mginavan@ku.edu)

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (D&I) COMMITTEE UPDATE

The D&I Committee seeks to develop a more inclusive campus culture by providing training and educational resources for staff, evaluating Senate and campus initiatives through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, and fostering discussions around DEI topics. We accomplish this work through Action Teams that focus on specific topics or tasks.

This summer, the committee drafted a set of goals for addressing injustices on campus that are symptomatic of a Predominantly White Institution. These goals are being used as the basis for our

D&I Action Plan and four new Action Teams. Each team is in the process of finalizing objectives and action steps that will guide committee work.

We'll post our plan and progress to [staffsenate.ku.edu/diversity](http://staffsenate.ku.edu/diversity), along with information on committee activities and links to DEI resources. Please contact us with concerns for the committee to address or with interest in joining. ■

**Michelle Wilson, Co-Chair**  
[michellewilson@ku.edu](mailto:michellewilson@ku.edu)  
**Jeff Severin, Co-Chair**  
[jseverin@ku.edu](mailto:jseverin@ku.edu)

### Staff Senate D&I Goals

- Educate ourselves and others
- Listen and respond to marginalized voices
- Examine our own complicity and dismantle systems of racism and oppression;
- Engage with leadership and hold others and ourselves accountable



# Join Spencer Museum of Art for the 5th annual Backyard Bash: Conference of the Birds.

The Spencer Museum of Art invites you to explore its 5th annual Backyard Bash, an interactive installation in Marvin Grove on view through Nov. 19. Rather than the usual day-long festival, the year's event is a month-long celebration of nature and culture in the Museum's backyard, allowing visitors to attend at their leisure and adhere to social and physical distancing.

Attendees can explore 13 sculptural "nests" created by current KU students and installed throughout Marvin Grove. These nests investigate themes of sustainability, community care, exchange economies, and human impact on our ecosphere. These ideas are also explored in the Spencer Museum's current exhibition, *Audubon in the Anthropocene: Works* by Matthew Day Jackson.

Visitors can discover self-guided activities, prizes and more inside the nests throughout the month. For more information about Backyard Bash, visit [spencerart.ku.edu](http://spencerart.ku.edu). ■



Backyard Bash participants explore Marvin Grove for bird-themed art. *Photo: Andy White / Marketing Communications*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Professional Development Committee continues to have funds to help support staff in their opportunities during the pandemic. Professional Development Awards will cover costs associated with KU training as well as any other online conferences. We are also working on a form that departments can use to apply for funds to bring in a speaker that would help KU staff. Please reach out if you have questions or are interested in joining the committee. ■

**Kim Spencer, Co-Chair**  
[kimspencer@ku.edu](mailto:kimspencer@ku.edu)

## ELECTIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

If you are interested filling one of our upcoming vacancies, contact Matt Deakyne, Election Committee Chair, at [mdeakyne@ku.edu](mailto:mdeakyne@ku.edu). ■

### Upcoming vacancies

- **Academic**  
*1 of 4 senators*
- **Administrative**  
*4 of 6 senators*
- **Administrative/Management**  
*2 of 9 senators*
- **Operations**  
*1 of 5 senators*
- **Research**  
*2 or 7 senators*
- **Student Services**  
*1 of 3 senators*
- **Support**  
*1 of 6 senators*

### Important dates

- **Feb. 15**  
*Email sent asking for nominations*
- **March 15**  
*Ballot sent out to electorate*
- **April 1**  
*Election results confirmed; new senators contacted*

# KU Staff Senate is the governing body for all university staff.

KU Staff Senate serves as a forum for staff and as an advocate for their interests — workplace improvements, professional development, employee recognition, and more — with other governing bodies, university administration, and the Kansas Board of Regents.

Senators, each having one vote, shall be elected by the members of the electorate. To ensure fair representation of all staff, the electorate shall be divided into eight categories representing the major divisions of work responsibilities across campus. The categorization of staff shall be accomplished by means of job families designated by Human Resource Management, detailed at [staffsenate.ku.edu/become-senator](http://staffsenate.ku.edu/become-senator). ■

## This newsletter was assembled by the KU Staff Senate Public Relations Committee:

Co-Chairs Teri Chambers & Mary Murphy; Kelly Banks, Kindra Bartz, Brain Bouton, Kisha Cranston, Margaret Hair, Lindsay Jorgenson, Nicole Reiz, Angela Robb, Justin Runge

## 2020-21 KU STAFF SENATORS

### President

- Abby Ehling

### President-Elect

- Tim Spencer

### Academic

- Ben Herron
- Amber Roberts Graham
- Liz Barton
- Tiffany Learned

### Administrative

- Kelly Banks
- Mary Murphy
- Teri Chambers
- Travis Arellano
- Elissa Stewart\*
- Leslie Wilson, A

### Administrative/ Management

- Cady Bush
- Aaron Quisenberry
- Robert Waller
- Jui-Shen Wang
- Connie Jordan
- Jena Gunter
- Jessica Chilcoat
- Michelle Ginavan Hayes
- Jeff Severin

### Information

### Technology

- Elvi Freudenhammer
- Matthew Deakyne
- Rick Evanhoe
- Lisa Hallberg

### Operations

- Josh La Tour
- Jessica Brown
- Jeremy Chance
- Steve Conway
- Chris Wallace

### Research

- Lindsay Elliot Jorgenson
- Nathan Garza
- Jennifer Hollenbach
- Kevin Liu
- Azure Pellegrino
- Christopher Lyon
- Kajsa Elizabeth Mullenix

### Student Services

- Bryanna Hanschu\*
- Megan Belaire
- Michelle Wilson

### Support

- Todd Carpenter
- David Day
- Mary Dykmann
- Brian Moss
- Justin Runge
- Kim Spencer

\* Members at large