

Newsletter

Fall 2021



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

As your president, I hear your concerns, and I continue to advocate on your behalf with university leadership to address them. I've outlined many of those concerns on the next page, and I hope you'll review them.

Our senators and staff colleagues work to address these challenges through committee work and advocacy across campus, as highlighted in their updates within this letter.

Advocacy, however, is limited without feedback and participation. We ask of you to continue

to bring forth issues that impact you and your staff colleagues by emailing staffsenate@ku.edu and getting involved with your campus community.

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
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KU STAFF SENATE PRIORITIES

Health and life

Mask mandates, vaccinations, healthcare costs, and greater work/life balance.

Recruitment and retention

Competitive pay with public and private sectors, resolution of salary compression issues, realistic output and growth goals, sustainable workloads, alleviation of burnout and attrition.

Benefits

Remote/flex work opportunities and oversight, dependent and spousal tuition coverage, and paid time off during winter break.

Administrative accountability

Mandatory supervisor training, greater diversity in and staff representation on major university searches and campus initiatives, greater transparency in administrative decisions and communication, and expansion of formal governance communication channels.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Legislative Affairs Committee monitors activities at the university, in the state government and at KBOR that impact the staff experience at KU. We oversee changes to the Staff Senate Code and work with leadership to address matters that impact staff on the Lawrence and Edwards campuses.

Meetings will be held virtually for at least another year. Each of our monthly meetings contain an update from Senate leadership as well as an update from the UPS and USS Council, which meets regularly with our counterparts at other KBOR institutions. Your input in the All-KBOR institution climate survey this spring will help provide valuable information to be shared with KBOR and KBOR institutions that will help improve the staff experience across the state.

We have appointed a new committee representative to work as a Civic Engagement Ambassador with the Center for Service Learning which will represent our committee and coordinate efforts that advance civic engagement and awareness for the KU community. We also welcomed a new staff senate committee structure that implements chair-elects for succession planning.

We are still early in the year with much to accomplish. We will continue to look at changes related to University Senate struc-

ture to create a more inclusive and equal representation among students, staff and faculty. And we will continue to push on improving tuition support for dependents, spouses, and staff members. Whether you are remote, on campus, or working a hybrid schedule, Staff Senate is here for you. We wish you a successful fall semester! ■

Michelle Ginavan Hayes, Chair
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Monica Bradshaw, Chair-Elect
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

We are pleased to announce that departments may apply to receive funds to help cover costs of speakers or materials. The limit for departments is the same as individuals, which is \$500. We hope to help support staff and departments in their efforts to promote and better staff.

The application and more information can be found at staffsenate.ku.edu/professional-development. If you have any questions, please reach out. ■

Kim Spencer, Chair
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Kelly Banks, Chair-Elect
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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (D&I) COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Staff Senate D&I Committee continues to use a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens when looking at matters that impact staff across campus. As we focus to move the DEI needle for KU staff, the D&I ACTION Teams are dedicated to the following 2021-2022 goals:

Goal 1: Accountability

We will continue to engage with leadership – which includes university governance and the administrative leadership of the institution – to press for more meaningful change. We will hold others and ourselves accountable for the commitment to our DEI goals, and we expect to be held accountable by the staff that we aspire to represent.

Goal 2: Communication

We will provide ongoing communication with staff senators and staff on topics relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Goal 3: Education

We must have a deep understanding of racism and white supremacy culture and develop the tools necessary to combat them. We will also explore opportunities to provide staff with tools for engaging in advocacy and social change outside the context of the workplace.

Goal 4: Engagement

A significant part of our own learning must come from listening to those who are most impacted and taking action... We must follow the lead of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in our community and examine our complicity and dismantle systems of racism and oppression as an organization, an institution, and as individual staff members.

If you are interested in being involved on the Staff Senate D&I Committee, please reach out. ■

Michelle Wilson, Chair
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ELECTIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The next Staff Senate election will take place this spring, with seats available in each job category. If you are interested in serving, answer our February call for nominations or send your interest to staffsenate@ku.edu now. Voting occurs in March, and results are shared in April.

We are actively working on our website to promote these opportunities. For more information, please visit staffsenate.ku.edu ■

Matt Deakyne, Chair
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Jessica Brown, Chair-Elect
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AD-HOC COMMITTEE

UPDATES

This year, three ad hoc committees will work toward specific goals. Their work so far is detailed here by the committee chairs.

Engagement Ad-Hoc

Committee: Jessica Chilcoat

As Staff Senators, we often remind ourselves that we work for you.

We want to know what you need, what you want, and what you are concerned about so that we can most effectively advocate on your behalf. The Staff Senate Ad Hoc Engagement Committee will work on four charges, all related to increasing engagement between Senate and KU staff members.

The first charge is internally focused and includes revising the Staff Senate handbook. The new handbook will contain technical information useful to senators, but more importantly, it will include resources senators can utilize when communicating with their constituents.

The second charge is to develop a communication network for senators to formally engage with their job categories. One idea is to partner with HR to reach new staff during onboarding or when they change positions.

Third, we'll explore ways to be more accessible to staff who more challenging to connect with

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PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Personnel Affairs Committee is committed to providing an avenue for the regular exchange of ideas on employee benefits, university policies and procedures, investment in employees and other matters that relate to university staff. Five action teams were established to guide the work of the committee.

The Supervisory Best Practices Action Team, led by Whitney Juneau, will review and develop best practices and resources for new and current supervisors as well as collaborate with Human Resource Management (HRM) on the employee experience.

The Diversity & Inclusion Training Action Team, led by Scott Cossel, will collaborate with Staff Senate and campus partners to review and promote training and resources related to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Ann Ermeley heads the Job Transparency & Hiring Best Practices Action Team, which is charged with improving job opportunity transparency and pro-

moting unbiased hiring practices and other best practices through search committee trainings.

An Action Team led by Leslie Wilson will look at KU's remote work policy, collaborating with HRM to offer guidance to supervisors and employees on evaluating remote work arrangements and expectations and goal setting.

Lastly, Trina Collins' Investment in Employees Action Team will explore different opportunities to invest in campus employees through the State Employee Health Plan (SEHP), employee recognition and appreciation, non-compensatory benefits, etc.

We look 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, recommendations, or have interest in being involved in the committee. ■

Leslie Wilson, Chair

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Todd Carpenter, Chair-Elect

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WAYS TO CONNECT WITH KU STAFF SENATE

facebook.com/groups/kustaffsenate

twitter.com/kustaffsenate

AD HOC, CONT'D

through typical channels. This could include staff that are designated fully remote, work outside normal business hours, or may not have regular access to their KU email.

And lastly, we will be exploring ways to increase awareness about Staff Senate across campus. We've consistently seen a decline in voter turnout during elections and fewer individuals volunteering to be senators or join senate committees. This committee is open to any staff member that wants to help support staff.

If you have ideas about how the senate can better serve and engage with staff, please consider joining the Engagement committee. Interest can be directed to staffsenate@ku.edu. ■

Roles & Responsibilities Ad-Hoc

Committee: Tim Spencer

The Roles & Responsibilities ad-hoc committee was established this academic year to do the following: 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 committee reports to address how committees are fulfilling their charges.

Over the last several months, our senators and staff colleagues have worked with Human Resources through a visioning process, which has allowed us to reimagine our shared vision and determine what bold steps are

needed to ensure our vision is supported through our committee work. As we progress through this semester into the next, we will focus on establishing and reinforcing how our committee charges and chair responsibilities support these bold steps. ■

Technology Ad-Hoc Committee:

Rick Evanhoe

The ad-hoc committee on technology is migrating the Staff Senate website to KU's Sunflower CMS platform. We are also reviewing and refining the site's content to make it more inviting, accessible, and inclusive. Many senators and non-senators are contributing their time and effort to this project, and I am grateful for their help. ■

**This newsletter was assembled by the
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