

# STAFF SENATE

ADVOCATE. SERVE. ENGAGE.



## Message from the President

I'm constantly reminded why I'm thankful to work at UNL during this time of year. The trees on campus transform into vibrant displays of red, orange, yellow, and brown. These autumn hues create a breathtaking landscape that I always find awe-inspiring. The chilled morning air signals a new season that I've always associated with comfort, coziness, and nostalgia. The Thanksgiving holiday also prompts me to reflect on my blessings, including the many friendships I've been fortunate to make on campus.

As I wrap up 100 days as Staff Senate President, I'm grateful for the over 4,000 talented and hard-working staff members who form the cornerstone of our university. The everyday efforts of staff ensure that every person and every interaction matters. I'm aware that UNL has its fair share of challenges. I'm confident we will navigate these trials—partly because of the exceptional Staff Senate executive team. I'm immensely grateful to Jessie Brophy, Jerri Harner, Morgan Green McConnell, Sara Haake, and Joann Ross for their leadership and for ensuring staff have voices at the campus decision-making tables.

I'm also optimistic and energized because of my encounters with new members of the staff community. My interactions with folks at UNL's new employee orientation remind me that UNL is a special place with people who care for and support each other. I'm thankful to outstanding professionals like Ranelle Maltas and Dr. Celeste Spier for coordinating this important experience.

There's a lot to be grateful for. I'm especially thankful for some recent successes that your Staff Senate has achieved over the past two months. These efforts include:

- The passage of an inclusive, common-sense bylaw amendment, driven by Co-Chairs Doug Pellatz and Lisa Vonfeldt and members of the Bylaws Committee, to enshrine voting rights for UNL-affiliated staff working at the University of Nebraska System.

- The launch of an initiative to increase staff representation in campus leadership opportunities, especially staff classified as office/service, coordinated by Vice President Jessie Brophy and UNOPA representative Sarah Smith.

- The creation of the Staff Senate Presidential Citation Award for Excellence, led by Co-Chairs Hilary Butler and Carrie Jackson and members of the Recognition Committee, which is a new recognition for deserving offices and departments for going above and beyond to advance UNL.

- Planned meetings between the Staff Senate and numerous Staff Councils within the academic colleges to collaborate more efficiently, facilitated by Senator Celeste Spier.

- The launch of a blueprint for staff senators to engage more easily and intentionally with campus constituents and leadership, championed by Co-Chairs Derek McConnell and Alisa Smith and members of the Communications Committee.

We're also working with Chancellor Bennett, Vice Chancellor Zeleny, and leaders of the faculty senate and student government to tackle other important issues affecting staff every day such as family medical leave, mental health and wellness, and e-scooters on campus.

In closing, I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve as your Staff Senate President. I'm also thankful for you. There's nothing we can't accomplish if we work together. Go Big Red!

Jordan Gonzales  
Staff Senate President



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## What is Staff Senate?

The purpose of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Staff Senate is to be an advisory body on issues, institutional policies, and practices that relate to the staff, to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, to promote common interests among the staff, to advocate for staff welfare and development, to suggest revisions and initiatives to improve staff policies, and to participate in the formulation of institutional policy and governance.

Read this online



[go.unl.edu/staffsenatenewsletter](https://go.unl.edu/staffsenatenewsletter)

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## UPCOMING DATES

November 27

Student Holiday

November 28—December 1

Thanksgiving Vacation  
(UNL Offices Closed)

December 9-14

Last Week of Classes

December 16-20

Final Exams

December 21

Fall Semester  
Commencement

December 23-January 1

Holiday Closedown

January 2– January 17

Spring Pre-session

January 20

MLK Day

January 21– May 16

Spring 2025 Academic  
Session

Subscribe to the Staff Senate  
Newsletter to receive updates  
from the staff senate and the  
latest information on  
happenings at UNL.



## #NCLUDE to continue in spring; small group leaders sought

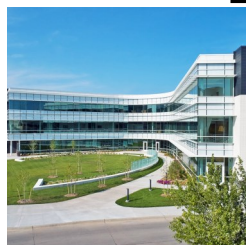
The University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s NCLUDE program, currently offered through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, will transition to Organizational Development and Training in Human Resources for the spring and beyond.

<https://diversity.unl.edu/nclude>

## University of Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Centers Provide Network of Research and Education Across the State

The University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) operates three Research, Extension and Education Centers (REEC) across the state. Within each REEC is a network of Research units, educational facilities, farm and ranches that support the mission of IANR.

<https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/westcentral/research-extension-and-education-centers-reecs/>



## Primary and Urgent Care Now Available to UNL Employees at University Health Center

UNL employees are now able to utilize services at the University Health Center and it is considered a Tier 1 provider so the costs will be low!

<https://health.unl.edu/faculty-staff-services>

## The Inaugural winners of the Staff Senate Presidential Citation Award for Excellence announced

The inaugural recipients were staff at the Office of Admissions and the Office of Graduate Admissions for their diligent recruitment efforts that led to an increase in student enrollment to 23,992 students this fall semester.

<https://staffsenate.unl.edu/staff-senate-recognition/staff-senate-presidential-citation-award-excellence/>

## Engage with the Staff Senate!

Are you interested in getting involved with UNL’s Staff Senate but not sure where to start?

Here are some ways to connect with the Staff Senate:

- Staff Senate Newsletter: Sign up to receive the newsletter to stay informed about Staff Senate activities, opportunities for staff, and other relevant updates.
- Submit an Article for the Staff Senate Newsletter: Do you have a story, event, or other information to share with staff at UNL? Submit an item for the newsletter .
- Participate in Staff Senate Meetings: Did you know you can attend Staff Senate meetings? Find dates and times on the Upcoming Events calendar on the Staff Senate homepage. Meetings are available both in person and virtually. Can’t attend? Meeting minutes are shared on the Staff Senate website.
- Serve as a Senator: Each year, the Staff Senate holds elections for open seats. We would love for you to consider serving alongside us!
- Share Your Voice with Senators: Have concerns or ideas? Contact us through the Staff Senate contact page. We want to hear from you!

<https://staffsenate.unl.edu>