

**STAFF SENATE ASSEMBLY MEETING**

Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025 | 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Red Cloud A | Willa Cather Dining Complex

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the full Staff Senate meeting as corrected by those participating. These are provisional and subject to change until approved at the July meeting.

Meeting Called to Order: 2:32 by President Jordan Gonzalez.

Preliminary business

Land Acknowledgment read.

New Staff Senators shout out: Maria Muhlbach, District 2, and Chance Radtke, District 5, stood to be recognized.

Welcome to Staff who are viewing online and in person.

Shared a quote by Niccolo Machiavelli.

Recognition of the Staff Senate Exploratory Committee, who worked diligently to form Staff Senate in 2021. They drafted the bylaws, held listening sessions and sought feedback on the proposed plans. We are celebrating the second anniversary of first meeting of the Staff Senate. Members of Staff Senate Exploratory Committee were invited to the front of the room to be recognized and photographed.

Consent Agenda sent Tuesday January 14.

Approved the Meeting Minutes from Nov. 14, 2024, by unanimous consent

Committee Reports can be viewed on the Microsoft Teams page need no approval. Reports were provided by the Bylaws, Communications, Personnel Affairs, and Recognition Committees.

**Officer Reports**

President Gonzales

Recipients of the Presidential Citation Award for Excellence

University Operations- including Landscape Services, Building Systems Maintenance. For their hard work and effort in aftermath of storm in July of 2024. Cleared debris around campus, and restored power. Jeff Culbertson and members of the team were present to accept the award.

University Communication and Marketing- for their *Home Again* national promotional video. Dr. Jim Cole and members of UComm were present to accept award.

[Task Force on Workplace Culture and Engagement](https://uofnelincoln.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/r/sites/UNL-StaffSenate/Shared%20Documents/General/Task%20Force%20on%20Workplace%20Culture%20%26%20Engagement?csf=1&web=1&e=wdOpIg) update

Reminder to senators that Task Force is top priority over next year and a half. We’ve identified 9 themes that will help us accomplish the main goal. Not a strategic plan but rather a strategic direction.

Next Steps: Submit formal report to senators on progress on each of the supporting objectives. To be shared on at the March 13 meeting.

Re: System President Gold’s email on system wide strategic planning, in which he announced his intention for a collaborative strategic process. President Gonzales will work attentively to ensure that staff voices are heard during this process. He shared Gold’s 5 Pillars as outlined in the email. President Gonzales believes that all staff can and should contribute feedback and that Staff Senate can, should, and will play an important role regarding the 5th pillar. Will follow up in March.

Vice President for Internal Affairs Brophy

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing

During collaborative discussion came up with 3 decisions. 1. To avoid redundancy will not be creating a new survey. Rather use the results from last survey to create actionable items. 2. Identify leadership for this initiative. Kyla Gorji(EAP) and Annelisa Davenport (Employee Wellness) will be taking the lead on this initiative. 3. Develop some actionable recommendations. Will then be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor as well as Faculty Senate and some of the Staff Senate committees.

Vice President for External Affairs Harner

Update from the Big Ten Collaborative for Staff Advocacy

The group meets quarterly. Give updates on what’s happening on each campus. Recently, the group discussed the use of DEI language and what that looks like. Some schools have not been given any instruction or direction on the language. Some schools were told not to use specific language and instead directed to use new language. Some other schools were not given direction on language and use but some things that have been implied. This is an ongoing conversation

Update on the Univ. of Neb. Staff Advisory Board

This is a meeting of the four campus (UNL, UNK, UNO, and UNMC) Staff Advisory Boards. Discussed current Family Medical Leave and how to make a more inclusive and equitable policy and process. UNMC is the last school of the four to get a staff advisory board. They recently completed the nomination process.

Question from Tony Lazarowicz, District 3, asking what system campuses are looking at for staff awards. President Gold’s current awards do not include staff that follow the pattern for faculty in both name and monetary award.

**Committee Reports**

Elections Committee (Stephanie Hanson, District 6, Co-Chair of Elections Committee)

Provided information and timeline for 2025 Staff Senate elections. The committee is tasked with looking at representation in numbers prior to next nomination cycle. Found inconsistency with how we thought things were determined. In collaboration with executive committee, It was determined for this election, they will keep numbers the same so that representation stays the same as it has been. By next year, the committee will work to ensure the election provides a better representation between O/S and M/P. Identified vacancies and getting ready to rollout the nomination process for next round of staff senators. Announcements will come out in Nebraska Today and maybe an email to solicit nominations. Voting to take place in March so new senators could be notified in April, with the new term beginning in July.

As nominations open, an email will be sent to all staff members. UCOMM will help with this. The results of the election will be posted in Teams, emailed to all current senators, and an announcement will be sent through Nebraska Today.

Liaison Committee (Amy Ort, District 5)

The parking advisory committee will be adding a member from Staff Senate. Will be meeting in Late January to make it official, but we want to be ready to put someone in that place. Liaison Committee is taking nominations, which are currently available on Teams or you can email Amy Ort (aort@unl.edu). Nominations will remain open until January 28. Following their committee meeting on January 30, they will send the name of the senator to the Executive Committee. As you consider whether you would like to serve in this capacity, please be thoughtful of your time and bandwidth. Before you nominate yourself, think about how much time you are willing to spend on this and to make that commitment. We want to have a good relationship with Parking/Transit. The recommendation was made to incite Dan Carpenter from Parking and Transit Services to a future Staff Senate meeting to discuss what Parking has done and will be working on.

Presentation from Jessica Herrmann on media and civic engagement.

Jessica brough a handout and will share an electronic copy that can be sent to interested members. She explained that the focus of her discussion is State Legislative Engagement. We focus on state since we get a substantial amount of our budget from the unicameral.

It is important to acknowledge that employees of the university retain their freedom of speech, rights, and protections. Nothing prohibits you from engaging with members of the unicameral. Nothing prevents NU employees from expressing personal views, on personal time, with personal resources. In doing so, a person may want to lead with: “My testimony today are my own personal capacity and not on behalf of UNL or the NU System.” Caution: Don’t use your work email or signature block when emailing Senators.

If an employee has an interest in running for public office, at what point do they need to tell the University? They should contact the University sooner rather than later. There is a protocol to follow for that. It is possible to negotiate to serve while remaining employed with UNL. If you are serving on a city committee, you should disclose that on the conflict-of-interest form.

The Executive Committee proposed an Amendment to Bylaw X.3.2. (Presented by Jessie Brophy District 6)

The Senate voted to make a bylaw change in November that incorporated senators representing NU Central Administration employees who work exclusively at UNL into full voting members. Today, we would like to formalize that decision by changing Bylaw X.3.2 to read that the Senate has 57 voting members, rather than 53 to account for those four members. Following debate, the motion was carried.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (Mikki Sandin, District 3)

In the fall, when campus was notified of the closing of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the DEI Committee began discussing whether they should rename and reframe the work of the committee. Today, they are proposing a change to the name and duties of the committee, to ensure that work continues without embracing words that could be disadvantageous for them. Senator Sandin provided an overview of the proposed new title of the committee and new language that would encompass the charge given to them. Following a lively discussion, a motion was introduced and passed to table the proposed amendments until further discussion could be had.

Adjournment at 4:01pm

The next Staff Senate Assembly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2025. Our speaker is h Emergency Management Director to discuss UNL’s emergency preparedness and management plan.

*The University of Nebraska is a public, land-grant institution with campuses and programs across the State that reside on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Oto-Missouria, Omaha, Dakota, Lakota, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Kaw Peoples, as well as the relocated Ho Chunk (Winnebago), Iowa, Sac and Fox Peoples.*