

**MEETING Minutes**

Thursday, May 8, 2025 | 2:30 to 4 p.m.

Platte River Room | Nebraska Union

Note: These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Staff Senate meeting as corrected by those participating. These are provisional and subject to change until approved at the May 8th meeting.

**Meeting Called to Order** **at 2:31 p.m.** by President Jordan Gonzales

* Land Acknowledgment read
* Lisa Vonfeldt, District 6, serving as parliamentarian for todays meeting.
* Had 116 people nominated for 26 staff senate seats. Recognition of newly elected senators and those senators who were reelected.

**Consent Agenda**

* The [Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2025](https://uofnelincoln.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/UNL-StaffSenate/Shared%20Documents/General/1%20-%20Bylaws%2C%20Agendas%2C%20Minutes%2C%20Parliamentary%20Procedure/2%20-%20Staff%20Senate%20Assembly%20Meeting%20Minutes/2025/2025%2003%2013%20Staff%20Senate%20Meeting%20Minutes.docx?d=w4f3736df94d24b6d91a2e2e76f022b52&csf=1&web=1&e=oy2ccZ) were approved by unanimous consent.
* Committee Consent Reports can be viewed on Microsoft Teams and need no approval. We received Consent Reports from the Bylaws, Elections, Liaison, Personnel Affairs and Recognition Committees.
* If you have any difficulties opening the consent agendas or accessing Teams due to the IT migration, please contact Joann Ross.

**Officer Reports**

President Jordan Gonzales

* Recipient of the Presidential Citation Award for Excellence: UNL Police Department recognized for diligent efforts and exceptional service during the 2024-2025 football season and unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety of the university community, athletes and thousands of visitors.
* Updates and Top Priorities for May and June
	+ Chancellor’s Cabinet Meeting recap: The cabinet met this Monday. Topics discussed included the impact of federal administration decisions on campuses across the nation. There was an update on the Alumni Affinity Survey. Alums indicated that they are hearing more about campus, but many are not happy about some of the things they are hearing. There was a legislative update on the unicameral and the budget/appropriations. Finally, there was an update from Troy Dannen, AD, regarding renovations to Memorial Stadium. Alumni holding town hall with AD Troy Dannen on Wednesday June 18th if anyone is interested in attending.
	+ Task Force on Workplace Culture and Engagement: Campus Stakeholders provided input, support, and/or clarity. There are 9 priority issues.
* Priority 1: Family friendly parental leave policy. The Board of Regents recently approved an update, modern family leave policy that is more equitable.It will go into effect on July 1.
* Priority 2: Support competitive salaries and equitable benefits for staff across all job classifications
* Priority 3: Promoting Policies and initiatives to reduce workplace harassment and bullying.
* Priority 4: Support for increased utilization and expansion of staff mental health and well-being resources.
* Priority 5: Advocating for standardized and transparent promotional process
* Priority 6: Improve leadership opportunities for staff classified as Office/Service within the Staff Senate
* Priority 7: Increase Staff Recognition and Awards
* Priority 8: Increase awareness of accessible professional development opportunities for staff
* Priority 9: Advocate for an improved talent management experience.
* Meeting recap with NU President Gold Recap on the system-wide strategic plan and fiscal forecast. Another topic of discussion was how the Staff Senate can be co-collaborators with the President’s Office and campus administrators. Specifically, the question was asked how we can help produce key metrics that are important for staff advocacy and a positive workplace environment. This would focus on President Gold’s Fourth Pillar – Extraordinary Culture and Environment.
* Business Simplified update: There will be updates in the weeks following the close of the state legislative session. When an update is ready, VC Zeleny and leadership will be invited back to Staff Senate to hear more and learn more.
* Upcoming meeting with UNL Chancellor Bennett on the short and long-term campus budget cuts. The executive committee will be meeting with Chancellor Bennett in the coming weeks to discuss the short and long-term budget cuts. Questions have been sent to the Chancellor in advance of that meeting. President Gonzales and Exec. Secretary Ross and other campus stakeholders will be meeting with Chancellor Bennett on May 9 to discuss the Dear Colleague Letter. This will be the second meeting of the group this spring.

Vice President for Internal Affairs Jessie Brophy: No Report

Vice President for External Affairs Jerri Harner

* Mutual Academic Defense Compact: In March, Rutgers drafted a framework for the members of the Big 10 to enter into a collective compact for mutual defense given the current challenges campuses are facing under the new federal administration. Both the UNL Faculty Senate (April 1) and ASUN (April 3) drafted resolutions to support the Compact. The Executive Committee met to discuss the topic in relation to Staff SEnate. The results included: a letter to President Gold and Chancellor Bennett explaining our discussion and plans to address the topic in today’s meeting. VP Harner reached out to the the Big Ten Staff Advocacy Collaborative and the University of Nebraska Staff Advisory Board to see what other schools were doing.

Secretary Morgan Green McConnell: No report

Executive Advisor Sara Haake: No report

Coordinator & Executive Secretary Joann Ross

* District Meetings at the All-Staff Conference: District meetings are scheduled for Day 2 of the conference, Wednesday, July 23 from 2:45 – 3:30 p.m. We would like at least 2 senators from each district to facilitate the meetings. Please email me if you are interested in serving in this way.
* Budget Report: We began the fiscal year with a budget of $8,000. To date, we have spent $4,200.49 on handouts for new employee orientation, Co-sponsoring the All-Staff Conference, items for Staff Senate Award recipients, certificates and holders, and other expenses related to running the Staff Senate. This leaves us with $3,799.51. The executive committee is strategizing on how best to use remaining funds before the end of the fiscal year.
* July 10 Meeting – East Campus, Great Plains A from 1-5 p.m.(Revised to 12:30-4:30): You should have all received the invitation to that meeting that will serve as an onboarding event for new senators and the election of new officers. In the coming weeks, I will be sending out an email asking those attending – senators whose terms continue and our new senators – for a lunch selection. You will have a choice of 3-4 boxed lunch choices. It will be important for you to get your order into me as soon as possible. As we continue through the IT migration process, please let me know when you have migrated. When reaching out, please let me know your new email address.

**New Business / Open Mic**

* Communications Committee: Derek McConnell, District 4, The Committee is soliciting from the senators anything that may serve as content for the upcoming newsletter. Please provide your ideas to him. The newsletter will be going out on Tuesday, May 13. Additionally, UNL is hosting the National Science Olympiad on May 23-24. Volunteers are being sought for set up and other administrative activities.
* Campus Budget Cuts: Nothing has yet been provided regarding guidelines for salary increases. We should anticipate 6-8% increased cost on health care costs for both the University and employees.
	+ Jordan Gonzales, District 2, provided a reminder of meeting with Exec Committee and Chancellor Bennett on 5/14. He will attach questions to the 3-2-1 email.
	+ Jennifer Rutt, District 7: Has there been communication from the Administration on whether there will be Merit increases? VC Zeleny: we have not received information regarding merit increases
	+ Andrew Rose, District 8: VC Zeleny discussed rising health care costs. Is he willing to expand on other information? VC Zeleny: We are waiting for the level of tuition increase and feedback from the appropriation committee at June Board of Regents meeting. We know health care costs will increase about 6-7.5%. Employee cost was increased 10-11% last year and will likely increase again. New Benefits providers, some evidence across the system that those costs aren’t going down.
	+ Sara Mattson, District 3: What percent of health care benefits are directly tied to staff? What is the university taking on? Answer: Mike Zeleny, dependent on individual situations. Currently policy not set to change employee vs. university contribution.
* Mutual Academic Defense Compact: What are the pros and cons of supporting the Compact? First, thank you to the senators from District 5 for coming to the Executive Committee to help provide feedback.
	+ Kaitlin Rife, District 5: What are our big 10 colleagues saying about the benefits of supporting or not supporting the compact? President Gonzales: Half of the 18 schools’ faculty and/or students have formally approved, have voted on, or approved some form of resolution on a mutual academic defense compact. We are not aware of any staff bodies who have done so. ASUN has not communicated with university leadership that a resolution was created. Not sure of the impact that ASUN and Faculty Senate have made. Staff don’t have the same protections that Faculty and students have. Should be thoughtful about how we voice our opinions on this matter.
	+ Jerri Harner, District 1: We have our staff level pros/cons but as a university we are also in a budget crisis year, this could impact decisions. We don’t have same protections as faculty and students. There is a lot for us to consider before deciding whether we would like to take any action.
	+ We will continue the conversation on June 10th. If you have thoughts, ideas, or suggestions, please email them to President Gonzales or VP Harner.
	+ Dave Long, District 5: is there an intention to bring a resolution to the floor or are we just discussing. President Gonzales: Anyone can bring any resolution to this floor. Committees also can bring fourth resolutions as well. Personally unsure of the effectiveness of passing a resolutoin in favor of the compact. Doing so could impact our relationship with administration. You will all receive an an email before the June 10th meeting, and we may call a special session before the July 10th meeting to further address this issue.
* Electronic Scooters on Campus: VC Zeleny provided an update on Scooters and the current mobility policy (which was originally intended to address skateboards and bicycles). Business & Finance is working on an updated policy. There is a wide range of mobility policies at institutions across nation. At UNL, safety for all members of the campus community is the premier goal for the new policy. Other partners working on this include Faculty Senate and ASUN. They are attempting to gather as much information as possible to help guide the policy. ASUN did a survey recently with questions that in part addressed scooters. It was found that most students don’t own scooters, but 63% of students have used a scooter on or near campus. 1/3 of students have witnessed students using scooters inside buildings or on university sidewalks. 59% believe there should be more stricter rules. An educational program will be available at the beginning of fall semester. President Gonzales asked how Staff Senate can be of assistance. Those with questions or complaints about scooter use should contact UNLPD or B&F, although, it is tricky to enforce regulations because scooter use does not violate
* HR Benfits Page: We now have a live helpline on the [HR benefits page](https://hr.unl.edu/health-benefits/) regarding prescription coverage with EmpiRx and Prescription Mart. Many issues with pharmacy rep. After discussion with HR Team, they helped to create a form. Will share a link today to share with colleagues. Advise that if you are having issues with prescriptions use the form to contact HR. Thank you to HR for working swiftly to bringing resolution to our question.
* Recognition of presidential leadership and the service of senators: Jessie Brophy District 6 recognized the leadership of Jordan Gonzales. This was the last meeting he will preside over. She recognized all his contributions for Staff Senate, declaring that he was an amazing leader and president. Jordan brought clarity, strength, and compassion to the role. He provided a teady voice for staff across campus and for a culture that respects individuals. Thanks to Jordan for leadership, and service.

Recognition of Senators Concluding Their Terms of Office:

* District 1: Eileen Bergt and Joleen Deinert
* District 3: Tony Lazarowicz, Mikki Sandin
* District 4: Carrie Jackson, Julia Stubblefield
* District 5: Chance Radtke, Katelyn Rife
* District 6: Brian Desh, Stephanie Hanson, Meg Kester, Lisa Vonfeldt
* District 7: Jeanne Schroeder
* District 8: Coleen Huls

**Adjournment at 4:00 p.m.**

The next Staff Senate meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 10, 2025, at the East Nebraska Union, Great Plains A Room. This is the orientation and onboarding meeting; executive officers will also be elected.

The minutes are respectfully submitted by Morgan Green McConnell, Secretary, and Joann Ross, Staff Senate Coordinator and Executive Secretary.

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*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.*