

Operating Staff Council

Member Handbook



Welcome to the Operating Staff Council! As a member of the Council, you are now part of a unique shared governance system that allows us to speak with one voice on behalf of the constituency we serve. We hope you find your time on the Council informative and fulfilling. Welcome aboard!

Who are We?

The Operating Staff Council is comprised of 16 members of the Operating Staff, representing more than 1,700 Civil Service employees on campus. Each member is elected to serve a three-year term. Every attempt is made to have at least one representative from the four divisions at NIU, including Administration, Finance and Facilities, Academic and Student Affairs, and University Advancement. Additional Operating Staff are appointed by the Council to various committees and commissions on campus including the:

Athletic Board

Campus Parking Committee

Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee

Computing Facilities Advisory Committee

Libraries Advisory Committee

Parking Appeals Committee

Unity in Diversity Committee

University Benefits Committee

Presidential Commission on Persons with Disabilities

Presidential Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities

Presidential Commission on the Status of Women

Representatives may also be called upon to participate in a grievance procedure hearing or to attend other meetings as needed. Once a year, members of the above-listed committees and commissions are invited to a Council meeting to give a report and provide updates on the activities of the committees and commissions on which they serve.

Mission Statement

The members of the operating staff of Northern Illinois University have the right to organize a council to represent their constituency. The Operating Staff Council is an integral part of the university governance system through its participation, communication, advisement, and assistance on the resolution of issues and the formulation of policies relevant to the general welfare of operating staff employees. The operating staff, through its OSC, may communicate its concerns to the relevant administrative bodies, to the appropriate vice president(s), to the president of the university, and shall then have the right of ultimate appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Ethics Statement

All Operating Staff are committed to performing their duties in a professional and conscientious manner in the furtherance of the mission of Northern Illinois University. Each Operating Staff member has specific and often unique duties which make each an integral part of the university. All Operating Staff are dedicated to supporting all other constituencies of the university. The Operating Staff is committed to consistently providing the highest quality service and support to the NIU community and the community at large in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The Operating Staff shall maintain the highest standards of professionalism in the performance of their duties. The Operating Staff shall treat all members of the university community, as well as the community at large, with the utmost respect by displaying a pleasant and civil demeanor at all times. Further, all Operating Staff shall be respectful of and sensitive to the needs of the many diverse cultures represented at NIU.
2. The Operating Staff shall be honest and ethical in the performance of their assigned duties. Further, Operating Staff shall be trustworthy and abide by all Statute and Rules as established by the State University Civil Service System (SUCSS), and by those policies and procedures established by the Board of Trustees and the constitution of NIU.
3. Those Operating Staff who deal with issues and matters of a personal or sensitive nature shall be committed to maintaining the highest degree of integrity by not disclosing such information to disinterested parties. The Operating Staff shall maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with non-public information.
4. The Operating Staff shall be committed to supporting the academic, research, and service mission of the university. They shall perform their duties in support of the furtherance of knowledge by assisting faculty in their roles in the academy. Operating Staff shall provide all university constituencies with excellent service and assist students in their university experience.

History of the OSC

The first known meeting of Civil Service employees took place way back in January, 1931, when approximately 30 Civil Service employees were employed on campus. That meeting was called to order by then president Karl L. Adams, who stressed that employees should be courteous and considerate in all their contacts with students and faculty.

In 1961, a newer version of the Council was formed called the Nonacademic Council. Their first meeting was held on April 7, 1961, and was formed to serve as an advisory group to the administration. Two representatives from each of the four divisions on campus were elected to the Council and the first order of business was to establish a Constitution and Bylaws for the group. The Bylaws described the duties of the officers, the membership composition of the Council, meeting times, requirements for election eligibility and election procedures. Still today, the bylaws are periodically reviewed and updated as policies and employee needs dictate.

December 17, 1969, marks the first meeting of what is now known as the Operating Staff Council. The name change was proposed by NIU's personnel office and adopted by the Council to better reflect its constituency. Many of the issues described in meeting minutes from that period and in subsequent years are important to Council members today—better employee benefits, merit raises and salary increases, communication and public relations, representation on university committees, recognition awards, staff education, and family activities. Through the years, the Council gained responsibility and recognition by advising the university on issues important to staff.

NIU is one of the largest universities in the state and employs approximately 1,700 Operating Staff in a wide variety of capacities: administrative, managerial, secretarial, clerical, food service, janitorial, grounds keeping, and other support

services. The Operating Staff Council works closely with the university to enhance the quality of life for Operating Staff employees. The Council's 16 members are elected according to the Council's Constitution and Bylaws. Council members represent the Operating Staff on a variety of university and Council committees and play an important role in the development of university policy as it relates to staff.

In 1998, the Council of Councils held its first meeting as a means of networking and sharing ideas with other civil service councils at other state universities. The annual Council of Councils meeting provides an opportunity to work together in the best interest of all state Civil Service employees.

Today, the OSC continues its mission of maintaining and improving the quality of life for all Operating Staff on the NIU campus. Recent years have brought even greater challenges to the Council as budget constraints and limited employment opportunities have stretched resources to the limits. Despite these challenges, the Council remains committed to providing the best possible service to our constituency.

PAST PRESIDENTS

1969-1970	John Peterson	1987-1988	Dianna Strink
1970-1971	Vernon Ray	1988-1990	Shey Lowman
1971-1972	Larry Berke	1990-1991	Sandi Sosnowski
1972-1973	Andy Thornburn	1991-1992	Joe Koch
1973-1975	Bill Marchese	1992-1993	Mary Crumbacher
1975-1977	John Coleman	1993-1994	Tom Miller
1977-1979	Randy Culver	1994-1997	Kate Romano
1979-1981	Dale Parkhouse	1997-1999	Andy Small
1981-1983	JoAnn Bergren	1999-2002	Judy Burgess
1983-1984	Pat Hewitt	2002-2004	Sara Clayton
1984-1985	Mary King	2004-2005	Donna Smith
1985-1987	Pat Hewitt	2005-	Rachel X. Turner

Committees of the Council

Each Council member is required to be a member of at least one committee of the Council. Committees meet independent of the full Council to discuss problems or issues of importance to all Operating Staff. It should be noted that all Council members are expected to be aware of, and to assist with all events and/or issues affecting Operating Staff, and service is not limited to the work of the committee. The committees include:

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee serves as a conduit between the OSC and the Operating Staff. This committee solicits input from the Operating Staff regarding their expectations of the OSC and conveys staff input to the OSC along with recommendations for action. This committee works with the editor of Northern Staff News to convey important information to Operating Staff. The PR committee monitors the OSC Outstanding Service Awards Committee and updates archives with pertinent historical information. This committee is also responsible for maintaining a camera and photo library.

Personnel/Staff Development/Benefits Committee

This Committee reviews and formulates recommendations and responds to inquiries from staff regarding personnel policies and procedures. This committee also reviews concerns related to employee benefits and works with the University Benefits Committee. This committee also explores new avenues for professional growth and advancement and makes recommendations for implementation of new programs.

Elections and Appointments Committee

This committee administers and supervises annual elections and appointments for vacancies on the OSC, OSC officers, candidates to fill vacancies on university commissions and committees on which the OSC has representation. This committee also evaluates the process for elections and makes recommendations for

Funding

improvements to the election process. The committee informs the Council of election results. This committee is also responsible for maintaining and updating the election procedure manual.

Special Events Committee

This committee plans and organizes the annual StaffFest luncheon for Operating Staff. The committee also helps to plan and delegate responsibilities for additional events sponsored by the Operating Staff Council. Members of this committee are responsible for publicity, purchasing door prizes (if applicable), creating fliers about the event, and reserving the location for the event.

Outstanding Service Award Selection Committee

This committee consists of at least one non-voting member of the Council to serve as liaison, as well as former recipients of the Outstanding Service Award, and two representatives from the divisions of the university. This committee reviews nomination packets for the award and can choose up to four winners. Recipients of this award are honored at the Operating Staff Service Awards dinner in the spring and are given a cash award of \$1,500.

Ad-Hoc Committees

Other temporary committees are sometimes formed for specific events. For example, a committee for decorations might be formed in anticipation of a specific event and then disbanded immediately following the event.

The Operating Staff Council receives funding from the university on an annual basis. All revenue sources are broken down into several accounts:

General Revenue Account

The university allocates monies annually to offset operating expenses. These expenses include printing of the Northern Staff News and other flyers/forms as needed; postage for mailings; office supplies; refreshments for OSC monthly meetings; and other miscellaneous expenses.

OSC Support Account

Monies for this account are received for special events such as the annual StaffFest luncheon, travel, media services expenses, Wellness Fair, and other events as deemed necessary.

NIU Credit Union Account

This account contains monies that were generated in the past when a fee was charged for the annual picnic for Operating Staff. The picnic has since been replaced by the StaffFest luncheon which is free to all Civil Service employees. This account is no longer receiving funds.

NIU Foundation Account

The NIU Foundation Account is used exclusively to fund the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship. Monies are received from proceeds derived from 50/50 drawings held at various events. Additional monies are received from donations to the account. Employees can make a one-time donation to the account or submit a payroll deduction form to contribute on a monthly basis. Up to two scholarships valued at \$500 each (\$250 each semester) are awarded annually.

Additional Committees

Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

A representative is elected every four years to the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) Employee Advisory Committee (EAC). This person is responsible for keeping abreast of all regulations, policies, and procedures implemented by the SUCSS office. This person also monitors issues and trends at all state universities and their potential impact on all Civil Service employees. This person is asked to report to the OSC at its monthly meetings.

University Advisory Committee (UAC)

This is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees (BOT). Members include the presidents of the Faculty Senate, OSC, Supportive Professional Staff Council, and four additional faculty members. Members attend BOT meetings and make reports to the Faculty Senate, the University Council, and their respective councils.

University Council

The University Council is made up of representatives from all constituencies on campus, including students, and is charged with addressing the needs of the campus community. Issues regarding the establishment, direction, and control of educational policy are addressed by the University Council. The president of the Operating Staff Council or the designated alternate serves as a voting member of the University Council, along with one additional member from the Operating Staff at large. The additional University Council representative will attend the monthly meeting of the University Council and report to the OSC any pertinent information.

State University Retirement System Member Advisory Committee (SURSMAC)

A representative is appointed to address the concerns of all operating staff regarding retirement and pension issues. This person observes trends in the state's fiscal decisions regarding employee retirement packages and incentives, attends SURSMAC meetings, and reports the latest information to the Council.

Special Events

StaffFest Luncheon

StaffFest is an annual event to say thank you to the Operating Staff for all that they do. Members of the administration, as well as Deans, Chairs, and Directors, are put to work to serve the Operating Staff. The event includes a full meal, 50/50 drawing for the OS Dependent Award, and door prizes. Operating Staff are granted release time from the President's Office to attend.

Wellness Fair

Each year, the Council sets up a table at the annual Wellness Fair in the Holmes Student Center. The event provides an opportunity for Council members to speak directly with constituents and to let them know who we are. Door prizes are offered and visitors can also enter a 50/50 drawing for a cash prize. Members of the Council are expected to volunteer to help out at the Wellness Fair.

OS Service Awards Dinner

The OS Service Awards dinner is held in the spring each year to honor those Operating Staff chosen for the Outstanding Service Award and also to recognize the years of service given to the university by Operating Staff. The event also honors Operating Staff retirees.

Council of Councils

Once a year, representatives from Operating Staff Councils from all of the state public universities meet for a day of information gathering, idea sharing, and just plain fun. Each year, a different university hosts the event and Operating Staff from around the state attend. Local and state officials are invited so they can learn first hand about the issues and concerns of Civil Service personnel from across the state.

Additional Responsibilities

Outstanding Service Award

Each year, information is sent to employees on campus reminding them to nominate an Operating Staff employee for the Outstanding Service Award. A nomination form, along with two letters of support are required for an employee to be considered. Up to four winners are chosen to receive the award. The recipients are honored at a special dinner in the spring and each also receives a cash award in the amount of \$1,500. Employees are only eligible to win the award once during their tenure at NIU. Winners are required to serve on the selection committee for the next year's contest.

OS Dependent Award

The Dependent Award is given to the dependent of an NIU Operating Staff employee or retiree. Interested students must submit an application explaining why they feel they are deserving of the award. The applicant must be a full-time student, have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better, and must be in good standing at the university. The recipient(s) are awarded \$500 for the academic year that is applied to any outstanding debts. The award is funded by 50/50 drawings held at OSC events, and also by donations. Students can receive the award more than once, as long as total winnings do not exceed \$2,500 over five years. Up to two recipients are chosen each year. The recipients are invited, along with their family member, to a Council meeting where the formal announcement is made.

Newsletter

The Northern Staff News is the newsletter created, edited, and distributed by the OSC. The newsletter contains information relevant to all Operating Staff including benefit issues, upcoming events, and employment changes, among other things. The newsletter is sent to all Operating Staff as well as administrators on campus, and Civil Service and campus leaders statewide

As part of the Operating Staff Council you are part of a unique shared governance system that allows you to have input on policies and procedures that affect more than 1,700 Civil Service employees here at NIU. Council members are expected to:

- ◆ Attend every meeting on the second Thursday of each month.
- ◆ Notify the Council president if you are unable to attend a meeting.
- ◆ Serve a three-year term.
- ◆ Serve on at least one committee of the Council.
- ◆ Have picture taken annually.
- ◆ Help out with special events.

The Operating Staff Council uses every available media to inform its constituency of relevant information that affects their employment such as benefits, salary concerns and the like. The Council submits information to the Northern Star, publishes information in our own newsletter, sends flyers to each employee, and posts information on our web page. Our web page can be found at www.niu.edu/osc.

We hope you enjoy your tenure with the Operating Staff Council and we welcome you!