# Member Handbook

As a member of the council, you are 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.

## Who are We?

The Operating Staff Council is comprised of 17 members of the operating staff, representing approximately 1500 civil service employees on campus. Each member is elected to serve a three-year term.

The Operating Staff Personnel Advisor (OSPA) serves as a confidential resource person and consultant to all civil service employees. The OSPA also serves as a liaison to OSC.

Additional operating staff are appointed by the council to various committees and commissions on campus including:

### University Council Representation

* **University Council:** Five operating staff members, selected by Operating   
  Staff Council
* **University Council Personnel Committee:** Two operating staff members selected by and from the operating staff members serving on University Council.
* **Fs-Uc Rules, Governance and Elections Committee:** One operating staff representative, who is either a member of University Council or of Faculty Senate

### Faculty Senate Representation

* **Faculty Senate:** Two operating staff members will be selected by the Operating Staff Council.
* **Faculty Senate Steering Committee:** One Operating Staff member, who is also a member of Faculty Senate
* **Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee:** One Operating Staff member, who is also a member of Faculty Senate.

Other Committees of the University  
With Operating Staff Representation

* **Athletic Board** [*three-year* term]: One member of the Operating Staff selected by the Operating Staff Council**.**
* **Campus Parking Committee** [*three-year* term]: Four operating staff employees, appointed by the Operating Staff Council
* **Computing Facilities Advisory Committee** [*three-year* term]: One member of the Operating Staff, selected by Operating Staff Council
* **Libraries Advisory Committee** [*three-year* term] One member of the operating staff nominated by the Operating Staff Council and selected by the executive vice president and provost.
* **Non-Union Faculty and Staff Grievance Panel:** The Grievance Panel is made up of three people from each constituency (Faculty, Instructors, SPS, OS, SGA). OSC will provide three members for griever to choose.
* **Parking Appeals Committee** [*three-year* term]: Three Operating Staff members appointed by the Operating Staff Council
* **Student Conduct Advisory Board** [*three-year* term]: One representative appointed by the president of the Operating Staff Council. The SCAB meets approximately once a month per members’ availability
* **Student Conduct Board** [*three-year* term]: Two members from the Operating Staff appointed by the Operating Staff Council. The SCB meets as needed.
* **Student Grievance Panel:** The Student Grievance Panel is made up of three people from each constituency (Faculty, Instructors, SPS, OS, SGA-undergraduate, SGA-graduate) OSC will provide three members for griever to choose.
* **University Benefits Committee** [*three-year* term]: Two Operating Staff members appointed by the president upon the recommendation of the Operating Staff Council.
* Presidential Commission on Persons with Disabilities
* Presidential Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
* Presidential Commission on Race and Ethnicity
* Presidential Commission on Interfaith Initiatives
* Presidential Commission on the Status of Women
* Presidential Commission on Well-being

Council members may be called upon to participate in grievance procedure hearings or attend additional meetings, as necessary. Annually, members from the listed committees and commissions are invited to a council meeting to present reports and provide updates on their respective activities.

## History of the OSC

The first known meeting of civil service employees took place 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 it was formed to serve as an advisory group to the administration.

December 17, 1969, marked 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
* Family activities

Through the years, the council gained responsibility and recognition by advising the university on issues important to staff. Today, NIU is one of the largest universities in the state and employs approximately 1,500 operating staff in a wide variety of capacities: administrative, managerial, secretarial, clerical, food service, building service workers, grounds keeping, and other support services.

The Operating Staff Council works closely with the university community and leadership to enhance the quality of life for operating staff employees. The council’s 17 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 a key 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.

The Operating Staff Council uses all 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 NIU Today, publishes information in our own newsletter, and posts information on our web page.

## Funding

The Operating Staff Council receives funding from the university on an annual basis.

### General Revenue Account

The university allocates monies annually to offset operating expenses. These expenses include purchasing office supplies, 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, the Wellness Fair, and other events as deemed necessary.

### NIU Foundation Account

The OSC has established an endowed Dependent Scholarship award. Scholarships are awarded annually. The NIU Foundation Account is used exclusively to fund the Operating Staff Dependent Scholarship. 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.

## 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.

### Executive Committee

* Screens meeting agenda items
* Makes assignments to standing committees as appropriate
* Reviews meeting minutes prior to submission to the OSC for approval
* Prepares budget proposals
* Handles general administrative matters
* Has authorization to sign purchase requests

### Elections/Appointments Committee

* Administers and supervises annual elections and appointments for the following: vacancies on the OSC, OSC officers, candidates to fill vacancies on university commissions and committees on which the OSC has representation
* Evaluates the process for elections and makes recommendations for improvements to the election process
* Informs candidates of election results
* Maintains and updates the election procedure manual

### Public Relations/Activities Committee

* Oversight of Northern Staff News; OSC Annual Event; Operating Staff Dependent Endowed Scholarship
* Manages updates to OSC plaques as needed to stay current
* Updates archives with pertinent historical information

### Workplace Guidance Committee

* Reviews and formulates recommendations and responds to inquiries from staff regarding personnel policies and procedures
* Reviews concerns related to employee benefits
* Maintains follow-up with the University Benefits Committee
* Explores new avenues for professional growth and advancement and makes recommendations for implementation of new programs
* Works in conjunction with the other OSC standing committees to identify, develop, promote, and implement new efforts designed to increase employee morale at NIU
* Also works in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, SPS Council, University Benefits Committee, and any other appropriate parties on campus on matters concerning employee morale

### Legislative Committee

* Maintains the OSC Constitution and Bylaws and reviews for compliance, when necessary
* Proposes amendments for OSC's consideration
* Monitors and communicates information about relevant local, state, and federal legislators (elected and non-elected)
* Facilitates the sharing of information on matters of interest or concern to the council and its constituents

### 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.

## Other Committees

### Employee Advisory Committee (EAC)

A representative is elected every four years to the State Universities Civil Service System Employee Advisory Committee (SUCSSEAC) or better referred to as Employee Advisory Committee (EAC). This person is asked to report to the OSC at its monthly meetings. Responsibilities of the representative include:

* Working with State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) on implementing changes/additions for all state universities’ civil service employees.
* Keeping abreast of all regulations, policies, and procedures implemented by the SUCSS office.
* Monitoring issues and trends at all state universities and their potential impact on all civil service employees.

### Council of Councils

Each year, representatives from operating staff councils across all state public universities gather for a day of information sharing, idea exchange, and camaraderie. The event rotates between universities, with operating staff from around the state attending. Local and state officials are invited to gain firsthand insight into the issues and concerns faced by civil service personnel statewide.

### University Advisory Committee (UAC)

The University Advisory Committee (UAC) 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 (UC) 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.

There are five OSC delegates to UC. The president of the Operating Staff Council, the OS Personnel Advisor, and three other delegates (or their designated alternates) serve as voting members of the UC.