

# **Operating Staff Personnel Advisor – Annual Review**

**FY 2024 (October 2023 – April 2024)**

Prepared for Natasha Johnson, President, Operating Staff Council April 25, 2024

## **Background**

The Operating Staff Personnel Advisor (OSPA) position was created in 2016 through the cooperation of the Operating Staff Council, the University Council and then Executive Vice President and Provost and current President, Lisa Freeman. I was appointed to the remainder of the previous OSPA's term on October 1, 2023.

## **OSPA's Directives**

I serve as a private resource and consultant to all civil service employees. Specifically, my duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Advise civil service staff about personnel policies and procedures at NIU, as well as with the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS).
- Advise and assist staff members who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement negotiated with NIU regarding personnel or employment concerns.
- Guide employees who are represented by a union that bargains directly with NIU to appropriate resources within their collective bargaining unit for issues related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment, etc.
- Accompany, upon request, the employee to both disciplinary and performance evaluation meetings, to meetings with AAEOE staff when filing a complaint or serving as a witness, and to meetings with Human Resource Services staff.
- Observe NIU's personnel and employment processes and suggest needed changes or clarifications through collaboration with Human Resource Services and the Office of General Counsel.

## **Highlights of FY2024 Contact Hours**

From October 1, 2023 – April 25, 2024

- I helped 12 civil service employees over a total of 25 meetings (both virtual and in-person), nine phone calls, and over 162 emails.
- Of the 12 employees, I met with eight of them at least two times or more.
- Six of the 12 cases are considered closed at this time. The other six still have pending outcomes yet to be finalized or resolved.
- Topics included:
  - Staff grievances/concerns
  - Performance plans
  - Job changes and job description discrepancies
  - Corrective action
  - Evaluations
  - Investigatory meetings
  - Mistreatment by supervisors
  - ECO investigations

**Interactions with Administration, Faculty and Staff**

Over the past seven months, I have attended meetings or sent emails on behalf of civil service employees with various NIU representatives including: Brian Smith, Cathy Doederlein, Liz Guess, Vicky Guzman, Pulchratia Lacey, Sandy Cox, Carrie Kortegast, Joe Lovelace, Sarah Garner, Carol Sumner and John Acardo.

**OSPA's Goals for FY 2025 and Beyond:**

- Continue collaboration with the other personnel advisors, Carrie Kortegast and Joe Lovelace, as well as Brian Smith, director of Employee Well-being, Cathy Doederlein, director of employee experience and Sandy Cox, ombudsperson.
- Develop and produce OSPA brochure and other marketing materials.
- Develop and maintain a webpage that responds to current employee issues and concerns.
- Continue to actively seek the opportunity to educate campus about the OSPA role.
- Encourage senior leadership to require (or strongly encourage) all supervisors and foremen to take EAP's "Supervisor Training Program Cohort Group" series.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly A. Nicholson  
Assistant Director, Web Communications  
Operating Staff Personnel Advisor