July 18, 2024

Office of Faculty Senate and University Council

Northern Illinois University

Altgeld Hall 103 | DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Re: Supportive Professional Staff Personnel Advisor Annual Report

Dear President Felicia Bohanon, Supportive Professional Staff Council, and NIU Faculty Senate and University Council:

I have completed my second year as the Supportive Professional Staff (SPS) Personnel Advisor. It is an honor to serve in this capacity and use my years of advocacy for the benefit of colleagues. The Personnel Advisor role includes:

* Advising SPS members about the personnel policies and procedures within the university and the courses of action open to SPS members;
* Advising and assisting SPS members who are experiencing difficulties with the personnel process;
* Advising and assisting SPS members dissatisfied with personnel decisions;
* Observing the workings of the personnel process and to recommend needed changes or clarification;

Throughout my second year I have assisted five SPS members. One of whom contacted me because they saw my information on the SPS website, the others were aware of my role because of previous interaction. One case was assisting a Temporary SPS employee understand their term of employment and how that differs from a traditional SPS employment status. Two cases dealt with helping negotiate MOU language to protect the employees’ status while departments were in a leadership transition phase. Another case involves the status of a unit’s reporting line and how decisions were made, without proper input from the unit leaders and the impact those decisions will have on that department’s effectiveness. I also consulted with an SPS member regarding concerns on the direction they were given on managing a legal issue. We discussed the matter and arrived at a strategy that protected them and their department. I have also consulted with another Personnel Advisor on a general advocacy question.

It should also be noted that the Operating Staff Personnel Advisor, Holly Nicholson, initiated a standing meeting for all NIU personnel advisors to meet with the Ombudsperson, the Director of Employee Well-being, and the Director of Employee Experience. These meetings have been helpful in sharing trends, concerns, and advocacy tools among all our areas. I thank Holly for proposing these meetings, which have proved valuable and should continue as part of the personnel advisor duties.

Thank you again for allowing me to be associated with the SPS Council. I wish all of you the best for this academic year. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Joe Lovelace