I. PRESIDENT’S CHARGE TO NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC or Council) is composed of staff, appointed by the President or his/her representative, from among the exempt and non-exempt staff of the University. It serves an important function for communication between the University’s administration and the staff. The Council’s primary liaison shall be with the Senior Vice President for Business and Finance and the Associate Vice President of the Department of Human Resources. At its inception, the Council received its budget from the Department of Human Resources, but now receives its budget from the office of the Senior Vice President for Business and Finance. The Department of Business and Finance shall provide, from its resources and budget, a reasonable amount of support for the Council’s activities. The functions of the Council are as follows:

- To work with the Associate Vice President of the Department of Human Resources, the Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, and the President, in hearing and reviewing staff concerns and interests;
- To serve as a “sounding board” for Central Administration on proposed actions and programs that will affect the staff;
- To initiate suggestions for improvements in the staff relations of the University and to help bring to the attention of Central Administration useful ideas that may originate from within the staff;
- To recommend to the President staff members who can serve as appointees on other University committees where such appointments are appropriate; and
- To serve, in general, to help make Northwestern’s educational community an efficient, fulfilling and attractive environment for employment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC) serves as an advisory voice and change-agent for Northwestern staff in matters relating to community development, professional opportunities and workplace concerns. This is accomplished through active engagement with staff, the University president, the Office of Human Resources, and/or various senior administrators. (Amended August 2013.)

II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Northwestern University is comprised of four groups of individuals: students, faculty, staff and alumni. Before the inception of NUSAC, decision-making that affected all members of the University community excluded the staff. In order to facilitate enlightened decision making, the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council participates, assists, and advises in decision-making processes affecting the staff’s relationship with the larger University community. Among the Council’s immediate and continuing concerns are:
Staff compensation and staff benefit policies;

Effective communication to and from the staff concerning its interests;

Development and implementation of more efficient and effective personnel policies relating to the staff;

A better environment through participating in existing University committees, and by suggesting ways to achieve efficiency and economy in operations;

Engaging staff members with both the University and larger community through networking, education, and philanthropic opportunities.

Other specific areas of concern, which are brought to its attention by any individual within the community; and

To accomplish its obligations to the staff and to the larger University community, the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council shall establish procedures, which will make it continuing and lasting.

III. RULES OF OPERATION

A. Membership

The Council shall consist of 25 members with equal voting power. The membership shall reflect, as much as possible, the full diversity of the staff. This diversity is defined by, but not limited to, distinctions of campus location, job classification, functional area, gender, race, sexual orientation or belief. Members shall be permanent full-time and/or permanent part-time staff, exempt or non-exempt and have not less than two years’ continuous service with the University by the date of appointment. (Amended July 2009 to increase membership to 21.) (Amended September 2010 to increase membership to 25)

Each year, if needed, eligible staff members shall be appointed by the President, from a list of nominees recommended by the Council, for three-year terms beginning the following September 1. The list of nominees will be developed from applications received from the entire University community and shall be forwarded to the President within a reasonable period of time after the nomination list is approved by the Council.

Each member of the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council shall express a willingness to serve in terms of time and commitment. Four absences from Council meetings between September 1 and August 31 of any year shall constitute resignation from the Council. Attendance at committee meetings is also important. Four non-University recognized absences from assigned committee meetings during the same period noted above shall also constitute resignation from the Council. Time away on approved University leave of absence is not considered to be part of these absences. The Executive Committee has the authority to make an exception to this
requirement in certain cases, for example: when a Council member misses four meetings due to work conflicts but there is clear evidence that this member contributes time and efforts outside those meetings and continues to demonstrate commitment to the Council in other ways.

- Mid-year vacancies shall be filled using applicants who have been placed on the waitlist during the previous recruitment period, in the order in which they were initially ranked. The Chair has the responsibility to confirm with potential nominees, and the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, that nominees are willing and eligible for membership and will extend an offer to the first, and then to subsequent nominee(s), if necessary. The vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the replaced member’s term, by appointment of the President. If there are no available nominees, there must be a new round of recruitment, and the nominees identified from this process shall be voted on by the Council.

- In addition to attending Council and committee meetings, it is expected that all Council members will be active participants in Council activities, requests, and tasks as needed and as schedule allows.

- No Council member shall serve consecutively for more than two, three-year terms.

B. Officers

i. Description of Officers

The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council shall be elected by a majority of the membership at the same time that new members are approved. Officers must expect to invest time and commitment far beyond the level of that required of other Council members. The officers shall be elected for a one-year term, shall have had one year of Council membership, and may be re-elected for a second one-year term, for a total of two terms in the same office.

Duties of the officers consist of, but are not limited to:

a. Chair

- Preside over all regular and special meetings of the Council;
- Speak officially for the Council;
- Vote on all matters brought before the Council as a regular member;
- Annually appoint chairs of the standing committees in consultation with the elected officers;
- Make annual committee assignments for individual Council members in consultation with the Executive Committee;
Submit, no later than September, a comprehensive report of Council activities for the past year to the Staff and the President;

Work with the treasurer to obtain access to University financial systems for NUSAC accounts with approval authority for transactions;

Approve all purchases from NUSAC funds;

Work with the treasurer to review, reconcile and approve monthly budget statements for NUSAC accounts;

Chair the Executive Committee;

Serve as a member on a standing committee;

With the Vice Chair, serve as final editor to all official Council correspondence;

Monitor “old business” for items that require discussion at subsequent meetings;

Check all NUSAC correspondence, for example email, unless designated to another Council member;

In consultation with the Secretary, notify member if he/she is close to the limit on absences;

Serve as immediate past chair upon completion of term as active chair; and

Such other duties as the Council shall require.

b. Vice Chair

Preside over meetings in the Chair’s absence;

Advise and counsel the Chair on executive decisions;

Take the lead on planning the President’s State of the University or similar annual event;

Vote on all matters brought before the Council as a regular member;

Monitor adherence to and maintenance of the Constitution and Bylaws;

Serve as a member on a standing committee;

With the Chair, serve as final editor to all official Council correspondence; and

Such other duties as the Council shall require.
c. Secretary

- Maintain all minutes, records and resolutions of the Council;
- Receive and file all committee reports;
- Record all votes of the Council;
- Track member attendance and consult with the Chair if a member is close to the absence limit;
- Assure that each member of the Council has a copy of the current Constitution and Bylaws, membership roster, monthly Council agenda, minutes, materials from committees and treasurer, and any other pertinent documents;
- Establish Council meeting schedule, including all necessary arrangements for meeting locations, and distribute to members;
- Establish an interview schedule for Council applicants and handle interview-related correspondence with applicants in consultation with the Chair and Communications Committee;
- Maintain the list of potential nominees to fill mid-year vacancies on the Council;
- Manage and maintain the Council email listserv (nusac@listserv.it.northwestern.edu);
- Vote on all matters as a regular member;
- Serve as a member on a standing committee;
- Coordinate application and document sharing software between group members; and
- Such other duties as the Council shall require.

d. Treasurer

- Prepare a yearly proposed budget for the Council’s approval and submission to the Budget Office;
- Maintain all financial records for the Council, including the preparation of a monthly budget report to be presented and approved at monthly Council meetings;
- Obtain access to University financial systems for NUSAC account;
- Enter all NUSAC purchase orders;
- Vote on all matters as a regular member;
Serve as a member on a standing committee; and

Such other duties as the Council shall require.

**ii. Officer Position Vacancies**

When a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair, the Vice Chair shall immediately become Chair for the remainder of the Council year (September 1–August 31).

When a vacancy occurs in the office of Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, the Chair shall immediately appoint an acting officer for the remainder of the Council year (September 1–August 31). The acting officer shall become a standing officer upon the majority vote of the Council membership.

The regular terms of all officers shall end when their replacements assume office at the beginning of each Council year.

**C. Removal of Members:**

Officers, chairs, or members can be suspended or removed by 2/3 vote of NUSAC members. Valid causes for removal include:

1. Continued, gross, or willful neglect of duties of the office;
2. Failure or refusal to disclose necessary information on matters of organization business;
3. Unauthorized expenditures, signing of checks, or misuse of organization funds;
4. Misrepresentation of the organization and its officers to outside persons.

Examples of conduct that are not valid grounds for removal from office are:

1. Poor performance as an officer due to lack of ability;
2. Negligence that is not gross or willful;
3. A tendency to create friction and disagreement;
4. Increase in job responsibilities that temporarily interfere with abilities to perform duties.

The procedures for suspending or removing members must provide adequate notice to the accused member, a fair hearing, and a reasonable opportunity for the member to present a defense.


Missing four Council or committee meetings results in automatic removal from the Council (except as noted above).

**D. Meetings**

**i. General Council**

Regular monthly Council meetings shall be held the first Wednesday of each month, during normal working hours, alternating between the Chicago and Evanston campuses. It is expected
that at least half of the meetings will be in-person meetings, and the remainder can be done by videoconference. Any change to the number of in-person meetings to accommodate the use of new technologies and/or members’ schedules, must be discussed with the full Council and is subject to a vote using the standard voting process.

Monthly Council meetings may be attended by any staff personnel. In order to be included on the agenda, a staff member must contact the Chair or secretary prior to the meeting. The Chair reserves the right to establish and control the Council meeting agenda. The Council reserves the right to go into closed session.

Five Council members may request in writing that a special meeting be called. The Chair shall be responsible for notifying the membership a week in advance of such special meetings.

A simple majority, including the Chair or the Vice Chair, shall constitute a quorum to conduct Council business.

**ii. Standing Committees**

All standing committees must meet on a monthly basis.

**iii. Ad Hoc Committees**

Frequency, location and type of ad hoc committee meetings will be determined by the committee chair.

All meetings should be conducted under the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. Any conflict between those rules and the NUSAC Constitution and Bylaws shall be resolved in favor of the NUSAC Constitution and Bylaws.

**E. Voting**

Voting at Council meetings on matters of general business shall consist of voice vote unless a motion is specifically passed for a hand, secret ballot, or e-mail vote. Matters of general business may be approved by a majority of members present.

**F. Committees**

**i. Executive Committee**

Shall be composed of:

- The four officers of the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council;
- The chairpersons of the current standing committees and any current ad hoc committees;
- The immediate past chair of NUSAC if still on the Council.
Duties and responsibilities shall consist of:

- Making special appointments to University committees in consultation with the entire Council whenever possible;
- Conducting elections for NUSAC members and officers;
- Appointing a representative from NUSAC to University committees as opportunities present themselves;
- Setting the agenda for general Council meetings; and
- Such other duties as the Chair or Council shall request.

ii. Standing Committees

All appointments are for one year. It is the responsibility of the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to distribute Council membership evenly amongst the standing committees and/or as committee work load dictates. All standing committees must meet on a monthly basis. Committees are required to conduct the majority of their meetings in person but may plan up to three committee meetings via conference call per year. Meetings should be held on alternate campuses. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to schedule these meetings and to distribute this schedule to all Council members. Anticipated absence from committee meetings must be reported to the committee chair. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to submit an agenda to all committee members and/or guests prior to each meeting, to ensure that meeting minutes are taken and a final copy approved by the committee membership and to submit the monthly agenda and committee approved minutes to the secretary prior to the next Council meeting. All committees are open to all members. To attend a committee meeting, the Council member who is not a regular member of that committee is required to contact the committee’s chair in advance of the scheduled meeting.

a. Benefits Committee

Duties and responsibilities shall consist of:

- Work directly with the Director of the Benefits Division of the Department of Human Resources on benefits issues related to staff;
- Establish subcommittees on specific benefits, topics or issues as needed;
- Coordinate, report and respond to staff suggestions and concerns referred to NUSAC regarding benefits policies and procedures;
- Provide a liaison with the General Faculty Committee’s (GFC) Benefits Committee; and
- Plan and staff any brown bags relating to outreach issues assigned to it by the Council.
Such other duties as the Chair or Council shall request.

b. Communications Committee

Duties and responsibilities shall consist of:

- Coordinate the lines of communication between staff and the Council;
- Coordinate publicity and public relations activities of the Council in conjunction with the Chair;
- Work with the Secretary in maintaining records and information it has collected;
- Publish a NUSAC newsletter, optimally on a quarterly basis, to be distributed to all staff. Content of the newsletter and a final draft must be approved by the Executive Committee and the Associate Vice President of Human Resources (or their designate);
- Establish and maintain a NUSAC web site (content of the web site to be approved by the Executive Committee);
- Establish and maintain other forms and mediums of communication as made available to or deemed necessary by the Council or Chair;
- In conjunction with the Executive Committee, solicit applications for Council membership;
- Publicize, in conjunction with the other NUSAC standing committees, brown bags on topics of interest to staff (information disseminated at all brown bags to be reported in the newsletter and other appropriate mediums);
- Publicize, an annual State of the University Address (or similar event) to be presented by the President where the President meets annually with staff to listen to and answer their questions; and
- Such other duties as the Chair or Council shall request.

c. Human Resources Committee

Duties and responsibilities shall consist of:

- Work directly with the Associate Vice President of the Department of Human Resources, the Director of HR, and related HR staff and committees on staff-related human resources issues;
- Coordinate, report and respond to staff suggestions and complaints referred to the Council involving personnel policies and procedures;
Work on staff development issues including, but not limited to, performance review, compensation, hiring, promotions and transfers, mentoring, career ladders, transparency in job grade and salary range, staff job growth and professional development;

Plan and staff any brown bags relating to staff development issues assigned to it by the Council; and

Such other duties as the Chair or Council shall request.

d. Outreach Committee

This committee was created in the fall of 2009 by the Council.

Duties and responsibilities shall consist of:

Promote NUSAC by reaching out to other University groups;

Foster cooperative and collaborative ideals by reaching out to the entire University community across all campuses (where possible) and with students, faculty, and administration where appropriate;

Network with other University groups on events such as philanthropic drives, town halls, and other University initiatives beneficial or informative for staff;

Work with Communications to let staff know about such events and encourage participation;

Sponsor or be involved in philanthropic events to promote community unity and create a positive and socially engaged work environment;

Plan and staff any brown bags relating to outreach issues assigned to it by the Council.

Help promote and participate in MLK Day activities; and

Such other duties as the Chair or Council shall request.

iii. Ad Hoc Committees

Issues occasionally arise which require the attention of the Council but do not match the focus of any standing committee. At these times, the Chair will propose and the Council will vote to establish an ad hoc committee. This committee will have a specific purpose and be time-limited. Committee membership will be volunteer; members will serve on this committee in addition to their current standing committee. There will be as many members as needed. This committee will assign itself a chair, and this chair will participate in executive committee planning calls,
submit meeting minutes to the Secretary and give committee updates at the general Council meeting.

G. Elections

At the start of each academic year (approximately mid-September), the Executive Committee shall set a timeline for NUSAC member recruitment that yields new member nominees for the President’s consideration and appointment during the months of June and July.

The Executive Committee, in consultation with the General Council, will approve the use of an application device that is emblematic of the values for which NUSAC stands, as outlined in the NUSAC Constitution and Bylaws. The Council membership shall vote to determine the list of Council member nominees. The Secretary or designee appointed by the Chair will compile the voting results and present the results to the council. Any dispute shall be resolved through a council vote where majority rules.

During this same new member recruitment timeframe, the Executive Committee shall also open a nomination period for new candidates for the Executive Committee. It shall be the charge of the Chair to oversee the voting processes for both new Council members and Executive Committee elections.

H. Adoption of Amendments

Proposed amendments to sections of these rules shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote at a regular meeting after prior written notice of such amendments to be considered.

The Council will present to the President of the University relevant proposed amendments for administration approval and such sections shall become effective upon approval by the President.

The NUSAC Constitution and Bylaws shall be made available to all members of the University community.