

Ask NUSAC

Dear NUSAC:

I hear a lot about parking at NU, but I don't drive to work. Does NU offer any help to people who commute via public transportation?

Northwestern University offers two programs to benefit staff who do not drive to work: pre-tax purchase of transit fares through payroll deduction and several shuttle bus services.

Transit Benefit

Employees may elect a monthly payroll deduction for the purchase of CTA transit cards or RTA transit checks (to pay for Metra train tickets) which are mailed to their homes. Up to \$65 may be deducted for transportation expenses.

Individual savings will vary with one's income and tax bracket. For example, an employee who takes the CTA, paying \$79.20 in cash fares per month, can receive a transit card worth \$71 (\$65, plus the CTA's \$6 bonus). Because payment is made in pre-tax dollars, a payroll deduction of \$65 only reduces take-home pay by approximately \$50.

Employees who ride Metra trains may opt for a \$65 RTA transit check to be used toward the purchase of either a monthly or ten-ride ticket. CTA riders may also choose a \$65 RTA check and add \$10 in cash to buy a CTA 30-day pass for unlimited riding.

It may seem expensive to commute via public transportation; however, when you calculate the cost of gas and parking, it is very similar or even less expensive. For instance, an employee who lives about 25 miles from work takes the Metra train for \$85.05 per month (or \$4.05 per day), plus a shuttle pass for \$32 per month (\$1.52 per day), for a total daily cost \$5.57. The cost of gas would be at least \$3 per day and parking in Chicago at NU rates costs about \$2.28 for a total of \$5.28 per day. This is before you add in the wear in tear on your car and yourself from traveling in rush hour traffic.

STAFF DISCUSS ISSUES WITH SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS AT NUSAC BROWN BAG EVENTS – continued from page 2

about growing interest and/or use of the intercampus shuttle service as well as the pre-tax transit deduction for public transportation, as both these initiatives relieve some pressure on existing parking resources.

On the Evanston campus, Associate Vice President Jake Julia introduced the new Office of Change Management and took input and suggestions from the group of about 25 gathered in the Louis Room of Norris Center. Mr. Julia described his office as a joint initiative

The Transit Deduction Request is available at Human Resources, or on-line along with various other HR forms:
<http://www.nwu.edu/hr/hris/forms/index.html>

More information about the transit benefit is available on the CTA's WWW page: <http://www.yourcta.com/welcome/transitb.html>

Shuttle Buses

Several shuttle bus services are available to NU staff, upon presentation of a WILDCARD.

The Evanston Parking Shuttle is free and runs weekday rush hours. Stops include the Central Street Metra Station, the El stations at Central and Foster streets, and various locations on campus. The schedule can be found on the WWW page:
http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/rush_sun.htm

The inter-campus shuttle is free and runs weekdays between Chicago and Evanston. For details:
<http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/Parking/inter.htm>

The McGaw shuttle serves Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Children's Memorial Hospital and the NU Medical School, running between the Chicago campus and the Lincoln Park area. The bus makes round trips daily between 6:05 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. For details:
<http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/Parking/chicago.html>

The Chicago Train Shuttle runs from Union and Northwestern stations and the Metra station at Randolph street to the Chicago Campus.

Ten-ride tickets for the Hospital and Chicago Train Shuttle are \$10, or a monthly pass is \$32.00. Further information on the schedule and stops may be found at:
<http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/Parking/train.htm>

between the Provost and Vice President of Business and Finance, with a mission of decreasing the barriers to change and improving the efficiency of work processes at the University.

Examples of projects in which the office is currently involved include: preparing for the new timekeeping system; working with the Controller's Office and HR on developing and piloting a structure for providing more effective access to business functions and services from Central Administration; and possible projects with the Office of Research, HR, and the Student Enterprise System.

NUSAC

Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council

WINTER 2001



INSIDE

NOTABLES

QUICK TAKES

ASK NUSAC

NUSAC WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

*Do you have questions
for future columns?
Send them to
nusac@northwestern.edu
with "ASK NUSAC" in
the subject line.*

Mark your calendars for the President's State of the University Address!

President Bienen will share his perspective on the progress and the challenges we have faced during 2000, and will describe goals and activities for the future. Don't miss this opportunity to gain a shared understanding on a number of University issues.

President Henry Bienen will deliver his State of the University message on the:

**Chicago Campus: Tuesday, February 13, 2001
9:30 am to 11:00 am
Thorne Auditorium
375 East Chicago Avenue**

**Evanston Campus: Wednesday, February 14, 2001
9:00 am to 10:30 am
McCormick Auditorium
Norris Center**

If you would like to ask the President a question, please attend this informative session. If prefer not to ask your questions yourself, come anyway and NUSAC will try to ask your question for you - just e-mail your question to nusac@northwestern.edu by January 31, 2001. Or clip out the form below and mail your question to NUSAC c/o Claudia Kunin, Theatre and Interpretation Center, 1979 S. Campus Drive, Evanston Campus.

Please include the following information:

- which campus you are from
- which address you will be attending
- if you would like to remain anonymous

This event is sponsored by the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC) and the General Faculty Committee (GFC).

Name _____	I work on the	___ Chicago Campus ___	Evanston Campus
I will be attending the ___ Chicago Campus Address ___ Evanston Campus Address			
Campus Phone _____		e-mail _____	
I would like to remain anonymous			
My Question for President Bienen is:			

NUSAC meets with the President

On November 9, 2000, NUSAC held its annual meeting with President Bienen. The group outlined the activities and accomplishments of NUSAC during FY2000, and highlighted its goals for FY2001. The members then engaged in a lively discussion with the President on a variety of topics including staff turnover and compensation, the benefits coverage provided to Northwestern staff relative to other Chicago area institutions, and the culture of the University.

The President's candid remarks provided NUSAC with a clearer sense of the Administration's priorities and its goals for the future. President Bienen agreed that staff turnover is a crucial problem. Although our peer institutions in urban areas are experiencing similar or worse turnover, the University is particularly vulnerable because turnover has been an ongoing problem at Northwestern for a number of years. He indicated that the Budget planning process for FY2002 has begun and includes the opportunity to review more aggressive scenarios for improving staff compensation. These scenarios are designed to improve compensation over three, four or five years, contingent on available funding. The goal of these scenarios is to bring staff compensation up to the a level equal to the average salary for similar positions at our peer institutions and employees in the Chicago area.

President Bienen indicated that deciding where staff funding should be geared, toward compensation or benefits, is a source of ongoing debate. He also said the University does not strive to be a leader in benefits or compensation but to be average in both areas relative to our peers and to competitive employers in the Chicago market.

When NUSAC asked President Bienen about the new three-level co-pay for prescription drugs, the President acknowledged that greater prescription costs may have to be borne by employees. He said that this step was necessary in order to share the increasing costs of prescription drugs between the University and its employees. One reason for the recent increase in prescription drug costs is the surge in use of newer designer drugs so often advertised in the media. The President emphasized the value of greater communication between employees and their physicians to adequately assess prescription drug needs and the possibility of using lower cost generic drugs in appropriate cases.

The President responded to comments regarding the culture at NU. He agreed that it is important for the University to foster a strong sense of respect among all its constituents and to provide a culture of service among and between faculty, staff and students.

President Bienen thanked NUSAC and encouraged the future exchange of ideas and debate on topics of importance.

Staff discusses issues with senior administrators at Brown Bag events

NUSAC was pleased to host Brown Bag events on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses during November. Eugene Sunshine, Vice President of Business and Finance, joined about 25 staff members on the Chicago campus to review issues including staff compensation, parking and construction on the Chicago campus. VP Sunshine also responded to many questions from the group gathered in Lowden Hall.

Regarding staff turnover and compensation, Mr. Sunshine reiterated many of the points President Bienen had made to NUSAC in its meeting several weeks earlier (see above). He indicated that during the past few years the University has made progress in dealing with the average differential between NU staff salaries and the market average for those employers to whom we compare ourselves. This past year HR provided guidance to target the largest salary increases to those staff whose salaries fall within the lower half of the salary range. It is this group who remains most vulnerable and tends to make little progress through their salary range as their length of service to the University increases. Funds for FY2002 will likely also

focus on this group, as pressures to pay incoming staff higher starting salaries in order to attract them to the University adds pressure to internal equity for existing staff.

VP Sunshine responded to questions and suggestions for streamlining the process for hiring and for reclassification of existing staff positions, the challenges of managing positions funded by 'soft money' from sponsored programs, and navigating the existing number and structure of positions and grade levels at Northwestern.

VP Sunshine also discussed plans to build an addition onto the Erie Street garage in the next few months. This effort is part of a broader strategy which includes providing spaces for the occupants of the new research building, and Northwestern Memorial Hospital becoming the primary occupant of the Huron Street garage. This will require current users of the Huron garage to move to Erie. After these accommodations there may be a net increase of several hundred spaces in the Erie addition, but plans are still being finalized. Mr. Sunshine was pleased to hear from attendees

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Did You Know?

Wildcard Advantage Program

Did you know that you can use your Wildcard to receive discounts on everything from automobiles to wireless service? Here's just a sample of over 150 area merchants offering discounts to NU employees.

Evanston Businesses

<i>Evanston Nissan</i>	<i>15% off service/parts; 2% over invoice on all cars</i>
<i>Jiffy Lube</i>	<i>20% off any service</i>
<i>Piven Theatre Workshop</i>	<i>10% off classes</i>
<i>Evanston Eyes</i>	<i>20 % off glasses; 10% off contacts</i>
<i>Trattoria Demi</i>	<i>15% off a single entrée</i>
<i>Great Clips for Hair</i>	<i>\$8.00 haircut and blow dry</i>
<i>Good's of Evanston</i>	<i>10% off non sale items</i>
<i>Evanston Lumber</i>	<i>5% off building materials</i>
<i>The Homestead</i>	<i>20% off standard daily rate</i>
<i>Fox Animal Hospital</i>	<i>10% off all services</i>

Chicago Businesses

<i>Bacinos</i>	<i>10% off any purchase</i>
<i>Supercuts</i>	<i>\$1.00 off regular hair cut</i>
<i>Kingston Mines</i>	<i>\$3.00 off cover charge</i>
<i>Sun Kin Optical</i>	<i>\$50.00 off complete eyeglasses</i>
<i>Seattle's Best</i>	<i>10% off any purchase</i>
<i>Scruples II</i>	<i>\$20.00 Haircuts for Men \$30.00 Haircuts for Women</i>

For a complete list of Evanston area businesses that offer NU employee discounts and details of each discount, check the Wildcard web page: <http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/Purchasing/discounts/index.html>

For a complete list of Chicago area businesses that offer NU employee discounts and to pick up the required discount card, stop by the Parking Office, 1st floor, Abbott Hall on the Chicago Campus.

Spotlight on NUSAC –Mary MacLean

Mary MacLean is a Teaching Assistant Coordinator at the Graduate School. She completed her 25th year at NU in August of 2000. Mary has worked at both ends of the Evanston campus—up north in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and down south at the Graduate School.

Why I joined NUSAC:

I joined NUSAC because I thought it was time to be proactive rather than complacent. Also, having been a strong student advocate at Penn State and here, I had a desire to represent my fellow staff members and to voice their concerns.

What people don't know about the Graduate School:

It takes a Herculean effort to provide excellent service since the advent of the Student Enterprise System.

My favorite places on campus are:

The Shakespeare Garden and the lakefront. I had a wonderful view of Lake Michigan for the first several years when I worked in the Frances Searle Building. Now, I'm grateful just to have a window in Crown!

When I talk about NUSAC to other staff members:

I encourage them to become active participants—attend brownbags, make an effort to attend the President's annual State of the University address. I encourage them to voice their concerns and direct them to the appropriate committees on NUSAC (Benefits, Human Resources). Last but not least, I encourage them to apply for membership on NUSAC because it is a wonderful opportunity to get to know staff members (exempt and nonexempt) from both the Evanston and Chicago campuses and to have interaction with senior administration.