

NUSAC

Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council

SPRING 2007



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JOIN NUSAC

We are now accepting
Membership Applications for 2007-2008

APPLICATION DEADLINE, JUNE 8, 2007
(See the application insert)

ABOUT NUSAC

Chartered by Northwestern University's president in 1973, the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC) was formed to participate, assist, and advise in decision-making processes affecting the staff's relationship with the larger University community.

MEMBERSHIP

NUSAC members are selected from a diverse pool of staff from both campuses, various schools and areas, and exempt and non-exempt roles. There are 18 NUSAC members, who bring their experience and talent to improve the work environment for all staff.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Regular full or part-time staff member with at least two years of continuous service
- Able to attend monthly general council meetings
- Able to attend monthly meetings for one of three working sub-committees
- Willing to serve a three-year term
- Willing to work as part of a team
- Have your supervisor's approval to participate

APPLICATION PROCESS

Employees interested in becoming members of NUSAC must complete an application form. Applications are reviewed by current Council members. Interviews of finalists will take place sometime in June/July 2007 and Council recommendations are forwarded to the University President.

To learn more about NUSAC's involvement, visit our web site at www.northwestern.edu/nusac.

MISSION STATEMENT

NUSAC is a group of volunteer staff members appointed by the President to represent employee concerns to the University administration. NUSAC solicits input, investigates concerns, and addresses issues with the University administration. The Council formulates recommendations and advises in decision-making processes regarding matters of concern for staff. NUSAC is dedicated to maintaining a positive work environment for staff and promoting excellence within the University community.

2006 OPEN ENROLLMENT SURVEY PRELIMINARY RESULTS

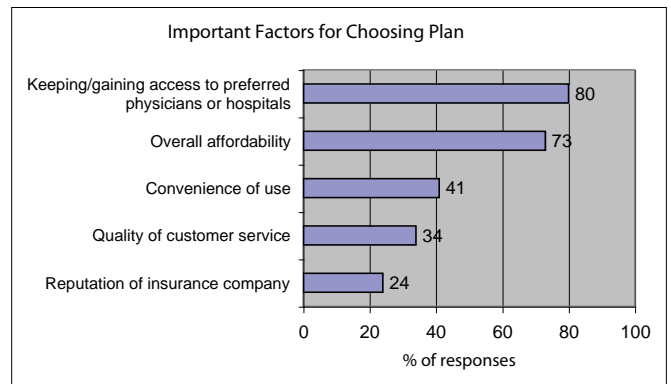
During Fall 2006 Open Enrollment there were significant changes to the health care benefits and each employee was required to make a choice concerning their health coverage. To better understand how these changes impacted each of you, the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC) sent a web link to all staff and faculty that connected you to an Open Enrollment Survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather data on your open enrollment experience and choices, share this information with the University administration, and use the information to make improvements to future processes. There were several key issues that concerned NUSAC when designing this survey including how the increase in coverage tiers and change in health care plans would financially impact employees, and what factors were most important to employees when deciding to enroll or waive health coverage.

Over 27 departments from both campuses were represented in the survey responses. A total of 931 employees completed the survey, 80% were staff and 20% were faculty. Given the response rate, we cannot say that this sample represents all staff and faculty, but the results do point to some trends. It is important to note that since respondents could check more than one answer for some questions, percentages may add up to greater than 100%. Included are some highlights of the survey, focusing on health care benefit changes.

Preliminary results show that about nine percent of employees waived health care coverage for 2007 and about two-thirds of respondents made some change to their health care benefits. Of the respondents that retained health care coverage through the university, over 50% did not change their health care plan and about 45% retained the same coverage tier.

In 2007, coverage tiers were expanded from two options (single or family) to four (employee, employee+children, employee+spouse, or family). We were curious to know how

the choice of new coverage tiers would financially impact respondents. 23% of respondents said the cost would be higher, 12% said the cost would be lower, and 14% said they were uncertain of the financial implications.



The most important factors noted by the majority of respondents were keeping or gaining access to preferred physicians/hospitals (80%) and overall affordability (73%). The results also revealed that the main reasons respondents changed their health plans were the HMO/PPO from 2006 was not being offered in 2007 (15%), to keep or gain access to preferred physicians or hospitals (13%), to pay less for coverage (12%), and it was too expensive to keep the 2006 health plan (8%).

In the coming months, NUSAC will work with the General Faculty Committee and produce a report that will be given to the University administration and made available to all staff and faculty. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback about this survey, please contact NUSAC at nusac@northwestern.edu.

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS

On Tuesday, May 1, 2007, 97 diligent and devoted employees serving the University for 20, 25, 30, and 35 years were recognized at the annual Staff Service Recognition Luncheon held on at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel. In addition to having their picture taken, honorees were congratulated and personally thanked by President Henry S. Bienen and Senior Vice President Gene Sunshine for their loyalty and service to the University. Guy Miller, AVP for Human Resources who will be retiring this summer, delivered the "Salute to Staff."

In addition to the Length of Service Awards, exemplary employees whom have gone above and beyond the call of duty were praised as part of Northwestern's Employees of the Year Award. The Staff Advisory Council would like to extend a warm-hearted CONGRATULATIONS to this year's finalists and winners for a job well done.

2007 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR WINNERS



2007 Employee of the Year Winners: Laura Gerety from the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science, and Carrie Harper from the Feinberg School of Medicine.

LAURA GERETY (EVANSTON), Business Administrator
Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering
McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science
“This finalist is the most capable staff member I have encountered during my 16-year career at Northwestern. In every facet of the job, this person displays a positive, can-do attitude that sets the tone for all others. This exceptional talent has demonstrated extraordinary dedication and ability, rendering superb service to faculty, students and staff. Under this leader, staff support and morale in our unit are – by a wide margin – at the highest level I’ve ever seen.”

CARRIE HARPER (CHICAGO), Research Administrator
Department of Psychology
Feinberg School of Medicine
“This finalist administered over 12 million research dollars for over 160 individuals this year. She transformed a collection of previously time-consuming and onerous administrative tasks into a smooth, efficient and worry-free process. Her exemplary contributions this year will no doubt increase the future success of our faculty. She simply takes care of all the administration in a timely and error-free way, so that we can focus on the science. By working in an extraordinarily conscientious and organized manner, she exemplifies someone who goes “above and beyond” with her contributions.”

2007 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

YOLANDA GOMEZ (Chicago Finalist)

Admissions Assistant
School of Continuing Studies

“This finalist consistently goes “above and beyond” the call of duty. For a significant period this year she also took on two additional jobs by managing the admissions process for both undergraduate and graduate students, and came up with several excellent ideas for streamlining the process and making it even more user-friendly.”

JOHN ANDERSON (Evanston Finalist)

Instructional Technology Coordinator
Institute for Design Engineering and Applications

“This finalist accepted additional responsibilities in 2006 to ensure the security of our new building. He quickly earned the respect and trust of the many people he worked with on this major initiative. I received nothing but praise from his customers. His unique contributions are simply exemplary.”

KATHLEEN DOHERTY (Chicago Finalist)

Coordinator of Effort Reporting
Accounting Services for Research and Sponsored Programs
“This finalist has gone “above and beyond” with incredible customer service in 2006. The year has brought extraordinary change with University systems, and no one has handled it better. She’s an excellent role model. Employees like her make coming to work a pleasure.”



2007 Employee of the Year Finalists: Yolanda Gomez, Laura Gerety, John Anderson, Carrie Harper, Kathleen Doherty, and Tessie Cachola.

TESSIE CACHOLA (Evanston Finalist)

Student Services Coordinator
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

”This finalist is a legend. Faculty, students and staff know her as an extraordinary go-to person. She works at the highest level every day to fulfill our mission of student service. Our operation is huge, traffic is quite heavy, and problems are often extremely complex. Somehow she manages it all with both quiet efficiency and seemingly bottomless reserves of good cheer.”

NUSAC COUNCIL 2006-2007

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Spotlight on Vice-Chair Deborah Cundiff



Deb has been at NU for 19 years. She began working here one week after she graduated college and has been here ever since. Deb started her career as a Research Technologist, and through the years has worked her way up the ladder to Research Lab Manager in the Hematology/Oncology Division of the Feinberg School of Medicine. About a year and a half ago she made a career change and joined the administration of that division as a Research Administrator who primarily assists faculty members with grant submissions and monitors

the division's grant accounts. Deb has met many great people at Northwestern, and truly believes that some of the most intelligent, motivated and well-rounded people work here. She feels very fortunate to work at Northwestern.

What has been your role on NUSAC?

I have been a member of NUSAC since September 2005. Last year I served on the Communications Committee. This year I serve on the Human Resources Committee and am the Vice Chair of the Council. In the last couple of years I have had interesting experiences and learned things about the inner workings of NU which I never would have known had I not joined the Council.

Why did you join NUSAC?

After being at NU for so many years I believed that I could provide valuable input to NUSAC. I feel that I have a good knowledge of how staff members feel about various issues at Northwestern, and I wanted to be able to share my experience with others, including the senior administration.

How can staff become more involved in University issues?

Becoming a member of NUSAC is a great way for staff members to get their voices heard. I would also encourage staff members to look into the many other organizations affiliated with NU. I believe that when a staff member becomes more involved outside of his or her own office or department it really gives one a greater sense of being connected to the entire NU community.

What would you like to see NUSAC accomplish in the next few years?

I would like NUSAC to continue to work on improving benefits for staff, including retirement benefits. I would also like NUSAC to work with the NU administration to improve employee recognition, and to promote staff development and advancement opportunities.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I spend most of my free time doing volunteer activities for Midwest Labrador Retriever Rescue, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization which finds homes for unwanted and abandoned Labrador Retrievers. I am a co-founder of the organization, and I am the Treasurer and Web Master (www.midwestlabrescue.org), among other responsibilities. I am very proud of the fact that in the past 8 years we have rescued over 700 Labs and placed them in new homes.

Check out NUSAC's new web site at www.northwestern.edu/nusac/