Message from the NU Staff Advisory Council Chair

My name is Deb Cundiff and I am pleased to serve as the returning Chair of the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council (NUSAC). I would like to thank all of the council members for their service and I welcome the new members who have joined this year.

In the past year (2007 – 2008) the NU Staff Advisory Council has continued to work with HR’s Benefits Division to improve staff benefits. Several positive changes have resulted from our discussions. For example, for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), the IRS “grace period” will be adopted which allows an extension of claim service dates through March 15th. Also, the claim filing deadline will be extended from the end of February to the end of March. Another change is that the dental plan will now cover implants.

The council’s Human Resources committee established a relationship with Pamela Beemer, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and continued to pose questions to the HR department on behalf of staff members who contacted the committee and relayed responses to the affected staff members.

The Communications committee initiated several changes last year, including a switch to an electronic newsletter instead of a printed newsletter, as well as adding a new way to inform the NU community of important and interesting topics through “NUSAC in Action” bulk e-mails.

We are preparing for an exciting and productive year in 2008 - 2009. Our objectives this year include improving the sense of community at Northwestern and to help foster a sense of unity across departments, schools, and campuses. We also plan to examine ways to improve and promote opportunities for professional development among staff. We welcome your ideas, opinions, and suggestions. Remember, we represent you, so please let us know what topics are important to you! You can e-mail us at nusac@northwestern.edu.

We look forward to continuing to serve you!

Deborah Cundiff, NUSAC Chair
NUSAC would like to acknowledge the contributions of unsung staff at Northwestern. With that in mind, we will be interviewing individual staff for the newsletter to introduce you to some of your fellow dedicated employees at the University whom you might not have had the pleasure to work with or meet.

Joann Mete was Assistant Dean for Finance, Compliance and Analysis in the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science. Joann worked for McCormick Administration for 26 years. During that time, Joann moved through the ranks from Financial Assistant to Assistant Dean. Joann always loved working at Northwestern. She has since retired as of September 30, 2008. We wish her well!

What is one of the most challenging situations you have faced and how did you overcome it?
My most challenging situation was talking to faculty and telling them that something could not be done because we had to follow policy, but I received more positive reactions to this than negative.

When you are not at the University, what do you do for fun and relaxation?
I enjoy family oriented outings, old movies, all kinds of puzzles, and time with my beagle, Molly!

What do you think would benefit staff either in your school or university – wide?
I believe staff should work to the best of their ability, and receive greater acknowledgement of their worth and contribution to the University.

Where do you like to go with your co-workers to lunch?
I enjoy lunching-in; closing my eyes and meditating.

Why do you think Northwestern is a good place to work?
I love working at Northwestern because of the fantastic benefits, beautiful surroundings, and the ability to advance in my career.

How have you taken advantage of the other benefits/events/organizations here?
I have attended many musicals and plays; have taken various courses; and have utilized almost every service offered by the University at one time or another.

Has there been anyone here that you feel has been especially beneficial to you as a mentor, an inspiration, or a colleague? How?
Before compliance, as an Assistant Dean, I would feel that I was a mentor to the staff whom I worked with, by encouraging them and helping them solve problems. I miss doing this now.

Do you have motto/words of inspiration for the Northwestern community?
Do your job to the best of your ability, be honest, and don’t ever knowingly hurt anyone.

If you know an “unsung” staff member whom you think deserves recognition, please send us contact information at nusac@northwestern.edu to nominate them for an interview.
Hello and goodbye

NUSAC would like to wish a fond farewell to the following outgoing members: Ann Marie LoPrieno and Charles Palamore from the Benefits committee, Elizabeth Gladic, Carol Henes, and Eric Odulio from the Human Resources committee. Thank you for your service and dedication to helping staff!

We are excited to welcome our new members:

**Laura B. Amsden** has been at NU for six years. She currently works in the Institute for Healthcare Studies, Feinberg School of Medicine, where she coordinates the Greater Chicago Study Center for the National Children’s Study, a longitudinal study of children from preconception and birth to 21 years. She joined NUSAC to be able to affect change at NU and to learn more about the university and its organization, functionality, and processes. When not working, she likes to mountain bike, cook, read fiction, and plan her upcoming trip to New Zealand.

**Tina Espina** has been in the Graduate Medical Education office at the Feinberg School of Medicine and working with the McGaw Programs and Housestaff for three years. She wants to help NUSAC improve the communication between campuses and work toward better benefits assistance for working parents with children. This former world traveling, self described Air Force brat is a die hard White Sox and Chicago Bears fan.

**Tara Freeman** comes from University Residential Life.

**Marta Osinski** has worked for Health Service for three years. She joined NUSAC to become more actively involved in the University community and an advocate for staff. When not working, she likes to read, bike, volunteer at Zoo’s Ferret Sanctuary, and take care of her albino ferret, Aladdin.

**Elizabeth Rauch** has been at Kellogg for 2½ years, most recently joining the dynamic Kellogg PhD program. Working in the diverse and stimulating NU environment gave her a desire to join NUSAC to continue to learn more about the university and how she can contribute. Her husband, four daughters and one very bad dog are happy to be in Evanston after living in England and Spain for many years. Besides spending time with her family, she enjoys art, tennis, and will be running in the Chicago Marathon for the American Red Cross.

**Vera Shively** has been in the Vascular Division of Surgery for 21 years. She was impressed enough with NUSAC’s past accomplishments to join in working towards future staff improvements. She spends her free time with her husband of 27 years, her two daughters and two golden retrievers. When not vacuuming dog hair, she enjoys yoga, cooking, reading, travel, and photography.

2008 Health and Benefits Fair Highlights

**Chicago Campus**

On October 14th the annual Health & Benefits Fair, sponsored by the Feinberg School of Medicine's Staff Relations Committee, was held in the Ryan Family Atrium of the Lurie Medical Research Building. Many faculty and staff attended the event, gathering information from representatives of the Northwestern University community, including NUSAC, Northwestern Memorial Faculty Foundation (NMFF), and a number of commercial vendors that provide employee healthcare, life insurance, and retirement investment opportunities. Flu shots were available on-site for $32. Some of the busiest tables included the NMFF Plastic Surgery Clinic which distributed samples of anti-aging skin products, as well as the free chair massages offered by Unicare Health Plans. In addition, Dr. Robert F. Kushner, clinical director for the Northwestern Comprehensive Center on Obesity, and director for the Center for Lifestyle Medicine, spoke on “Enhancing Personal Health and Wellness”.

**Evanston Campus**

On October 15th the annual Health & Benefits Fair sponsored by NU Athletics & Recreation and the NU Benefits Division, was held in the Norris University Center's Louis Room. Many faculty and staff attended the event, gathering information from representatives of the Northwestern University community including NUSAC, NU Women's Center, NU Fitness and Recreation, NU Benefits Division, and many commercial vendors that provide employee healthcare, life insurance, and retirement investment opportunities. Flu shots were also available on-site. Some of the busiest tables included Fidelity and TIAA-CREF, which helped employees with their retirement and financial futures. NUSAC helped direct employees to different vendor tables while listening to employees' ideas and concerns. As in previous years, this was a very successful event!
NUSAC invites the Northwestern Community to give the gift of giving this holiday season - Adopt a child or a family. Donate purchased gifts - no more than $30 - as an individual or as a department/program team.

On the CHICAGO CAMPUS, there are two ways to help: Project Angel Tree and Inspiration Corporation.

Project Angel Tree works by connecting parents in prison with their children through the delivery of holiday gifts. For many of these children, this will be one of the few gifts they receive this holiday season.

Inspiration Corporation inspires change and enriches the Chicago community by providing people who are affected by homelessness and poverty with essential social services that create choices and enable participants to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. During the holiday season, Inspiration Corporation provides gifts to both adults and children.

To participate on the Chicago campus, by November 10th please email Laura Amsden at l-amsden@northwestern.edu. Along with instructions, by November 17th you will be provided a name and brief information on your child/adult. You may be asked to wrap and label your gift/s.

Drop offs will be conveniently located on the Chicago campus during the week of December 7th, 2008.

The EVANSTON CAMPUS can help by donating to either: Family Focus or Rice Child + Family Center

Family Focus Our Place has been providing family support programs for parents, children, and teens for more than 20 years. What makes our center special? In part, it’s the programs and resources we provide, including mentors for pregnant and parenting teens, monthly family nights, and a community gospel choir. But more than that, it’s the way our staff, families, board members, donors, and others in the community bring it all together to create a safe, welcoming place where families can make connections and get support.

Children with a history of violence and abuse often exhibit extremely volatile and severe behavior. The Rice Child + Family Center is focused on treating these vulnerable children with a goal of returning them to a loving family. The therapy services offered through the Rice Child + Family Center are round the clock and intensive. Highly trained therapists work with the children to correct negative behavior and reinforce positive social contact. Therapy is conducted in individual and group settings, and includes social skills training, counseling, and psychiatric intervention.

To participate on the Evanston campus, by November 10th please email Natasha Dennison at n-dennison@northwestern.edu. As with the Chicago campus, by November 17th along with instructions you will be provided a name and some brief information on your child/adult. You may be asked to wrap and label your gift/s.

Drop offs will be conveniently located on the Evanston campus during the week of December 7th, 2008.

Open Enrollment

Northwestern University’s 2009 Open Enrollment for benefits begins at 8:00am Monday, October 27 and runs through 5:00pm Friday, November 14, 2008. Take care to choose the benefits that will best meet your needs throughout 2009. If you have questions about Open Enrollment, please email: benefits@northwestern.edu.

Important Reminders:

♦ The health care, limited use and dependent care flexible spending accounts can be valuable benefits because they allow you to pay for eligible health care and dependent care expenses on a pretax basis. You must enroll during Open Enrollment to participate in any or all of these accounts in 2009.

♦ The underwriter for the life insurance plans is changing to ReliaStar Life Insurance Company*. Read about this change and your options to increase coverage in the 2009 Open Enrollment Guide.

♦ If you do not wish to make any changes to your benefits plan or enroll in a flexible spending account, there is no need to do anything during Open Enrollment.

♦ Before Open Enrollment, validate your dependent and beneficiary information using HRIS Self Service at https://nuhr.northwestern.edu. Select the ‘Update NU Life Ins Beneficiary’ link under Benefits.

*ReliaStar is the underwriter for ING Life Insurance