

The University of Texas at Dallas Staff Council Annual Report FY 2020

The UT Dallas Staff Council is a team of staff members elected to represent the interests of campus staff by advocating on a variety of issues, addressing staff suggestions and serving in an advisory role to the University President.

Leadership of the council during the 2019-2020 academic year includes Brooke Schafer, President; Debra Greszler, Vice President; Andy Helgeson, Chair of the Staff Development Committee; Jennifer Klunk, Chair of the Benefits Committee; Carrilaine Schneckner, Chair of the Communications Committee; Adrienne Wilson, Chair of the Fundraising Committee.

Highlights and Accomplishments of the year

- Inaugural Breakfast and Casual Conversation with Dr. Richard C. Benson, UT Dallas President (December 2019)
- Appointment of an ad hoc committee to outline and further detail a proposal and process for an additional Staff Award
- Appointment of an ad hoc committee for the proposal of a Staff Ombudsman
- Staff Ombudsman Proposal submitted to the Office of the President in response to longtime adopted suggestion
- Implementation of a suggestions log to ensure follow through and documentation on items that come to Staff Council
- Most successful winter plant sale to date
- Updated scholarship information and procedures
- Updates to Staff Council website and increased use of social media
- Frequently Asked Questions page added to our website
- District email distribution lists created to improve communications with constituents
- Updates to the CARE Award nomination form and rubric
- Operational Handbook created by the Executive Board to streamline procedures
- Proposed revisions to Staff Council Bylaws
- Transition to virtual meetings due to COVID-19, which resulted in higher attendance of staff council general meetings

Campus Engagement

Members of the Staff Council were engaged in the campus community in many ways throughout the year. Some examples include:

- Participation in University Task Forces and Working Groups
- Collaborations with Academic Senate and the Student Government
- Campus-Wide Committees
- Make-a-Mask Project in response to COVID-19
- Assistance with the delegation of staff representatives for the UT System Employee Advisory Council
- Publication of *The Solar Flare* which highlights information and news around campus

Staff Council Leadership Updates

President Brooke Schafer –

- As Staff Council President, I have had the honor of leading Staff Council this past year. We have over 2,500 staff at UT Dallas, and I have done my best to increase our visibility across campus and open lines of communication. As President, my focus has been to ensure that the mission of Staff Council is carried out, addressing staff questions and suggestions, and being an advocate for our constituents. I have worked closely with the Executive Board to address staff concerns and developing resolutions; finding ways to better represent and support all staff. Below are key responsibilities that I have completed over the past year.
 - Supervision of the Administrative Assistant for Staff Council
 - Representation of Staff Council at Academic Senate, providing a brief update at each meeting
 - Participation in the State of the University as a speaker
 - Staff Representative for the Handbook on Policy (HOP) Committee
 - Maintained communication lines with the Office of the President
 - Made recommendations to the Executive Board and managed project implementation and follow through
 - Oversaw the work of the ad hoc committees for a staff ombudsman as well as an additional staff award
 - Led all Staff Council general meetings and coordinated the invitation of guest speakers; developed PowerPoint presentations for meetings and sharing of documents for review
 - Coordinated with the Office of the President, University Event Coordinators, and the Office of Communications for the CARE Awards ceremony and reception for fall 2019 winners
 - In addition, due to COVID-19, we collaborated to create a care package to send to the spring 2020 winners of the award
 - Recruited and delegated volunteers to campus wide committee vacancies
 - This year we implemented a volunteer form open to all staff and received 100+ staff interested in being on a campus wide committee. I am proud that we now have several new staff members serving in this capacity.
 - Regularly sent emails to Staff Council Representative regarding updates as well as information to share with their districts

Vice President–

- The Vice President of Staff Council maintained attendance records for Staff Council and standing committee participation. In addition, they made the necessary appointments to committees in consultation with the Executive Board.

Staff Development Committee—

- This committee reviewed ways in which constituents can benefit from training programs and professional development. Due to COVID-19, the committee had to postpone many staff development and appreciation events.

Communications Committee Report by Carrilaine Schneckner—

- The 2019-2020 Staff Council Communications Committee consists of a devoted team of hard-working people who give a lot of thought and time to keeping the UTD staff community well informed of what is happening on campus. Here are a couple of the highlights of our committee achievements:
 - Continue publishing of *The Solar Flare* newsletter, via email to UTD staff, which is Staff Council's primary communication tool. We added monthly interviews with staff members, both those who are a part of Staff Council and those who are not, in an effort to help the UTD community get to know people on a closer level. Also, as a result of a suggestion received this year, we began including a list of retirees.
 - The committee also amped up activity on Facebook. We not only promote Staff Council events and happenings, but also provide advertising support to other UTD centers and departments. We have also begun creating fun posts to cultivate interaction among the UTD community and improve Staff Council's voice on campus. As an example of Facebook's effectiveness, of July's 55 posts, we averaged 124 people reached.

Benefits Committee Report by Jennifer Klunk –

- The Benefits Committee continued the process of scoring staff scholarship applications, revising the application form to provide the greatest clarity to recipients, as well as the scholarship website. The committee developed a timeline to provide further transparency to applicants and recipients, as well as details on the scoring process for all applicants.
- The Benefits Committee continued to gather Did You Know facts and tips to share with the campus community via the Sun and the Flare publications.
- The Benefits Committee was tasked with developing a process for the Rick Dempsey Scholarship. The committee had many discussions about how to integrate into current scholarship processes, what criteria to use, and how to best promote this new scholarship to the campus community.

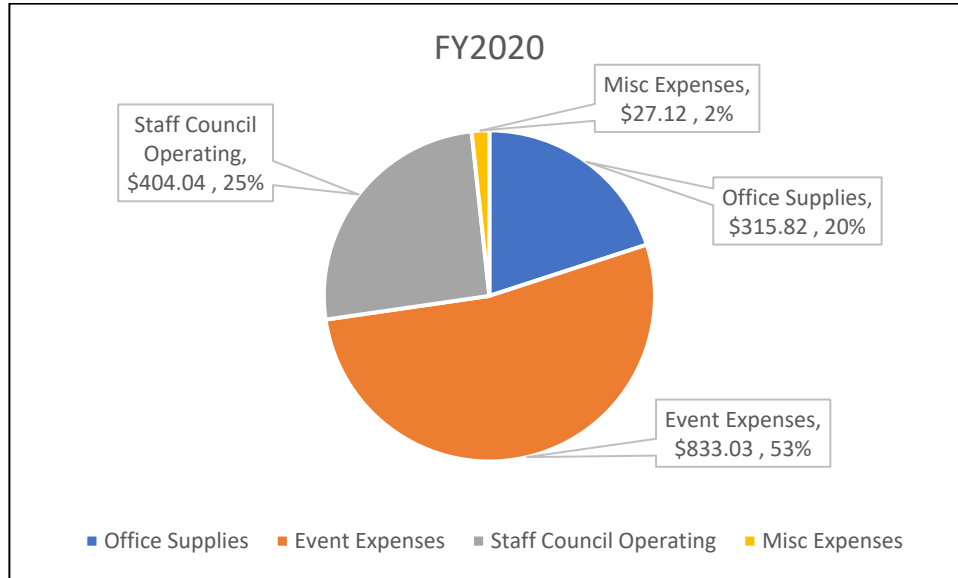
Fundraising Committee—

- The Fundraising Committee organized a winter plant sale in fall 2019 that resulted in the largest sales to date; proceeds going to Staff Scholarships. Due to COVID-19, the committee postponed fundraising efforts.

Treasury Report—

Staff Council Annual Expenses FY 2020

Staff Council Operating Expenses



Office Supplies	\$315.82
Event Expenses	\$833.03
Staff Council Operating	\$404.04
Misc. Expenses	\$27.12
<i>Total</i>	\$1,580.01

Staff Council Scholarships

Scholarship	Number Awarded	Amount
SC Scholarship Endowed	9	\$ 2,250.00
Jody Nelsen Endowed	7	\$ 1,750.00
Staff Scholarship	4	\$ 1,000.00
<i>Total</i>	20	\$ 5,000.00

Staff Council Fundraising

Expenses		Revenue	
Garden Acre Growers	\$1,531.40	Fundraising Account	\$629.00
		Revenue Account	\$1,800.06
		<i>Total Revenue</i>	\$2,429.06

Initiatives before closing out FY 2020

- New representatives and alternates have been elected and will begin their term on September 1st, 2020. An onboarding session was held on August 25, 2020.
- Elections of the President and Vice President will occur at the September Staff Council meeting; nominations will be taken via email and interest confirmed prior to the meeting as voting will be done virtually.
- Proposed revisions to the Staff Council Bylaws need to be reviewed and voted on so they can then be sent on to the HOP committee.
- The ad hoc committee for an additional staff award will need to finalize the process and proposal to be reviewed in Staff Council.
- The proposal for a Staff Ombudsman has been submitted to the Office of the President.

Final thoughts from the Staff Council President

I would like to offer a big thank you to the members of Staff Council who worked tirelessly to move this year's many agenda items forward. As Staff Council President, it has been an honor to serve and work with each of you.

Respectfully Submitted by Brooke Schafer

August 31st, 2020