



Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff 2018-2019 Annual Report

Submitted: June 25, 2019

Approved: June 27, 2019

The Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff (WACSS) advises the Executive Vice President for Administration about issues that primarily affect women support staff. The committee's role is to:

- Voice staff issues or concerns, or recommend policies, programs, or procedures that impact women support staff employed at Michigan State University.
- Ensure a productive educational work environment (particularly in areas related to women's concerns), including general issues of campus climate and programs as they affect employees throughout the university.
- Alert the administration to and recommend solutions for problem areas related to women support staff and other employees at the university.
- Serve as a liaison between support staff employees and university leadership.

WACSS Mission Statement: The Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff supports a culture of equality, equity, engagement and inclusion by providing a voice for women support staff at Michigan State University.

WACSS Vision Statement: The Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff will be the leader in elevating advancement and leadership in the MSU Community by empowering and reawakening women support staff through the promotion of equity, education and advocacy.

WACSS Values:

- Advocacy
- Connectivity
- Engagement
- Staff Development

This Report serves to outline the activity and accomplishments achieved by the Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff during the 2018-2019 academic year.

WACSS began the year with a full committee of 17 members. Angela Arsenault had to resign due to time commitments in her unit and Mary McGill-Jones resigned from the committee after retiring from the University. Jonne' McCoy-White served as Chair of the committee, Lisa Desprez served as Vice Chair, and Amanda Jones served as Secretary.



The following subcommittees formed throughout the year. Their membership is as follows:

Benefits/Work Climate/Health and Safety

Members: Jaclyn Sayen (Chair), Constance James, Angela Resseguie, and Jacqueline VandenBosch

Diversity/Pluralism/Inclusion

Members: Ashley Lathrop (Chair), Lisa Desprez, Chrissy Hodges-Chakrani, and Melissa Peek

Training/Development/Communications

Members: Elbony Hawkins (Chair), Amanda Jones, Pam Hebeler, and Wendi Winston

University Engagement and Membership

Members: Sherry Stevens (Chair), Angela Bigelow, and Jonne' McCoy-White

Big Ten Women's Advisory Group Survey

Members: Angela Resseguie (Chair), Elbony Hawkins, Pam Hebeler, and Christine Carter

Annual Spring Forum Planning Committee

Members: Elbony Hawkins (Chair), Angela Bigelow, Amanda Jones, Chrissy Hodges-Chakrani, Jonne' McCoy-White, and Sherry Stevens

Areas of Focus:

During the June 2018 and August 2018 retreats, the members of WACSS discussed and determined where they would focus their efforts for the 2018-2019 year.

- Increase awareness and utilization of Educational Assistance
- Diversifying MSU's workforce
- Determining what is important to women support staff
- Encouraging two-way communication
- Increasing women representation in service maintenance and skilled trades positions

The committee examined how each focus area was served by MSU, engaged with support staff to understand where gaps in knowledge and participation existed in each focus area, and sought solutions/actions to recommend to the Executive Vice President for Administration and/or other administrators as needed.

Summary reports from the WACSS subcommittees dedicated to each focus area follow.

Benefits/Work Climate/Health and Safety

Goals:

- Increase Health Initiatives: Go Red (cv disease), quit smoking, heart disease, breast cancer awareness, and overall fitness awareness of health benefits
- Mental Health Focus: work life balance, education, addressing stigma, mental/physical well-being, and programming
- Department/supervisor support for flexible working arrangements
- Support for nursing mother's in university travel status



- Increase awareness of HR topics: HR tax bill, professional development opportunities, and payroll deductible options for benefits
- WACSS media logo

Actions:

- Increase Health Initiatives
 - Subcommittee member Connie James attempted contacts with Sparrow Health System and Peckham to inquire on whether or not they pay employees for good health.
 - Subcommittee member Angela Resseguie suggested an inter-departmental health challenge using <https://www.burnalong.com/>.
- Mental Health Focus
 - Beth Morris, LMSW, MPA an EAP Counselor with Health4U presented to WACSS regarding women's mental health and Amanda Jones (Facebook Administrator) created two Facebook posts on November 15, 2018 of what was learned.
- Department/supervisor support for flexible working arrangements
 - Amanda Jones posted an open-ended question on Facebook seeking testimonials regarding success requesting flexible working arrangements on February 11, 2019. Amanda then posted a poll on May 14, 2019 requesting a response of "yes" or "no" if a supervisor has approved your flexible working request.
 - Both inquires generated responses from 103 individuals on Facebook.
- Support for nursing mother's in university travel status
 - Item was brought to the attention of senior administration in late 2018 by Barbara Roberts of the MSU WorkLife Office.
- Increase awareness of HR topics: HR tax bill, professional development opportunities, and payroll deductible options for benefits
 - Subcommittee member Angela Resseguie explored these initiatives with WACSS Advisor Christine Carter and initiated a Facebook post regarding payroll deductible insurance on October 2, 2018.
- WACSS media logo
 - Located photos that represent the collective spirit and mission of WACSS. Received permission to utilize all photos.

Recommendations:

- Increase Health Initiatives
 - No plans for carry over at this time.
- Mental Health Focus
 - No plans other than continued sharing of the topics via Facebook.
- Department/Supervisor support for flexible working arrangements
 - Share information received from Facebook polls with WACSS and MSU WorkLife Office.
- Support for nursing mother's in travel status
 - This initiative has been passed along, WACSS will support as needed.
- Increase awareness of HR topics: HR tax bill, professional development opportunities, and payroll deductible options for benefits
 - Continued awareness and education efforts via Facebook is suggested.
- WACSS media logo
 - Share completed product with WACSS.



Diversity/Pluralism/Inclusion

Goals:

- Recruitment Brochure: Complete and update the MSU recruitment brochure, which will increase inclusion and diversity in job applicant pools and provide more visibility and accessibility for employment. Update the list of locations to distribute to.
- Interview Tool: Create an interview tool for support staff postings to remove biases and encourage diversity and inclusion. This tool will aid in creating a diverse interview committee and outline an interview process which is less biased.

Actions:

- Recruitment Brochure: The subcommittee worked with Central HR on a new design to align with current MSU brand standards. The pamphlet was distributed to HR managers/groups on campus for feedback. The brochure is final and ready for print. See Appendix A of this report.
- Interview Tool: Ashley made contact with the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives and they have agreed to partner with us to work on the process to create a tool. The subcommittee has created an outline for this tool.
- The subcommittee developed the application to submit WACSS for the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives IDEA Grant in the fall of 2018, but did not meet the submission deadline.

Future actions to consider:

- Submit the application for the OIII IDEA Grant in fall 2019.
- Work with EVPA office to print and distribute the recruitment brochures. Monitor and measure recruitment and hiring efforts for a noticeable change in staffing at MSU. Plan to work with EVPA, OIII, and HR on measurement.
- Work with Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives on getting the interview tool started, which will carry us into next year's initiatives.

Overall Recommendations:

- The subcommittee is very pleased with the outcome of working with Central HR and other HR groups on campus to ensure the recruitment brochure is inclusive and presents all of what MSU has to offer.
- The subcommittee looks forward to working with OIII on the interview tool and hopes to create a more streamlined and unbiased process when hiring support staff.
- We recommend following up with locations that receive the recruitment brochures and asking for feedback.

Training/Development/Communications

Goals:

- Increase awareness and utilization of the Educational Assistance benefits offered to MSU Support Staff.
- Research and share information about educational benefits, tuition waivers, and other cost savings programs available to support staff through MSU, union membership, and other channels.
- Support and improve awareness and share information about [WIST](#) (Women in Skilled Trades).



Actions:

- Members of the subcommittee met with the Sharri Margraves, Julie Rorick, and Danielle Devota in HR to discuss ways to make the process for applying for Educational Assistance easier or more efficient as well as increase awareness about the types of programs that Ed Assist can be applied.
 - Educational Assistance is a complex process affected by union membership, tenure, academic program, course availability, etc. Decisions regarding eligibility are often made at the individual level.
 - There is not currently a system in place for metrics and reporting of Educational Assistance utilization. Requested information is pulled and assembled on an ad-hoc basis from a large data system.
 - HR's communications team as well as the staff in the Organizational and Professional Development office work to educate through their website, social media, blog posts, and in-person meetings or trainings.
- There are several resources available to MSU staff and their families to reduce the cost of attending college or the burden of student loans after graduation.
 - CTU Loan Program- Through a memorial bequest from a previous CTU member, CT staff can apply for and receive a loan to pay for tuition that is typically reimbursed through Educational Assistance after completion.
 - [Eastern Gateway Community College](#) (through MEA – available to APA members that pay dues and their immediate family members).
 - [Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#)
 - [MEA discounted services and funding opportunities](#)
- The Committee continues to share information within MSU and the larger community about opportunities for women to attend workshops or enroll in the WIST Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

Future Actions to Consider:

- WACSS and the Training/Development/Communications team will continue to broaden the reach of Education Assistance programs through their own networks including social media.
- Members of the committee have asked to consider presenting at an upcoming HR connect meeting (of university-wide Unit HR Coordinators) to share their perspective about the professional development needs of support staff at MSU.



University Engagement and Membership

Goals:

- Fill five openings for the 2019-2020 academic year. (1 APSA, 1 APA, 2 CT, and 1 Labor)
- Increase awareness of WACSS and have completed applications on file for future openings.

Action:

- Modified the bylaws to update membership composition to more accurately reflect distribution of union populations.
 - Eliminated at-large positions and placed them in corresponding union designations to align with MSU's workforce.
- Recommended four candidates for membership
- Engaged HR Source, the CTU newsletter, and the IPF newsletter to reach new audiences and target specific unions for new members.
- Reached out to previous members for referrals or requests to fill the remaining labor position.

New Membership Composition	
CTU	4
Labor (1585, SSTU, 274, 324)	3
APA	6
APSA	3
Other (not represented above)	1
Total	17

For Future Consideration:

- Continue to engage with union and organizational communications to increase awareness and promote WACSS as a professional development opportunity.
- Ensure that application, recommendation, and appointment materials and other communications are clear regarding release time to participate in WACSS meetings and activities.

Annual Spring Forum:

Held on March 18, 2019, from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., the Annual WACSS Spring Forum brought together nearly 500 members of MSU's women support staff – the largest attendance to date. This year's theme, "Resilience: Rebuilding for Success" featured a keynote from Lisa Laughman and a panel of experts featuring Jessica Garcia, Vicki Johnson-Lawrence, Claudia Finkelstein, and Lisa Laughman. The forum intended to provide attendees with resources to increase their ability to recover from difficulties and provide skillsets to spring back into shape. Acting President Udpa and Provost Youatt also provided remarks and answered questions submitted in advance and during the event. A summary of this event including a recording of this event can be found here: <https://adminsv.msu.edu/wacss/spring-forum.html>.

This year, the committee elected to provide each attendee with a complimentary bag with informational and trinket materials. Fresh Thyme generously donated the reusable bags for all participants. Following the event, nine individuals were selected to have lunch at Cowles House with Acting President Satish Udpa and Provost June Youatt: Heidi Macwan, Keri Morris, Jennae Rozeboom, Penny Shanks, Kelly Wilcox, and Jennifer Wood. The Committee chair as well as two outgoing WACSS members that served four years on the committee were also present: Jonné McCoy-White, Jaclyn Sayen, and Wendi Winston.



Other Activities

Letter to the Presidential Search Committee

On October 26, 2018, WACSS submitted a letter to the Search Committee tasked with hiring MSU's next President. The committee felt strongly that as a representative group of MSU's Support Staff we should be among the voices that the members of the search committee considered as they worked to find the next leader of our institution. WACSS members submitted their thoughts to Jaclyn Sayen and Amanda Jones, who drafted a letter reflective of our collective views. It touched on values the President should embody, challenges the President should endeavor to solve, and opportunities the President should encourage and support for the overall benefit to the faculty, staff, students and community that is Michigan State University. A copy of the letter is available as Appendix B of this report.

Big Ten Women's Advisory Group Survey

This year, we were able to connect with members of Women's Advisory Groups at other Big Ten universities. The survey and additional conversations showed us that each university has a unique approach to organizing and supporting women staff members. Some universities have organization councils, or commissions, and some groups are within a unit or department rather than the university at large. There is a diverse range of services and approaches that each group takes to collaborate within the campus community but the majority focus on the same values of WACSS in some form—Advocate, Connect, Engage and Staff Development. Based on a review of websites and social media presence, WACSS is leading the way with advocating, connecting, and engaging support staff across the Big Ten.

Three areas stood out as potential avenues for our own committee work:

- **Mentoring** - providing information about self-guided/organic mentoring on our website. At this time, there is not a formalized program in place that services MSU as a whole.
- **Policy review** – Marilyn Tarrant, Associate Vice President and Chief Audit, Risk and Compliance Officer in the Office of Audit, Risk and Compliance is in the midst of compiling all of Michigan State University's policies into one portal. Once that is completed and launched, it might be worthwhile to make a comprehensive review of policies that are of interest to us as women and make recommendations for change or clarification if needed. This process should happen on an annual basis.
- **Workforce analysis** – obtain and review current demographic data as it relates to gender and diversity within support staff. Data points and metrics of interest include: women representation in certain job groups and leadership positions; equity in salary; and diversity progression throughout the university over time. Additionally, it could compliment the work of the Diversity, Pluralism, and Inclusion subcommittee and their focus on recruitment and a review of gender and diversity demographic applicant and interview data.

WACSS Facebook

As of June 21, 2019, the WACSS Facebook Group has 366 members. The committee utilizes the group to improve communication between support staff, the committee, and administration. We post to the group regularly, sharing information about events on campus and articles and other resources that affect women. We solicit feedback or interest in our efforts and subcommittee work. For example, we asked for members to comment or share privately about how they (or their office) flex their schedules. We received a variety of responses that demonstrated the disparities in utilization and support of flex scheduling across units.



University Response during times of Trauma and Crisis

In depth discussions occurred surrounding the need for a 'trauma team' to provide a unified, consistent, and supportive approach to employees affected by a traumatic event. Resources are available through the [Work Life Office](#) (WLO), [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP), [Behavioral Threat Assessment Team](#) (BTAT) and more, however not everyone knows who to call or how to handle the situation. We look forward to the leadership of Edward Thomas in [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#) (CAPS) who is working to develop a crisis response team with CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management). He is leading the development of this crisis response team with campus-wide experts and stakeholders with the help of others including Barbara Roberts (WLO), Amy Ray (BTAT), and David Weismantel ([University Physician](#)).

Sexual Violence Advisory Committee (SVAC)

WACSS member Jacqueline VandenBosch served on the Sexual Violence Advisory Committee for the 2018-2019 academic year. She represented both WACSS and support staff on campus. The SVAC held several forums throughout the year to gather feedback and share information about MSU's culture, prevention programs, available and needed resources on campus, and other issues relating to sexual violence on campus. Visit the [SVAC](#) website for more information.

WACSS Recruitment

The committee welcomes applications for membership throughout the year. This year we received several applications and filled four vacancies. During meetings in the Spring Semester, the committee voted to approve the following applicants and recommend that Acting President Udpa appoint them to the committee.

- Emily Khan, Office Assistant III, Center for Gender in Global Context (CT)
- Anslee Norris, Service Center Specialist I, IT Services (CT)
- Shannon McGaughey, Unit Human Resources Coordinator, Residential and Housing Services (APA)
- Katherine Dorshimer, Administrative Assistant II/S, Department of English (APSA)
- WACSS still has one Labor opening yet to fill

Ex-Officio Engagement

The committee regularly interacted with Ex-Officio members including Satish Udpa, Paulette Granberry Russell, Sharon Butler, Barbara Roberts, and advisor Christine Carter. Each Ex-Officio shared updates and information about activities in their offices and across the university, as well as sought input and feedback from the committee. Conversations and topics included:

- Updates from the Board of Trustees Meetings
- Updates regarding legal matters
- Updates on the President Search, other hiring committees as appropriate
- Updates from Human Resources
- Updates from the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives
- Updates from the WorkLife Office
- MSU Health Team, new non-profit
- Pooled sick leave
- Flex leave and alternative work schedules
- Support for nursing mothers



- MSU Mobility
- Education and professional development: Implicit Bias Certification, MSU Dialogues on DEI topics
- Impact of e-scooters on campus
- RVSM 'Know More' Survey
- MSU's Voluntary Benefits programs
- Decision protocol for equitable leave policy decisions
- Updates to the Back-up Child Care Program
- East Lansing city income tax implementation at MSU
- Impact from the January 2019 weather closures and Business Continuity Plans (BCP)

Lunch and Learns

During each meeting, the committee invited an individual or group to share their expertise and illuminate a program, resource, or opportunity at the university. This year, presenters included:

- Rob Kent, Interim AVP, Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Education and Compliance, and Debra Martinez, Assistant Director, Office of Institutional Equity
- Beth Morris, LMSW, MPA, EAP Counselor, Health4U
- Jamie Hutchinson, MA, LPC, Lifespan and Family Services Coordinator, WorkLife Office
- Quentin Tyler, PhD, CANR Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Sharri Margraves, M.A., SHRM-SCP, Associate Director, MSU HR Organization and Professional Development
- Brittany Richards, Fitness and Wellness Programs Assistant



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- ▶ Life
- ▶ Home/Auto
- ▶ Long-Term Care
- ▶ Critical Illness
- ▶ Teladoc for 24/7 access to doctor online
- ▶ Livongo for diabetes
- ▶ Best Doctors for second medical opinions

Vacation/Sick Time

Employees may receive paid vacation, sick and personal time.

Tuition Assistance

Educational Assistance may be available for professional development and tuition. Course Fee Courtesy offers tuition assistance to spouses and children.

Retirement

Our retirement plans promote a stable financial future and include a great funds matching program.

FOR STAFF

Use the following resources to learn more about what the university has to offer and how to apply for jobs.

New jobs are posted every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. on careers.msu.edu.

WorkLife Office

Find resources for family care, career transitions, workplace assistance, relocation/community connections, research and more.

▶ Learn more at worklife.msu.edu.

Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives

We are committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, inclusive of women, persons of color, persons with disabilities, veterans, and members of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as others who contribute to MSU's vibrant and inclusive community.

▶ Learn more at inclusion.msu.edu.

FOR STUDENTS

Use the following resources to learn more about student job, internship and research options at MSU.

Jobs & Internships

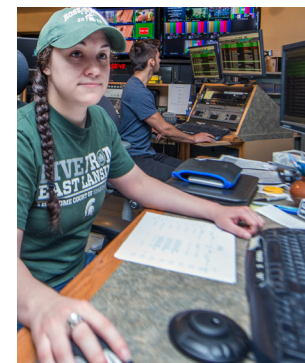
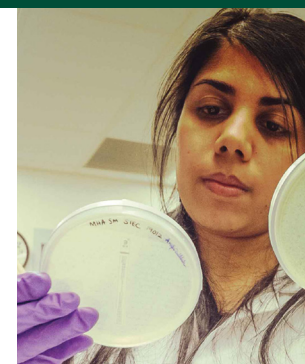
Use Handshake to find job and internship postings for students. Also find advice for interviewing and writing resume/cover letters.

▶ Learn more at careernetwork.msu.edu

Research Opportunities

Find resources to participate in MSU research at graduate and undergraduate levels:

▶ Learn more at vp.research.msu.edu/student-research



MICHIGAN STATE **UNIVERSITY**

To: Presidential Search Committee
From: Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff
Date: October 25, 2018
Re: Community Input

With over 7,000 members on and off campus, the support staff of Michigan State University have a significant impact on nearly every facet of the university. The Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff (WACSS) represents a cross-section of MSU's support staff with members from several unions, positions, departments, units, and organizations. As such, WACSS serves as the collective voice of support staff and we, as a committee, submit the following to aid in developing the presidential position description and evaluation of future candidates.

We believe MSU's new president should:

- Be collaborative, flexible, approachable, knowledgeable, and a true leader.
- Be innovative and inspirational.
- Be empathetic, sincere, inclusive, and respectful.
- Be honest and straightforward.
- Believe in the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, with the record to prove it.
- Set and achieve goals that further MSU's vision, mission, and values.
- Work to improve transparency and communication across the university and the community.



Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff

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We believe the new president should rise to resolve MSU's challenges including:

- Continuing to recruit and retain excellent and diverse students, faculty, and staff.
- Adapting to innovations in educational technology and evolving to meet changing pedagogy and delivery methods.
- Successfully implement significant and necessary cultural changes while demonstrating and supporting the resilience of affected faculty, students, and staff.
- Becoming a leader in the reduction of Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) on college campuses and in society.
- Balancing a budget with less funding and resources, and more regulations and demands.

We believe MSU has many strengths and opportunities. The new president should consider and support:

- Updating technology, infrastructure, and facilities to meet the needs of current and future faculty, students, and staff.
- Encouraging efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in all areas of the university.
- Supporting RVSM policies that create lasting changes in culture to promote the safety of students, faculty, staff, and patients.
- Giving back to our community through innovation, outreach, and engagement.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute our thoughts as well as your time in reviewing these responses. We wish you the best in the coming months as you continue along the path to identify our next leader.

As a final note, we ask that transparency continue in terms of process, timelines, and presentation of final candidates via the website <https://msu.edu/presidentialsearch/>. In addition, we ask that any future requests for input opportunities be emailed directly to all faculty and staff and highly suggest that remote and/or livestream access be considered should any presentations be planned so off-site employees can participate.

Go Green!

Respectfully,

Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff

- Website: www.wacss.msu.edu
- Email: wacss@msu.edu
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/msuwacss/>