

WOMEN'S ADVISORY
COMMITTEE
FOR SUPPORT STAFF
ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR
2022-23



Women's Advisory Committee
for Support Staff (WACSS)
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY





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EXECUTIVE LETTER

The [Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff](#), or WACSS, at Michigan State University has proven invaluable to the university community.

Over the past year, the committee has accomplished numerous initiatives and projects that have enhanced the support and recognition of support staff positions.

Among the notable accomplishments include the relaunch of Mission Menstruation on campus, which has helped to raise awareness and provide menstruation product dispensers in women's and all-gender restrooms.

In an October 2022 memorandum to the president, WACSS provided implementation suggestions, including expanding personal observance days for various religious and cultural holidays. This further demonstrated the committee's commitment and influence in creating a positive work environment for all staff.

The development of the Change in Strategic Direction, planned implementation for the fiscal year 2023-24, is a critical step towards expanding representation, participation, and the mission to improve campus alignment, promote inclusion and expand impact.

Additionally, the successful continuation of the Anti-Racism Insight Series (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion subcommittee) and Building Community Insight Series (Events and Engagement subcommittee) has helped to promote a sense of community and belonging on campus. The series has been particularly impressive, with various in-person and virtual events to bring together the Spartan community, including creating the WACSS Book Club.

“The development of the Change in Strategic Direction planned implementation for the fiscal year 2023-24 is a critical step towards expanding representation, participation, and the mission to improve campus alignment, promote inclusion and expand impact.”

EXECUTIVE LETTER CONTINUED

Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D.
Vice President and
Chief Diversity Officer,
Office for Institutional
Diversity and Inclusion



Finally, the Communications and Marketing subcommittee has also engaged the university community by expanding a social media following, maintaining an updated committee website and working to establish a WACSS listserv. These efforts have helped to keep the Spartan community informed and engaged in this critical work.

In summary, the Women’s Advisory Committee for Support Staff at Michigan State University has accomplished an impressive array of initiatives over the past year. Their efforts will undoubtedly continue to support and recognize the invaluable contributions of support staff positions. In addition, the committee’s work highlights the importance of creating a positive and inclusive work environment that supports all university community members.

We are excited about the continuation of these impactful efforts for all support staff and look forward to continued success in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D. ([he/him](#))

VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER, [OFFICE FOR INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION](#)

Christina Brogdon ([she/her](#))

VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, [HUMAN RESOURCES](#)

Jaimie Hutchison ([she/her](#))

DIRECTOR, [WORKLIFE OFFICE](#)

Christina Brogdon
Vice President and Chief
Human Resources Officer,
Human Resources



Jaimie Hutchison
Director, WorkLife Office



“...the Women’s Advisory Committee for Support Staff at Michigan State University has accomplished an impressive array of initiatives over the past year. Their efforts will undoubtedly continue to support and recognize the invaluable contributions of support staff positions.”

CHAIR LETTER



Tina Alonzo,
CM, CHRS, CDP
[\(she/her\)](#)

2022-23 CHAIR, WACSS
DEI ADMINISTRATOR,
[EVPA OFFICE OF DEI](#)

WACSS continues to serve as a resource and live our values of advocacy, connectivity, engagement, and staff development to further and collectively advance equality, equity, engagement and inclusion by providing voice for our support staff at Michigan State University.

I am pleased to highlight the progress of our goals established at the beginning of the fiscal year. **Promoting connectivity and engagement, we held our 22nd Annual Spring Forum, themed *Building Bridges of Spartan Connections***, providing panel discussions with campus leaders addressing connections between our work and administration, DEI, unions, WorkLife, and WACSS – bringing more than 200 attendees with 35% in first-time attendance. Building on this theme, we hosted our **2nd Annual Summer Social: *Building Bridges of Spartan Connections in the Gardens***. **We also launched a book club named *Beyond the Book***, which grew 120% from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023, to increase networking opportunities, encourage discussion amongst staff and promote professional relationships.

This past year, we have seen our advocacy efforts to promote inclusion, wellbeing, and recognition in a campus wide annual winter break, Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day as a university holiday, and personal observance days. Over the years, the Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff, or WACSS, has been instrumental in the development and progress of critical initiatives and programs across campus that have benefited our Spartan community. These efforts and initiatives focus on

CHAIR LETTER CONTINUED

promoting equity, education and advocacy and this year has been no different. Recently, we have moved the Mission Menstruation initiative forward in partnership with the MSU Division of Student Life and Engagement (SLE) and Infrastructure Planning and Facilities (IPF), who have installed complimentary product dispensers in women's and all-gender restrooms with plans to offer free menstrual products in men's restrooms of buildings where all-gender restrooms are not present. This directly supports menstrual hygiene and promotes physical health, mental health, and education of university members.

To promote staff development, the Building Community Insight Series held virtual and in-person events throughout the year, including a deeper dive follow up to the WorkLife Office's Whole-Person Workplace Conference, creating a living ornament, review of Robert's Rules of Order, funds of knowledge and DEI work, DEI: the Heart of Institutional Change and Art of Negotiation.

Much appreciation to WACSS

ex-officios – Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D., vice president and chief diversity officer, Jaimie Hutchison, WorkLife Office director, and Christina Brogdon, vice president and chief human resources officer – for their continued support in amplifying efforts, supporting the needs and requests of the committee and staff, and assisting toward the achievement of committee goals. In addition, I express gratitude for my outstanding WACSS executive committee team – Immediate Past Chairperson Emily Khan, Vice Chairperson Lindsey Rose, Secretary Taren Storrs, Treasurer Arianna Perrien – who have been instrumental in advancing our collective goals and efforts and the true embodiment of teamwork; as well as the larger committee members.

Looking ahead, WACSS as it currently stands is the only dedicated committee for staff, and we recognize the necessity for a change in strategic direction and opportunity to evolve and expand.

As we set our objectives for the 2023-24 fiscal year, the committee is planning to expand representation, participation and mission that would require a name and structure change to improve campus alignment, promote inclusion, and expand impact. This broadened scope does not aim to replace or remove the focus on women issues but open avenues for additional areas of focus and elevate the voice of all staff.

Looking forward to the continued service WACSS provides, empowering, collaborating with, advocating for and maximizing the involvement of university staff.

Sincerely,

Tina Alonzo, CM, CHRS, CDP ([she/her](#))

2022-23 CHAIR, WACSS
DEI ADMINISTRATOR, [EVPA OFFICE OF DEI](#)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women’s Advisory Committee for Support Staff would like to highlight the activities and efforts put forth in the 2022-2023 year that reflect the strategic implementation of our mission and values. Here we highlight several achievements and milestones that help to advance advocacy, connectivity, engagement, and staff development.

- Social media employee engagement increased by more than 23%
- Continued support of [Mission Menstruation](#) to provide menstrual hygiene products for MSU students
- Presented [Building Bridges of Spartan Connections](#), our Annual Spring Forum, for more than 200 Spartans across the country
- Continued the WACSS Insight Series with six different events, connecting with over 140 Spartan Staff
- Hosted the second-annual WACSS Summer Social, [Building Bridges of Spartan Connections in the Gardens](#)
- Sent a memo to the Office of the President entitled [Building on Employee Recognition Efforts](#), acknowledging the contributions of Spartan Staff which contributed to the implementation of Personal Observance Days, revised Religious Observance Policy, observation of the Annual Winter Break, and observation of [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)
- Sent the [Student Application Fee Waiver for MSU Staff Recommendation](#) to the Office of Admissions, to waive the student application fee for MSU staff who register for MSU courses and degree-granting programs

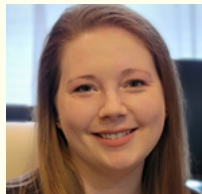


OUR COMMITMENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



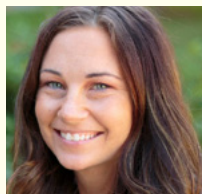
CHAIR
Tina Alonzo
EVPA DEI
ADMINISTRATOR,
EVPA OFFICE OF
DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
AND INCLUSION



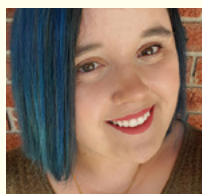
VICE-CHAIR
Lindsey Rose
RESEARCH ASSISTANT,
CHARLES STEWART
MOTT DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



SECRETARY
Taren Storrs
DIRECTOR, ALUMNI
RELATIONS - WEST COAST,
MSU ALUMNI OFFICE



TREASURER
Arianna Perrien
ADMINISTRATIVE
BUSINESS ANALYST,
FOOD SCIENCE AND
HUMAN NUTRITION



IMMEDIATE PAST-CHAIR
Emily Khan
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST, MSU
UNIVERSITY PROCUREMENT
AND LOGISTICS

Guided by our commitment to voice staff issues—particularly those that relate to women support staff—WACSS serves as a channel of communication. Sharing information directly with university leadership including our ex-officio members, the committee’s work has resulted in the development of many [initiatives](#) and outcomes since its establishment in 1976.

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.

OUR COMMITMENT IS DRIVEN BY OUR VALUES:

ADVOCACY: Serve as a liaison to influence key decision making at MSU that affects women support staff.

CONNECTIVITY: Unite women support staff and stakeholders through effective and innovative two-way communication.

ENGAGEMENT: Maximize the involvement of women support staff and provide an opportunity to exchange information.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: Provide, promote, support, and encourage development opportunities for women support staff.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

The Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff (WACSS) has four [subcommittees](#) that support efforts involving communications, marketing, recruitment, signature events, championing university initiatives, policy, community partnerships, and programs. The following are summaries and progress of actions taken to advance advocacy, connectivity, engagement, and development of staff.

The committee welcomes [ongoing input](#) from all support staff. Its role is to provide a wide range of views on issues that staff members face at MSU. You may also [contact any member](#) of the committee to represent this concern for you. If you have any questions, please contact wacss@msu.edu.

FOUR SUBCOMMITTEES OPERATE WITHIN THE COMMITTEE



COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING (CM)

CHAIR

Ashley Wilson

EVENT AND PROJECT COORDINATOR,
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION

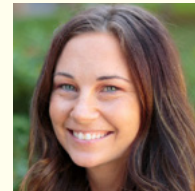


DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

CHAIR

Heather Dover

COORDINATOR FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH,
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST
FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION



EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT (EE)

CHAIR

Arianna Perrien

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS ANALYST,
FOOD SCIENCE AND HUMAN NUTRITION



MEMBERSHIP, BENEFITS, AND DEVELOPMENT (MBD)

CHAIR

Taylor Unrath

HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST,
MSU HUMAN RESOURCES

Membership

To achieve committee goals on behalf of our support staff constituency, WACSS is comprised of seventeen members representing various units, roles, and unions from across the university. The Membership, Benefits, and Development subcommittee is responsible for recruiting applicants on a rolling basis and filling open committee positions. Through partnership with WACSS's Executive Committee and Communications and Marketing subcommittee, seven new applicants were added to the committee's pool of candidates. The Membership, Benefits, and Development subcommittee interviewed six candidates throughout the year to backfill two open Labor representative positions (terms started November 1, 2023), as well as to fill two end-of-term positions (terms starting July 1, 2023).

Engagement and Awareness

In the spirit of the overall annual WACSS theme, *Building Bridges of Spartan Connections*, the WACSS Communications and Marketing subcommittee collaborated with and featured over 20 other Spartan groups and 43 campus events in our social media spaces. We also placed greater focus on amplifying WACSS's online brand through the creation of Instagram story highlights, social media post templates, and updates to the committee website. To promote engagement and support other WACSS subcommittees, we reinstated the #FridayMemberFeature series, highlighting a current member each week to provide insight to the benefits of WACSS committee membership. The Communications and Marketing team also provided support through the development of marketing materials for the Annual Spring Forum, Summer Social, and Insight Series events throughout the year.



SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM	JUNE 2022	MAY 2023
Facebook	567	594
LinkedIn	159	268
Instagram	159	231

CONNECT WITH US!

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/msuwacss/

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/msuwacss

Instagram: instagram.com/msu.wacss/

Our Partnerships

CONNECTION

WACSS is connected with many groups across the university, and works to strengthen these partnerships throughout the year. Three of our strongest partnerships are with our ex-officio member units: the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, MSU Human Resources, and the WorkLife Office. In addition to meeting monthly with our ex-officio members to discuss their updates, progress on committee goals, and how we can work together for our support staff constituency, individual WACSS subcommittees worked closely with these offices. For example, to raise awareness of WACSS initiatives such as the *Building Community Insight Series*, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittee collaborated with Henry Mochida, DEI Communications Manager. Similarly, the Membership, Benefits, and Development subcommittee partnered with the WorkLife Office and MSU Human Resources to examine opportunities for the future of WACSS's Spartner mentorship program—initially launched in FY22.

Outside of our ex-officio partnerships, WACSS was involved with many Spartan groups. In partnership with Infrastructure Planning and Facilities (IPF) and the Division of Student Life and Engagement (SLE), WACSS continued support of Mission Menstruation, which provides menstrual hygiene products for MSU community members across campus. The Communications and Marketing subcommittee collaborated with over 20 Spartan groups to cross-promote relevant news, events, and more on social media. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittee also partnered with the Coalition of Racial and Ethnic Minorities (CoREM) to provide awareness of CoREM groups, events, and university initiatives.

Annual Spring Forum

The 2023 Spring Forum, entitled *Building Bridges of Spartan Connections*, was hosted virtually and focused on how Spartans can build a better MSU together.

The event began with remarks from university leadership: Interim President Teresa K. Woodruff; Executive Vice President for Administration, Dr. Melissa Woo; and Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Thomas Jeitschko. Following these remarks, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Christina Brogdon touched on the Power of Connectivity in her keynote address. Afterward, breakout rooms shared insights and experiences of Building Connections through Administration, Worklife, DEI, Committee Work, and Unions. The breakout rooms consisted of the following co-hosts:



ADMINISTRATION

DR. ALEXIS TRAVIS,
Assistant Provost and Executive Director,
University Health and Wellbeing

ALISON TANGE,
Executive Administrator,
Office of the Interim President

RATI WALTHER, Assistant Budget Officer,
Office of Financial Planning and Budget

WORKLIFE

JAIMIE HUTCHISON, Director, WorkLife Office

RACHEL PEREZ, Life Span and
Family Services Coordinator, WorkLife Office

RACHEL DUNCAN, Senior Administrative Business
Professional, Eli Broad College of Business

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)

DR. JABBAR BENNETT,
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer,
Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion

DR. GENYNE ROYAL, Assistant Vice President
of Executive Management, DEIB

EMILY KHAN, Marketing and Communications
Specialist, University Procurement and Logistics

COMMITTEE WORK

TINA ALONZO, EVPA DEI Administrator,
EVPA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

ASHLEY WILSON, Event and Project Coordinator,
Department of Media and Information

ARIANNA PERRIEN, Administrative Business
Analyst, Food Science and Human Nutrition

HEATHER DOVER, Coordinator for
Undergraduate Research, Office of the Associate
Provost for Undergraduate Education

TAYLOR UNRATH, Human Resources Generalist,
MSU Human Resources

UNIONS

DEB BITTNER, Clerical-Technical Union President

DANIEL BARNEY, Spartan Skilled Trades
Union President

TAREN STORRS, Director, Alumni Relations -
West Coast, MSU Alumni Office

The event brought more than 200 attendees, 35% of which were first-time Spring Forum attendees, resulting in an 85% registrant to attendee rate.

A post-event survey was distributed to all participants who attended the webinar, and we received overall positive feedback from 43 unique responses, resulting in a 19% response rate. Highlights from the survey include:

- 42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information covered in the keynote session by Christina Brogdon is applicable to their role at MSU.
- 44% of respondents ranked their ability to make connection between their work and their selected breakout topic as “very well” or “extremely well.”

Open feedback applauded Christina Brogdon’s delivery of information as keynote speaker and shared that the forum was extremely well thought-out and executed.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

Creating a Better Spartan Community

BOOK CLUB

In 2023, the Events and Engagement subcommittee launched the inaugural book club *Beyond the Book*. The year was broken up into two sessions; Fall 2022 and Spring 2023. In the fall, the ten participants selected “The No Club – Putting a Stop to Women’s Dead-End Work” as the book to be read and discussed. With a 120% increase in participation, the spring semester

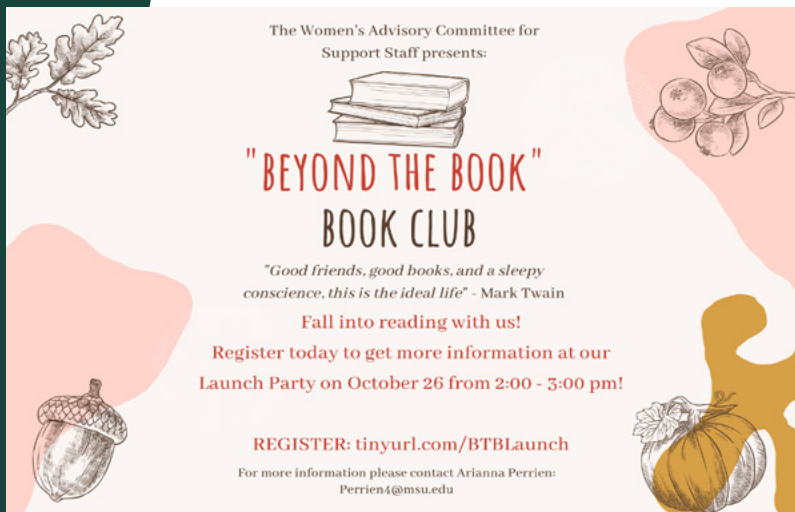
participants (22) selected and engaged in reading “Crazy Rich Asians” by Kevin Kwan. Meetings took place in multiple modalities, alternating between in-person and virtual settings. During the in-person meetings, participants were able to get to know each other over lunch provided by WACSS.

INSIGHT SERIES

Furthering our commitment to building community, the Events and Engagement subcommittee partnered with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittee to establish the *Building Community Insight Series*, engaging over 140 Spartan Staff. A variety of virtual and in-person events were offered, including: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Heart of Institutional Change; Deeper Dive: The Whole-Person Workplace (a follow up to the 2022 WorkLife Conference); The Art of Negotiation – Creating a Win/Win Situation for Getting What You Want; and Funds of Knowledge and DEI Work.



Jeff Beavers, Career Network Services, presents The Art of Negotiation – Creating a Win/Win Situation for Getting What You Want



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

BUILDING BRIDGES OF SPARTAN CONNECTIONS IN THE GARDENS

Following the 2023 Annual Spring Forum, the committee planned an in-person social at the MSU Horticulture Gardens entitled: *Building Bridges of Spartan Connections* in the Gardens. The event provided a photo opportunity with Sparty, a strolling light lunch buffet, music by the MSU Jazz quartet, and brought more than 200 Spartans in person to network.



BROAD RESOURCE FAIR

At the close of each academic year, the Broad College of Business hosts an ice cream social and resource fair to celebrate staff and faculty, as well as provide an opportunity to learn more about available resources. This year, WACSS was pleased to join as a resource dedicated to support staff. This event served as an avenue for both constituent engagement and membership recruitment.

DEI FOUNDATIONS

As the only committee representing all MSU support staff and with a focus on women's issues, WACSS was honored to contribute to DEI Foundations, MSU's institutional-level required online diversity, equity, and inclusion education module for all Spartans, including students, staff and faculty. Several WACSS committee members provided information and testimonials of their experiences as Spartan women, including stereotypes, challenges, and barriers. The committee also provided recommendations for change that support inclusive and equitable practices for women.



MOVING FORWARD

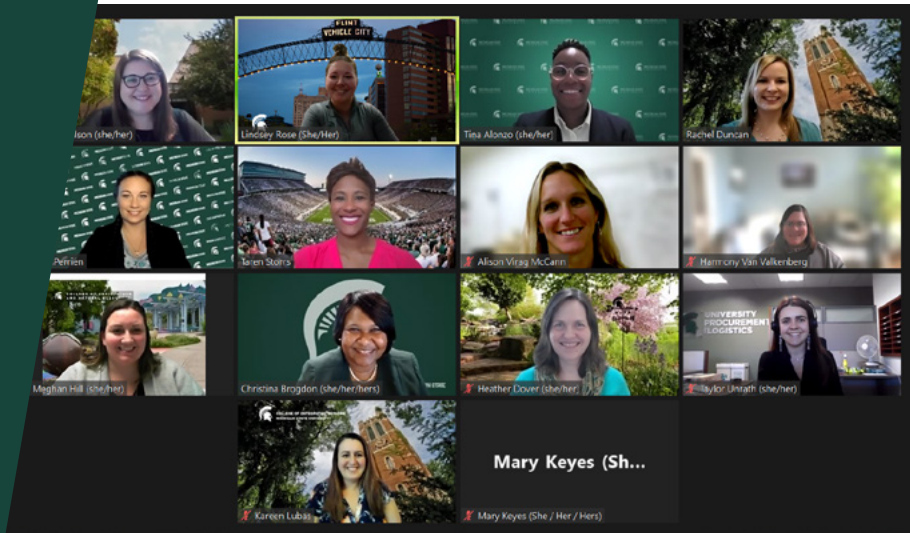
Change in Strategic Direction

WACSS, as it currently stands, is the only committee dedicated specifically to support staff at MSU. Staff are often generally underrepresented across the university in decision making processes, including university committees. As of January 31, 2023,

Michigan State University has 7,430 support staff employees and 2,241 academic staff, 963 of which are academic specialists. As such, the committee recognizes the need for and has explored the opportunity to expand our representation, participation, and mission to cover both academic and support staff. The scope of this expansion would require a name change to improve clarity on campus alignment, promote inclusion, and expand impact. Our proposed broadened scope

does not aim to replace or remove the focus on women's issues, but to open avenues for additional areas of focus and to elevate the voice of all staff members.

The 2022-23 WACSS Executive Committee—with the support of our ex-officios and committee members—has worked extensively to develop a Change in Strategic Direction Plan to accomplish this in expectation to see a more inclusive committee in years to come.





Women's Advisory Committee
for Support Staff (WACSS)
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

wacss.msu.edu

