

Genesee Staff Council
2021 Annual Report

University of Rochester

A person wearing a white protective suit, a white hard hat, safety glasses, and a blue surgical mask is working on a large, complex industrial machine. The machine is primarily blue and metallic, with various pipes, cables, and components. The person is focused on a specific part of the machine, possibly a control panel or a sensor. The background shows more of the machine's structure, including a large circular opening and various mechanical parts. The overall scene is a technical or industrial environment.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Genesee Staff Council is to facilitate active and direct communication between University staff and senior administration and to provide a forum for input and discussion of issues important to the staff and the University. The Council is composed of a group of diverse staff from across various University offices and academic departments.

About this Report

This document describes the undertakings of the Genesee Staff Council (GSC) from October 2020 through December 2021 and identifies priorities and themes that will guide our work for 2022.

Council Activities

Over the past year, the GSC has been actively pursuing the priorities outlined in the 2019-20 annual report. This year's report also highlights the continued progress of the Council and builds on its creation as a permanent body of the University of Rochester in 2019.

Communication and Transparency

The GSC continues to meet regularly with University leadership, including the President, Provost, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, and Board of Trustees. Keeping these communication channels open has allowed us to advocate for staff on issues of importance, such as COVID-19 vaccine mandates and the transitions between remote and in-person work. We are encouraged that University leaders, even at the highest levels, have been willing and enthusiastic about engaging with us and sharing their time. These conversations allow staff voices to be heard all the way at the top and have cultivated a shift in culture where staff participation and input are actively sought and valued. GSC representatives continue to sit on various committees that have the potential for broad impact on staff members across the University, such as the Coronavirus University Restart Team (CURT) and the Career Path Modernization (CPM) Advisory Board.¹

Over the past year, GSC members have also represented staff interests on the search committees for the new Provost and Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, the Employee Vaccination Recommendation Committee, the Policy 106 Review Committee, the Faculty Senate Benefits Committee, and the Remote Work Planning Group.

The Council has worked to improve constituent outreach. The GSC, in partnership with University Communications, launched a new and cohesive Council website. The new site (www.rochester.edu/staff-council) communicates and reinforces the Council's mission, services, and resources, and describes its structure and role at the University. The site also includes FAQs, a list of Council representatives and committees, staff spotlights and awards, the Council's resources and materials—including meeting minutes and the annual report—and an anonymous feedback form. The new staff spotlight feature highlights the diversity of our staff and their excellence in promoting the University's mission.

In addition to the new GSC website, we are working on district-specific engagement methods. Recent open-feedback Zoom sessions in Advancement; Arts, Sciences & Engineering; and Central Administration as well as Eastman's monthly e-newsletter initiative and a job satisfaction survey of Auxiliary/Union district members have been well-received.

Culture and Climate

The culture and climate of the University community are critical factors that affect all staff. As pandemic conditions continue, the Council has witnessed the highs and lows of employee morale; staff are both proud of all they have achieved under challenging circumstances and exhausted by the continued stress and uncertainty. While we cannot control public health conditions, we have explored factors that impact campus climate to help support and uplift staff in as many ways as possible.

The GSC represented staff during return-to-campus planning, implementation, and operations and acted as a voice for staff in University decision-making. We have encouraged University leaders to increase transparency and equity in communication and planning. We also advocated for expanded, more equitable access to anti-racism training and maintained and expanded partnerships with the Faculty Senate to improve faculty-staff relations and promote joint interests.

The Council has been able to work directly with the Office of Human Resources on some of these interests, including retirement contributions and health plan contributions, to better understand policies and advocate for staff needs. We have listened to constituent concerns about job security, promotions, and salary competitiveness. With that in mind, we have collaborated with the Career Path Modernization team to provide extensive feedback on the new compensation philosophy and to voice the need for transparency in job classification and salary information as the new system is built. Additionally, we have worked with the Director of Learning and Organizational Development to offer workshop suggestions for future professional development and training. We anticipate this collaboration yielding new cultural, skill-building, and leadership opportunities.

¹ See Appendix A for a full list of Council representation on various University boards, committees, and working groups.

Council Operations and Expansion

Operations

The Council continues to develop its administrative and operational tasks. Interim elections were held early in the year to fill vacancies in the Auxiliary/Union and Advancement districts, and regular elections took place from August to September 2021. As the inaugural GSC members were elected for two- or three-year staggered terms, the 2021 election was our first general election with incumbents. The strong field of candidates indicates sustained interest from staff in the GSC's mission and success, and we welcomed 11 new members to begin the Council's third year at the University.²

Following the general election, Marc Seigfred (University IT) completed his term as co-chair, and Amanda Sharpe (Eastman School of Music) was elected to serve a two-year term as the new co-chair of the GSC. She joins current co-chair Caterina Caiazza (Arts, Sciences & Engineering), whose term continues until September 2022.

An annual review of the bylaws was completed and ratified by the Council. Updates were made to clarify the co-chair terms (section II.B.i.a.1), establish formal procedures for filling interim vacancies and holding off-cycle elections (section V.C.iv), and to incorporate a budget and expense approval process (section II.B.i, V.A.iv, and V.A.v). The updated bylaws can be accessed on the GSC [website](#).

Expansion

While the Council in its pilot phase has included only 11 non-medical units of the University, we are working on a proposal to expand representation across the entire University to include those not yet represented by the Council.

The process for expanding the Council is in the early stages; Rebecca Walters, an ex-officio GSC member from the Office of Human Resources, is convening a working group for planning purposes. We have secured support from members of the Faculty Senate, which includes medical faculty, to advise on maintaining equitable representation during and after expansion. We have approval to include funding for a 50% FTE administrative support staff member. This support role will assist in the expansion planning efforts and help streamline normal operations, such as scheduling meetings, releasing meeting minutes, and facilitating daily activities.

² See Appendix B for a list of current Council representatives and those who have stepped down.

Council Priorities for 2022

The GSC has identified several priorities and themes to guide our work in 2022. The tasks and strategies to support these priorities may evolve in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other emergent issues. The Council will continue to solicit feedback from staff to inform these priorities, identify additional issues of importance, and synthesize key elements to share with University leadership. As always, the GSC remains committed to its core mission of facilitating transparent and direct communication, amplifying messaging both to and from staff, and collaborating with other campus partners to address staff concerns.

Council Operations and Communication

GSC representatives will work to strengthen relationships, both within the Council and with staff across the University, establish consistent communication with constituents, recruit diverse candidates for new and open seats, and collaborate with leadership to expand Council representation to medical center staff. The Council will continue to seek educational opportunities in order to grow as leaders and best represent the Meliora values of equity, leadership, integrity, openness, respect, and accountability.

Culture and Climate

The GSC will collaborate with key programs, units, and working groups that address topics related to culture, climate, and morale, as well as identify new ways to engage staff to ensure all constituents' voices are heard and feel welcomed. Additionally, the Council will continue to provide safe spaces for constituents to share their challenges, concerns, and questions.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We will work to partner with key University offices, including the Office of Equity and Inclusion, in identifying new ways to engage staff in more clearly defining an inclusive University culture that consistently supports and appreciates the multiple important identities and the whole person that define each staff member among our current and future constituencies.

We will encourage collaboration among diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committees and working groups across various University offices and academic departments to maximize opportunities and more efficiently utilize resources as the University solidifies its supportive infrastructure for DEI work.

Future of Work

The Council will work to contribute to the development of standardized and equitable processes and criteria for flexible work opportunities, transparent compensation practices, competitive benefit programs, recruitment of a diverse workforce, and other areas critical to employees. A Future of Work committee has been formed within the GSC with a liaison to the Office of Human Resources to facilitate communication on this issue. We will also continue our collaboration with the Career Path Modernization (CPM) team to provide feedback as the CPM project progresses.

Professional Development

The Council will identify and engage with individuals who administer University training programs to ensure that all employees have ample access to training, growth, and career opportunities, both in-person and online via resources such as MyPath. The development of training curricula that align with the new job family, career stream, and leveling framework introduced by the Career Path Modernization project will be a priority in our push to establish a clearly-defined pathway for advancement within and across career streams. Our existing collaboration with the CPM team provides us with a communication channel to amplify messaging about the new framework and facilitate the alignment of training opportunities within that architecture.

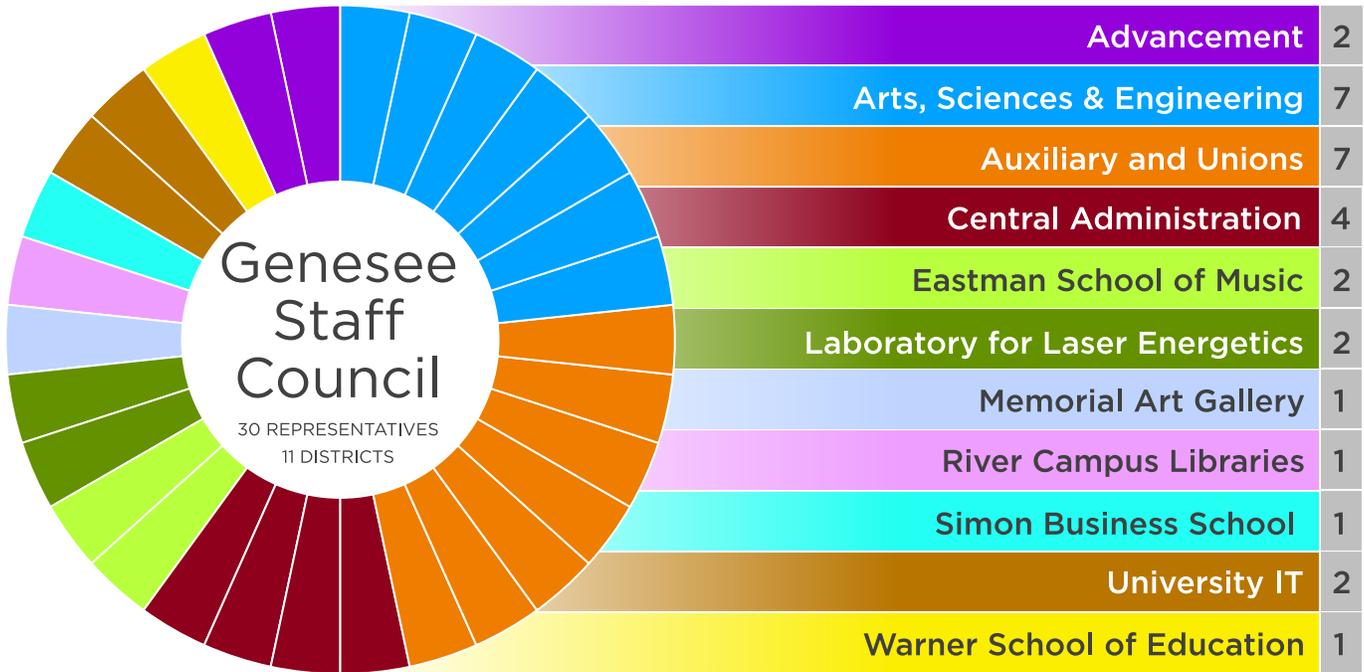
Appendix A

Council Activities and Representation

- Career Path Modernization (CPM) Advisory Board
- Coronavirus University Restart Team (CURT)
- Employee Vaccination Recommendation Committee
- Executive Compensation Committee
- Faculty Senate Benefits Committee
- Policy 106 Review Committee (Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Discriminatory Employment/Service Practices)
- Public Safety Review Board Composition Committee
- Remote Work Planning Group
- Search Committee—Provost
- Search Committee—Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer
- Strategic Plan Working Group—Building Healthier Lives
- Strategic Plan Working Group—Reimagining Education

Appendix B

Composition of GSC Membership



Current Representatives

DISTRICT	NAME	DEPARTMENT
Advancement	Diane Crane*	Donor Engagement
	Lauren McKenna	Alumni Relations
Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Melinda Adelman	Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences
	Angela Buchiere*	College Center for Advising Services
	Caterina Caiazza, <i>Co-chair</i>	Gwen M. Greene Center for Career Education and Connections
	David Cota-Buckhout*	Gwen M. Greene Center for Career Education and Connections
	Sherri Gunter	Department of English
	Kaitlin Legg*	CARE Network
	Jon Powers*	Event and Classroom Management
Auxiliary/Union	Dawn Marshall-Hosier	Dining Services/SEIU 200 United Representative
	Amy Kadrie*	University Facilities and Services
	Anthony Siragusa	Department of Public Safety
	Keri Siragusa*	Transportation and Parking Management
	Andrea Walton	Transportation and Parking Management
	Paul Wlosinski	Department of Public Safety
	Joe Williams, Jr.*	Dining Services

DISTRICT	NAME	DEPARTMENT
Central Administration	Rani Bhagwat	International Services Office
	Kristi Brock	University Health Service
	Michael Osadciw	University Communications/Creative Services
	Heidi Mergenthaler*	Ain Center for Entrepreneurship
Eastman School of Music	Amanda Sharpe, <i>Co-chair</i>	Academic Affairs
	Harish Nayak, <i>Secretary*</i>	Institute for Music Leadership
Laboratory for Laser Energetics	Alexander Pita	Information Technology
	Jennifer Hamson*	Administration
Memorial Art Gallery	Anthony Campbell†	Facilities and Exhibitions
River Campus Libraries	Katie Papas	Rossell Hope Robbins Library/Koller-Collins Center for English Studies
Simon Business School	Bailey Nixon*	Barry Florescue Undergraduate Business Program
University IT	Molly Snyder†	Projects and Service Delivery
	Marc Seigfred	Core Technology Services
Warner School of Education	Theresa Danylak	Communications and Marketing
Ex-Officio	Terra Butram, <i>Parliamentarian</i>	Office of Human Resources
	Rebecca Walters	Office of Human Resources

* elected in 2021
 † elected in 2022

Former Representatives

DISTRICT	NAME	DEPARTMENT
Advancement	Celeste Cooper	Gift and Donor Services
Arts, Sciences & Engineering	Chris Apple	Athletics and Recreation
	Laurel Contomanolis	Residential Life and Housing Services
	Robert DeLeon	Gwen M. Greene Center for Career Education and Connections
	Kari Kafka	Institute of Optics
Auxiliary/Union	John McIntyre	Horticulture and Grounds
	Josh Spenard	Planning and Project Management
Central Administration	Matt Spielmann	Ain Center for Entrepreneurship
Eastman School of Music	Rich Wattie	Technology and Media Production
Laboratory for Laser Energetics	David VanWey	Administration
Memorial Art Gallery	James Chudyk	Facilities and Services
Simon Business School	Janelle Kohlman	Benet Career Center
University IT	Yennifer Hernandez	Projects and Service Delivery

Report completed by the
GSC Communications Committee

Ratified by full
Genesee Staff Council on
February 11, 2022



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