

2023 University Staff Elections

Senate Candidate BIOGRAPHIES

YELLOW is a SENATE candidate-if also interested in serving on a Senate subcommittee it is listed in bold

GRAY is a Committee candidate only for a **Senate Subcommittee which are listed in Bold**

Justin Almquist SC My name is Justin Almquist and I have been working as an administrative assistant in the Occupational Therapy, Science, and Technology (OTST) Program at UWM for about 6 years. I started serving on the University Staff Senate this last year, and I would love the opportunity to continue to serve on the Senate. After seeing what the Senate does firsthand, I hope that I can be provided with the opportunity to be more involved in the future. I believe that it is important to be involved in leadership and to help my community. It would be a great privilege to be able to continue to serve on the University Staff Senate. If allowed to continue serve on the committee, I would work to empower all voices at UWM, and strive to represent UWM University Staff concerns to campus administration. Thank you for your consideration. After serving on the full University Staff Senate for the last year, I would be honored to serve on one of the standing committees in the future. Within my current academic program, I currently serve as an ex officio member of the Occupational Therapy, Science, and Technology (OTST) Program Committee and the OTST Admissions Committee. I also serve as a member of the OTST Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. As part of my job, I participated in reviewing pre-established program policies/procedures and assisted in the process of creating new policies for the OTST Program. In my current job, I am also involved in the process for securing nominations for a student award that we give out to one graduating student from the MS in Occupational Therapy Program every year. I believe that the skills I developed in my current job would be an asset as a committee member for the University Staff Senate and the standing committees. Thank you for your consideration.

Natachia Attewell SC Codification Committee, Grievance Committee I am a UWM alumna both undergraduate and graduate degrees and I have worked on campus since 2011. I started working full-time in 2021 when the Philosophy Department hired me as their administrative assistant III. I am best suited for the University Staff Codification Committee or the University Staff Grievance Committee because I have always had a passion for rules, bylaws, policies, and procedures in my day-to-day life at work and at home. I am a firm believer that there is a balance between rules as written verses the spirit of the rule and it is up to governing bodies such as the University Staff Committees here at UWM to find a balance that best suits the needs of everyone. I have a strong interest in being given the opportunity to take a closer look at the cogs that turn our community.

Jake Azinger FAA

Awards Committee, Climate and Information Committee, Codification Committee,

Grievance Committee, Layoff Committee, Nominations Committee Hello, my name is Jake Azinger and I have been University Staff for 3 years and served on the Senate since Spring 2022. It has been an amazing experience being able to contribute and represent the University Staff on the Senate, several committees, and as co-chair of the Climate and Information Committee. I hope to continue to build upon the progress we have made and continue to focus on maximizing what is best for us all. I appreciate the opportunity to serve in this way. Respectfully, -Jake I have no special talent, I am only passionate about doing what's right.

Elle Cochrane SC

Awards Committee, Layoff Committee, Nominations Committee

I am a currently serving senator interested in continuing to participate in governance. My primary interests include advocating for and representing other LGBTQ+ members of the University Staff.

Paul Dixon OAD

Climate & Info Committee, Codification Committee, Grievance Committee

It's been a privilege to serve on the University Staff Senate for the past two years representing the interests of University Staff across our campus. During this time, I've learned more about governance on our campus, and I would like to apply those skills on committees to serve my University Staff colleagues. As a committee member, I will bring my experience from the Senate and my administrative skillset from my work in University Housing.

Louisa Eastman OAD

I have worked at the University over 20 years and am passionate about Governance. I am

passionate about Governance. I feel that University Staff should have a voice in all aspects of UWM. I have been at UWM my whole life, I was a college for kid, I was here for college, graduate school and now I have worked here over 20 years.

Anna Fischer FAA

Awards Committee, Grievance Committee

I have been very lucky to serve as a member of the University Staff Senate over the last year. While I have only been at UWM for 5 years, I am so happy to be a part of our wonderful University community and feel so grateful to be a part of fulfilling UWM's mission. I would be honored to continue to represent the critical interests of University Staff in the greater UWM and UW System community. I would be honored to serve on any of the University Staff standing committees. I have been lucky to have been a member of the Awards and Grievance committees in the past. I find working on both of these committees to be very fulfilling. It is always wonderful to be able to encourage and facilitate the recognition of US staff's hard work and contribution to the University. On the flip side, I also feel

that ensuring that the Grievance process, when it unfortunately happens, is as fair and equitable as possible for US staff is critically important.

Cassandra FitzPatrick FAA I am interested in serving on the University Staff Senate because I feel strongly about making a difference across campus for all campus community members. As full time member of the Help Desk team I see how policies affect student staff, employees, emeritus, annuitant, faculty, and the general public.

Sabrina Fuller FAA **Codification Committee, Grievance Committee** As a former UWM graduate student and now a staff member, I have a unique perspective on how issues within the campus impact employees at different levels of the university. In my position as an administrative assistant, I get the opportunity to see where some policies and procedures could be clarified or improved to better serve our campus staff. My goal as a member of the University Staff Senate would be to listen to the concerns of our campus community and work to better organize our systems to maintain consistency, share information, and find common ground solutions. I would be honored to hold positions on the University Staff Standing Committees, as I believe both the Grievance Committee and the Codification Committee fall into my skillsets: mediation, policy comprehension, and consistency. Being a former teaching assistant and a current administrative assistant, much of my experience lies in utilizing interpersonal skills to justly adhere to policies, using discourse to produce fair outcomes for all parties. I am very familiar with many of UWM's policies in a variety of domains, and would use that knowledge to equitably serve our campus staff.
Communication, Research

Peter Geraci SC **Climate & Info Committee, Grievance Committee** UWM has been an important part of my life since I began graduate school here in 2009. In 2016, I returned to UWM to become the Department Administrator in the Department of Anthropology where I also conduct archaeological research. For most of that time I have served on the senate because I believe in the important work we do. We act as a voice for all university staff, particularly those who do not have the position to speak up for themselves. I am proud of the work we have done to protect and elevate staff across campus and look forward to being a part of this work going forward. I have served on the senate for many years but have not participated in committee work. If selected, I would bring several years of senate experience and a progressive, anthropological perspective to the issues at hand. Coming from a science background, I tend to listen and observe before I make judgement and am not afraid to ask the difficult questions in order to identify problems and find solutions.

Jose Gonzales FAA

Grievance Committee

I am a fairly new UWM employee with 11 years of experience working in Higher Education. It would be an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to serve on a University Staff Standing Committee. I have 11 years of experience working in Higher Education and have served on various committees. I consider myself blessed to be able to work for this incredible institution and If elected to serve, I would bring my passion, knowledge, stewardship, diligence and collegiality.

George Henion SC

Nominations Committee

For the last 4 years, I have represented you on the Senate, chaired the Nominations committee and served on Search and Screen committees and other university level committees. I will continue to support University staff and ask for your vote to allow me to continue this important work. I also worked and co-chaired the group that got the Climate Survey built, submitted and the results distributed. Results of that survey will go a long way to improving conditions for University Staff here at UWM. As the chair for the Nomination committee the past 3 years, I have endeavored to continue to appoint a wide variety of University Staff members to different committees and will continue to do so. I am asking for your vote to allow me to continue to do this important work.

Kathryn Morgan SC

Awards Committee, Nominations Committee

I am a long time UWM staff member and an alumna. I enjoy meeting new people across campus. I want to make sure that university staff voices and concerns are addressed at all levels. I have previous experience on search and screen committees and enjoy participating in them. I also would like to serve on other campus committees to ensure that support staff concerns are heard and understood at all levels.

Tiffany Nation SC

Awards Committee, Codification Committee, Grievance Committee, Layoff Committee, Nominations Committee

I'm currently a Senator of the University Staff Senate and would like to continue to serve as a Senator to continue to provide governance support to all University Staff. I've been with UWM going on 8 years. For at least 6 years, I have served on several governance committees and enjoy the work of supporting and improving the campus environment for all of our University Staff. I currently support 2 standing governance committee and enjoy being able to use my skills from my job duties to serve on other committees representing our University Staff.

Michael Page OAD

Grievance Committee

My name is Michael Page, originally from Cleveland Ohio. I moved to Milwaukee 1.5 years ago. I am a food service assistant at Sandburg. I would like to enter my name for the Grievance Committee. I have over 20 plus years of customer service, management, and 7 years of law enforcement experience. All of which has given

me experience in dealing with conflict, situations, and decision making. I would like to utilize my experience for the betterment of the UWM. My experience dealing with crisis, controversy and high pressure moments is something I can lean on in this capacity. Judgement calls can be tough but I am fair and I believe in a system that I've used in my career. Listen, Advise, Make a Decision! This is my method and process that has worked for me. Understand why you make a decision, make the decision, stand firm on your decision. I am a writer, blogger, I am an outdoorsman, enjoy doing community service and outreach.

Chris Parks SC **Codification Committee, Layoff Committee** This is my fourth year as a Senator. I have been happy to serve on the standing committees in the past, working to serve University Staff employees. I hope many others will invest their time and abilities in doing the same. We need voices to help in to exercise our governance rights as employees. I have 37 years of experience working at UWM, which has helped me to understand the needs and aspirations of University Staff employees. The Shared Governance rights we have as University Staff employees are important, and we need all University Staff members to stay informed and help to exercise those rights.

Ella Rakowski FAA **Codification Committee** I currently work in HR Shared Service Center as an HR Operations Coordinator supporting department recruitment and transactional employment entries into HRS. I have 5 years of HR experience which includes reviewing and recommending changes to employee handbooks, policies, trainings, workflows and process improvements. I am interested in making improvements for the staff and overall functionality

Rose Sauers OAD **Awards Committee, Codification Committee, Grievance Committee, Layoff Committee, Nominations Committee** My position as an USA2 (old)/Student Processing Specialist (TTC)/Student Services Admin Coord (Business – but closer to what I do!) in Pathway Advising has given me in depth experience with a number of key components of the UWM experience. I believe that every UWM employee should participate in shared governance to the extent that they are able. To that end, I wish to volunteer my time and share my experience with the Senate in order to give voice to the needs and opinions of my fellow Classified Staff. I have been on campus since 1995; classified staff since 2000. I have seen many changes across campus and in our role in shared governance – it is my goal to further advance the progress that University Staff have made in UWM governance. I have been on campus since 1995; classified staff since 2000. My position as an USA2 (old)/Student Processing Specialist (TTC)/Student Services Admin Coord (Business – but closer to what I do!) in Pathway Advising has given me in depth experience with a number of key components of the UWM experience. I believe that every UWM employee should participate in shared governance to the extent that they are able. To that end, I wish to volunteer my time and share my experience on governance committees in order to give voice to the needs and opinions of my fellow Classified Staff

and to improve the UWM experience for the campus community in general. I have experience on the Codification (incl. Chair), Awards, Nomination, and Layoff committees. Outside of UWM, I am a Belgium Village Trustee where I sit on the Personnel and Finance Committee and chair the Public Safety Committee. I am also President of the Grafton Lions Club, so I am well-versed in leadership roles.

Tim Steffan FAA **Climate & Info Committee, Codification Committee, Grievance Committee, Layoff Committee, Nominations Committee** I am currently in University Senate and would love to continue to represent University Staff at the branch campuses for the College of General studies. I have learned a great deal in my term as University Staff senator and feel I can continue to learn and grow to better represent those who need it.

Kate Valerius SC Celebrating my 17th year (as of April 2023) as a University Staff member here at UWM -- as the Graduate Program Coordinator in the Physics Dept. Grateful for the opportunity to provide support and assistance to fellow US, based on my experience from serving on the Climate and Information Committee and the Grievance Committee, in addition to being an invited participant in the 2030 Employee Development work group. The UWM University Staff senate continues to be an important part of this campus and I hope to continue in the efforts of keeping that going. Thank you for your consideration and support of my efforts in that regard. I work well with multiple levels of people (administration, faculty, students, staff, etc.) and have exceptional organizational, time management and communication skills -- all of which lend to success in working groups / committees. Each opportunity allows me to further hone these skills, adding professional contributions to the task at hand.

Marco Vallejo OAD **Awards Committee, Climate and Information Committee, Codification Committee** I would really enjoy serving my co-workers as a member of these committees.

Susan Wagner SC **Awards Committee, Layoff Committee** I have been with UWM almost four years now and I now feel I could properly represent the interests of University Staff on some of the standing committees. I have experience in volunteer committee work in my local town and would be honored to be chosen by my colleagues. It is important that University Staff have their own distinct representation as our needs do not always coincide with Faculty or Academic Staff. Our contributions are significant, our recognition is often inadequate, and our demands are deserving of a voice. Through collaboration, I am confident I can be a strong advocate for my teammates and ensure our interests are represented on

committees. As the University Staff employee who supports both Women's & Gender Studies and the LGBT+ Studies programs, I am uniquely well positioned to serve on the Chancellor's Advisory of LGBT+ Advocacy Issues. I have developed solid relationships with the instructors who teach in those areas, as well as many students who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In my personal life, I have been an advocate the LGBTQIA+ communities in Milwaukee and Racine, volunteering at Pride events and the resource centers for more than 15 years. I know I could learn a lot as well as contribute productively and I would be honored to be selected to serve on this committee. I'm very interested in giving representation to University Staff. I want to "dip my toe in the pond," so to speak, by serving on committees rather than jumping straight into the Senate itself. I have chosen the Awards Committee because I believe that recognition is so important, and I think it is important to acknowledge the unique individual contributions made by University Staff. So many people go outside the box in their responsibilities and that should be recognized. I have also chosen the Layoff Committee so I might gain knowledge into what factors are considered when these decisions are made, and to ensure the procedures are followed. In my personal life, I have sat on several volunteer committees, from a pet rescue organization on whose board I have served to a municipal licensing board. I am comfortable in that environment and am familiar with the rules of order to ensure things run smoothly. I look forward to the opportunity to represent my fellow University Staff to give them more transparency and confidence in their workplace. I want to serve on the Chancellor's Advisory for LGBT+ Advocacy Issues because I am passionate about the inclusion of all students, particularly the LGBTQIA+ community. As an ally for decades, I have volunteered within the community in both Milwaukee and Racine and am respectful of and familiar with some of the challenges faced by this population. In my position at UWM, I support the LGBT+ Studies program and am proud of the relationships I am building with the instructors and students. I have championed the cause for a gender neutral restroom within Curtin Hall and make it a point that all students, regardless of identity, are not just recognized but are comfortable. UW-Milwaukee should be proud of the high marks they have received in LGBTQIA+ representation, but there is always more that can be done and I would be honored to serve on this committee. In my personal life, I have sat on several volunteer committees, from a pet rescue organization on whose board I have served to a municipal licensing board. I am comfortable in that environment and am familiar with the rules of order to ensure things run smoothly. I look forward to the opportunity to serve.

Robert Wahl FAA

Climate and Information Committee

I have been on The University Staff committee then on the Senate and really enjoyed being on them and would like to continue. I have been on and off the Climate committee since it started and would like to stay on it.

Andrew Williams FAA

Climate and Information Committee

My name is Andrew Williams, and I am interested in serving on the staff climate committee so I can help foster a good relationship between departments, employees, and

possibly management. I have served on the staff senate and staff codification committee meetings already, and feel that this would be a better fit for me. My employment here at UWM puts me in situations where I really have to think outside the box to get things done, and I believe that skill set would really be beneficial to the climate and information committee. My job requires me to be able to have multiple solutions to fix an issue, and I think that skill set would help the climate and information committee here on campus. I have an open mind, and have been in leadership roles in my career and personal life outside of campus. I am a Navy veteran, a father of three children, and do animal rescue as well. I have an interest in high powered rocketry, trains, arcade and pinball machine restoration, skateboarding and snowboarding, animal rescue, anything radio control, anime, and helping others. I make a good six foot tall can opener for the three black cats who rule over my home.

Susie Wirka SC **Climate & Info Committee, Grievance Committee** I work for an obscure, off-campus program called the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System in partnership with a sister department at UW-Madison. Essentially, we operate like a small nonprofit and are completely grant funded. I am a Training Support Specialist which means I do anything and everything to make sure the trainings we offer run smoothly. We are a "college within a college," so to speak, and our trainings qualify as continuing education credits for professional social workers working in child welfare, out-of-home care, and home visiting around the state. I've been doing this work at UWM for nearly a decade. I was re-elected to the Senate in 2022 and got a much better sense of what's involved in serving the University in this capacity. I served on the following subcommittees last year: Awards Committee, Nominations Committee, University Climate and Information Committee, and Title and Total Compensation (TTC) Project Appeals Panels. The TTC panels were particularly challenging. Each case was different, demanding individual attention, close inspection of documentation, oral arguments, deliberation, and decision making. I was proud of this work and thrilled, in the end, to be asked to chair 3 of the 6 panels I sat on. I love the work I do on the University Staff Senate, and I look forward to serving for another year. This is a classic "learn by doing" opportunity! And I encourage others to get involved in this level of shared governance. I have served two years now on both the Awards and Nominations Committees, so I feel like I've developed a strong sense of that work and it's time for me to spread my wings. I just recently joined the Climate and Information Committee and am involved with that group's efforts to develop a "New Staff Buddy" system to help assimilate new employees to the University environment both on and off campus. So, I would very much like to continue with that work. I also recently helped a co-worker through a difficult annual review; I was essentially her advocate within my department and I kept the boundaries of communication as clear as possible. I know that the Grievance Committee is looking in to developing some kind of Grievance Program that we could help support. This is an area of great interest to me. I am a people person and a very good listener (or so I've been told). So, I'd like to expand into this area as well and pull away from Awards/Nominations for the time being. 1. To be perfectly honest, I live as an "out" lesbian although I pass as "straight looking" which gives me a kind of reverse privilege around sexuality issues. I've done a lot of teaching around women's health issues over the years, including those related to LGBT+ health care. It would be an easy fit for me to join the Chancellor's Advisory

Committee on Advocacy for LGBT+ Community. 2. I've also served on several search and screen committees over the years, some successful, some not so much. I just finished up a second interview here in our department for an additional Administrative Assistant position which we are hoping to fill sooner than later. 3. I am a firm believer in the adage "teamwork makes the dream work"! While most folks don't necessarily appreciate being assigned to another committee by their supervisor, the WORK GROUP model provides an alternative model that can be incredibly dynamic and has the potential of fostering more ownership of whatever the immediate issue/problem/project is at hand. In my home department, we've used the work group model in combination with massive brainstorming sessions to grapple with structural problems that need to be addressed. 4. I think that I put myself forward on this one last year as well. Since I work off campus, I always appreciate any opportunity to meet up with folks involved with any aspect of the campus environment. So, any UWM Committee work, small or large, would be a pleasure for me to get involved with. Thank you very much for reading my long-winded responses. -Susie I am a writer and an organizer (of things). I love to copy edit documents and other people's writing if they need a fine tooth comb treatment of important work. I am also a dog person. Just last week we added a tricolor beagle to our pack of dogs. His name is "A lex" (short for Alexei, named after Navalny and the Russian scientist in Season 3 of Stranger Things). I'm 61 years old and can still get excited about television shows like Stranger Things! Right now I'm horrified by the state of the planet and by the dismantling of the state around us.