University Classified Staff Council Mission

The mission of the University Classified Staff Council is to advise the President and leadership of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) on behalf of the classified staff. This is done by making recommendations on existing and proposed policies; weighing in on procedures and programs that impact the classified staff or are of particular interest to them; and voicing questions and concerns from classified staff members.

Updated policy announced regarding classified staff promotions, transfers

September of this year brought an updated policy for Classified staff promotions and transfers. To clarify, promotions are when an employee moves to a position with a greater pay range (compared at the midpoint), and a transfer is if the pay range midpoint is the same or below the previous position’s range. Promotions and transfers can occur within a department or between departments. A department is defined by using the first six digits of the department code in the financial management system.

In order to be eligible for a promotion or transfer the following criteria must be met:

- Successfully completed six-month probation period in current position.
- Must be rated at “Fully Meets Expectations” on last annual performance review.
- Meet educational and experience qualifications for position.
- Not subject to formal
A note from the UCSC Chair

Welcome to an exciting new year with UCSC

Welcome to a new year with the University Classified Staff Council (UCSC). I am so excited to be the Chair of the council this year. Let me give you a little bit of information about myself. I have been with UTHealth for about 10 years now. I started my career in Neurology, and now I have the distinct pleasure of working in Diagnostic and Interventional Imaging under the leadership of who I feel is the best chair Dr. Susan John and Director of Management and Operations Catherine Doughty. I am currently the Program Manager for Interventional Radiology where we do exciting cutting-edge minimally invasive procedures to help save lives. It is extremely exciting, and I am so proud to be a part of the team here. I joined the council five years ago, and since being a part of the council, I have given time to volunteer and to work alongside many exceptional individuals that love UT and love what they do for patient care and to support the physicians here. It is important to keep the long traditions of the classified staff council by putting the needs of the staff first. I look forward to this year trying to help with making some changes to creating a more clear focus for people to exceed in their careers and to feel like they are appreciated for the work that they do. We spoke to the leadership in the past year about having better communication, and I believe that this is happening. This year we have some exciting things that we are working on. Bringing the council to the forefront is one of the main things that I would like to change this year. I am looking into maybe creating more marketing ideas so that everyone knows that we are here and what we do. I would like to do some meet and greets and have tables at each building as they have events so that everyone will know who their representatives are. I look forward to working with all of you and cannot wait to be a part of the great things that we do.

Fundraising ramps up for Educational Awards program

The University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) has been providing Educational Awards to the children of classified staff since 2014.

Every year UCSC provides an opportunity for the UTHealth community to help high school seniors achieve their dreams of attending college through our Educational Awards program. Donations are accepted year-round for this fund, but the fundraising drive occurs each spring. Donations of all sizes are welcomed and can be made on the Donate2Educate website: https://www.uth.edu/ucsc/donate/. Donations are now accepted through the website. UCSC strives to provide as many awards as possible to students of classified staff. In the past, awards ranged from $500 to $5,000.

Applications are accepted for this award beginning in mid-February. To qualify for these awards,

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UTHealth employees have access to several resources throughout the university. Perhaps, none are as underutilized or unknown as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). EAP exists to help employees with a variety of problems ranging from personal issues to workplace issues generally free of charge. Additionally, EAP resources are available to both you the employee as well as your spouse, live-in partner, and eligible dependent children. While there are many facets to EAP resources, there are excellent programs available for personal wellness for UTHealth employees.

Within the personal wellness section of the EAP website, you will find links to resources related to addiction, nutrition, tobacco cessation, emotional health, and physical fitness. If you struggle with addiction, there are links to both support groups and mobile applications to assist you with your recovery. The topics range from drugs and alcohol to sexual addictions as well. EAP can also put you in contact with professional counselors who can help you.

Many employees struggle with providing themselves or their families with adequate nutrition. Through EAP, nutrition can be a snap! With access to Naturally Slim, employees who would like to shed a few pounds can quickly be connected and initiate the program. Employees who would just like to begin to incorporate healthier eating options into their meals can also find information on UTHealth’s Farm to Work program. The Farm to Work program provides the opportunity for UTHealth employees to receive a fresh basket of local produce delivered right to work. The produce is grown using organic and sustainable practices from a local farm near the Houston area. Each box costs $20-25 and contains enough to feed a family of 3-5 for one week. There is also the link to the UT System cookbook for you to try recipes on your own.

Opportunities to compete in physical challenges abound at UTHealth, and EAP can help you get connected with those. Recently, UTHealth competed in the Yo Ho Ho UT System fitness challenge. These fitness challenges are a hallmark of UTHealth life and we have successfully won the trophy for large institutions six times in a row! Also within the Personal Wellness section of the EAP website is a Wellness Calendar so that employees can keep up-to-date on all the wellness-related activities around the university. There are also custom maps to show you the location of fitness stairwells, nursing mother rooms, and the wellness kiosks at UTHealth.

For those employees who are especially motivated by physical fitness, there is also the opportunity to become a wellness ambassador. A wellness ambassador is a volunteer who helps the UTHealth Office of Employee Assistance Programs promote UTHealthy wellness initiatives by disseminating information and generating interest in wellness-related events and activities. They serve as role

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University Classified Staff Council Members come together for the annual retreat and prepare for the upcoming year.

**UCSC members prep for new year at retreat**

On Aug. 24, members of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston’s (UTHealth) University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) filled out nametags, grabbed breakfast snacks, and took their seats, ready for the annual UCSC retreat.

The one-day event, which was held at UTHealth’s Operations Center Building in Houston, served as an opportunity for the council to kick off the year with important business, including election of officers; strengthen themselves through professional development; educate new members about the council; recognize outgoing members for their service; and enjoy fellowship and good food. It also marked the beginning of their duties as this year’s representatives for classified staff of UTHealth.

The council exists to advise UTHealth leadership on behalf of classified staff, which includes sharing concerns with leadership. This year, the council is composed of about 50 members, about 20 of whom are new to UCSC.

“UCSC is an important partner in the university,” explained Jean Grove, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Fiscal Year 2018 Chair of UCSC. “Although we represent very diverse roles, classified staff members are the group that bring many of the visions and missions of the university to life through their tireless work in support of patients, faculty, and students.”

During the business portion of the August meeting, UCSC officers were elected as follows: Alainna Talton, Chair; William “Bill” Severson, Chair-Elect; Bethany Roachell, Secretary; Verlinicia Williams, Treasurer; and Lt. Gaudencio Arenas, Parliamentarian.

“My hope as the new chair of the council is to bring more recognition to the UCSC (and) also to assist in helping classified staff with salient concerns,” said Talton, Program Manager for Interventional Radiology.

Following elections, each council member was assigned to one of UCSC’s five standing committees. Breakout sessions were held so committees could select chairs and begin planning an exciting fiscal year for classified staff. Committees and their chairs are as follows: Colin Dunham, Communications Committee Chair; Denée Velazquez-Murillo, Educational Awards Committee Chair; Brenda Adams, Elections Committee Chair; Anthony “Tony” Jackson, Staff Development Committee Chair; and Rosie Gonzalez, Staff Recognition Committee Chair.

While the retreat marked the start of an exciting new year for UCSC, it was also bittersweet as a number of members were recog-
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the applicant must be a child or legal dependent of a classified employee currently employed. These students should be planning to enter either an accredited U.S. college program to pursue an associate or arts or baccalaureate degree or entering an accredited technical school.

The award committee, consisting of five members, evaluates students on their grades, letters of recommendation, and a one-page essay from students regarding their career goals and how their studies will help them achieve this. The committee will look at the students’ preparedness for college or technical school, evidence of prior scholastic achievement, clearly stated career and educational goals, and evidence of volunteerism or activism at school or in their communities.

Over the last five years, UCSC has helped 48 high school students with their dreams of attending college. We have awarded $89,500 dollars.

EAP  
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models offering support and encouragement to colleagues and coworkers. Lastly, many employees struggle personally with mental and emotional well-being. As both of these aspects are essential to your overall health, EAP offers convenient and confidential services at no cost to you. These resources can be counseling and consultation services with licensed mental health professionals. There is also a caregiver support group that meets monthly to help employees who are primary caregivers for their loved ones. To access any of these resources, please visit the EAP website or call them directly at 713-500-3327.

POLICY  
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disciplinary action within six months of application date.

- Must not have received a formal written reprimand or Performance Improvement Plan within six months of application date.

As with any position with UTHealth, human resources will provide guidance on compensation with the hiring manager. Human resources will extend the job offer to the final candidate.

Internal UTHealth candidates must give two weeks notice, and all transfers and promotions will occur at the beginning of a pay period.

RETREAT  
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nized for their service as their time on the council came to an end. The following members rotated off the council: SJ Abke, Sherryl Burnell, Judi Cardenas, Minjon Drake, Rick Escamilla, Sandra Grant, Virginia Guzman, Ana Lozano, Tiffany Richardson, Maria Rodriguez, Adelyn Russo, Koko Taylor, Melissa Walker, and Peggy Wiles.

During the day, council members also heard from Eric Fernette, Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer and UCSC’s Executive Sponsor, who gave an overview of the council and its purpose. In addition, author, speaker, and psychologist Rob Pennington, PhD, led a session about having influence with one’s manager and how to deal with differences of opinions.

As UCSC members peeled off their nametags and headed to their cars at the end of the day, they left prepared to represent and serve their fellow classified staff members in the coming year.

To learn more about UCSC or find out who your representative is, visit uth.edu/ucsc. To bring your concerns to UCSC, contact UTHealthUCSC@uth.tmc.edu.
On Sept. 27, 2018, Dean Barbara J. Stoll, MD, opened conversations with NASA astronaut and McGovern Medical School alumna Serena Auñón-Chancellor, M.D., live from the International Space Station (ISS), who answered questions presented by McGovern Medical School students and faculty.

Dr. Auñón-Chancellor, a 2001 graduate of McGovern Medical School, is board certified in both internal medicine and aerospace medicine. She joined NASA in 2006 and has been a part of the astronaut corps since 2009. She is a member of the Expedition 56/57 crew and has been on the ISS since June.

Dr. Jennifer Fogarty, the chief scientist for NASA’s human research program, joined the event to provide context for the Q&A and give insights into the science being conducted in space.

McGovern Medical School Office of Communications prepared a video of the event that can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/8zSyW8Dr5Pk.

NASA’s full video is posted on YouTube.

Astronaut Serena Auñón-Chancellor talks with McGovern Medical School from space
Member Spotlight: Trudy Jacobs

A twin, a boy band fan, a voice for classified staff

She’s a twin, a boy band fan, an avid walker, a cat mom, and a new member of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston’s (UTHealth) University Classified Staff Council (UCSC). Her name is Trudy Jacobs, and once you meet her, you won’t soon forget her.

A Michigan native, Jacobs has worked at UTHealth since July 2016. As Development Coordinator of Estate and Gift Planning in the UTHealth Office of Development, she helps facilitate life income gifts, gift annuities, and other plans for generous donors who wish to support the university.

But when she’s not in the office, you can find Jacobs exploring Houston on one of her many walks (where she knows the neighborhood cats by name), searching for graffiti walls around the city, hiking in the parks, spending time with friends, or reading books. She even takes part in large-scale Nerf gun wars with friends.

Her favorite life memory is of traveling abroad during college. “Since then, I have planned more trips and want to travel everywhere!” Jacobs said. “In addition, I got to see the castle that Disney is modeled after, and it is absolutely stunning in person!”

In addition, Jacobs enjoys boy bands, particularly the Backstreet Boys, whom she has seen in concert 10 times.

Jacobs and her husband, Joe, have a cat they affectionately call “Keeks,” though his official name is “Porch Cat” because (you guessed it) he was found on the porch.

However, Jacobs said the “coolest” fact about her is that she has a fraternal twin sister named Tracy. The two have shared many experiences together through the years and have become stronger because of the bond they share. They also have gotten several tattoos together – one of which is of the Backstreet Boys.

More important than their love of the Backstreet Boys, though, is the love they share for Tracy’s daughter.

“(She) is the craziest kid I have ever met,” said Jacobs. “She’s my favorite niece – ssh, don’t tell my brother.”

Jacobs is a new member of UCSC, having joined in August, and serves on the elections committee. She said she wanted to join the council to be a voice for people.

“I wanted to be the voice for my
Astra Schedule simplifies scheduling process

Astra Schedule is a scheduling tool that allows a resource scheduler to enter the event criteria, add meetings to the event and, when needed, identify rooms and resources for meetings. Room and resource information maintained in the database allow the scheduler to effectively select the appropriate resources for their event. Additionally, customer information is maintained and accessible through the application.

Astra Schedule includes support for event notification, event request and resource request messaging via email. The event notification email message includes an event summary with meeting details. This message is used as a confirmation to a customer and as a general notification to identified contacts.

Event request forms are used to allow the customer contact (event coordinator) to share required information with the event scheduler at the time of requesting a room. Each institution has developed a request form that is specific for their location.

Non-UTHealth guests will need to complete the external ‘request an event’ solicitation form available on Astra Schedule’s login page. The non-UTHealth guests are not required to log in but have very limited accessibility to Astra Schedule.

Astra Schedule provides the ability to create estimates, create invoices and maintain special events’ data to users who have security access to the accounting module. By using the accounting features within an Astra-scheduled event, a user may generate estimates and an invoice. An estimate or invoice generated within Astra Schedule will include all items with charges that have been added to the event.

The Academics module in Astra schedule allows an academic scheduler to enter the criteria involved in academic section data and room scheduling including terms, sections records, scheduling preferences and optimization. Subjects, courses, meeting patterns and scheduling preference information is maintained in the database to allow the scheduler to effectively select the general information including dates, times, days, instructor and room assignment. Additionally, Astra Schedule provides an academic scheduling area where scheduling scenarios can be created using a sandbox (a non-published work area).

Several sandbox options for academic scheduling exist; this provides schedulers with the ability to select the method best suited to their needs whether they chose Room Optimization, Sectioning or Timetable. These tools allow the entire schedule to be completed and reviewed before publishing. This provides an opportunity to experiment with scheduling scenarios and compare results to build the academic schedule.

Explore Astra Schedule by visiting schedule.uth.tmc.edu.
WebEx is available to UTHealth students, faculty, and staff for use in scheduling interactive online meetings.

**New app available for online meetings**

The UTHealth Information Technology Department announced in Fiscal Year 2018 that UTHealth has selected Cisco WebEx as a new tool for video and audio collaboration. Students, faculty, and staff will now be able to use this technology, free of charge, to schedule interactive online meetings. WebEx includes Outlook calendar integration, allowing you to schedule WebEx meetings directly from your Outlook calendar. Each online WebEx meeting you host will support up to 1,000 participants. While in a WebEx meeting, participants have the option to share audio and visual, as well as other applications that enable users to work on projects and collaborate in real time. Additionally, every meeting also allows the functionality to call in remotely, so you don’t have to miss a meeting if you are not close to your computer.

UTHealth students, faculty, and staff will have access to use:

1. **WebEx Meeting Center** – for basic online meetings and collaboration.
2. **WebEx Event Center** – for large, structured online events and seminars.
3. **WebEx Training Center** – the virtual, online classroom.

The best way to utilize this invaluable resource is to visit WebEx at uthealth.webex.com and log in using your UTHealth credentials.
Staff benefits include toner recycling

The McGovern Medical School (MMS) Employee Relations Committee (ERC) became partners in sustainability with TODAY’S Business Solutions and Clover environmental solutions in July 2013 to reduce the waste stream by keeping ink & toner cartridges out of landfills.

In 2016, MMS ERC welcomed the University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) in supporting the efforts of toner recycling across the university. Benefits for UCSC & MMS ERC include rewards for the Educational Awards program and UTHealth Toner Recycling Program Partner, which provides this service to all of UTHealth institutions.

UTHealth Benefits include: Environmentally preferred disposal of empty cartridges, free and easy-to-use disposal process, and cartridges being remanufactured, remarke ted, or recycled. Some of these are resold through Today’s Business Solutions.

To sign up, please send an email request to be added as a contact for a toner recycling collection box location site and include the following information to Suzanne Paramore (Suzanne.J.Paramore@uth.tmc.edu) & Amity Browning (Amity.Fath@uth.tmc.edu):

• Your name
• Your contact phone number
• Your contact address including office room number and building
• Address of pickup box location (if different than your office location)
• Name of your department

Your location with you as the contact will be set up and three boxes will be ordered for you. Within 7-10 business days you will receive your recycling boxes, which will be delivered by UPS to the contact address you provided. Each box has a prepaid UPS shipping label attached. When you are ready to return a filled box, you will email Paramore and Browning the label number (you can either take a snapshot picture or type out the label number in the email). The label number begins with “1Z” and contains a total of 18 characters.

Once the request for pickup with the label number are received, the order for UPS to pick up the box will be completed for you. Each shipment box must include at least 10 inkjet cartridges or 6 toner cartridges.

Your participation gives your department a free and convenient way to discard used toner cartridges while helping our environment!

Thank you for participating in the recycling program!
Employee Advisory Council represents staff

The Employee Advisory Council (EAC) is advisory in nature. EAC is intended to be the representative of staff of the institutions of UT System and System Administration. Each UT System institution and System Administration will select two representatives and one alternate to the EAC.

Our UTHealth members for the next EAC year are UCSC’s Fiscal Year 2018 Chair, Jean Grove, and MMS ERC’s current President, Valerie Buchanan. Our alternate for Fiscal Year 2019 is Jim Smiley, who served as the EAC Chair in Fiscal Year 2017.

Members of the EAC are full-time, part-time, non-faculty, benefits eligible employees who are in good standing and have been employed with UT System for at least one full year. The EAC was established in August 2000 to provide a vehicle for communication and to facilitate the flow of ideas and information between staff, the Board of Regents, the institutions and executive officers of UT System Administration. The EAC functions to define, analyze and make recommendations on employee issues to the appropriate body.

The EAC members work on subcommittees to focus on various areas to give support to a wider range of staff issues. This year the subcommittees are Staff Recognition, Advancing Diversity and Equality in Leadership, Communications and Employee Experience.

The MMS ERC, UCSC and EAC work in a progression as One System, One Voice moving forward as appropriate on issues and concerns from the employee to the Board of Regents.

By working together and recognizing what each council and committee offers to our employees, we can gain great strides in communications, resolving employee-related issues and using our collective voice to introduce new initiatives and work on existing initiatives to benefit all employees of UT System.

The next sessions for the EAC: Oct. 29–30, 2018, in Austin and Feb. 28–March 1, 2019, hosted by The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

For more information on the EAC, visit the website at https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/employee-advisory-council/employee-advisory-council.
McGovern Medical School Employee Relations Committee increases morale

The MMS ERC’s mission is to improve the working environment and morale of the employees through effective communication, recognition, education and events. We strive to put “fun” into our workday with social events, contests, special events and much more.

The ERC is a non-profit committee where employee volunteers at the institution’s school level hold fundraisers to support fun activities held for employees throughout the year. Some of these activities include Valentine’s Day, Administrative Assistant Day, door decorating contests, Annual Craft Show, bake sales, pumpkin carving contests, costume contests, Summer Fun Silent Auction baskets and more.

The ERC volunteers also help provide assistance to dean-sponsored events at MMS, manage the UTHealth Ink & Toner Recycling Program and blood drives held at McGovern Medical School locations.

MMS ERC is currently sponsoring a fall door decorating contest for all of our MMS locations including our off-site clinics. Volunteers manage these contests using photographs allowing all locations to participate equally.

MMS ERC recently held a Halloween bake sale, pumpkin carving contest and costume contest on Oct. 31. The 32nd Annual Holiday Arts & Craft Fair will be on Dec. 4 in the main lobby at the Medical School Building.

For information, visit https://med.uth.edu/erc.
Many of you may know that the UTHealth School of Nursing changed its name to the Cizik School of Nursing or CSON. But the other CSON…well, it is the abbreviated name and initials of the Classified Staff Organization for Nursing. This organization was actually started in 1995! Pamela Nugent came up with the idea way back in 1995 when she noticed that the Medical School had an employee relations committee and the School of Public Health also had a staff organization. In fact, some School of Nursing staff members were attending the staff meetings at the other schools. After discussing this with Patricia Starck, who was dean at the time, the new staff organization CSON was formed. CSON started bringing together staff to present programs and have regular meetings to discuss staff concerns as well as to raise money for the organization for various staff activities and even providing scholarships for nursing students.

The original organization had monthly meetings and brought in guest speakers who spoke on topics as diverse as aroma therapy to first aid and what to do when there is a medical emergency. Being a longtime employee of the School of Nursing, I remember the emergency nurse/faculty member who presented a first aid program. This faculty member was Dr. Elda Ramirez, who is still here at the school. She shared stories from the many exciting and admittedly unpleasant and grisly experiences that she had come across. I still remember many of the staff members’ eyes going wide with surprise and shock as Dr. Ramirez told her stories. This organization represented the SON in the Fun-Fest, chili cook-offs, that were in vogue during that time, and also had bake sales, craft shows, and silent auctions. After a long run, the organization became inactive.

Last month the organization started up again. Now the organization shares the name with the school. We are CSON at CSON! The first meeting after the re-start was Sept. 20, when officers were introduced and staff members discussed issues and concerns. We all enjoyed a time to share with each other and relax a bit and talk. We have set up a CSON Canvas site and are again working on fundraising and will be meeting quarterly…and who knows, maybe we will have Dr. Ramirez back to discuss how to remain calm during a medical emergency!
What is your WHY?

UTHealth supports employee health, well-being

When Anna Alvarado, our wellness program coordinator, asked me WHY I wanted to be fit and well, I realized I had not really thought about my “WHY” in a while. With a teenager and an infant at home, and a new job, my plate seemed full. But then it dawned upon me that perhaps, my ‘full plate’ was my WHY! I realized I made my well-being a priority, so that I am able to perform at work, and to be a happy and healthy family member.

I think when people figure out WHY they want to achieve something, they tend to accomplish their goals more often than those who do not. One of my favorite authors, and a great TED Talk sensation, Simon Sinek, explains this concept in his book ‘Start with Why’:

So today, take a moment and think about what is your WHY; set your well-being goals, and let us help you achieve them!

UTHealth Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and wellness team makes your well-being a priority by focusing on our greatest assets - YOU, our employees. We as a team focus our effort to offer a healthy work environment and provide our employees with opportunities to make healthy lifestyle choices. Leadership support is crucial for the success of any well-being initiative. I am very happy to share the well-being endorsement of our director, Monica Guidry, Executive Director-EAP: “We have sustained the interest in opportunities to promote not just wellness but also well-being. This recognition validates that we have sustained the gains we made over the past two years and our focus is shifting to overall worker health and well-being. As our organizational culture is changing we now have the challenge of gathering meaningful data that measures our progress and effectiveness.”

In my role as the senior program manager – wellness, I hope to make our wellness efforts more inclusive,
empowering and centered on overall well-being. Please visit www.go.uth.edu/wellness to learn about a variety of resources and well-being programs offered to you to improve your health and well-being. Did you know if you are a member of the UTSelect Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance plan, your annual routine physical exam is covered 100 percent. For more details on your preventative care, please visit https://www.bcbstx.com/ut/pdf/ut-ben-book-2018-2019.pdf. Take charge of your well-being today!

Additionally, avail yourself of great discounts on numerous deals including personal care, family care, retail and wellness through the discount program: https://www.uth.edu/uthealth-discount-program/my-discount-resources.htm.

On the side note, we are very happy to announce that we successfully completed the fall wellness challenge YOHOHO. For the sixth year in a row, UTHealth won first place in the large institution category against other UT System institutions. We had 756 registered and engaged participants from UTHealth.

Robin Dickey accomplished her physical activity goals practicing yoga daily!

WHY
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SPOTLIGHT
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department and wanted to see positive changes on all levels,” she said. “I’ve had many jobs where my voice was lost in a sea of upper management, and when I heard of this opportunity, it felt like a good way to be a part of the solution if there were any issues that came up in my department.”

Alainna Talton
2018 Chair
University Classified Staff Council
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For additional information about the University Classified Staff Council, visit us at: www.uth.edu/ucsc

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