UTHealth University Classified Staff Council 2017-2018

Pictured here are members of the University Classified Staff Council for 2017-2018.

2017-2018 Officers
Jean Grove, Chair
Alainna Talton, Chair-Elect
Melissa Wuennenberg, Secretary
Verlincia Williams, Treasurer
William Severson, Parliamentarian

University Classified Staff Council Mission

The mission of University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) is to advise the President and the university leadership on behalf of the classified staff.

The council advises by way of making recommendations on existing and proposed policies, procedures and programs that impact or are of particular interest to the classified staff; as well as voicing any questions or concerns the classified staff may have.

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Representatives are located throughout the University to meet your needs. Scan code for a complete list of UCSC representatives!
It has been an eventful year so far for UCSC. With Hurricane Harvey kicking off our year, much of the normal fall activities were postponed or cancelled. UCSC members did participate in the “Stop the Bleed” event to create emergency kits that were recently added to all the defibrillator cabinets across campus. It was a great cross functional event that included faculty, staff and students.

With things starting to get back to normal UCSC is back up and running with several events planned over the next few months.

**Educational Awards** – Applications for the UCSC Educational Awards for children of Classified Staff members closed on March 30. There are 27 applications. These are currently under review by a Selection Committee comprised of Faculty and A&P staff. Winners will be announced in May.

**Pledge/Donation Campaign** – Our inaugural pledge/donation campaign will kick off in April and run through mid-May. We have a team who, under the leadership of Koko Taylor, have done a great job of designing a fund raising campaign to help support the Educational Awards. Be on the lookout for your opportunity to give!

**Staff Development Day** – Please save the date of June 27 to attend the annual Staff Development Day at the Cooley Center. This is a free Professional Development event. This year’s theme is a focus on work/life balance. It is also an opportunity to network with others from across the University and to also congratulate the winners of the Educational Awards.

**Finally** – If you would like to make a difference at UTHealth, we encourage you to register to become a UCSC Representative. You will be part of a group of Classified professionals who are dedicated to helping others at the University, making recommendations for improvements, and dedicated to helping provide funds to children of Classified staff to assist with their education. It is a great way to get involved, meet others from across the University and to really bring improvements to UTHealth!
Guest Speakers at UCSC Meetings

The University Classified Staff Council meets every second Wednesday of the month in an open meeting that all are encouraged to attend. During these meetings we discuss current business the council is involved in and we introduce new business that our constituents have brought forward. In addition to these items, UCSC invites several key university members to discuss their departments and how they intersect with classified staff members. Over the past several months, we have been fortunate enough have presentations by the following UTHealth folks:

Dr. “Safety Bob” Emory – Hurricane lessons learned and Stop the Bleed
Dr. Emory came to speak to the council about how the Safety, Health, Environment, and Risk Management (SHERM) department helped prepare and continue specific operations during Hurricane Harvey. Given that Hurricane Harvey was so destructive, Dr. Emory spent a majority of the time speaking about how the SHERM department was able to assist UTHealth during the storm as well as some of the lessons learned during this time so that UTHealth is even more prepared for the next hurricane or adverse weather condition. Additionally, Dr. Emory publicized the “STOP the Bleed” event that many UCSC members went on to attend and assist with.

Sergeant Gabrial Wisneski – Safety around campus
No campus is immune to crime, and UTHealth is no different from other universities of its size. Sgt. Wisneski of the UTHealth Police Department (UTPD) spent time at a recent UCSC meeting speaking about various ways to be aware during work hours of possible crimes. From locking your drawer where you keep personal items, to calling UTPD if you notice a suspicious person, Sgt. Wisneski gave UCSC members practical advice for staying safe and helping maintain a safe environment for other UTHealth employees. He also shared ways to become more involved with campus safety such as attending one of the many training classes put on by UTPD, or enrolling in the Community On Patrol (COP) program.

Syrine Joubert – 2017 Top Workplace Results
Syrine Joubert, Human Resources Reporting Analyst, came to speak to UCSC about the Houston Chronicle Top Workplaces Survey. For the past eight years, UTHealth has been consistently rated a Top Houston Workplace due to the results of the Houston Chronicle Top Workplaces Survey. Every year, every employee receives an invitation via email to participate in this survey and give honest feedback about various aspects of working for UTHealth. While UTHealth has eight years of success, there have been areas that UTHealth has improved and continues to improve upon due to the feedback from employees. Remember to take your survey when it arrives this summer.

James “Jim” Smiley - Regents’ Outstanding Employee Award Nominations
Jim Smiley, Director of Parking and Shuttle Services, came to the monthly meeting to speak about the Employee Advisory Council (EAC) of which he is a member along with UCSC’s own Valerie Buchanan. The Employee Advisory Council is another form of employee advocacy that UTHealth participates in on a system-wide level. The EAC is a collection of representatives from all the UT campuses that meet with the Board of Regents to present information and make recommendations regarding issues of importance to the employees of UT System. In November 2016, The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Regents’ Outstanding Employee Award (ROEA). Jim came to publicize the ROEA and encourage UCSC to nominate individuals who were eligible.
Deana Moylan & Tiffany Dillard-Obeng – Equal Opportunity
Deana Moylan, Associate Vice President of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, Tiffany Dillard-Obeng, Equal Opportunity Advisor, came to a UCSC meeting to give a brief overview of the many ways the Equal Opportunity team assists employees here at UTHealth. The Equal Opportunity team provides support through disability accommodations, religious accommodations, investigations on discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct, Affirmative Action Planning, and more.

Karla Crabtree – Family Medical Leave Act
Karla Crabtree spoke briefly at a UCSC meeting to discuss the process for employees to request Family Medical Leave (FML) here at UTHealth. The university has a decentralized process, wherein every department has a FML Coordinator to assist employees who may need to utilize FML. Karla spoke through the eligibility requirements and showed UCSC representatives how to find the new FML website that is full of contact information as well as resources.

Charles Figari & James “Jim” Smiley - Auxiliary Enterprises
Charlie Figari, Vice President and Chief Auxiliary Enterprises Officer, attended a recent UCSC Meeting to discuss Auxiliary Enterprises and various departments in Auxiliary Enterprises work within the university. After Mr. Figari explained how each of the various departments worked and some information about them, he took questions from the council. Jim Smiley, Director of Parking and Shuttle Services, was also present to assist with questions concerning parking at UTHealth. While there are concerns about the cost and availability of parking at UTHealth, Mr. Smiley pointed out that UTHealth was often cheaper than some other members of the TMC. Additionally, Parking Services is actively looking into assist employees with their parking needs and quickly advocated for use of the UTHealth Shuttle.

Keena Harris - Employee Recognition Program
Keena Harris, Development Coordinator, gave a presentation to UCSC recently to discuss how her department was able to implement an employee recognition program that was both low cost and high impact. Keena spoke extensively about practical ways to include the whole office in a recognition program such as sending out a survey to capture her coworkers favorites candy, drink, or other items that could purchased for a fellow team member. Additionally, her team started celebrating work anniversaries and birthdays with a special traveling sign that was put in someone’s office. The last suggestion she gave was to set up an online form for employees to anonymously nominate their coworkers for outstanding work done around the office. The department’s leadership would discuss the nominations at their meetings and the top three nominations would be presented at the departmental staff meeting.
The Women In Leadership Series (WILS) is an informal monthly seminar series designed to develop staff and faculty leadership competency and efficacy in women leaders from junior to executive levels. The seminar series features notable speakers and nationally recognized speakers from academic, corporate, healthcare, and non-profit organizations. The WILS seeks to provide women with tools and techniques to improve their leadership, as well as opportunities to grow deeper in developing their personal leadership skills. Throughout its tenure, the WILS has invited several dynamic speakers to help UTHealth employees engage and understand their leadership roles. Some of the more recent speakers are mentioned below.

Joy Weaver
Joy Weaver is a speaker, author, and etiquette expert in all forms of social settings. Her presentation at UTHealth gave attendees a crash course on what the subtle arts of social interactions. She went into detail about hand shakes, name tags, how to introduce yourself and others, appropriate small talk conversations, and much more. Ms. Weaver’s presentation made it easy for audience members to understand that how we carry ourselves in the workplace will affect how our coworkers, bosses, and customers will view our abilities.

April Powers
April Powers is the managing director of First Impression Rx, a full service consulting firm that helps companies manage differences through training, diversity, and inclusion strategy. Ms. Powers’ presentation focused primarily on emotional intelligence and its intersection with the intelligence quotient and personality. Audience members participated in a discussion on the difference between empathy and sympathy, as well as ways to connect with others who are going through a difficult situation.

Haben Girma, Esq.
Haben Girma is the first Deafblind person to graduate from Harvard Law School. She was named a White House Champion of Change and Forbes recognized her in Forbes 30 Under 30. Today Haben advocates for disability rights and gives presentations about the benefits of fully accessible products and services. Her presentation at UTHealth included helpful insights into what barriers actually exist in this world, and how it is up to all of us to fight for their removal. Oftentimes, there are alternative solutions that exist, if both people and communities come together. Given her incredibly successful career, Ms. Girma reminded the audience to never assume what people with disabilities can and cannot do, as they might surprise you. Ms. Girma left WILS participants with a difficult choice: to accept oppression or to advocate for inclusion.

These are just a few of the wonderful speakers that have been invited by the WILS. The WILS will continue later this year. Information regarding the WILS can be found at https://go.uth.edu/WILS. To read more about this wonderful program, to enroll in future sessions, or to view previous speakers’ presentations, please follow the link.
Donate2Educate Pledge & Donation Drive
This year, the Educational Awards Committee on the University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) made the bold decision to start a pledge campaign. The Educational Awards Committee has seen great successes in years past with fundraisers such as “Boo Bags” and other similar activities, but this year’s chair of the Educational Awards Committee had bigger ideas. Tawaki “Koko” Taylor has worked tirelessly, along with the rest of her committee, to start an annual pledge and donation campaign. Utilizing a modern development approach, the Educational Awards Committee hopes to increase donations to this valuable cause. Additionally, Koko Taylor and her team will have laid the groundwork for future committee members to enhance the drive.

A main objective of the Donate2Educate Pledge and Donation drive is to help our community readily identify what the Educational Awards benefit. For those UTHealth members who are unaware, the UCSC Educational Awards benefit high school graduating children of UTHealth classified staff members. The award is a one-time, cash payment made to selected applicants who have plans to attend an institution of higher education and meet the other eligibility requirements.

Additionally, Koko has established a way for the UCSC website to accept credit card payments so that we can reach a broader audience of giving. A main concern of the Educational Awards Committee was that people who would otherwise give to the Education Awards do not always have cash on their person—especially at events where UCSC would have a table to solicit donations. By accepting credit card payments online, UCSC is able to meet people where they are in their giving methods. While there is a UCSC representative on location at every UTHealth division who can accept cash and check donations, the website allows for a more streamlined experience.

If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please go to https://www.uth.edu/ucsc/donate/ or https://www.uth.edu/ucsc/donate/donations to find a list of representative to contact for more information.
Sarah “SJ” Abke began working at UTMB 21 years ago. SJ joined UTHealth 2 years ago. She is a Senior Practice Manager for Network Access Improvement Program (NAIP) UT Physicians Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center.

SJ joined the University Classified Staff Council (UCSC) to join the “...voice for many staff members who rely on representatives to step forward and speak on their behalf. As a supervisor, it is my responsibility to ensure that the needs of front line staff are heard. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of a council that truly moves the needs of the classified staff to the desk of the executive level for consideration and improvement as a preferred employer within Houston.” She currently serves on the UCSC Staff Recognition Committee.

SJ is happily married to Jason and together they enjoying taking cruises and relaxing at the lake house. She has a 21yr old daughter, Amby. Amby (nickname) was given the name Amethyst (like the stone) as her mom proudly states, “She is a true gem.”

One of SJ’s favorite memories is attending Ragsdill Preschool. She enjoyed attending a preschool that was like “...a farm for city kids to go to and experience cows, chickens, etc.”
The 2018 annual STAR AWARDS was held in March. The annual STAR AWARDS events are the university’s way to recognize its outstanding faculty and staff and honor them for their commitment and dedication.

UTHealth honored the faculty and staff who celebrated 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 or 45 years of service with the university. As quoted from Eric Fernette, Vice President and Chief Human Resources officer, “The people of UTHealth are what make this organization so successful and so welcoming.”

STAR AWARDS receptions were held on March 20 and 22. Remember to go to the UTHealth Intranet for a listing of the STAR Award recipients. If there are recipients in your area remember to give a congratulations. During the March 22 reception, three individuals were recognized as recipients of the President’s Award for Leadership: Auco Dang (Classified Staff), Stephen Glazier (Management A&P), and Dr. Mark Wong (Faculty).

STAR TRIVIA

Did you know that STAR is an acronym which stands for: Service Tradition Achievement Recognition
The University Classified Staff Council is presenting the 24th Annual Workshop on Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at The Cooley Life Center. We are excited to support a positive work/life balance agenda to include “Keep Calm & ______.”

Registration will begin soon and seating is limited. Please ensure you have received permission from your supervisor to attend. This year’s workshop will include a State of the University from Dr. Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, President of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Robin Dicky, Faculty Assistant Specialist, Pastor Kareem Jackson, and Tony Jackson, Learning and Development Consultant.

The workshop will also include early bird attractions such as breakfast, door prizes, over 15 vendors with samples or giveaways, lunch, and the announcement of Educational Awards to our Classified Staff Members Children. We can’t wait to see you there!

Date: Wednesday, June 27, 2018
Location: Denton Cooley Center
Theme: Work/Life Balance
Regents Outstanding Employee Awards Inaugural Year!

In November 2016, The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved the establishment of the Regents’ Outstanding Employee Award (ROEA). The awards honor non-faculty employees who have shown superior performance, innovation, enthusiasm, teamwork and dedication in their jobs.

Thirty awards are given out each year across the fourteen UT System institutions plus the UT System Administration. Recipients will be honored at a special ceremony May 14th in Austin and each will receive a $10,000 award.

For this inaugural year, UTHealth at Houston submitted 15 nominations. The University of Texas System Board of Regents has selected Misty Ottman, program manager—research, McGovern Medical School Department of Emergency Medicine, and Arthur Lupkowski, human resources assistant III, UTHealth Office of Human Resources, as recipients of the Regents’ Outstanding Employee Awards.

A full list of recipients can be found on the awards website.

MMS Employee Relations Committee (ERC)
Valentine’s Bake Sale

On February 14, 2018, McGovern Medical School’s Employee Relations Committee held a Valentine’s Day Bake Sale event. Volunteer members of the ERC donated their time, talents & treats for the event. An estimated 120 plus employees, faculty & students participated. Some as “Givers”, “Receivers” & “Spectators.”

The donations received go back to the MMS employees via door prizes, contest winner gifts, next event’s setup costs, etc. The ERC holds 4-10 events a year to improve the working environment and morale of the employees at McGovern Medical School. The committee strives to put “fun” into our workday with social events, contests and much more.
McGovern Medical School’s Annual Black History Month Program

This year’s Annual Black History Month Program, presented by the McGovern Medical School Chapter of the Student National Medical Association and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, featured Dr. Valerae Lewis, chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Lunch was provided and all were welcomed.

Attendees had the opportunity to enjoy food, special performances, and a keynote presentation on “The Evolution and Advancement of African Americans in Medicine” by Dr. Valerae Lewis as part of this year’s Annual Black History Month Program. The annual event is presented by the Student National Medical Association and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Event Photos by Lorenz Meyer/ Office of Communications
Attention all UTHealth Classified Staff employees: do you want to help make a difference?

It’s that time of year again to renew our membership and recruit new members as current members reach the end of their term. All UTHealth full-time, classified staff employees are eligible to participate on the University Classified Staff Council.

Nominations for FY 2018-2019 will open on April 23, 2018. If you are a current member whose first term is expiring, please be sure to submit your renewal nomination. If you are not on the council and wish to join and represent your area, now is your chance. The nomination cycle will run from April 23 to May 4, 2018.

Please be sure to obtain the approval of your supervisor and also share this information with others in your area who may be interested.