



KENT STATE  
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Staff Council

**Agenda**  
**Staff Council Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 10, 2026**  
**Microsoft Teams**

**Welcome (Crystal)**

**Guest: Shannon Driscoll, Faculty and Staff Ombuds**

- Handout: [FY2025 Annual Report](#)

**Approval of Minutes for January 13, 2026 Staff Council General Meeting (Craig)**

- Handout: [January 13, 2026 Minutes](#)

**Revisiting Community Agreement (Crystal)**

**2026-2027 Staff Council Executive Board Goals and Charge to Committees (Crystal)**

- Review Executive Board Goals
- Charge to Committees for Next Meeting (March 10<sup>th</sup>):
  - Each committee should create one goal for the year
  - Each committee should identify at least one expenditure of funds that's possible/reasonable while pursuing your goal
- Complete [survey regarding Future Meeting Suggestions](#)
- Don't forget to complete [Committee Reporting Form](#) following each committee meeting

**Committee Reports (Crystal)**

- Advocacy Committee (Stephanie & Erin)
- Bylaws & Elections Committee (Shaunte)
- Communications Committee (Madison & Melissa)
- Finance Committee (Nikki)
- Membership Committee (Nikki & Aimee)

**Adjournment**



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**Minutes**  
**Staff Council Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 10, 2026**  
**Microsoft Teams**

**Attendance:**

Present: Kara Barnett, Craig Berger, Erin Beseda, Zach Boggs, Matt Cola, Matthew Craver, Patti Davis, Stephanie Evans, Sally Fadorsen, Carmen Grubbs, Melissa Halozan, Crystal Hamon, Aimee Johnson, Cheryl Kanis, Alice Kopunovitz, Jaclyn Macomber, Madison Massey, Katie Mattise, Nikki Mills, Monica Morson, Phillip Nelson, Barbara Ozimek, Cassie Pegg-Kirby, Ruth Pittman, Shaunte Rouse, Jennelizabeth Sepulveda, Megan Smeznik, Heather Stupecki, Jen Villanueva, Tiffany Williams, Judy Yasenosky, Shannon Driscoll (Guest, Faculty and Staff Ombuds)

Absent: Darcy McBride (excused), Jennifer Richmond (excused)

**Welcome (Crystal)**

Meeting started at 2:00 p.m.

**Guest Speaker: Shannon Driscoll, Faculty and Staff Ombuds**

- **Handout:** [FY2025 Annual Report](#)
- **Office Overview & Guiding Principles:** The Ombuds Office serves all faculty and staff at any level. Operating under the International Ombuds Association standards, the office is defined by four core principles:
  - **Confidential:** Does not keep records.
  - **Neutral:** Does not take sides, offer advice, or adjudicate. Focuses on educating individuals on how to advocate for themselves.
  - **Informal:** Does not participate in any formal university processes.
  - **Independent:** Reports to Kevin West (dotted line to Betsy McCafferty). Does not share identity details with leadership and is not part of any compliance function.



- **Role & Services**
  - **Core Functions:**
    - What she does: Listens without judgment; assists with referrals; initiates anonymous inquiries for those not ready to file formal reports; tracks aggregate data/trends for leadership.
    - What she does NOT do: Advocate; provide legal advice; keep records; participate in formal processes; or change university policy.
  - **Service Offerings:**
    - Individual Visits: 1-1 conflict coaching and referral assistance.
    - Mediation: Serving as a neutral third party for facilitated discussions where solutions emerge from participants.
    - Group Consultation: Helping leadership and teams identify needs and establish "community agreements."
    - Professional Development: Creating customized programs (e.g., Library staff development, conflict management, and self-care).
- **FY2024–2025 Utilization & Trends**
  - **Engagement Statistics:**
    - 102 Individual Visits: 65% Faculty / 35% Staff (Note: Served as Faculty Ombuds for only the first half of the year).
    - 78 Total Cases: Unique situations involving one or more visits/persons.
    - Outreach & Development: 40 "Meet and Greets," 4 workshops, 6 community agreements, and consultation for 10 committees (including T28 Working Group E).
  - **Post-Visit Survey Insights (21% Response Rate):**
    - Satisfaction: 95% felt heard; 90% found the Ombuds fair/impartial; 86% would recommend the service.
    - Confidentiality: 62% cited confidentiality as a primary concern. Notably, staff were twice as likely as faculty to value this, suggesting higher perceived risk for staff when seeking assistance.
    - Trending Issues: Respect/treatment in evaluative relationships, empathy-based stress ("compassion fatigue"), and power dynamic tensions (staff/faculty or NTT/Tenured faculty).
- **Q&A Session**
  - **Phil:** Asked if some departments are more aware of the office than others.



- *Shannon:* Noted she is always open to more publicity and welcomed Staff Council's support in promoting the office.
- **Cassie:** Asked where Staff Council might assist with advocacy, given the Ombuds' restrictions.
  - *Shannon:* Suggested this requires a longer discussion. She noted that people often need moral support or someone to attend meetings with them—roles she cannot fill, but the Council might explore.
- **Sally:** Asked how she tracks the background of situations without keeping notes.
  - *Shannon:* Clarified that she does take notes during meetings to track context, but she shreds them immediately after. She relies on visitors to provide context during follow-up meetings.
- **Nikki:** Asked about scheduling and office logistics.
  - *Shannon:* Contact her at [mdrisco9@kent.edu](mailto:mdrisco9@kent.edu) or 330-672-2219.  
**Warning:** Email is public record; use the phone for sensitive, confidential matters. She meets via Teams, phone, or in person and is located on the 3rd floor of the Library (serves all campuses).
- **Barb:** Asked if regional campus employees utilize the office.
  - *Shannon:* Confirmed that regional campus employees do utilize the service.

**Crystal gave Judy Yasenosky a shout-out for 30 years of service to Kent State. Thank you for service Judy! We're lucky to have you!**

#### **Approval of Minutes for January 13, 2026 Staff Council General Meeting (Craig)**

- Motion to approve: Megan
- Second: Nikki
- No discussion.

#### **Revisiting Community Agreement (Crystal)**

- Any suggestions or reactions to the Agreement?
- These are the guidelines for all of our meetings
- Shaunte: I'm not sure what the calendar or schedule looks like, but believes it's valuable to go over these as a group to potentially add things or clarify things. Would like to make time to do this as a Council sooner rather than later.



- Crystal: Are you thinking it would be best to do this at a separate meeting or during one of our general meetings?
- Shaunte: If time, would like a General meeting; I'd like to focus on what these look like in practice, how to hold folks accountable, etc.
- Crystal: Would Katie be willing to facilitate this at an upcoming meeting?
- Katie: Yes
- Crystal: With the President attending our March General Meeting, we will plan to table this to April?
- Monica: has a concern regarding April's meeting date; a divisional meeting is scheduled to overlap. Not sure if there's anything that can be done?
  - Crystal: As our best practice, work takes priority over a Staff Council meeting
  - Monica: Concerned about running afoul of attendance requirement
  - Crystal: The requirement is three consecutive meetings; be sure to remind Craig as the April meeting approaches, but you've already provided sufficient advance notice. Also, feel free to communicate your perspective on the Community Agreement ahead of the April meeting so it's represented in the conversation.
- Upcoming Meeting Schedule:
  - March – President Diacon as Guest
  - April – Betsy / Community Agreement Discussion
  - May – Provost Tankersley as Guest

### **2026-2027 Staff Council Executive Board Goals and Charge to Committees (Crystal)**

- Review Executive Board Goals
  - Refine committee definitions and charges, which requires updating the Bylaws; need to also make sure that each committee creates goals
  - Exploring the creation of a Treasurer role while also replacing the Finance Committee with an Outreach/Engagement Committee
  - Wants to develop better relationships between Vice President level, including Finance & Administration, and Faculty Senate
  - Working on a Shared Governance plan to incorporate Staff Council into the University's shared governance structure;
- Charge to Committees for Next Meeting (March 10<sup>th</sup>):



- Each committee should create one goal for the year. Also, is there another committee that is doing something that would be better served on your committee?
  - Each committee should identify at least one expenditure of funds that's possible/reasonable while pursuing your goal
- Nikki: can also add addendum to Bylaws
  - Crystal: yes, will be meeting with Katie to discuss how to proceed with solidifying Bylaws
- Complete [survey regarding Future Meeting Suggestions](#)
  - What guest
  - What topic
  - Offer rationale – how does it help us reach our goals?
- Don't forget to complete [Committee Reporting Form](#) following each committee meeting

### **Committee Reports (Crystal)**

- Advocacy Committee (Stephanie & Erin)
  - First meeting: introduced everyone, lots of new folks
  - Had some regional campus representation
  - Discussed where things left off last year and how to move forward, including a discussion around the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Bylaws & Elections Committee (Shaunte)
  - Got to know one another and learned why folks chose Elections and Bylaws, and asked about intended accomplishments
  - Sending Executive Board meeting request for next Bylaws meeting
  - Proud of starting an icebreaker activity schedule on the committee
- Communications Committee (Madison & Melissa)
  - Recapped 2025 using previous notes and returning committee members
  - Reviewed responsibilities
  - Reviewed Drupal training (website as a core charge of the Committee)
  - Reviewed other committees to see if there was any overlap, took some notes
- Finance Committee (Nikki)
  - Went over budget and expenses
  - Approximately \$45 left in \$1,000 budget



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- Discussed upcoming budget; committees should submit budget by April for upcoming year
- Discussed possibility of fundraising and procuring additional funds
- Membership Committee (Nikki & Aimee)
  - Lots of returning members
  - Discussed finalizing staff shoutout program, along with award; would like to invite award winners to Presidents' banquet
  - Wants to prioritize employee engagement and morale building (e.g., spirit week, Relay for Life, book club)
  - Exploring some sort of virtual programming to engage regional campuses
  - Will organize a calendar of events
  - Discussed current membership structure; gathering data on how many employees from each division we have on Staff Council. Could drive Bylaws changes, if needed.

#### **Reporting to colleagues about Staff Council activity (Nikki)**

- Encouraging everyone to find opportunities to provide standing updates on Staff Council's activity
- Represent co-workers' opinions/perspectives to convey to the rest of the Council

#### **Extending meeting by half an hour (Crystal)**

- Will gauge members' opinions

#### **Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned 3:08 p.m.