

Retired longtime employee, Classified Staff advocate earns Wells STAR Award

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/30477/retired-longtime-employee-classified-staff-advocate-earns-wells-star-award/>

The Classified Staff Advisory Council Richard H. Wells Star Award celebrates the character, passion, and commitment of non-classified faculty and staff who have supported the advancement of UW Oshkosh Classified Staff.

This award is named after Chancellor Wells because he was so instrumental in giving the Classified Staff a voice on campus.

Elizabeth Heuer is the recipient of this year's award and was nominated by Paulette Feld.

Heuer's nomination follows:

"I would like to take this opportunity to nominate an individual for the Richard H. Wells Award who worked at UW Oshkosh for many years. Classified Staff (University Staff), were particularly fortunate that this individual advocated for us and helped us find a voice in campus governance prior to the current pressures many other campuses are experiencing to develop similar groups.

"Elizabeth Heuer served in many capacities at UW Oshkosh during her career. I believe her start as a member of the Classified Staff formed much of the work she did with us later in her career at UW Oshkosh. Educating and working her way to become part of the administration, serving as human resources director in her final position, she diligently worked to help create a place for Classified Staff. Her unique history gave Beth the ability to understand the concerns and situations that employees encountered.

"In the autumn of 2000, Chancellor Richard Wells began his tenure at UW Oshkosh and offered the Classified Staff a unique opportunity to form a "governance" type committee. Although the employees had collective bargaining, often there were facets of the University structure that our large group of employees did not have the opportunity to experience. As a result, many did not feel part of the University community. During the same conversation that resulted in the advisory committee, the idea of a staff day was "hatched." Classified Staff in several departments, including the leadership of the local union on campus, were intrigued by the idea, but, there was a great deal to understand about organizing an advisory committee. In the same breath, we were discussing the possibility of a day that would offer development opportunities for more than 400 employees. The entrance of Beth Heuer into the conversation on both topics was well timed.

"With her background and length of service in many areas of the University, including working with the governance groups, Beth helped leaders from the Classified Staff to develop committees to plan the Classified Staff Advisory Council. Although a few other UW campuses had similar groups, Oshkosh

developed their council to be inclusive and involved the local union in its development. This unique approach allowed for acceptance and widespread representation on the council. Beth's involvement and understanding of the University structure assured that the council would have widespread management buy-in and approval from the start. The council held their first election of members later in spring of 2001. The inaugural meeting of the council was held shortly after the election. Beth Heuer served as the liaison to the council. She guided the group to begin working on projects that would create a new place for the staff within the University community. Committees were set to write the council bylaws, to recruit and nominate representatives to University Committees (many that never had Classified representation), to promote staff on campus and the community and to offer support for professional development. Committees were later developed that awarded grants for off campus professional development opportunities. These grants continue to be financed with an endowment fund through the UW Oshkosh Foundation. CSAC has been responsible for continued fundraising to grow that fund, and has since introduced a second fund to support Classified Staff on campus. Another area that was developed with Beth's guidance was the CSAC Awards Committee. This group has been responsible for monthly STAR Awards to staff members who perform above their normal responsibilities. Classified Staff never had an award that honored outstanding performance until 2001. To date, more than 50 individuals have been recognized on Opening Day along with faculty and academic staff, in front of the University community. The nomination, selection, ranking and recommendations of recipients for both awards is peer driven.

"Since 2001, the Advisory Committee has functioned and helped develop many leaders on campus. Early on, the group realized that it would be useful to offer a series of sessions on campus to help that formation. Beth assisted with the initial series and prepared participants to continue to plan future series. Those classes continue on a biannual basis, completely planned by the members of the University Classified Staff.

"One of the most impressive aspects of the UW Oshkosh Classified Staff Advisory Council is that it has always and continues to function as an equal to the other campus governance groups. This was an important part of what the group strived for during our formation and a point that was understood and communicated to the administration with Beth's gentle guidance.

"While the Classified Staff Advisory Council was being created in 2000/2001, Beth was also working with a group that developed the Classified Staff Development and Appreciation Day. Starting from a suggestion to have an administration/union baseball game, this idea quickly (and thankfully) evolved into a full day of development opportunities. Along with providing the day, the work that is done every year to put the event together gives many members of the Classified Staff the opportunity to work with individuals outside of their daily responsibilities and to learn leadership and planning skills.

"The fact that UW Oshkosh has been a leader in creating opportunities for Classified Staff has not been lost at other UW campuses. Over the years, several other campuses developed councils based on the model created at Oshkosh. With changes since 2012, Advisory Committees have been created on all the UW campuses, and many have turned to UW Oshkosh as an example of "best practices." UW Oshkosh was fortunate to have Beth Heuer working to help us develop a structure that respects and promotes opportunities and leadership for Classified Staff.

"Beth's involvement never ended with working with groups. Many individuals have turned to Beth for advice and support in their personal growth. Even since retiring, Beth is willing to help those looking to

grow in their careers, including those looking to start their careers at UW Oshkosh. Other projects that Beth continues to work on benefit the community at large. I have no doubt that many of us will continue to have the opportunity to work with and benefit from Beth's abilities and willingness to share her talents and time

"This only scratches the surface of the many ways that Beth Heuer has benefited and worked to promote Classified Staff at UW Oshkosh. Her work allowed the Classified Staff to work toward goals with the independence and knowledge to be equal partners on campus. For these many services to the Classified Staff, I would like to ask the Awards and Recognition Committee to consider Beth to receive the Richard H. Wells Award."

Learn more:

- [Richard H. Wells STAR Award](#)