From Polos and Chocolates to "Pomp and Circumstance"
How fund raising sales support staff education

The Staff Council Fund Raising Committee exists to support the education of the university staff. The Staff Council has two separate staff scholarship accounts. The general Staff Council Scholarship Fund is used for any benefits-eligible staff member who is attending a community college, university or accredited vocational school. The Jody Nelsen Staff Scholarship Fund is used for benefits-eligible staff members who are attending UT Dallas specifically.

Each year the Fund Raising Committee conducts various activities to raise money for these scholarship funds. All profits go straight back into the scholarship accounts. None of the money raised is spent on administration or overhead.

One of the quietest fundraising efforts is the ink cartridge and toner recycling program. With the gracious cooperation of Facilities Management, their staff pulls empty toners and cartridges from all the recycling bins around campus for bulk resale. They range in value from 50 cents to $10. All the money raised goes back to staff scholarships. This brings in over $1,000 every year.

The Fund Raising Committee sells poinsettias and cacti in the winter, and teddy bears and chocolates on Valentine’s Day in February. Last year, the poinsettias sales made $635 in profit and the Valentine’s Day sales made $550.

This year, we also selling $10 raffle tickets for a purple parking pass and $100 gift cards for on-campus dining (see the full story in this month’s newsletter). In 2012, these raffles earned $1,500 in profit. Last year, the raffles grew to $2,200.

The Fund Raising Committee sells staff polo shirts all year. The 2014 shirts are black in color. Some limited quantities of orange and green shirts are also available. To buy your own shirt, click https://alumni.utdallas.edu/staffpolo. The prices start at $30. This is a great opportunity to show your Comet pride. The sales raise a little over $100 per year.

We also raise some money through Rockfish Mondays. On the first Monday of each month, the Staff Council earns money based on how many patrons at Rockfish Seafood Grill drop their receipts into the UT Dallas Staff Council box. If you want to contribute and get some good seafood, drop by their Richardson location on the first Monday of each month.

The Staff Council greatly appreciates all the donations, purchases and hard work done to benefit our staff scholarship funds.

Q&A: Mariah Armitage

A Dallas area native and graduate of Lake Highlands High School and the University of North Texas, Mariah Armitage is familiar with the challenges facing emergency planners and first responders in the DFW Metroplex. Having studied emergency management and worked in that field for more than a decade—first with a Washington D.C. based company as a counter terrorism and emergency management consultant, and later as a staffer for the City of Arlington, Dallas County and the City of
— she joined UT Dallas in March as the Director of Emergency Management and Continuity Planning.

Over the course of her career, Armitage has helped coordinate emergency response efforts in the wake of natural disasters, including several hurricanes that struck Southeast Texas and the Gulf Coast in the mid to late 2000s. Critical to any emergency management leader, Armitage says, is the ability to foster relationships between planners, responders and constituents. That, she says, will be the same at UT Dallas. “I like to say that emergency management is like the conductor of an orchestra,” she said. “You’ve got all the people who play all different types of instruments together, and we provide the sheet music—the direction for where we’re going—and provide the information they need to carry out their individual areas.”

How does your role in emergency management at UT Dallas differ from past positions you’ve held in emergency management at the municipal government level?

Emergency management at the city level is very similar to the university. There are some differences: The challenges with the university level are the continual changeover and the graduation of new students and new students coming in. But it’s similar in the sense that [at the city level] new citizens come in and relocate from different parts of the country.

My duties here are a little bit more expanded, though. I have oversight over lab safety as well as fire and life safety and emergency management.

UT Dallas has a great reputation and it’s its own little city. I would like to help ensure that our students, faculty and staff are in a safe environment and help them learn how to prepare for disasters. Serving as Director of Emergency Management is a wonderful opportunity and I’m excited to be a part of the UTD family.

What types of emergency situations require the most consistent planning and preparation from you and your team?

There are common hazards, fire being one, that certainly are very concerning. Severe storms are another that gets a lot more recognition in that regard, especially during storm seasons. That’s something we constantly educate people on. We have people coming in that are from different countries. Our outdoor warning system produces a wailing noise, and to them that might mean something different. It might mean a tsunami warning to them. So we have to make sure that we educate those people on something as simple as that, as well as educate them on the difference between watches and warnings and what type of action they have to take in those instances. It’s something that’s very common here in Tornado Alley.

There are other hazards associated with severe storms. Straight-line winds occur way more often than an actual tornado. Hail is another big one. In 1995 at Mayfest, a festival in Fort Worth, we had some severe weather in the area that triggered hail and 13 people died as a result. And lightning actually kills quite a few more people than tornadoes, so we let people know that if you can hear it, it can strike near you. So just making sure that those everyday types of hazards, that we’re educating people on them, that’s the challenge and definitely keeps us busy.

What goals or projects are on the horizon for UT Dallas’ emergency management?

I really want to re-evaluate our hazards and do what’s called a Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis. It ranks the hazards that the community and campus face. So I’ll be working to re-evaluate that, and that will drive our plans and help us determine some standard operating procedures that need to be written.
But I think even more important than that is establishing relationships internal to the university and external to the university. It’s very important that people understand what it is that emergency management does, what we can provide them and how we can help—establishing and maintaining good relationships so that people recognize our faces and don’t just see us when things are not going well. That includes key relationships with the City of Richardson emergency management, police and fire, the American Red Cross and other entities that would assist the university in the event of an emergency.

Were there any specific experiences in the past that you feel helped prepare you for your position at UT Dallas?

When I was with the City of Arlington, Hurricane Katrina occurred. The City of Arlington stepped up and we had about 13,000 evacuees from Louisiana and the surrounding areas that we sheltered. It was a very big operation. It really struck me to see face to face the people that we were helping. They were so grateful and so kind. I just really felt for their situation. That was my first real major disaster as an emergency manager. I remember working 10, 15 hours a day. They were very, very long days. We had to set up emergency shelters and take into consideration children and people with special needs, people with dietary restrictions; making sure that people who were injured and had special health needs were taken care of. It taught me how important it was to coordinate with multiple agencies and how to pull those resources together for a common effort; how it’s important to have those relationships established ahead of time and not to be there to tell people what to do but to be there to let people know, “These are what our capabilities are and these are what our gaps are. What are your capabilities and gaps?” Knowing what those are ahead of time and complementing each other is the key to the effective coordination of a disaster response.

Part of emergency management at UT Dallas is the emergency notification system. On occasion when it has been used in the past, staff have reported seeing delays in receiving email or text notifications. What steps are you taking to ensure people within the UTD community are receiving the necessary warnings and information?

The purpose of the UTD notification system is to be redundant so that in the event of one failing, there’s another way for the message to reach the intended audience. Sometimes there are factors that come into play that could not be foreseen that cause those failures to happen. To try to mitigate those incidents from happening we have a fairly robust testing system.

One of the things we’re starting to do is test the UTD alert system monthly in concert with the outdoor warning system. So the first Wednesday of every month at noon, unless it’s overcast or rain is forecasted for that day, we will sound the outdoor warning system to make sure those are functioning properly and then we’ll also send out a UTD alert—an email and text—saying “This is a test.” That will help us make sure that if there are any system glitches that we don’t know about yet, they might show up then and give us time to get those fixed.

I think it’s actually a fairly large, redundant system we have in place. We’ve got the UTD alert, which is text and email, the indoor warning system, the outdoor warning system, the university’s main Facebook and Twitter profiles, the website and the university hotline. Some jurisdictions just have some type of alert system, a website and then media releases; and those are the three ways they communicate. I think ours is a really good, robust, redundant system.

What are your impressions of UT Dallas after your first few months on the job?
It is a great campus, and one of the things that struck me is all the growth. I’m really excited for the university to see that growth and to see all the new opportunities we’ll have to serve our students and faculty and staff.

What keeps you busy when you’re away from campus?

Usually my time is taken up with my family. I have four children. Their names all start with E—Ethan, Evan, Emma and Elijah. It was not intentional; it just kind of worked out that way. But when I was expecting my fourth child I couldn’t have Ethan, Evan, Emma and Bob. I was committed at that point [

laughs].

The oldest is 10 and the youngest is 10 months. We do a lot of things together. They like to go swimming; they like to go to the zoo and museums.

What I like to do is read. If there’s a good book in front of me, I can finish it in one night. If it’s 700 pages, no problem, I can knock it out. Now if you put a procedure manual in front of me, it could take me a week [

laughs]. But if it’s a good book, no problem. I really like medical thrillers, so I’m a big fan of Michael Crichton, Steven King, and Robin Cook. That’s my thing.

### Staff Council Raffle Drawings

If you’ve always wanted to park like a VIP but didn’t want to pay top dollar, you’re in luck: A purple parking permit could be yours for just $10.

The University Staff Council is raffling off one of the prized permits, along with two $100 dining cards, as part of this year’s fundraiser benefitting the Staff Council Scholarship. The dining cards can be used for food purchases at any on-campus dining venue.

Raffle tickets will be sold from June 15 to Aug. 31 at $10 apiece, and there is no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase. To buy tickets by credit card, visit the Staff Council Marketplace. To pay by cash or check, contact one of the following members of the Staff Council Fund Raising Committee: Nick McCormick, Letitia Andrews, DeAnn Hegi, Jay Jascott, Jason Garter, Becky Wiser, Vincente Torres or Melissa Wyder. For more information, call extension 6497.

Winners will be announced on Sept. 2.

The Staff Council Scholarship is awarded in the fall and spring semesters to deserving staff members who are pursuing further education. Even if the raffle isn’t your cup of tea, the Staff Council always welcomes contributions to the Staff Council Scholarship Fund. Donations to the fund in any amount can be made via the council’s marketplace site. Thank you for your continued support of Staff Council, and best of luck to all of our raffle entrants!

### Staff Council News & Notes

**Dining Dollar Discount**

UT Dallas Dining Services is offering staff and faculty a 10 percent discount on food purchases at all dining locations across campus starting in the fall. Purchase Dining Dollars online in increments of $20
and the amount will be loaded to your Comet Card, which can be used as a debit card for food purchases. Visit the Dining Services website for more information.

From ABCs to DVDs, McDermott’s Got It

Kristen Palmiere, senior librarian and head of access and delivery services, recently visited the University Staff Council to let us know about the wide array of resources available to staff via the Eugene McDermott Library. Here’s a little recap:

The library’s media collection includes thousands of DVDs and audiobooks, in addition to calculators, digital cameras, and music CDs. Our DVD collection includes award-winning motion pictures and television series, high-quality documentaries and educational films in support of the University of Texas at Dallas curriculum. New titles are usually added to the collection and ready for checkout within two to three weeks of release.

In the library’s audiobook collection, you’ll find sound recordings of classic and modern literature, as well as audio versions of popular novels and nonfiction located in our Leisure Reading section. DVDs can be checked out for seven days at a time, and you can check out most audiobooks for 21 days. Your Comet Card is your library card.

If the collection is missing your favorite DVD or audiobook, let us know! Just describe the item on our Suggest a Title form. We will let you know if we decide to purchase it.

For more information about Library Media information, please speak with Kristen Palmiere. She can be reached at kristen.palmiere@utdallas.edu or at (972) 883-2593.

Assist with Student Move-in

Student move-in is right around the corner, and Residential Life would like to invite you to participate! We will be rolling out the GREEN & ORANGE carpet to welcome our students and their families on the following days:

- **Saturday, August 16** — Apartments Phases 1-9 & Residence Hall North
- **Wednesday, August 20** — Residence Hall West & Residence Hall South
- **Thursday, August 21** — Residence Hall Southwest & Residence Hall Northwest

**FAQ’s**

- **How do I sign up?** Contact John Carrillo at john.carrillo@utdallas.edu. Please include your availability for the days you wish to help.
- **People who can help?** Anyone you know, the more the merrier!
- **What should I bring with me?** Please just bring yourselves! Water will be provided. We ask that you do not hand out any marketing material for your department. During the move-in process, the students will be getting a lot of different paperwork and we do not want to overwhelm them; we simply want to help them move-in. If you would like to disseminate marketing materials, John Carrillo will be collecting those materials to include in give-away bags.
- **What will you be doing?** Your role at move-in will be to greet residents and their families as they arrive and to assist the residents in bringing their belongings from their car to their suite/apartment. This will require physical labor and is completely voluntary on your part.

**Staff Appreciation — Ice Cream Social, August 6**

Mark your calendar now! Join us for ice cream sundaes and snow cones at the 3rd Annual Comet Family Reunion and Staff Appreciation ice cream social on Wednesday, August 6, in the Student Union Dining Hall. Check out our Staff Appreciation official flyer for more information.