

# North Lake College



## Advisor of the Year Award

Dr. Beth Nikopoulos

North Lake College

Dallas County Community College District

TJCSGA Region II

2019-2020

For the Joel Franke Memorial Advisor of the Year Award, North Lake College Student Government Association would like to nominate Dr. Beth Nikopoulos. Dr. Beth obtained her

Bachelor of Arts in English, with a minor in Political Science in December of 1993 at the University of Texas at Arlington. She later went on to obtain her Master of Psychology Human Services with an emphasis on Counseling from Texas A&M University at Commerce. To top off her academic accolades, she obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University at Commerce. She currently works as the Director of Student Life at North Lake College as well as the full time advisor for our Student Government Association.

Dr. Beth's advisory started from scratch, in the sense that she revived our Student Government after its long absence. This can be accredited to her passion for working directly with her students and empowering them to make a difference. She has a penchant for student advocacy, and by guiding Student Government at North Lake College, she allows students' voices to be heard, and their needs represented properly to North Lake College's administration. When she first started over 10 years ago, she would walk right up to students in order to pique their interest for Student Government. Soon after, she comprised an officer team from these students and the Student Government Association (SGA) at North Lake College finally became an official organization. From then on, SGA forged a legacy, one which stood for working with students, cultivating servant leaders within the community, and making the campus and community a better place through advocacy and service. Without Dr. Beth's commitment, zest for leadership, and ability to inspire students this legacy could never have been established.

This year in our local SGA, Dr. Beth guided us through some tough challenges. After a majority of our Executive Board moved on from North Lake, the future of our SGA was uncertain. This uncertainty only persisted when we found student engagement had *drastically* decreased from the previous year. It was enough to discourage any group and the lower morale of even the most dedicated officers. Because of Dr. Beth we have been able to maneuver

adversity of this kind and regain stability. She did this by serving as a mediator and facilitating open discussions among the officer team when there were personality clashes and problems adjusting. Additionally she used her skills that once revived North Lake SGA to boost interest among students once again.

With the loss of an advisor she has been carrying the responsibility that two advisors would normally hold. Not once has she complained but she constantly motivates us to keep going in the face of defeat. This became more evident with our event of the year, The Faces of Homelessness Experience. She facilitated the contact between us and the faculty in order to gain support for our event. Amongst the North Lake staff she is very well received and faculty did not think twice when helping not only because they recognized it was a needed cause but they knew that with a leader such as her NLC SGA could carry out a project of such great magnitude.

One of the main duties of Student Government is advocating for the student voice. When a club funding dilemma threatened the prosperity of clubs that students are passionate about, and restricted accessibility for students in regards to these organizations, with her experience she helped us find a solution.

First she assisted us in collecting data feedback and data from other clubs and organizations. She maintained back and forth communication with our administration, fighting to acquire a date we could meet with our Vice President of Business Services (VPBS) to convey the information from the clubs and organizations. After meeting with the administration, we came to understand that a lot of our concerns were at the district level and our VPBS suggested we take our concerns to the district level. After that Dr. Beth worked extremely hard and acquired a meeting with our Chancellor, Dr. Joe May, where we relayed our concerns to him. That discussion led to the next discussion, which was with our College President, Dr. Slejko, about

club funding and acquiring more money for clubs and organizations, who need money to engage in the activities they wish to engage in, to benefit the lives of students. She managed to acquire that meeting which was in January, and since then, club funding has now been added into the budgeting for next year. Dr. Beth to this day, is still working tirelessly on making sure that our student clubs are being represented properly and working to make sure they get the money they need to engage in their activities. Our board would not have known how to tackle such a big issue if it was not for her guidance and leadership.

At the regional level Dr. Beth consistently plays an integral role in the success of Region II. For several years she has taught a Robert's Rules workshop at both Region and State to ensure that delegates know exactly how to articulate their thoughts and their ideas adequately in a formal setting. In addition to preparing delegates in Robert's Rules she has trained the Region E-Board for several years, vigorously, to prepare in facilitating their conferences. Furthermore, each time one of her students from North Lake College has served on the region or state board she has gone above and beyond to remain involved and supportive throughout their entire experience. Last year's State President, Mhakeda Shillingford, has said, "Through a very demanding time of having to handle a conference she kept me grounded and made sure my wellbeing was taken care of while I was focused on the conference. She helped me survive the State conference."

Besides her work as the Director of Student Life and advisor of Student Government, she is also active in her community. Dr. Beth is and always has been a huge advocate for mental health. She actively leads a support group for children and teens who suffer from Tourette's, a disorder when a person suffers from both tics disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder. This was extremely beneficial for our former president S.M. Gibran, as he had a lifelong struggle with

Tourette's. Following his fortuitous term, Gibran continued to benefit as he could open up about his own challenges to guide youth along their own paths as he moved on from North Lake to a four-year university. Gibran heavily credits all of his success to Dr. Beth, as her guidance and compassion allowed him to keep his Tourette's under control to remain motivated and focused.

To strengthen our SGA executive board Dr. Beth often teaches us about global citizenship and everything pertaining to leadership, giving officers the tools and motivation to engage and give back to our North Lake Community. Her selflessness is seen through her constant giving, a characteristic that stands out from past SGA advisors. As someone with such an extremely busy schedule, it is hard to imagine Dr. Beth having time to personally help students. That is 100% true for her, as she is never hesitant to sit with an officer or any member, listen to whatever is going on, and offering her 100% support in assisting that student. Some of our officers being international students, talk to her personally about their struggles and go to her for her guidance. Others speak to her for academic advice, career advice, and also advice on how to make their time management more effective. Almost everyone, officers, chairs and members included, seek her out to talk about personal issues for example; family, health, and finances. She never once turned anyone down, and she sits as long as she has to to make sure that the student gets assisted to the fullest extent.

With so many years of experience to dedicate, Dr. Beth is a beacon of inspiration to students, faculty, staff, administration, and even Student Government advisors from other schools as well. Advisors are constantly calling her for advice on how to do things, and how to run certain things. She is also a mother of three children, and, besides her immensely busy schedule, she always has time for.<sup>3</sup> Even with her schedule, she will always have a smile on her face and continue doing what she does, because to her, students are what matter the most, and

Student Government is her lifeline. These are all reasons why, Dr. Beth Nikopoulos should be awarded the Joel Franke Memorial Advisor of the Year.