

Constitution and Bylaws of the Virginia Tech Staff Senate

Staff Senate Constitution

Article I: Name

The name of this organization is the Staff Senate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Article II: Authority

1. The Staff Senate derives authority from the University Council Constitution and Bylaws through the voice and intentions of the staff, defined as non-faculty salaried and non-student wage employees of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
2. Existence of the Staff Senate does not preclude the existence of or the right of any university employee to belong to any other organization.

Article III: Purposes

The purposes of the Staff Senate are to:

1. Serve as the representative body for the staff employees of the university.
2. Act in an advisory capacity to the University administration and governance structure.
3. Appoint or recommend staff representatives to University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commissions, Committees and ad hoc committees as appropriate.
4. Provide a two-way medium for the exchange of information between the staff and the administration.
5. Foster a spirit of unity and cooperation.
6. Provide referral for individual concerns and problems to appropriate organizations or personnel.
7. Accept and share responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students in all efforts to attain the stated goals of the University.

The Staff Senate is part of the legislative system defined in the University Council Constitution. This system constitutes the main bodies for policy formation at Virginia Tech and also includes the A/P Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate, Graduate and Professional Student Senate, and Undergraduate Student Senate, the university and senate commissions, and their related committees, and the University Council. Domains of responsibility for each senate are outlined in Article VII of the University Council Constitution. The senate commissions formulate and recommend policies to the senates, which in turn recommend policies to the University Council, the university commissions formulate and recommend policies directly to University Council. All senates have at least one commission assigned to them. The University Council makes policy recommendations to the president. Final authority rests with the president of the university and the Board of Visitors. Because these bodies constitute a legislative system, their function, relationships, and the processes they hold in common are defined in the University Council constitution and bylaws. All aspects of the Staff Senate not defined in those documents are defined in the Staff Senate constitution and bylaws.

Staff Senate policy recommendations are advanced in the form of resolutions as described in Article III of the University Council Bylaws.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Composition

The Staff Senate will consist of 40 voting senators elected from among the following constituent areas at the university:

1. Eight colleges (other than Agriculture & Life Sciences)
2. Agriculture & Life Sciences (to include Extension)
3. General Academic areas not included in the colleges
4. The President and Vice Presidents (other than the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Campus Planning and Facilities)
5. Vice President for Student Affairs (to include Dining Services and custodial staff)
6. Vice President for Campus Planning and Facilities (to include buildings & grounds staff)

The maximum number of senators from any single constituent area shall be ten.

There will be 8 at-large alternates who will be available to fill in for any Senator who is unavailable for a vote due to an excused absence.

There shall be seven possible non-voting members representing university organizations:

- a. One representative from the Faculty Senate.
- b. One representative from the Administrative and Professional (A/P) Faculty Senate.
- c. One representative from the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- d. One representative from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate.
- e. Past-President of Staff Senate, if no longer serving as a senator.
- f. One member from the Human Resources Department to be appointed by the Staff Senate President.
- g. The senior university administrator responsible for Human Resources.

In forming the membership, the Executive Committee shall be sensitive to the inclusion of employees who are representative of the various types of salaried staff and non-student wage employees, occupational classifications, and organizational units. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for maintaining an equitable representation of the various types of salaried staff and non-student wage employees, occupational classifications, and departmental units within the constituent areas.

Section 2: Term of Membership

1. Term of office for Staff Senators will be three years. Each term will begin July 1. Terms shall be staggered to permit election of approximately one-third of the Senate body each year.
2. Transfer of a member from one constituent area to another shall result in the replacement of that individual by an at-large alternate until the constituent area designates a permanent replacement.
3. Movement of a member from one occupational classification to another or from Classified Staff to University Staff within the same constituent area shall not affect his/her unexpired term on the Staff Senate.
4. Conversion of a member from a staff position to a non-staff position (A/P faculty, faculty, student employee) shall result in the immediate replacement of that individual by an at-large alternate until the constituent area designates a permanent replacement.
5. The member changing areas or position (to non-staff) must notify the Staff Senate secretary of the change in status as soon as possible.

6. A senator may be reelected for multiple three-year terms. There are no restrictions on serving as an alternate.
7. Vacancies may occur as a result of death, termination of employment, transfer, retirement, resignation, or by a majority vote of the Staff Senate to remove a senator following three consecutive unacceptable absences from regular meetings during any calendar year. The vacant position will be filled by an at-large alternate until the constituent area designates a permanent replacement.

Section 3: Elections

Elections for the Staff Senate shall take place no later than March 31. The election process shall be conducted by the Elections and Nominations Committee in accordance with the Staff Senate Bylaws.

Article V: Officers

Section 1: Titles

The four officers of the Staff Senate are the president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, and parliamentarian.

Section 2: Term of Office

1. Officers shall be elected annually to a one year term by the Staff Senators following the election of Senators. Each term will begin at the end of the June regular meeting.
2. Officers shall be eligible for re-election but may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
3. The Staff Senate may, upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Staff Senate membership, any officer may be removed from office either with or without cause.
4. In the event an officer, excluding the president, shall take office and for some reason be unable or unwilling to complete his/her term of office, a special meeting shall be called and a special election held to fill the vacated office for the remainder of the vacating officer's term. Should the president be unable to complete their term, the vice president will fill the vacancy and a special election will be held to fill the vacant vice president position.
5. The immediate past president of the Staff Senate shall serve as an advisor to the Executive Committee until a new president is elected. If his/her elected term as a senator has expired, he/she shall serve as a non-voting member of the Staff Senate and Executive Committee.

Article VI: Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA)

Section 1: Description

All policy recommendations of the Staff Senate must first be advanced and approved by the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs before they are voted on by the senate.

Though CSPA is part of the senate, its charge and membership are maintained within Article VIII of the University Council Constitution and cannot be altered directly by the senate. The charge and membership of CSPA are repeated here for convenience.

Section 2: Charge

To study, formulate, and recommend to Staff Senate policies and procedures affecting the working conditions of classified and university staff and to promote staff participation in the University community. Areas for consideration include, staff morale, evaluation, communication with supervisors, recognition, and career development; staff relations with administrators, faculty, and students; benefits and personal leave; extra-university professional activity; and matters of equity and diversity that affect staff.

Section 3: Membership

- Chair will be elected by the Staff Senate in accordance with the Staff Senate Bylaws
- Vice President for Human Resources (advisor)
- One dean selected by the Council of College Deans
- Nine staff members elected by Staff Senate
 - Three from Staff Senate
 - Three from academic units
 - Three from administrative units
- One administrative department head or equivalent appointed by the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- One academic department head or equivalent appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost
- One non-ex-officio A/P faculty representative elected by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate
- One Faculty Senator elected by the Faculty Senate
- One Graduate and Professional Student Senator elected by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate
- One Undergraduate Student Senator elected by the Undergraduate Student Senate

Article VII: University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and Committees

Senators and staff representatives to the University Council, University Council Cabinet, and commissions shall be elected by the Staff Senate by simple majority vote of the Staff Senate. Nominations for election may include Staff Senators-elect from the constituent areas.

Nominations of senators and staff requested by the president or other administrator of the university to serve on “university standing” or ad hoc committees shall be approved by a majority vote of the Staff Senate. Nominations may include Staff Senators-elect from the constituent areas. Terms of appointment and responsibilities are prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the University Council.

Senators and staff representatives to the University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and committees shall

1. Represent the position of the Staff Senate and staff in the discharge of responsibilities,
2. Bring matters of staff concern before the respective University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commission, or committee.
3. Inform the Staff Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and actions taken by summarizing discussions and actions taken at meetings of each University Council, University Council Cabinet, commission, or committee and forwarding as a group or by a Staff Senator, staff representative, or a designee to the secretary/treasurer within ten days after each meeting.

Article VIII: Staff Senate Committees

The Staff Senate shall form the following committees:>

1. An Executive Committee consisting of the president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, chair of each Staff Senate standing committee, and the immediate past-president of the Staff Senate serving in a non-voting advisory capacity.
2. Three standing committees:
 - a. Policies and Issues.
 - b. Communications Committee
 - c. Elections and Nominations.

The President of the Staff Senate may designate standing, special, and/or ad hoc committees as approved by the Staff Senate.

Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws

Section 1.: Development

Amendments to the constitution require a CSPA resolution; amendments to the bylaws do not. Proposed amendments to the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted to the Executive Committee for review and clarification. Upon approval by the Executive Committee, amendments to the constitution proceed to the CSPA prior to review and vote in the senate, amendments to the bylaws proceed directly to the senate.

Section 2: Approval of Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the constitution become effective upon the following sequence of actions:

1. An affirmative majority vote by the CSPA.
2. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the senators present and voting, provide that a quorum has been reached.
3. An affirmative vote in the University Council of the majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
4. Approval by the president of the university.

Section 3: Approval of Amendments to the Bylaws

Amendments to the bylaws become effective upon an affirmative vote of the majority of the senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.

Section 4: Notice of Proposal

Notice of proposal to amend the Constitution and/or bylaws shall be given in the Staff Senate agenda and considered at no fewer than two meetings of the Staff Senate prior to voting. A vote may be taken on an amendment at the second meeting. The proposed amendment shall be distributed with the agenda.

Section 5: Corrections to the Constitution and Bylaws

Corrections of typographical/grammatical errors and updating terminology, where appropriate, are permitted without going through the amendment process for both the Constitution and Bylaws. These corrections should be noted in the changelog.

Bylaws of the Virginia Tech Staff Senate

Article I: Duties of officers, senators, and non-voting members

Section 1: Officers

All officers are responsible for ensuring a smooth transition to their successor and an orderly transfer of official records.

The President shall

1. Preside at all regular and special meetings.
2. Enforce all regulations and policies.
3. Preside over the Executive Committee.
4. Prepare the organizational chart of the Staff Senate.
5. Submit the budget, if funds are available, to the Staff Senate at the July regular meeting for approval each year.
6. Call special meetings.
7. Prepare an agenda for the Staff Senate Secretary to distribute to the Staff Senators and non-voting members of the Staff Senate seven days prior to the next regular meeting.
8. Authorize disbursement of funds.
9. Designate chairs of the standing committees as appropriate.
10. Serve as a member of University Council and the University Council Cabinet.
11. Serve as the staff representative to the Board of Visitors.
12. Establish ad hoc committees as approved by the Staff Senate, appoint members and designate chairs of these committees as appropriate.
13. Perform other such duties as associated with this office.

The Vice-President shall

1. Preside in the absence of the President.
2. Serve as the principal assistant to the President.
3. Serve as Chair of the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs.
4. Coordinate legislative activity.
5. Serve as a member of University Council.
6. Fulfill any term vacated by the President.
7. Perform other such duties as associated with this office.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall

1. Conduct a roll call, record attendance and advise the President if a quorum is present at the beginning of each meeting.
2. Prepare minutes of all Staff Senate meetings and maintain them as permanent records.
3. Distribute copies of the minutes to each member within ten days after meetings via email. The minutes should also be posted on the Staff Senate website.
4. Distribute copies of agenda and information packages to each member within seven days prior to the next regular meeting via email. The agenda should also be posted on the Staff Senate website.
5. Maintain all records of the Staff Senate including
 - a. Fiscal records
 - b. Mailing lists (electronic and campus)
 - c. List of senators serving on the Staff Senate including term of office
 - d. List of senators serving on the University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and committees with term of office
 - e. List of constituent areas and number of staff in those areas.

6. Make authorized disbursements of funds. Submit quarterly financial reports of expenditures to the Executive Committee. Both the President and the Secretary/Treasurer shall sign all checks.
7. Serve as a member of University Council.
8. Perform other such duties as required by this office.

The Parliamentarian shall

1. Advise the President on parliamentary procedures in accordance with the parliamentarian authority used by University Council.

Section 2: Staff Senators

The Staff Senators shall

1. Make informed decisions.
2. Vote on matters brought before the Staff Senate.
3. Serve on at least one standing committee.
4. Serve on University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees when elected or appointed.

Section 3: All Members of Staff Senate

All members of the Staff Senate shall

1. Report to their respective areas on issues brought before the Staff Senate.
2. Seek opinions of their respective areas on pertinent matters concerning the Staff Senate or the staff at large, and
3. Be accountable to their respective areas.
4. All members shall attend meetings of University Council, University Council Cabinet, Commissions, and committees they are elected or appointed to. If unable to attend the member shall send an alternate if possible.

Section 4: Alternates

1. Alternates may attend Staff Senate meetings and shall vote only when filling in as a replacement for a senator with an excused absence.
2. Alternates may serve on University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees when appointed.

Article II: Elections

1. The elections process for Staff Senators from the constituent areas will be conducted by the Staff Senate Elections and Nominations Committee before March 31 each year. All staff members are eligible to be nominated and to vote.
2. The number of Senators elected will be from the following constituent areas:

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| • Eight colleges | 8 Senators |
| • Agriculture & Life Sciences and Extension | 6 Senators |
| • General Academic areas | 5 Senators |
| • The President and Vice Presidents | 9 Senators |
| • Vice President for Student Affairs | 6 Senators |
| • Vice President for Campus Planning and Facilities | 6 Senators |

The number of Senators from each constituent area can be adjusted by the Executive Committee as staffing levels change or departments are moved, removed, or created in various areas.

3. Each constituent area will elect a minimum of one alternate to serve at large on the Staff Senate.
4. The Elections and Nominations Committee shall begin taking nominations for Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Parliamentarian, representatives to the University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees and other appointments at the February regular meeting.
5. Permission must be obtained from candidates before names are placed in nomination.
6. Election of officers shall be held by secret ballot by April 1. Election and/or nomination of representatives to the University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees and other appointments shall be completed by April 1.
7. A majority vote of those present shall be necessary to elect officers and/or representatives. In case no candidate receives a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from each successive ballot until one candidate receives a majority.
8. All those elected shall assume responsibilities at the end of the June regular meeting.
9. The Vice president shall automatically fill the office of the President when a vacancy in that office shall be slated to occur, either via end of term or through resignation, status change, or removal. If the Vice President refuses the appointment, then the Elections and Nominations committee shall be charged with finding a nominee from the members of the Executive committee or Past Presidents of the Staff Senate. If no member of the Executive committee or a Past president will accept the appointment, the Election and Nominations Committee shall open nominations for President up to the current Senators.

Article III: Committees

Executive Committee

1. Screens proposals from staff for Staff Senate consideration.
2. Acts on behalf of the Staff Senate between regular meetings. All such actions shall be ratified by the Staff Senate at the next Staff Senate meeting.
3. Approves, by majority vote, initial composition, changes, and additions to the membership of standing committees by the President.
4. Implements the rules and regulations of the Staff Senate.
5. Assists in interpreting the intent of the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
6. Determines if a senator's absence from a regular meeting is excused.
7. Assists the President in preparing the budget.
8. Meets at least once a month prior to the regular Staff Senate meeting.
9. Addresses occasional changes to the regular meeting schedule of the Staff Senate.

Standing Committees

General Guidelines

1. Members of standing committees shall be appointed by the president and approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. The president will also designate a chair for each standing committee.
2. Unless requested by the senator, membership on standing committee shall not change for the senator's term of office.
3. Each member of the Staff Senate shall serve on at least one standing committee.
4. Minutes shall be kept for each standing committee meeting. Each standing committee will also submit an annual report of its activities and any pending matters to the Executive Committee at the June Executive Committee meeting.
5. The Scope of the charges of the standing committee shall be established by the Staff Senate in accordance with the bylaws.

6. Standing committees shall establish goals, objectives, and priorities. They have authority to investigate, carry out activities necessary to perform their charges, prepare reports, offer recommendations, and make parliamentary motions.
7. Standing committees may establish subcommittees to address specific issues as needed. Membership of subcommittees shall consist of members of the respective standing committee. Chairs of subcommittees shall be appointed by the chair of the respective standing committee.
8. Standing committee chairs shall convene their committees no less frequently than once a month unless approved by the Executive Committee.
9. At the end of each term, each committee chair shall provide to the respective incoming chair appropriate information to facilitate continuity (e.g., charges, goals, unfinished business, investigatory materials, past and pending parliamentary motions).

Policies and Issues Committee - Primary Responsibilities

1. Serves as a link between the Staff Senate and the Division of Human Resources and/or University Administration in general on personnel and related matters.
2. Brings to the Staff Senate's attention changes in policies and procedures that may affect the staff and advises the Staff Senate on these issues. This includes monitoring the activities of the University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees that may affect the staff.
3. Provides assistance to the staff in obtaining educational leave, tuition waivers, and other educational opportunities.

Communications Committee - Primary Responsibilities

1. Informs the staff, university community, the Board of Visitors, and the Virginia State Legislature as to the mission of the Staff Senate.
2. Communicates information to staff concerning new employee orientation, employee training and development, incentives and rewards, benefits, retirement planning, and related matters utilizing university and non-university media and/or other appropriate means as needed.
3. Interfaces with university and non-university media sources to provide information on Staff Senate activities when appropriate.
4. Fulfills communications needs of Staff Senate as requested by the President or Executive Committee.
5. Maintains the Staff Senate website and any social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Elections and Nominations Committee - Primary Responsibilities

1. Coordinates the Staff Senate elections process. This committee is responsible for ensuring that the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws are followed when electing Staff Senate members, officers and representative to the University Council, Commissions, Advisory Councils, and Committees.
2. Composes a list of nominations for Staff Senate officers and representatives to the University Council, University Council Cabinet, commissions, and committees as needed.
3. Makes recommendations to the president for appointment of members and chairs to Staff Senate committees.
4. Monitors elections of senators by the staff associations and oversees votes on proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Staff Senate.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee

1. Gather information from staff about DEIB priorities, concerns, and issues; plan and review All-Staff survey & results.

2. Determine ways to fund, plan, and promote a speaker series that would be specifically for CLAHS staff and would correspond to polled DEIB priorities.
3. Establish an easily replicable approach to generalizing staff engagement in DEIB activities across the university.
4. Work in cooperation with HR committee to determine areas that we can report on and potentially address with respect to barriers to staff recruitment and retention, with a focus on barriers that may be experienced by different types of minority groups.
5. Other DEIB priorities that this subcommittee identifies along the way.

Article IV: Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate shall be held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Occasional conflicts to this schedule, such as University holidays or inclement weather, shall be addressed by the Executive Committee. The meeting schedule may also be adjusted by the Executive Committee to meet the needs of staff in particular areas, i.e., Dining Hall staff may not be able to participate in a noon meeting due to work needs.
2. The Staff Senate shall invite the President of the University to meet with the Staff Senate at least once each academic year.
3. A quorum at all Staff Senate meetings shall be a majority of the total eligible voting Staff Senate membership.
4. All meetings shall be open to the public unless the Staff Senate approves a motion to enter into executive session. However, a person who is not a Staff Senate member may not participate in discussion unless recognized by the President of the Staff Senate.

Article V: Procedures

1. Staff employees may submit items to any Senator for inclusion in the agenda of the next regular Staff Senate meeting. A senator wishing to have an item (or items) included on the agenda of a regular meeting may submit the item(s) to the President of the Staff Senate. The President shall then decide whether items should be included on the next regular meeting agenda or passed to the appropriate Staff Senate committee.

Article VI: Parliamentary Authority

1. The parliamentary authority used by University Council shall govern the business proceedings of the Staff Senate except when otherwise specified in the Constitution and/or Bylaws.

Article VII: Approval of Amendments to the Staff Senate Bylaws

1. Notice of any proposal to amend the Bylaws shall be given in the agenda. An affirmative vote of the majority of the Senators present and voting, provided that a quorum is reached, is required for adoption.

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