

The Constitution of the Staff Senate of Texas A&M International University

Article I: Name

Section 1. The name of this organization is the Staff Senate of Texas A&M International University.

Article II: Purpose and Responsibility

Section 1. The purpose of the Staff Senate is to examine and communicate matters affecting all classified staff, their quality of life and their employment, and to act as an advocate for all classified staff, and to formulate recommendations to the University Administration. The Staff Senate will consider any other topic relevant to the interests and welfare of the University and make recommendations. The Staff Senate also considers those affairs that are delegated to it by the President of the University.

Article III: Membership in the Staff Senate

Section 1. All persons holding benefits-eligible classified staff appointments at Texas A&M International University, who are not represented by Faculty Senate, Dean's Council or University Executive Council, are members of the Staff Senate. They are empowered to conduct all affairs of the Staff Senate except for those specified otherwise in this Constitution and its Bylaws.

Article IV: Bylaws

Section 1. The Staff Senate establishes Bylaws to this Constitution which govern matters required by, or not otherwise specified in, this Constitution.

Section 2. A majority of the eligible voting members present at a schedule meeting is required to initiate a ballot item concerning amendments to, or changes in the Bylaws. Amendments to or changes in the Bylaws are then submitted to the Governance Committee for review. The Governance Committee will report at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The ballots are then distributed to the Staff Senate by the Governance Committee with notice that they will become effective if and when ratified by an affirmative 60% of the total eligible member ballots.

Article V: Constitution Amendments and Interpretation

Section 1. A majority of the eligible voting members present at a scheduled meeting is required to initiate a ballot item concerning amendments to, or changes in the Constitution. Amendments to or changes in the Constitution are then submitted to the Governance Committee for review. The Governance Committee will report at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The ballots are then distributed to the Staff Senate by the Governance Committee with notice that they will become effective if and when ratified by a 60% majority of ballots received in a referendum of the Staff Senate, provided the affirmative votes constitute no less than one-fourth of the membership of the Staff Senate. The Governance Committee handles the amendment voting. The Governance Committee has the authority to interpret this Constitution.

Article VI: Adoption and Distribution

Section 1. This Constitution is adopted by the Staff Senate, enters into effect, and replaces all previous constitutional documents, on the date that it is approved by a 60% vote of the membership present.

Section 2. This Constitution and its Bylaws are distributed to all members of the Staff Senate Officers and are available to all members of the Staff Senate via the Staff Senate website.

Section 3. This Constitution was last revised on **July 2009**.

Bylaws to the Constitution of the Staff Senate of Texas A&M International University

I. Membership

All persons holding benefits-eligible classified staff appointments at Texas A&M International University, who are not represented by Faculty Senate, Dean's Council or the University Executive Council, are members of the Staff Senate. They are empowered to conduct all affairs of the Staff Senate except for those specified otherwise in the Constitution and its Bylaws.

Each member of the AAC is entitled to propose resolutions to the AAC, and to vote on the business of the AAC. Each member has one vote, even if qualified to be a member in more than one capacity.

II. Staff Senate Officer Elections

a. Eligibility

- i. The officers of the Staff Senate are elected from the members who are active employees and have been employed with the University in a benefits-eligible position for a minimum of 12 months.
- ii. A person may not simultaneously hold more than one office position, nor may a person run for more than one office at a time during an election.

b. Officer Positions

Staff Senate officer positions are as listed below:

- President
- President-Elect
- Vice President (classified support staff)
- Vice President (classified administrative staff)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Parliamentarian
- Past President (ex-officio, non-voting)
- HR Representative (non-voting)

c. Nominations/Elections Procedures

- i. The University Office of Human Resources will provide a listing of all eligible members to the Governance Committee, both for voting and nomination purposes.
- ii. Each eligible staff member may nominate one eligible staff member for each position that is up for election. Nominations shall be in writing or via email.
- iii. After the closing date for nominations, the Governance Committee shall tabulate the number of nominations received by each potential candidate.
- iv. The Governance Committee shall notify the successful nominees that their names will be placed on the election ballot unless they withdraw by a specified date. If insufficient nominations for a particular position occur, this matter will be referred to the Staff Senate Officers for a recommendation on additional nominations.
- v. Before the July meeting of each year, the Governance Committee produces a ballot of nominations for each elected position to be filled. Voting by ballot by the membership of the Staff Senate for the election of officers takes place before the August meeting of each year.
- vi. The Governance Committee secures procedures for conducting all elections within the Staff Senate and is charged with enforcing all elections procedures. It is also charged with verifying the results of all elections within the Staff Senate.
- vii. Elections to fill the terms of the above mentioned positions are decided by the majority of votes received from the membership of the Staff Senate.
- viii. Should an election ballot put before the Staff Senate or the Staff Senate Officers result in a tie vote, the Staff Senate President decides the election.
- ix. Within one week of the close of an election, the Governance Committee shall notify the newly elected representatives, the Committee shall inform the University community of the results of the election.

d. Terms & Limits

- i. Each of the regular terms of office for the elected officers of the Staff Senate is one-year in length and commences at the beginning of the fiscal year (September 1st) and runs through the end of the fiscal year (August 31st).
- ii. Non-voting Staff Senate Officers are appointed for a period of one year.

e. Duties: Staff Senate Officers are entitled to propose resolutions to the Staff Senate, and to vote on the business of the Staff Senate. Each member has one vote, even if qualified to be a member in more than one capacity.

- i. President – presides over all meetings of the Staff Senate and will have primary responsibility for preparing the agenda for each meeting. As an elected representative, the President may vote on any and all issues.

Ensures that all Staff Senate activities are conducted in an orderly and professional manner and that all actions conform to the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

- ii. President-Elect – Presides in the absence of the President. Assumes the duties of the President for the unexpired term in the event the President is unable to complete the term of office. Responsible for disseminating information about Staff Senate to all new employees.
 - iii. Vice-President (support/administrative staff) – Carries out duties as assigned by the President.
 - iv. Secretary – Takes and maintains the minutes of each meeting of the Staff Senate and Staff Senate Officers. Publishes and distributes the minutes from the previous Staff Senate Meeting and the agenda for the upcoming Staff Senate Meeting to all members at least two working days prior to the next meeting via email. Sets the monthly meetings (location and refreshments). Solicits agenda items for the meeting and prepares and distributes the agenda. The Secretary will be responsible for maintaining accurate records, including attendance, of all business conducted by the Staff Senate. Maintains historical and past information of the Staff Senate (minutes, meeting attendance, memos, letters, resolutions, correspondence, etc). Serves as a resource person to incoming secretary.
 - v. Treasurer – Primarily responsible for the Staff Senate's fiscal affairs. Prepares a monthly financial statement and reports to the Staff Senate at each of the regular meetings. Assists the President in preparing the budget for Staff Senate activities. Disburses monies from Staff Senate funds for Staff Senate expenses. The President of the Staff Senate must approve all disbursements of money. Monitors disbursements of scholarship funds and follows up with Financial Aid to make sure all scholarships are awarded. Monitors fund-raising efforts and keeps accurate records of all activities.
 - vi. Parliamentarian – The Parliamentarian shall ensure that the Senate abides by *Robert's Rules of Order* when conducting its meetings and will serve as a resource person to the Senate Officers and the membership regarding the usage of the stated rules of order.
 - vii. Past President - Serves as a non-voting officer of the Staff Senate and provides continuity in the administration of the Staff Senate. Serves as an advisor to current and proposed activities, using previous office experience to give a historical perspective, if needed.
 - viii. HR Representative - The Director of Human Resources or designee shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the Staff Senate.
- f. Attendance: Staff Senate Officers are expected to attend all Staff Senate meetings.
- g. Appointments
- i. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws or in the written charge to an Ad Hoc Committee, the Staff Senate President shall attempt to provide representation of all administrative units of the University as appointments are made to any of the committees or councils (Staff Senate or University wide).
 - ii. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws or in the written charge to an Ad Hoc Committee, vacancies in unexpired terms occurring in any of the committees may be filled by qualified persons appointed by the President of the Staff Senate.
 - iii. By agreement with the University Administration, the Staff Senate officers appoint representatives to University Councils and Committees. These appointments are made by the Staff Senate President in consultation with the Staff Senate Officers. Except in the case of an Ad Hoc Committee, appointments are for the term of the Committee but no more than one year. Appointees are full members of the Staff Senate and the committee to which they have been appointed and are responsible for maintaining communications between that body and the Staff Senate.
- h. Vacancies
- i. Should a vacancy occur in the office of the Staff Senate President, the Vice President shall complete that term and a new Vice President shall be selected. If the office of the Vice President is vacant at the same time, a President is elected for the remainder of the term.
 - ii. Should vacancies occur in the office of the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Parliamentarian before the completion of a term of office, the Governance Committee will nominate a candidate or candidates for the vacant office and an election is held at the first possible Staff Senate meeting. At that meeting, nominations from the floor are acceptable. Such an election is decided by a majority vote of the secret ballots received from the Staff Senate members present at the meeting. Officers elected by this method serve to the original expiration date of the term that they have been elected to complete.
 - iii. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Past President before the expiration of the one-year term, the person who most recently satisfies the requirement of the position, becomes Past President.
 - iv. If at any time, no person is available to serve as Past President, that office remains vacant until a qualified person is available.
 - v. If no replacement is found utilizing above methods, an individual will be appointed by the Staff Senate Officers.
- i. Resignations: Any Staff Senate Officer or appointee who wishes to resign their position will need to submit their resignation in writing to the Staff Senate President. The procedure to fill the vacancy is listed under Vacancies within these Bylaws.
- j. Removal from Office
- i. Any elected officer of the Staff Senate may be recalled by a vote of the membership of the Staff Senate.
 - ii. To call an election for recall of an elected officer or elected officers, a petition, signed by 25% of the membership of the Staff Senate, and stating with particularity, the reason or reasons the elected officer or

- elected officers should be recalled shall be presented to the Staff Senate Officers at either a regularly scheduled meeting or a meeting specifically called for the purpose of receiving such a petition.
- iii. The Staff Senate Officers shall review the petition and shall, within ten (10) days of the date of the receipt, set a meeting date for the recall election.
 - iv. The Governance Committee will conduct any recall election, which shall be treated as a special election, and will require, at least, secret ballots with the polls and polling places to be open for not less than eight (8) hours during a normal University work day.
 - v. Fifty-one percent (51%) or majority vote rule of affirmative votes of the total membership are needed to recall an officer or officers. In the event of a tie vote, the incumbent officer whose recall is sought shall remain in office and shall be eligible to stand for re-election as provided herein.

III. Meetings of the Staff Senate

- a. Regularly scheduled Staff Senate meetings are held at least once a month.
- b. Notice of meetings along with agenda items, minutes and financials shall be provided to the membership two (2) University business days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- c. A simple majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of the Senate's business.
- d. Additional meetings of the Staff Senate are called by the Staff Senate President if requested to do so by the President of the University or if requested in writing by at least twenty percent of the voting members of the Staff Senate.
- e. Should the President and Vice President be unavailable to preside at a meeting of the Staff Senate, the Staff Senate Officers appoint, by resolution, one of the Staff Senate Officers present to serve as President Pro Tempore.
- f. In matters not specified in these Bylaws, meetings of the Staff Senate are conducted according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- g. Questions of procedure arising during a meeting of the Staff Senate are decided by the presiding officer after consultation with the Parliamentarian. A ruling of the presiding officer may be overruled by a majority vote of the Staff Senate members present.
- h. Approval of a resolution requires an affirmative vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of the quorum, except for strictly procedural matters which are governed by the current edition of the *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- i. Should a resolution put before the Staff Senate or the Staff Senate Officers result in a tie vote, the motion fails to pass.
- j. Actions contained in resolutions from the Staff Senate Officers do not take precedence over actions of the Staff Senate members. A meeting of the Staff Senate Officers has the power, however, to initiate a referendum of the membership of the Staff Senate. Officers may discuss Staff Senate business, but may not take action without members present.
- k. All procedures for conducting, recording, and reporting on the actions of meetings of the Staff Senate are the responsibility of the Secretary.

IV. The Governance Committee

- a. The Governance Committee secures nominations and conducts all elections for the officers of the Staff Senate.
- b. The Governance Committee consists of at least five members of the Staff Senate who are appointed by the Staff Senate Officers. The Chair of the Governance Committee will be the Parliamentarian of the Staff Senate.
- c. The Governance Committee secures procedures for conducting all elections within the Staff Senate and is charged with conducting all elections and enforcing all election procedures. It is also charged with verifying the results of all elections within the Staff Senate.
- d. The Governance Committee is charged with recommending amendments to the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Staff Senate. It may also be charged with interpreting provisions of the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Staff Senate at the discretion of the Staff Senate President, or by majority vote of the members of the Staff Senate present at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- e. The Governance shall provide activity reports to the Staff Senate Officers and members on an as needed basis.
- f. The term of the Governance Committee starts in September and ends in August, unless specifically continued by the new Staff Senate Officers.

V. The Employee Recognition Committee

- a. The Employee Recognition Committee makes recommendations to the Staff Senate Officers and the Staff Senate at large regarding, but not limited to, rules and procedures on salaries, fringe benefits, leaves, welfare, and other conditions of staff employment.
- b. The Employee Recognition Committee is also charged with proposing, arranging and running, within the year they are appointed, one-time as well as ongoing recreational and employee recognition activities. All activities proposed by this Committee require a majority vote of the Staff Senate members. Other activities such as welfare concerns may be assigned to this Committee by the Staff Senate Officers. These concerns include, but are not limited to, action in the event of continued illness or death of an Administrator or upon the retirement of a member of the Staff Senate.
- c. The Employee Recognition Committee consists of one Staff Senate Officer and at least five members of the Staff Senate who are appointed by the Staff Senate Officers. The Chair of the Employee Recognition Committee is appointed, from among the members of the Committee, by the Staff Senate Officers upon nomination by the Staff Senate President.
- d. The Employee Recognition Committee reports to the Staff Senate members and the Staff Senate Officers. It holds regularly scheduled meetings and also meets when requested to do so by the Staff Senate Officers.
- e. The Employee Recognition Committee shall provide activity reports to the Staff Senate Officers and members on an as needed basis.

- f. The term of office of the Chair and members of the Employee Recognition Committee starts in September and ends in August, unless specifically continued by the new Staff Senate Officers.

VI. Ad Hoc Committees

- a. Ad Hoc Committees are established by the Staff Senate President.
- b. Upon the completion of the task assigned to an Ad Hoc Committee, a written report is presented to the Staff Senate Officers.
- c. Written reports from Ad Hoc Committees which have not completed their assigned tasks are prepared for the August Staff Senate meeting. The incoming Staff Senate Officers has the discretion to extend the term of an Ad Hoc Committee; however, the charge of the Committee must be established.

VII. Effective Date

- a. These Bylaws shall become effective when the Constitution is adopted by the Staff Senate. Revisions to the Bylaws will be made in accordance with Article VI of the Constitution.

Last Revised: July 2009