

# **SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY STAFF SENATE**

## *Constitution and Bylaws*

### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Staff Senate (Senate) of South Carolina State University.

### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Senate is to promote the welfare of the staff. The Senate will examine issues and policies which affect the staff of the University and make appropriate recommendations to the President of the University.

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

All non-academic employees of South Carolina State University are eligible for membership in this organization. Non-academic employees are those who do not hold faculty rank. The body of representatives for the Senate shall consist of voting and non-voting members.

#### Section 1. Representatives – Voting Members

##### A. Eligibility and Qualifications

1. Voting members of the Senate shall consist of eligible staff elected to serve as representatives from the following voting divisions based on a 1:50 ratio:

1890 Research and Extension

Academic Affairs

Athletics

Enrollment Management

External Affairs and Communications

Fiscal Affairs

Institutional Advancement

Office of the President

Operations

Student Affairs

A division shall be entitled to elect one (1) additional representative when the number of members in the division exceeds a multiple of fifty (50) by at least twenty-six (26).

2. Each representative elected from a division based on a 1:50 ratio:
  - a. must be a permanent, full-time employee; and
  - b. must be employed at the University by January 1 of the election year.
3. Each division shall be entitled to elect one (1) non-academic temporary staff employee who shall be employed at the University by January 1 of the election year.

## B. Responsibilities

1. Representatives shall attend all meetings of the Senate.
2. Representatives shall serve on the committees of the Senate.
3. Representatives shall be accessible to constituents, make their campus addresses and phone numbers available to constituents, hear concerns of staff, receive information and suggestions and communicate these to the Senate, and keep constituents informed of Senate activities.
4. Representatives shall be allowed reasonable time per month to devote to Senate business.

## C. Terms of Office

Terms of office for representatives shall commence June 1 following their election.

1. Permanent employees
  - a. Terms of office shall be for two (2) years.
  - b. Representatives can be elected for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. However, if a representative is elected to the Senate to serve an unexpired term, the individual may serve up to one (1) year in that capacity and can be elected to two (2) additional terms
2. Temporary employees
  - a. Terms of office shall be for a two (2) year period of consecutive temporary assignments with no more than a four (4) week break between assignments.
  - b. If a temporary employee representative is elected to the Senate to serve an unexpired term, the individual may serve up to one (1) year in that capacity. (This one year must consist of consecutive temporary assignments with no more than a four (4) week break between assignments.) If a temporary employee representative is elected to serve an unexpired term, the individual can be elected to two (2) additional term

## D. Vacancies

1. A vacancy occurs through termination of employment (or in the case of temporary employee representatives by a four (4) week break between consecutive temporary assignments), by change of voting division, by resignation, or by expulsion from the Senate, and this vacancy shall be filled by an appropriate alternate.
2. The alternate for each division is the next highest vote recipient following the successful candidate in an election.
3. When a vacancy is filled by an alternate, the expiration of the term remains the same.

## E. Removal from Office

1. An elected representative can be removed from office for just cause as determined by the Executive Committee.
2. The Executive Committee shall investigate any matter regarding removal from office on a case-by-case basis and shall recommend action to the Senate.
3. The Senate, by a three-fourth (3/4) majority vote of the total Senate membership, shall be able to remove an elected representative from office.

## Section 2. Representatives – Non-Voting Members

The immediate past president shall serve as a non-voting member of the Senate.

## Section 3. Ex-Officio Members

The President of the University and the Director of the Office of Human Resource Management shall be ex-officio members of the Senate.

## ARTICLE IV – DUES

Membership dues for all staff as determined by the Senate, shall be payable annually on or before July 1. ***Only staff whose dues are current shall be allowed to vote in elections.*** Executive Officers and Staff Senators are

encouraged to pay annual dues. If an Executive Officer or Staff Senator refuses to pay the annual dues, the Staff Senate President has the right to request an alternate from the Vice President of that division.

Dues are collected for the purpose of:

- Providing memorial tributes (card) for the death of a South Carolina State University Staff Senate Member
- Staff Appreciation Recognition
- Staff Spotlight Certificate
- Brochures
- Supplies (paper, certificates, etc.)
- Monthly Workshop & Staff Meeting Materials

Dues are to be paid to the Staff Senate Treasurer.

The Staff Senate Treasurer will keep an accurate record of the dues collected from members. Dues will be deposited by the Treasurer in the official Staff Senate account, and will be administered according to foundation cash handling procedures.

## **ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (OFFICERS)**

Officers of the Senate shall be permanent, full-time non-academic employees who have been employed at the University for one (1) year prior to election to office. Officers shall be allowed reasonable time per month to devote to Senate business.

### **Section 1. Officers and Responsibilities**

- A. President. The President shall be responsible for scheduling and conducting all senate meetings. The President shall serve for one (1) year following the term of office to act in an advisory capacity to the Senate and the Executive Committee. The President is an ex-officio member to all Senate committees.
- B. Vice President. The Vice President shall assist the President and perform duties of the President in his or her absence.
- C. Secretary. The Secretary shall provide necessary secretarial services.
- D. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all financial affairs of the organization.
- E. Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian shall ensure that meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
- F. Historian. The Historian shall prepare and maintain a historical written and pictorial record of the Senate. The record shall be housed in the Senate Special Collections section of the Miller F. Whittaker Library.

## **ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Section 1. Members**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and the chairs of standing committees.

### **Section 2. Meetings**

- A. The Executive Committee shall meet monthly. Additional meetings may be called by the President of the Senate.
- B. The President of the Senate shall preside at Executive Committee meetings.
- C. The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying Executive Committee members of meeting dates and locations.
- D. A majority of the Executive Committee membership shall be present to constitute a quorum.

- E. The President of the Senate or his or her designee shall report the actions of the Executive Committee to the Senate at each regular meeting of the Senate.

### Section 3. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall be to propose the agenda for Senate meetings, consider and refer items to the appropriate committees for review and subsequent recommendation to the Senate, appoint members to standing committees, resolve questions and ensure due process to the Senate election process, and make recommendations to the Senate regarding the removal of Senate members.

### Section 4. Terms of Office

The term of office for a member of the Executive Committee shall be for the representative's term as an officer of the Senate, or as a standing committee Chair.

## **ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS**

### Section 1. Meetings

- A. Regular meetings. Regular meetings shall be held monthly during the University's fiscal year. The specific date and time shall be decided by the Senate at its first meeting.
- B. Special meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President and/or the Executive Committee, or upon petition of twenty (20) percent of the membership of the Senate.
1. An advance notice of ten (10) working days shall be given except in case of emergency.
  2. The agenda shall be limited only to the specific items for which the special meeting was called.
- C. Open meetings. All meetings of the Senate and its committees shall be open to all staff except when items are considered in executive session.

### Section 2. Attendance Policy

- A. Senate members shall be responsible for attending monthly meetings as well as special or called meetings except for the following reasons which will constitute excused absences:
- Annual leave
  - Sick leave
  - Official University business other than normal job duties that requires the Senator's attendance at the time of the regularly scheduled Senate meeting.
- B. In the cases of annual leave and official business, the Senator shall provide advance notice to the Senate Secretary. In the case of sick leave, the Senator shall notify the Senate Secretary upon the first day of returning to work.
- C. After a Senator has two unexcused absences, the Executive Committee shall contact the Senator for an explanation for missed meetings. An opportunity to resign from the Senate will be given if the Senator feels he or she will not be able to comply with the attendance policy.
- D. A Senator who has four (4) absences during a twelve (12) month period beginning with the month of July and ending with the following June shall be subject to removal by the Staff Senate upon recommendation by the Executive Committee. Removal shall occur when passed by a simple majority of the quorum.
- a. The Executive Committee shall contact the Senator in good faith at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting at which a removal vote will be taken. Prior to the removal vote, the Executive Committee shall inform the Senate of any reasons given by the Senator for lack of attendance.
- E. Each vote for removal shall be taken individually for each Senator recommended for removal, with no more than one Senator being removed by any one vote of the Senate.

F. Any Senator removed from office for lack of attendance shall not be placed on any election ballot for Staff Senator for a period of two (2) years after being removed.

### Section 3. Code of Conduct

- A. Each Senate member shall make him/herself known to his/her constituents. He/she shall be willing to hear concerns, to receive information and suggestions, and to communicate these effectively to the Senate. Senators shall also keep his/her constituents informed of the work of the Senate.
- B. Senators shall work actively toward the goal of improving the current and future needs and working conditions of the University's Staff members. Senate members shall protect and promote the interests of their constituents and the University even when these conflict with the Senator's own interests.
- C. Senate members shall keep private, non-University interest separate from their University activities to avoid conflicts of interest.
- D. Senate members shall keep informed of current University policies, procedures, and expectations affecting the interest of the Staff and function of the University.
- E. Senate members shall strive to demonstrate competence, fairness, integrity, and conscientious behavior as they conduct Senate Business within the University community.
- F. Senate members are free to express personal opinions to constituents and other members of the University community; however, they must clearly state that these opinions are their own and differentiate them from Senate positions and actions when differences exist. Senate members shall not misrepresent any Senate action, position, or decision to the University community.

### Section 4. Agenda

An agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting shall be sent to all representatives at least ten (10) working days prior to the meeting.

- A. The agenda shall include the time and place of the meeting, the order of business, and copies of any proposals.
- B. The items to be discussed before the Senate shall be submitted in writing and forwarded to the Secretary fifteen (15) working days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting.
  - 1. Any committee of the Senate, member of the Senate, non-academic employee, the Senate President or designee, or the President of the University may submit in writing items to be included in the agenda.
  - 2. The Executive Committee may choose to refer proposals for Senate action to the appropriate committee for review prior to placing the issue(s) on the agenda.

### Section 5. Order of Business

The order of business for meetings will be set forth in the agenda and may be amended by an action approved in the meeting. The order of business shall be:

Call to order

Invocation

Roll Call of Executive Officers

Roll Call of Senators

Adoption of Agenda

Special order of the day (if any)

Approval of minutes

Committee Reports

Standing Committees

Ad Hoc Committees

Report from the President or designee

Old Business

## New Business Adjournment

### Section 6. Quorum Required

Senate committee business shall be conducted when there is a quorum of voting members present. A majority of the Senate membership shall be present to constitute a quorum.

### Section 7. Voting Privileges

Only elected senators present may vote. Action by the Senate shall be by voice vote unless the President deems the vote too close to determine a majority. In this case, the vote shall be determined by a show of hands or written ballot. Election of officers shall require written ballots.

### Section 8. Floor Privileges

Proposals, measures, and resolutions may be introduced on the Senate floor by voting and non-voting members of the Senate.

- A. If objections are raised, the floor privilege may only be granted by a majority vote of the Senate.
- B. Non-voting members may be granted floor privileges, but may not vote on matters before the Senate.

### Section 9. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings will be open to inspection. The minutes shall be made available to all University employees in the Senate Special Collections section of the Miller F. Whittaker Library.

### Section 10. Visitors

Visitors are welcome at all meetings except when items are considered in executive session.

## **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**

### Section 1. Standing Committees

Standing committees shall consist of the Benefits and Compensation Committee, Communication Committee, Election Committee, Hospitality Committee, Staff Development Committee, and Membership Committee.

The standing committees will accept business assigned to them by the Executive Committee and act on item(s) in a responsible and timely manner. The committees will maintain and provide the Senate with a written report of each committee meeting. Additionally, each committee will prepare and submit to the Senate an annual report which includes all items placed on the committee's agenda and the disposition of each.

#### A. Membership

Each standing committee shall consist of a minimum of five (5) members. Members of the committee, except for the Executive Committee, may be drawn from the Senate or from the University's non-academic employees. No more than two (2) non-Senate members may serve on a standing committee. Members of the committee shall be selected by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee.

1. Chair. The Chair of a standing committee shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and must be a member of the Senate.

2. Secretary. The committee will select a Secretary from among its members.
- B. Meetings
- Standings committees will meet monthly. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair of the standing committee upon notification to the President of the Senate.
- C. Responsibilities
- The standing committees shall keep written minutes, address agenda items as assigned, make recommendations to the Executive Committee, and maintain a file of all official documents.
1. Benefits and Compensation Committee. The Committee shall review staff members' concerns regarding benefits, compensation, and other related areas.
  2. Communication Committee. The Committee shall plan and coordinate activities for University employees to apprise them of Senate activities, serve as the public relations committee to the Senate, and work with the Public Relations office to publicize activities of the Senate.
  3. Election Committee. The Committee shall coordinate all regular and special filing and election processes for the Senate.
  4. Hospitality Committee. The Committee shall plan and coordinate benevolent, entertainment, and social activities for University staff.
  5. Staff Development Committee. The Committee shall review and recommend ways for staff to benefit from internal and external training programs at the University.
  6. Membership Committee. The Committee shall plan and coordinate membership drives for prospective members, greet and introduce new members and prospective members at Staff Senate meetings.

## Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees of the Senate shall be appointed by the President and/or the Executive Committee as needed. The committees may consist of Senate members and the University's non-academic employees. Ad hoc committees will act on issues in a responsible and timely manner, make progress reports to the Senate, and submit a written, final report.

## **ARTICLE IX – ELECTION PROCESS**

The filing and election process shall be managed by the Election Committee. Candidates shall file for no more than one (1) officer position or division representative in the same election. The election shall be held no later than the first Tuesday in May during an election year.

### Section 1. Filing Procedures

- A. The Election Committee shall provide all non-academic employees notification of the filing period and the necessary form to file for an office and/or division representative by February 15.
- B. The filing period for an office shall commence the first Monday in March and run no longer than five (5) working days.
- C. The Office of Human Resource Management shall provide the Election Committee with a list and labels of all non-academic employees in each division.
- D. Non-academic employees filing for an executive office must be permanent, full-time employees who have completed one (1) year of continuous service at the University by the beginning of the filing period.
- E. Non-academic employees employed by January 1 of the election year shall be eligible to file for a division representative.
- F. After the closing date for the filing period, the Election Committee shall determine eligibility and notify all potential candidates of their filing status within five (5) working days.

- G. The Election Committee shall publish and e-mail to all non-academic employees a list of eligible candidates for executive offices and division representatives.

## Section 2. Election Procedures

- A. The Election Committee shall determine the campaign period. This period shall not exceed five (5) working days.
- B. The Election Committee shall prepare separate election ballots for the executive offices and division representatives.
- C. Campaigning shall end the day before election. All campaign materials must be taken down and removed. Campaigning includes but is not limited to: email, text messages, fliers, and/or posters.
- D. Voting shall be via electronic voting between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm.
- E. Non-academic employees, who have been employed at the University by January 1 and ***whose dues are current, are eligible to vote.***
  - 1. The Office of Human Resource Management shall verify employees' official dates of hire.
  - 2. The Senate Treasurer shall verify current dues status.
- F. Eligible non-academic employees may vote for all executive offices and representatives for their respective divisions.
- G. There shall be two ballots for voting, one for the executive offices and one for division representatives. No proxy voting is allowed.
- H. The Election Committee shall announce, at least three (3) weeks before the election, the time and place for absentee voting. Absentee voting shall be allowed only for verifiable extenuating circumstances as certified by the Election Committee. The absentee ballot request must be received by the Election Committee within five (5) working days after the announcement of the election date. Absentee ballots must be received by the Election Committee by the close of the polls on election day.
- I. If no one files for an executive office or if no one files for the position of division representative, the write-in candidate with the highest number of votes shall fill the vacancy. If write-in declines, the Staff Senate President has the right to request an alternate from the Vice President of that division.
- J. When the polls close, the Election Committee shall immediately tabulate the votes. A majority of the Election Committee shall be present when the votes are counted.
- K. A simple majority of the votes cast shall determine the elected officers and division representatives. If a tie occurs among the top vote recipients, the Election Committee shall conduct a runoff election within two (2) weeks of the election for the executive office and/or division representative.
- L. An alternate representative, as defined in Article III, Section I, D2, shall be identified for each division.
- M. The Election Committee shall notify the President of the Senate of the election results. The President of the Senate shall notify the President of the University, newly elected officers, and the division representatives in writing within three (3) working days.
  - 1. A recount will occur within a forty-eight (48) hour period after the polls close when the difference between the vote totals of the top two (2) candidates is less than or equal to two (2) percent of the total votes cast.
  - 2. Whenever a reasonable belief of impropriety exists, any candidate may make a written request to the Election Committee for a recount of votes within a forty-eight (48) hour period after the election. The Election Committee shall consider the request.
  - 3. The Election Committee shall notify the candidates of the specific date and time for the recount.
  - 4. The Election Committee will certify election votes after the recount period has expired.
- N. The President of the University shall announce the results of the election.

## Section 3. Records

All records pertaining to the filing and election process shall be stored either in the office of the Secretary of the Senate or the Senate office until after the next election.



#### Section 4. Unexpired Terms

In the event the President is unable to complete the elected term of office, the Vice President shall assume the vacant office for the length of the unexpired term. In the event the office of Vice President becomes vacant, a special election shall be held to elect a Vice President from the University's non-academic employees to fill the vacant office for the remainder of the term.

In the event the office of Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, or Historian becomes vacant, a special election shall be held from the University's non-academic employees to fill the vacant office for the remainder of the term.

#### **ARTICLE X – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Senate and its committees in all cases to which they are applicable.

#### **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

The Senate shall make any amendments it deems necessary to facilitate the transaction of its business as long as such amendments are consistent with this Constitution and Bylaws and are consistent with University Policies and Procedures.

- A. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws may be proposed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Senate, or by a petition of ten (10) members of the Senate subject to a favorable vote by two-thirds (2/3) of the Senate.

#### Section 2. Ratification

- A. Ratification procedure is as follows:
  1. Within fourteen (14) days of the date of Senate approval, copies of the proposed amendment(s) must be distributed to eligible staff together with a ballot.
  2. Within seven (7) days, the ballot must be returned to the secretary of the Senate.
  3. With a three-fourths (3/4) majority of eligible staff voting, amendments shall take immediate effect.

This Constitution and Bylaws was approved September 8, 2014 by Thomas J. Elzey, Eleventh President of South Carolina State University.