

Staff Senate Charter and Bylaws

Purpose:

The Wright State University Staff Senate serves as the official representative body of the Wright State staff community, including classified and unclassified, creating a unified voice to address matters of university governance. The Staff Senate will also serve as a means by which to increase staff engagement, to embolden student success efforts, and to empower professional and personal growth.

Mission Statement:

To provide meaningful representation and service, in the best interest of all staff members, to increase staff engagement in university governance and student success measures.

Overview:

The Wright State University Staff Senate will serve as the official representative body of the Wright State staff community. The staff senate represents the interests of staff, fosters a spirit of unity and cooperation among the campus community, and provides staff representation parallel to those of the faculty and student governing bodies.

In addition, the Staff Senate:

- Conveys information and makes recommendations to the university leadership regarding interests and concerns of the staff.
- Fosters a spirit of a unified community by encouraging the exchange of ideas and concerns in keeping with the mission of the university.
- Provides opportunities to engage the staff in areas of professional and personal growth.
- Empowers staff to make decisions and affect change to better our collective student success initiatives.
- Endeavors to keep the staff informed regarding university issues and activities.
- Promotes the effective contribution of staff expertise toward university goals and objectives for the benefit of the entire university community.
- Is represented on university committees as deemed appropriate by the university leadership.

The Staff Senate will be comprised of 20 elected senators—10 classified and 10 unclassified staff members—serving three-year terms. If either classification is unable to fill their allotted positions, senators will be filled from the next highest vote earners from the election pool. The Executive Committee will be composed of the chair, chair-elect, secretary, treasurer, and parliamentarian. Executive Committee members will be selected annually from the elected staff senators. Executive Committee members may run for a second term, but may only serve two consecutive terms. Staff senators will serve on Staff Senate standing committees and participate in university governance by providing advisement on university policies and procedures.

Article I - Name

The full name of this organization is the Wright State University Staff Senate, hereinafter referred to as the "senate."

Article II - Responsibilities and Functions

The senate will serve as the official representative body of the Wright State staff community. The senate represents the interests of staff, fosters a spirit of unity and cooperation among the campus community, and provides staff representation parallel to those of the faculty and student governing bodies.

Wherever used in these bylaws, the term "employee," "staff," or "staff employee" shall mean a Wright State staff employee in a full-time, part-time, or time-limited position.

The senate will:

- Study staff concerns and create a forum for the exchange of ideas and concerns, which specifically relate to staff and the university mission.
- Formulate and recommend to the president's leadership university-wide policies and procedures related to staff.
- Develop a systematic means for communicating to all staff the existing university policies, specific actions, and feedback concerning all matters considered by the senate.

Article III - Membership

Section 3.1 Representation

The senate is composed of voting members chosen and appointed using the following criteria:

- a. Representation will be based on the total number of employees on campus. At the onset, there will be 20 elected senators, comprised of 10 classified and 10 unclassified staff. The number of senators will change as appropriate when compared against staffing levels and may increase, or decrease, by even numbers.
- b. The incumbent may run for re-election if eligible under Section 3.3.a.
- c. All nominees must be employees in good standing with the university.

Section 3.2 Elections

- a. Elections shall be held in May of each year for the senator positions whose terms will be expiring, and for any vacant senator positions. The terms of office shall begin with the July meeting of the senate, and will conclude with the June meeting. Each year the membership committee will notify those voting, call for nominations, prepare ballots, and handle the election. The details of the elections shall be contained in a separate document, *Election Procedures*, to be reviewed and updated as appropriate by the membership committee with final approval by the senate.

1. Any prior or currently retiring senator who was not re-elected can be appointed to a term of one-to-three years with an at-large designation (full voting rights) as a special appointment by the Executive Committee for any vacant positions.
 2. In the event of any special circumstances that arise with the specially appointed at-large appointments, the Executive Committee reserves the right to discuss and vote to finalize a decision to fill all staff senate seats as needed.
- b. A letter from the senate will be sent to new senators informing them of their election to the senate and inviting them to attend the first meeting of their term. At the annual new senator orientation, copies of the roster and the bylaws will be made available.

Section 3.3 Terms

- a. Senators shall serve a three-year term beginning at the July meeting of the senate. A maximum of two consecutive terms (six years) may be served. After two consecutive terms, a one-year interval is necessary before being eligible to serve again.

Section 3.4 Absences

- a. If during a term year (July–June), a senator accumulates a combined total of seven absences from regularly scheduled monthly meetings and/or regularly scheduled committee meetings, the senator may be dismissed from the senate. If a senator realizes that their schedule, or any other reason (with the exception of an approved FMLA), will not allow them to adhere to this policy, it is strongly recommended that their resignation letter be submitted to the senate chair before a dismissal action is deemed necessary by the senate Executive Committee.
- b. If, upon the recommendation of the membership committee, it is determined by the executive committee that a dismissal action should be initiated, then a notification letter from the staff senate chair will be sent to the senator informing them of the committee's recommendation.
- c. Any current senator who receives a dismissal notification letter has 10 university business days upon receipt of notice to respond to the letter explaining why they have exceeded the allotted absences.
- d. If a letter of appeal is received, a special executive committee session will be called to determine the senator's standing. No more than 10 university business days from the appeal receipt will pass before a response will be given to the appealing member.
- e. If the appeal is denied by the executive committee, a formal letter of dismissal will be sent to the senator and their supervisor informing them of the senator's status and the committee's action.
- f. If after the 10 university business days of allowable time to appeal has passed and no appeal is received, a formal letter of dismissal will be sent to the senator and their supervisor informing them of the senator's status and the committee's action.

Section 3.5 Vacancies

- a. Vacancies occur due to resignation from the senate, dismissal by the executive committee, or termination of employment. Vacancies may be filled by the person who received the next highest number of votes in the previous regular election or by appointment of the executive

committee. When a vacancy is filled, the expiration of the term remains the same. For purposes of re-election, a new member who serves more than 30 months shall be considered to have served one term.

Section 3.6 Non-voting Members

- a. The senate will include as a non-voting member a designee appointed by the president.

Article IV - Officers

Officers are elected by the senate and serve for a period of one year. The exception to this is that the chair-elect will become the chair after serving the first one-year term. The retiring officers shall serve through the end of the June meeting and the new officers shall take office immediately following the July meeting. A good faith effort shall be made to ensure the Executive Committee will be comprised of both unclassified and classified staff.

Section 4.1 Duties

- a. Chair—Shall be responsible for scheduling and conducting all senate meetings and shall serve as a member of other university-wide committees as directed by the president of the university for the one-year term. The chair has the right to appoint current members as their representative to sit on any committee as approved by the Executive Committee. The senate chair will select a current senator to chair the governance and membership committee, communications and staff recognition committee, policy and welfare committee, scholarship committee, social and community engagement committee, and any ad hoc committees. The senate chair's selections for committee chairs shall be presented to the Executive Committee for confirmation. If the committee chair is unable to fulfill their responsibilities, the senate chair may select a replacement. The chair will become a non-voting advising member for the following year.
- b. Chair-elect—Shall assist the senate chair and perform the duties of the chair in their absence. This position will become senate chair the following year. See *Election Procedures* document.
- c. Secretary—Shall work with the Executive Committee to provide necessary record keeping, including keeping minutes, maintaining records, and distributing information. Shall ensure that mailings are sent to the membership before each regularly scheduled meeting. The secretary shall ensure that meetings are conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* in the absence of a parliamentarian.
- d. Treasurer—Shall be responsible for disbursing funds, preparing annual financial report and budget, and all other financial affairs of the organization.
- e. Parliamentarian—Shall ensure that meetings are conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* and shall ensure adherence to the bylaws. Shall review any changes or additions pertaining to the bylaws. This position carries a two-year term and allows for consecutive terms to be served if they choose to accept multiple nominations. The parliamentarian will serve as the chair of the governance and membership committee.

Section 4.2 Election Procedures

- a. The governance and membership committee will conduct officer elections.
- b. At the February meeting, an announcement will be made by the sitting senate chair that nominations will be accepted at the March and April meetings.
- c. Candidates are eligible to be nominated for one office only.
- d. At the March and April meetings, nominations will be accepted from the members for each office. Only current senators will be eligible for nomination to any office. Nominations are not valid until the senator accepts the nomination and has received approval from their supervisor to serve.
- e. The deadline to submit nominations is the April meeting. Candidates will have the option to give a brief speech to the senate at the April meeting in support of their candidacy.
- f. Elections will take place either by online voting prior to or by paper ballot at the May meeting. Only currently serving, vote-eligible senators may vote.
- g. If the term of the chair-elect expires, he/she may remain on the senate for a fourth year to serve as chair.

Section 4.3 Vacancies

- a. An officer can be removed from service by a simple majority vote by the senate. If the chair is removed, Section 3.4.b–f applies. All officers have the right to appeal in writing to the executive committee within 10 university business days of the senate vote.
- b. If an office other than the chair is vacated, nominations of current members to replace the officer will be accepted at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The senate will then hold an election by majority vote to select a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term of office.
- c. If the chair is vacated for any reason, the vacancy will be filled by the chair-elect. After the replacement term, the chair-elect of the senate will assume the role of chair for the remainder of the term, in addition to their elected term.

Article V - Executive Committee

Section 5.1 Membership

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the chair, chair-elect, secretary, treasurer, and the parliamentarian of the senate. While the monthly senate meeting is open, executive sessions may be called to conduct confidential business.

Section 5.2 Responsibilities

- a. The committee's purpose shall be to propose the annual agenda and to consider and possibly refer items, including items submitted by staff, to the appropriate committees for their review and subsequent recommendation to the senate. The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the senate between meetings, make recommendations to the senate, and perform other duties as specified in these bylaws. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the senate, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the senate. Appointment to standing committees and university committees will be required for elected Executive Committee members.

Article VI - Committees

Section 6.1 Standing Committees

All senators will serve on one or more standing committees. Senators may rank their top three committee preferences. The Executive Committee will make final committee assignments. Once committee chairs are selected (no later than the Executive Committee meeting in June), committee meeting dates/times will be established and provided to the senators. Chairs will also have the ability to call electronic meetings in place of in-person meetings. Chairs will have the ability to fill committees with current and former senators, as well as staff volunteers.

1. Governance and membership committee

- a. The purpose of the governance and membership committee is to establish guidelines for how the senate will function and elect new senators.
 - i. Governance—Responsible for the following initiatives:
 1. Evaluate the bylaws annually and ensure updates are done in a timely manner
 2. Ensure that appropriate procedures are being applied to all functions of the senate
 - ii. Membership—Responsible for the following initiatives:
 1. Strive to produce equal representation in each classification of staff
 2. Conduct all senate representative and officer elections
 3. Implement new member orientation and evaluate excessive absences

2. Communications committee

- a. The purpose of the communications committee is to develop and maintain a systematic means for communicating to all staff employees. In addition, this committee will be responsible for serving as the liaison to the staff appreciation night planning and athletics council.
 - i. Communications—Responsible for the oversight of the following initiatives:
 1. Promote communication to staff utilizing the website, newsletters, listservs, and other appropriate means of communication.
 2. Act as liaison to the offices of marketing and communication to market/communicate initiatives
 3. Partner with human resources to communicate issues that relate to staff (e.g., policy revisions, benefits etc.)
 4. Works with membership committee to communicate to staff opportunities for service

3. Policy and welfare committee

- a. The purpose of the policy and welfare committee is to consider the development of job and supervisory skills, compensation, benefits, and welfare of staff employees, not to exclude other areas of concern that are brought to the senate's attention. The committee will

formulate and recommend university-wide policies and procedures related to employees. In addition, this committee will be responsible for serving as the liaison for the staff morale initiatives and the OSCE, dining services, and parking and transportation committees.

- i. Staff affairs—Responsible for the oversight of the following initiatives:
 1. Identify work/life matters, identify concerns from staff, and work with the administration to correct
 2. Examine wages, benefits, retirement, and legislative concerns
 3. Advocate on behalf of staff for anything related to these areas
 4. Work in collaboration with communication committee to conduct periodic issue-specific surveys to identify areas of current and ongoing concern to staff, and communicate the findings to the senate
- ii. Staff development—Responsible for oversight of the following initiatives:
 1. Promote staff development across campus by assessing existing opportunities and assuring needs are met
 2. Coordinate with campus partners to facilitate development opportunities.
 3. Identify staff service and volunteer opportunities
- iii. Staff retention and morale—In partnership with the social and community engagement committee, responsible for the oversight of the following initiatives:
 1. Coordinate awards and/or other recognition to highlight the day-to-day contributions of staff
 2. Coordinate with communications to develop story ideas that recognize staff on a monthly basis
 3. Advocate for and help coordinate staff recognition events

4. Scholarship committee

- a. The purpose of the scholarship committee is to serve as the fundraising arm of the senate. The money raised is used to support the scholarships awarded to staff and the selection of recipients of hardship funds. The committee will set yearly goals for its fundraising campaigns and seek new and creative methods to enhance these efforts and to build the funds for future expansion of these programs.

5. Social and community engagement committee

- a. The purpose of the social and community engagement committee is to coordinate the social and community-building activities of the senate. The committee may be asked to organize other events as appropriate. In addition, this committee will be responsible for serving as the liaison for the wellness/recreation and bookstore committees.
 - i. Social events and community building—Responsible for the oversight of the following initiatives:
 1. Promote spirit and unity across campus
 2. Coordinate any projects that come out of staff surveys, e.g., campus beautification, happy hours, potluck, and concert series
 3. Partner with staff development to offer lunch and learns

4. Develop initiatives such as Wright State First Impressions; hand out maps, water, answer questions, etc. during Welcome Weeks; and other community-building activities

Section 6.2 Ad Hoc Committees

- a. Ad hoc committees shall be created and disbanded as deemed necessary by the senate chair. Staffing of these committees may include current and former senate members, however election to the senate is not a prerequisite to serve on an ad hoc committee or taskforce. These groups may be chaired by any staff member in good standing with the university.

Section 6.3 University Committees/Councils

- a. The senate chair shall appoint a member of the senate or an employee from the staff to represent the senate on university committees/councils when necessary, considering the expertise of the member and their area of representation. Outgoing members will be asked if they wish to remain part of a communications and resource network. Those wishing to participate will be considered as a potential resource for service on committees. If the appointee is unable to attend meetings and provide activity reports to the senate, the chair may choose a replacement.

Section 6.4 Committee Responsibilities

- a. Each committee should prepare a brief verbal report for presentation at the full senate meeting.
- b. Maintain committee records containing summary reports, current assignments and letters, completed assignments and letters, members' attendance at meetings, and a list of committee members.
- c. Work on agenda items as assigned.
- d. Make recommendations to the senate. Any material to be included in the senate agenda will be sent to the secretary, chair, and chair-elect, seven calendar days before the scheduled meeting, unless the committee meeting is within that timeframe, then communication will be made as soon as possible.
- e. Hold a transition meeting with incoming and outgoing committee members prior to the June meeting.

Article VII - Parliamentary Authority

- a. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the senate may adopt.

Article VIII - Amendment of Bylaws

- a. These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the senate by a 2/3 vote of the attending senate members, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting and approved by the Executive Committee.

Standing Rules

Section 1. Meetings

- a. Senate meetings
 1. Meeting schedule—The senate shall meet on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. Visitors are welcome at all meetings.
 2. Agenda—The secretary shall include on the agenda any item of business submitted in writing to the chair at least seven working days before the regularly scheduled meeting. Items sent should indicate expected amount of time needed to present and discuss.
 - a. Approval of minutes
 - b. Special guest (if any)
 - c. Chair's report
 - d. Treasurer's report
 - e. Committee reports
 - i. Standing committees
 - ii. Ad hoc committees
 - iii. University committees/councils
 - f. Unfinished business
 - g. New business
 - h. Open commentary (limited to five minutes in total or per person?)
 - i. Announcements
 - j. Adjournments
- b. Closed session—The chair may call a closed session to discuss items concerning sensitive or confidential information. Closed sessions will be held in accordance with Ohio public meeting laws.
- c. Executive Committee planning meetings
 1. Regular meetings of the executive committee shall be held on the first Thursday of each month to create agendas, review minutes, and discuss upcoming speakers or presenters.

Section 2. Operational Guidelines for Introduction of New or Revised Policy

- a. Introduction of policy—Any senator may submit a proposal for a new or revised policy by way of a motion to the floor during the discussion of new business agenda items. Once a motion is made and approved by the senate, the chair will then assign the issue to the proper standing committee or establish an ad hoc committee if appropriate.

- b. Communications—The committee chair will examine the proposal brought forth by the senator who introduced the proposal. The committee chair will bring any research or information to the executive committee and the committee chair will continue to keep the senator apprised of any outcomes.
 - 1. Policy revision—The committee chair will provide copies of both the current policy and the proposed policy to each member of the senate one month in advance of the vote.
 - 2. New policy—The committee chair will provide copies of the proposed policy to all members of the senate one month in advance of the vote.
- c. Forwarding the policy—If the senate approves the new or revised policy, the proposed policy and a supporting resolution shall be forwarded to the president’s designee for introduction to the administrative leadership team. A copy of the resolution will also be forwarded to the president of the university. The president’s designee will provide written notification of the decision of the administrative leadership team to the chair of the senate in an expeditious manner.