

# Recommended Staff Senate Bylaws

## I. Preamble.

The University of North Texas (UNT) Staff Senate is created by the authority of the University President and reports directly to the president or president's designee(s). The Staff Senate represents the collective body of UNT staff members and promotes its general welfare as it relates to the university.

As a representative shared governance organization, the Staff Senate serves as an advisory body to the president and president's cabinet about university policies, procedures and long-range plans pertinent to Staff Senate. It serves as a conduit of information to and from the president and President's Cabinet about matters affecting staff as a whole and matters related to the performance of their work in support of institutional goals. It appoints or recommends Staff Senate representatives to university committees.

Staff Senate is a forum for members to communicate with one another on matters of mutual interest or concern. It endeavors to communicate with constituents about issues, policies and activities affecting them.

The Staff Senate does not serve as a substitute for the formal grievance procedures of the university. It does not engage in specific individual or group employee/employer disputes or grievances and does not serve as a bargaining entity.

## II. Mission.

It shall be the mission of the Staff Senate:

- to serve as a vehicle to share staff issues and concerns with the administration;
- to improve engagement with the universities constituencies and administrators;
- to foster communication within the campus community; and
- to advance the university's mission.

## III. Composition of Staff Senate.

### a. Eligibility and Membership.

- i. Membership of the Staff Senate shall consist of full or part time benefits-eligible staff employed by UNT for a minimum of one (1) year.
- ii. The number of senators shall be proportional to the number of total staff per each administrative unit.
  1. One senator for the first 50 staff employees (or portion thereof), one for the second 50 (or portion thereof), and then one for every 100 (or portion thereof).

### b. Voting and Non-Voting Members.

- i. Voting Senators shall consist of staff members elected to the Staff Senate.
- ii. Non-voting members shall consist of:
  1. The current chair, unless the vote is needed as a tie breaker.
  2. Ex-officio members of the Staff Senate.
  3. Guests of the Staff Senate.

### c. Staff Senate Officers.

- i. The Officers and Executive Committee shall consist of a chair, chair-elect, parliamentarian, secretary/treasurer, communications coordinator, the past chair (ex-officio), and a representative from Human Resources (HR), ex-officio.
  1. The chair-elect shall assume the role of chair in the next election year.

d. Terms of Office.

- i. Senators serve a staggered two-year term.
  1. One-half of the Staff Senate is up for election each year.
  2. Each senator serves two (2) consecutive terms.
- ii. At the completion of the senator's second term, the senator shall be required to take a one-year absence from the senate before becoming eligible to seek reelection.
  1. Officers serve a standard one-year term.
  2. Officers may serve two (2) consecutive terms by election of the voting membership.
  3. The chair-elect will serve a 3-year term:
    - a. The first year as the chair elect;
    - b. The second year as the chair;
    - c. And the third year as the past chair, not a voting member.

e. Vacancies.

- i. Vacancies within the Staff Senate shall be filled from those staff members nominated by the administrative unit, but not elected during the last election, in order of highest number of votes received.
- ii. Any officer vacancy may be filled at the regular meeting, at which a quorum is present, following the announcement of the vacancy.

f. Elections.

- i. The Bylaws and Elections Committee will assist each administrative unit with the nomination and election process.
- ii. The Bylaws and Elections Committee Chair shall conduct the business of nominations and elections of Staff Senate officers annually during the month of August.

g. Operating Budget.

- i. The university shall establish an operating budget sufficient to fulfill the mission of the Staff Senate, as approved by the president or president's designee(s).
- ii. The chair of the Staff Senate will be responsible for approving all Staff Senate expenditures, working with the account holder assigned by the president.

**IV. Staff Senate Expectations.**

a. Attendance.

- i. Excessive absences (defined as 3 or more) of any type may subject a senator to removal. Refer to vacancies, Staff Senate Procedures [insert link].

b. Meetings.

- i. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate shall be held every month, September through August.
- ii. The Staff Senate may request to go into closed session by a majority vote of Senators in attendance. Guests are not present during executive sessions.
- iii. Special meetings of the Staff Senate may be called by a majority of the senators on the Executive Committee.
- iv. The Executive Committee may request to go into closed session by a majority vote of the Executive Committee in attendance. Guests are not present during executive sessions.

c. Quorum.

- i. The Staff Senate shall not transact official business without the presence of a quorum. A quorum shall exist when a simple majority of the voting senators is present. A simple majority requires 50 percent of all senators plus one.

- d. Parliamentary Authority.
  - i. All proceedings and deliberations of the Staff Senate and its respective committees will function under *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (most current: 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, released 09/27/2011).*

**V. Staff Senate Committees.**

- a. The Executive Committee shall:
  - i. Reserve the right to consider all matters brought before the Staff Senate and may take official action on matters that do not require the Staff Senate's vote or consent.
  - ii. Exercise general oversight of the Staff Senate and its committees and may refer matters to committees when necessary.
  
- b. The Bylaws and Elections Committee shall:
  - i. Research and present bylaw changes, as needed.
  - ii. Assist each administrative unit with the elections process.
  - iii. Manage the Staff Senate officer election process.
  
- c. The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall:
  - i. Exercise responsibility for event and program planning.
  - ii. Work collaboratively with HR for staff events.
  - iii. Use the university's key communication vehicles, including the web and social media, to inform staff members about issues, developments, and events.
  
- d. The Staff Development Committee shall:
  - i. Identify professional development opportunities for staff.
  - ii. Execute learning and training activities, as needed.
  
- e. The Policy and Benefits Committee shall:
  - i. Identify and research Human Resource issues and concerns brought to its attention.
  
- f. The Ad Hoc and University Committees:
  - i. Staff senators shall be represented on university committees that affect UNT staff.
  - ii. Ad hoc committees may be established to review a specific issue at any regular meeting of the Staff Senate upon a simple majority vote of the members present.

**VI. Adoption of Bylaws.**

- a. Any Senator wishing to amend the bylaws should submit the proposed amendments in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration.
  
- b. Adoption of the proposed changes shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a scheduled monthly meeting.
  
- c. Any amendments to the bylaws recommended by the Staff Senate shall be submitted to the university president, or designee(s), for approval.