

Staff Senate Bylaws and Procedures

I. Preamble

- a. 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 professional UNT staff members and promotes its general welfare as it relates to the university.
- b. As a representative shared governance organization, the Staff Senate serves as an advisory body to the president and president's cabinet and 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, upon request.
- c. 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. Staff Senate is primarily a body focusing on advocacy for its constituents, both in partnership with institutional leadership and as a body acting on its own accord.
- d. 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/employer disputes or grievances and does not serve as a bargaining entity.

II. Mission

- a. The official motto for the Staff Senate is: "Your Voice, Our Mission."
- b. It shall be the given mission of the Staff Senate:
 - i. to serve as a vehicle to share staff issues and concerns with the administration;
 - ii. to improve engagement with the university's constituencies and administrators;
 - iii. to foster communication within the campus community; and
 - iv. to advance the university's mission

III. Operating Procedures

- a. The following procedures outline the classification, details, processes, and best practices for operating with the Staff Senate at the University of North Texas.

- b. The Membership and Assessment Committee (formerly known as the Bylaws and Elections Committee) will conduct an annual review of the Bylaws and Procedures by the middle of the fall semester each year and provide a report to the Senate General Body about any adjustments in procedure that may be required at that time. Amendments can be proposed at any time throughout the year.
- c. This document is subject to change with a simple majority vote of senators.

IV. The Composition of the Staff Senate: Membership Allocation and Eligibility

- a. Staff Senate size is based on the total number of professional staff members within each administrative unit.
 - i. Units are as follows:
 - 1. Academic Affairs,
 - 2. Advancement,
 - 3. Athletics,
 - 4. Digital Strategy and Innovation,
 - 5. Enrollment Management,
 - 6. Finance and Administration,
 - 7. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA)
 - 8. Research and Innovation,
 - 9. Student Affairs,
 - 10. University Brand Strategy and Communications (UBSC),
and
 - 11. Joint seat for the Office of the President, the Division of Planning, and the Office of Compliance and Ethics.
- b. Eligibility and Membership
 - i. Membership of the Staff Senate shall consist of full or part time benefits-eligible staff employees at UNT for a minimum of one (1) year prior the start of their term.
 - 1. The executive committee can make exceptions for units that do not have a candidate that fulfill the one (1) year requirement as long as the nominee has been employed for at least six (6) months at UNT – preference will be given to candidates that have been employed for eight to ten (8-10) months.
 - ii. Eligible individuals shall seek permission from their immediate supervisor to serve on the Staff Senate.
 - iii. The number of senators shall be proportional to the number of total staff per each administrative unit.

- iv. 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).
- c. Staff count of the administrative units shall be reviewed annually in the first quarter of the calendar year to guarantee each unit is represented by the correct number of senators.
 - i. HR shall supply the list of employees within each administrative unit.
 - ii. Should the number of seats allocated to a unit for the next term decrease below the current number of senators for that unit and no senator is up for re-election, no senator will be required to step down.
- d. The following employee positions are excluded from serving as a Staff Senator:
 - i. President,
 - ii. Provost,
 - iii. Vice President/Associate Vice President/Assistant Vice President
 - iv. Dean/Associate Dean/Assistant Dean
 - v. Teaching Fellow/Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant/Graduate Student
 - vi. Individuals in positions classified as student positions
 - vii. Faculty/lecturers/professional librarians/ adjunct professors/special appointed faculty,
 - viii. Unless otherwise considered first, and foremost, a regular staff member
 - ix. Employees of the UNT system and its other member institutions.

V. The Composition of Staff Senate: Membership Definitions

- a. 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.
- b. Staff Senate Officers

- i. The Officers and Executive Committee shall consist of a chair, chair-elect, parliamentarian, secretary, communications coordinator, assessment coordinator, the past chair (ex-officio), and a representative from Human Resources (ex-officio).

VI. Senator and Officer Responsibilities

a. Senators will:

- i. Make informed decisions.
- ii. Vote on matters brought before the Staff Senate.
- iii. Serve on one (1) standing committee.
- iv. Serve on university committees when requested or appointed. No Senator, aside from the Chair or Chair-Elect, is permitted to serve on more than one University Committee, explicitly as a representative of the Staff Senate, at a time, unless no other Senator can fill that vacancy.

b. Staff Senate Officers

- i. Each officer position is one (1) year in length. The Chair-Elect automatically assumes the Chair position in the following year and the Chair automatically assumes the Past-Chair position at the same time.
- ii. All Officer positions are available to new incoming Senators, except for Chair-Elect, which requires at least one (1) prior year of service on the Senate. It does not need to immediately proceed their term as Chair-Elect.
- iii. The Chair shall:
 1. Preside at all regular and special meetings.
 2. Vote only in the event of a tie.
 3. Enforce all regulations and policies.
 4. Preside over the Executive Committee.
 5. Oversee all standing committees.
 6. Prepare the organizational chart of the Staff Senate.
 7. Approve agendas and minutes.
 8. Represent the Staff Senate at all functions which require representation of the Staff Senate or appoint a designee.
 9. Call special meetings.
 10. Communicate Staff Senate operations to the president or president's designee(s).

11. Approve all financial transactions and authorize the disbursement of funds in collaboration with the account holder assigned by the president or the president's designee(s).
 12. Establish ad hoc committees as approved by the Staff Senate.
 13. Meet with the President at least once per long semester, inviting all or part of the Executive Committee or another designee, as needed.
 14. Perform other such duties, as associated with this office.
- iv. The Chair-Elect shall:
1. Prepare to fulfill the role of chair in the following year.
 2. Preside over meetings in the absence of the chair.
 3. Assist chair in performing leadership responsibilities.
 4. Fulfill any term vacated by the chair.
 5. Maintain fiscal reports in accordance with the chair.
 6. Develop annual report and other reports, as requested, with the Assessment Coordinator.
 7. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
- v. The Parliamentarian shall:
1. Oversee the execution of Staff Senate business to ensure adherence to the Bylaws and Procedures.
 2. Advise the Chair on parliamentary procedures in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, as applied in any amendments or other calls to vote.
 3. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
 4. Make approved edits to the official Bylaws and Procedures based on new motions or legislation. Provide changes to the Communications Chair for website updates.
 5. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
- vi. The Secretary shall:
1. Record attendance.

2. Call for agenda items, prepare draft agendas and take minutes of all Staff Senate and Executive Committee meetings within ten (10) days prior to next meeting.
 3. Email the minutes to each Executive Committee (EC) members within ten (10) days prior to next meeting.
 4. Email agendas and minutes to the full Staff Senate prior to a meeting, ensuring both are posted to the Staff Senate website.
 5. Maintain all records of the Staff Senate including: mailing list (electronic and physical addresses), list of senators and term limits, and list of committees and serving senators.
 6. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
- vii. The Communications Coordinator shall:
1. Create, edit, and maintain all content on the Staff Senate website and social media accounts, or oversee a designee who supervises the website management in their place.
 2. Create and distribute the Staff Senate newsletter and/or oversee designee from the Communications and Public Relations Committee in executing newsletters or other major written communications.
 3. Serve as a historian by maintaining Staff Senate archives.
 4. Edit and maintain the communication plan set forth by the Staff Senate Executive Committee.
 5. Maintain electronic constituency list(s) of all staff by the administrative unit with the assistance of UNT System Information Technology Shared Services (ITSS).
 6. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
- viii. Assessment Coordinator shall:
1. Review results of major university or administrative unit assessments and report to Senate General Assembly to ensure knowledge of results influence programming, spending, and advocacy decisions.
 2. Oversee implementation of roughly three (3) internal assessments each year, with specific topics and copy

- to be determined by the Membership and Assessment Committee.
3. Work with Chair-Elect on annual report or other reports, as requested by the President of the University.
 4. Perform other such duties as associated with this office or deemed appropriate by the chair.
- ix. The Past-Chair shall:
1. Serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee.
 2. Ensure continuity of multi-year projects, as assigned by the Executive Committee.
 3. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
- x. The HR representative shall:
1. Serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee.
 2. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
 3. Assist with providing the annual list of employees, for election purposes, within each administrative unit.

VII. Terms of Office and Vacancies

a. Terms of Office

- i. Senators shall serve a staggered two-year term.
 1. About one half of the Staff Senate is up for election each year.
 2. Each senator may serve two (2) full 2-year consecutive terms. Senators filling an incomplete term do not count that service towards their four (4) year limit prior to a mandatory roll-off period of at least one year.
- ii. At the completion of the senator's second complete term, the senator shall be required to take a one-year absence from the senate before becoming eligible to seek re-election (referred to as rolling off).
- iii. Staff Senate officers ordinarily serve a one-year term, unless re-elected.
 1. Officers may serve two (2) consecutive terms by election of the voting membership.
 2. The chair-elect will serve a 3-year term:
 - a. The first year as the chair-elect;

- b. The second year as the chair;
 - 3. And the third year as the past chair, not a voting member.
 - iv. The annual Staff Senate term begins the day after the final day of Spring Commencement and concludes on the final day of Spring Commencement the following year.
- b. Vacancies
 - i. Vacancy within the Staff Senate
 - 1. A vacancy due to termination of employment or removal from the Staff Senate shall be filled within 45 days of Staff Senate notification or final date serving as a Senator, whichever comes second.
 - 2. The Membership and Assessment Committee will research the prior election results and nominations within the impacted administrative unit.
 - a. Within the administrative unit where the position is vacant, the nominee that received the most votes, but did not attain a senator position (the runner-up), will be offered the role.
 - b. If the runner-up declines the position, the next in line with the most votes within the unit will be offered the position.
 - 3. In the case where there are no available nominees from the prior election to fill the vacancy, the Membership and Assessment Committee will develop a special election to fill the vacancy.
 - a. In the case where there are no available nominees to fill the vacancy after a new call for nominations, the Membership and Assessment Committee may work with the Chair to appoint another eligible staff member to fill the role until the next General Election.
 - b. If the role cannot reasonably be filled within 60 days, the Chair can approve a prolonged vacancy until the next General Election.
 - ii. Vacancy Due to Administrative Unit Changes
 - 1. If a senator changes roles that require a transition into a different administrative unit, the senator will complete their term as a representative of the original unit.

2. When the term ends, a senator may seek reelection from the new campus unit where the senator is currently/newly employed provided the senator has not served the maximum number of years without a break.
 3. If there is currently a vacancy in the senator's new unit, the Chair may appoint the senator to fill that vacancy for the rest of their term and instead instruct the Membership and Assessment Committee to pursue filling the vacancy in the senator's old former unit, provided the Committee has not yet issued a call for nominations or a Special Election has failed to fill that vacancy.
- iii. Vacancy within the Executive Committee
1. If the Chair vacates their term for any reason, the Chair-Elect assumes the role effective immediately.
 2. All other officer roles may be filled through a call for nominations from the Membership and Assessment Committee at the next General Assembly meeting.
 - a. If only one nominee is available, the Chair may appoint them to fill the role for the remainder of the term.
 - b. If more than one nominee is available, an election shall be held at that meeting with results reviewed, verified, and announced by the Membership and Assessment Committee at the meeting unless a delay is necessary for proper evaluation.
 - c. If no nominees are available, the Chair may designate a future General Assembly at which another call for nominations will be made.
 - d. If no replacement can be found after two calls for nominations, the Chair may approve that vacancy through the end of the term. However, there is no limit to the number of times a call for nominations may be issued by the Membership and Assessment Committee.

VIII. Elections

a. Nominations for Staff Senators

- i. All nominations for the Staff Senate, including the Executive Committee, shall be coordinated by the Membership and Assessment Committee and overseen by the Parliamentarian.
 - ii. No senator up for reelection shall assist the committee with the election process, including recruitment, authoring the nomination form, or processing any results, for their own administrative unit.
 - iii. Nominees' information will be emailed to the appropriate administrative units for voting based on a calendar set by the Membership and Assessment Committee each year.
 - iv. The nomination period, election period, and date on which election results are announced should be communicated to affected administrative units ahead of time via email and the Staff Senate website.
- b. Voting for Staff Senators
- i. All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot.
 - ii. The nominees shall be listed as candidates.
 1. Each candidate listing must at least include the following: length of time at UNT, role and office, disclosure of past service on the Staff Senate, if any.
 2. Candidates will be given the opportunity to include additional information about themselves to appear on the ballot.
 - iii. Candidates shall only be viewed by the employees from the administrative unit in which the nominee is housed.
 - iv. Specific instructions shall be placed on each ballot for voting assistance.
 - v. Voters may cast one vote for each open seat in their administrative unit. (For example, in an administrative unit with five open seats, voters can vote for as few as one or as many as five candidates).
 - vi. Ballots shall be counted under the supervision of the Membership and Assessment Committee.
 - vii. Election results for senators shall be communicated to all staff at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the new term
 - viii. Election results and ballots shall be retained until the next election is concluded the following year.
 - ix. Election results may be contested for up to 30 days following the announcement of the election results. Requests for a

recount shall be submitted to and overseen by the Parliamentarian.

- x. In the case of a tie vote among two or more candidates, a runoff election shall be held. All tied candidates shall be listed on the runoff ballot.
 - 1. In the runoff election, the candidate receiving the most votes shall be declared the winner.
 - 2. In case of a tie vote in the runoff, the winner shall be randomly selected by the Membership and Assessment Committee.

c. Officer Elections

- i. Officer elections are to be coordinated by the Membership and Assessment Committee to take place during the final General Assembly meeting of the active term (typically May but the Committee should consult the academic calendar each year).
- ii. Nominations for an officer position can also be emailed to the Chair prior to the final meeting of the term, at which the election will take place.
- iii. At the final meeting of the term, nominations will be taken from any senator in attendance (including newly elected senators who have not yet commenced their term).
- iv. Having given prior consent, nominees need not be present to be considered for an officer position.
- v. Officers will take office on the first day of the new term (the day after Spring Commencement concludes).
- vi. Qualified officer nominees for the Chair-Elect must have prior service as a Senator for a full year prior to the start of the term. All other roles do not require prior service.
- vii. All present senators, current and incoming, are qualified to vote in an officer election.
- viii. Voting is conducted by secret ballot and counted by the Membership and Assessment Committee.
- ix. A simple majority of votes shall determine the elected officers.

IX. 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 to committees when necessary.
 - b. The Membership and Assessment Committee shall:
 - i. Research and present bylaw changes, as needed.
 - ii. Recruit new Senators preceding each General Election and Special Election.
 - iii. Oversee all elections, including managing the Staff Senate Officer elections, under the supervision of the Parliamentarian.
 - iv. Review and report on general university assessment, as necessary.
 - v. Conduct assessment throughout the year, under the supervision of the Assessment Coordinator.
 - c. The Communications and Public Relations Committee shall:
 - i. Exercise responsibility for the Staff Senate website.
 - ii. Exercise responsibility for major notifications and communications, including social media and email campaigns.
 - d. The Staff Success Committee shall:
 - i. Identify professional development and engagement opportunities for staff.
 - ii. Execute learning, training, and engagement opportunities on a monthly basis.
 - e. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee shall:
 - i. Identify EDI training, learning, and engagement opportunities.
 - ii. Execute EDI opportunities in collaboration with other campus stakeholders.
 - f. 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.
 - iii. Senators may hold one Ad Hoc or University Committee position at a time as to allow more members to take part in these committee opportunities, as of the 2021-2022 academic year.
- X. Staff Senate Expectations
- a. Meetings

- i. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate (General Assembly) shall be held every month, June through May, except January.
 - ii. General Assembly meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month from 3:00-5:00pm.
 - 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 of the Executive Committee in attendance. Guests are not permitted during executive sessions.
 - v. All in attendance are expected to silence cell phones and other non-medical technology during Staff Senate meetings.
 - vi. The meeting agenda will:
 1. Be available to all staff members via the Staff Senate website two (2) working days prior to Staff Senate meetings and include prior meeting minutes. The agenda will remain posted on the website until at least the end of the term.
 2. Include time and location of the upcoming Staff Senate meeting.
 3. Include the order of business and supporting documentation.
 4. Be developed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Chair or Chair-Elect in their absence.
 - vii. The meeting minutes will:
 1. Be recorded by the secretary.
 2. Be distributed by the secretary to the Executive Committee within ten (10) days of the adjourned meeting.
 3. Be posted on the Staff Senate website for all to view through at least the end of the term.
- b. Attendance
- i. Excessive absences (defined as three or more in a single year) **of any type** may subject a senator to removal.
 - ii. Attendance is required at both the General Assembly portion of the monthly meeting, as well as Committee Breakout Sessions. Senators found to regularly skip significant portions of a meeting are subject to the same review process as outlined below.

- iii. Senators shall be responsible for attending monthly meetings as well as special or called meetings except for the following reasons, which will constitute excused absences.
 1. Vacation leave
 2. Sick leave
 3. Official University business other than normal job duties that require the Senator's attendance at the time of the regularly scheduled Senate meeting.
- iv. In the cases of vacation leave and official business, the Senator shall provide advance notice to the Secretary and Chair. In the case of sick leave, the Senator shall notify the Secretary and Chair upon the first day of returning to work.
- v. After a Senator has two absences, the Secretary shall contact the senator for an explanation for missed meetings. An opportunity to resign from the Senate will be given if the senator feels they will not be able to comply with the attendance policy.
- vi. A senator who has three absences during the 12 month term shall be reviewed for removal.
 1. The review process consists of the creation of an Ad Hoc committee made up of three Staff Senators to review the circumstances and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.
 2. This Ad Hoc committee does not have to be approved with a simple majority, nor does it have to be convened at the next General Assembly. The Executive Committee can assemble this committee outside the scope of a General Assembly meeting.
 3. The review process is as follows:
 - a. Minutes shall be taken electronically.
 - b. The Ad Hoc committee can allow the Senator up to an additional three absences as part of their recommendation.
 - c. The recommendation will be sent to the Executive Committee no later than three days before the next regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting.
 - d. The Executive Committee shall contact the Senator in good faith at least three working days

prior to the meeting at which their removal will be read into the minutes.

- e. Minutes shall be taken at all meetings pertaining to the review process.
- f. Removal from the Staff Senate does not preclude an individual from seeking nomination or participating in UNT Staff Senate elections the following year or beyond.

c. Quorum

- i. The Staff Senate shall not transact official business without the presence of a quorum.
- ii. A quorum shall exist when a simple majority of the voting senators present (fifty percent plus one).
- iii. When the presence of a quorum is challenged by a member of the Staff Senate, the secretary shall conduct a roll call and announce to the chair the presence of a quorum.
- iv. In the absence of a quorum:
 - 1. The chair may only make informational announcements.
 - 2. Any business transactions that require a vote will be tabled until a quorum is present.
 - 3. Invited guests may address the Staff Senate or request to return at the next meeting.

d. Parliamentary Authority

- i. All official proceedings and deliberations of the Staff Senate and its respective committees will function under *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

XI. Staff Senate Administration

- a. Operating Budget
- b. Administrative Support

XII. Amending Bylaws and Procedures

- a. Any senator wishing to amend the bylaws may submit the proposed amendment(s) in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration.
- b. Adoption of the proposed changes shall require a simple majority vote of the members present and voting at a scheduled meeting.
- c. Any amendments to the bylaws recommended by the Staff Senate shall be submitted to the university president for approval.

