

Bylaws of the Staff Council

Stephen F. Austin State University

Original Implementation: December 2, 2021

Last Revision: April 10, 2023

I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Stephen F. Austin State University Staff Council, hereinafter referred to as Staff Council or Council.

II. Mission and Purpose

- A. **Mission** – The Staff Council is an advisory body through which eligible Staff members represent the collective body of the Staff, hereinafter referred to as Staff, by conveying information and making recommendations regarding interests and concerns of the Staff to administrative leadership of Stephen F. Austin State University or other University administrative bodies. The Staff Council shall promote and foster the effective contribution of Staff expertise toward University goals.
- B. **Purpose** – The Staff Council shall serve as a consultative and deliberative body, the purposes¹ of which include:
1. Addressing and resolving issues of concern that affect Staff.
 2. Fostering expanded opportunities for Staff involvement in campus governance.
 3. Building a sense of community by encouraging the exchange of ideas and concerns among Staff.
 4. Providing advice on University policies and procedures impacting Staff.
 5. Contributing to the success of the University through professional networking, growth, and development opportunities for Staff.
 6. Recognizing and promoting the accomplishments of Staff.

III. Definitions

- A. **Staff** – a non-faculty employee who is employed to work at least 20 hours per week for a period of at least four-and-one-half months, excluding students employed in positions that require student status as a condition of employment.
- B. **Representative** – Staff employees of Stephen F. Austin State University who are elected to the Staff Council.

IV. Membership

A. Eligibility

1. Membership is limited to individuals employed at Stephen F. Austin State University that are benefits eligible; have had one year of continuous employment as of the date of reapportionment; and have a primary job classification of Staff.

¹ Staff Council does not supplant existing procedures for addressing employee/employer grievances or disputes.

2. Employees who report directly to the President, who report directly to the Board of Regents, or are employees of the Charter School are ineligible for membership.
3. With the exception of directors, associate directors, and assistant directors, Representatives cannot be members of the Officials and Administrators EEO job category (president, vice presidents, associate and assistant vice presidents, deans, department chairs, chief officers, executive directors, and head athletic coaches).

B. Composition

1. Seats on Staff Council shall be apportioned at a ratio of one Representative per 25 constituents within each eligible EEO category with a minimum of one representative per eligible EEO category.
 - a. If an EEO category meets eligibility but does not have 25 constituents, the category will receive one Representative.
2. Apportionment will be reevaluated each June prior to elections and will be based on employment data retrieved on June 1.

C. Terms

1. Council Representatives shall serve three-year terms, with term years beginning on September 1 and concluding on August 31.
2. Council Representative terms shall be staggered.
3. Representatives may serve up to two consecutive terms. Once term limit has been reached, Representative must have a one-year absence from Council service before being eligible for re-election.
4. If a Representative's EEO category changes during their term but they still meet membership eligibility criteria, the Representative will remain in office for the remainder of the term year in which the change occurred, representing the category for which the Representative was elected. At the conclusion of the Representative's term year, an alternate will be chosen in accordance with Article IV, Section F to serve through said Representative's term cycle.
5. If a Representative's EEO category, reporting line, or job title changes such that they no longer meet membership eligibility criteria during their term, the Representative must resign, and an alternate will be chosen in accordance with Article IV, Section F.

D. Duties and Expectations

1. Representatives will advocate for all Staff.
2. Representatives will communicate with their constituents.
3. Representatives will attend meetings of the Council, accruing no more than two absences at meetings of the whole per term year. Any Representative who accrues no more than two absences during the year will cause their EEO category to be underrepresented; therefore, the Representative will forfeit their membership on the Council.
4. Representatives will serve on at least one Council committee.

5. If a Representative cannot attend a meeting, they must notify the Parliamentarian in advance and in writing of the absence, along with the name of the proxy that will attend in their stead. Proxy must be a Staff member who meets membership eligibility criteria and is of the same EEO category as the Representative.
6. Representatives will adhere to university policy regarding standards of professional conduct, notably when crafting language and expressing opinions during Council affairs.
7. Representatives will maintain confidentiality of discussions held during meetings' executive sessions.

E. Time Allowances and Professional Commitment

1. Representatives are allowed to devote a reasonable amount of time (not to exceed 10 hours per month) within the scope of normal duties to the work of the Council. Representatives remain responsible for the completion of their normal job duties.
2. Representatives shall not be subject to reprisal for the dedication of time to Staff Council duties within the allotment noted above.

F. Vacancies

1. Vacancies can occur due to resignation from the Council, promotion or transfer to a position ineligible for membership, termination or conclusion of employment, or removal from the Council.
2. A vacancy that occurs shall be filled by the alternate for that EEO category within 30 days of the date of the vacancy. The alternate will fill the position for the remainder of the original Representative's term. The Executive Committee shall refer to the list of eligible alternates in order to fill the vacancy. (See Article VI, Section C.) If no alternate is available or if the alternate does not wish to serve, the Staff Council will appoint (by majority vote) a willing individual from within the same EEO category to serve until the next election cycle.
3. Temporary vacancies may include a Representative being absent for an extended period due to a situation such as FMLA leave. In such cases, the Executive Committee shall refer to the list of eligible alternates in order to fill the temporary vacancy. In the event no alternate is available or desires to serve, the Staff Council will appoint (by majority vote) a willing individual from within the same EEO category to serve until the Representative is able to return to service on the Council.

G. Resignation

1. A Representative shall notify the Executive Committee in writing of their intention to resign from Staff Council and include the effective date of their resignation.
2. The Executive Committee shall notify all Staff Council Representatives of the resignation within one business day of its receipt.

H. Removal

1. *Representatives can be removed from office for the following reasons:*
 - a. non-attendance at more than two meetings per year;
 - b. lack of engagement in Staff Council activities, including committee work;
 - c. unprofessional behavior; or
 - d. other behavior detrimental to Staff Council.
 2. *Procedure*
 - a. A petition requesting such removal can be brought to the Staff Council by a simple majority of the Representative's constituents, or such removal may be initiated by 20% of the membership of Staff Council. Representative will be provided with the petition at least five business days in advance of the meeting at which a vote on removal will be taken.
 - b. Removal shall be effective upon a two-thirds vote of those present at the next regular meeting at which a quorum is present.
- I. Faculty Senate Liaison
1. A member of Faculty Senate, either elected by the Senate membership or designed by Senate in that body's standing rules, serves as a liaison to Staff Council, attending the open portions of all Council general meetings or sending another Senator in their stead. This liaison has no voting privileges.

V. Officers

- A. Officers of Staff Council shall be elected by the Representatives of Staff Council. Elected officers shall include Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary/Historian, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian. Ex-officio officer shall include Past Chair.
- B. Duties
 2. *Duties of Chair include:*
 - a. Attend and conduct Council meetings.
 - b. Communicate Council concerns to the University leadership and serve as liaison to the President and appropriate university committees.
 - c. Ensure Council projects are developed, organized, and implemented in an orderly and timely manner.
 - d. When necessary, cast tie-breaking votes.
 - e. Carry out other duties specified in these bylaws and needed to fulfill the mission of the Council.
 - f. Appoint Council committees and chairpersons.
 - g. Appoint ad-hoc committees as necessary.
 - h. Serve as ex-officio member of all Council committees.
 3. *Duties of Chair-Elect include:*
 - a. Assume position of Chair at conclusion of Chair's term or at time of Chair's vacancy.

- b. Conduct Council meetings in the absence of the Chair.
 - c. Assist Chair in duties, becoming knowledgeable in duties and activities in order to facilitate a smooth transition and continuity of operations.
 - d. Oversee committee work, collecting documents (minutes, reports, etc.), and distributing a yearly list of committees and their members.
 - e. Coordinate training of new Representatives.
 - f. Perform the duties of the Secretary in the event the Secretary is unable to attend a meeting.
 - g. Serve as a liaison to Faculty Senate, attending all Senate meetings in accordance with associated provision in Senate standing rules.
4. *Duties of Secretary/Historian include:*
- a. Prepare and maintain electronic archive of meeting minutes of the Council and of the executive board.
 - b. Post or arrange for posting of Council minutes to Council website.
 - c. Distribute agendas for Council meetings.
 - d. Maintain accurate attendance records of Representatives.
 - e. Keep and archive history of body actions, decisions, and membership.
 - f. Maintain the list of Council Representatives, their terms, and EEO category represented.
5. *Duties of Treasurer include:*
- a. Be responsible for all financial aspects of Council functions and do so in accordance with University policies, procedures, and budget cycle.
 - b. Maintain accurate documentation of all transactions and expenditures.
 - c. Reconcile financial records at least monthly and report on their status to the Council at each meeting.
 - d. Maintain dual signature role for all transactions with Chair and/or Chair-Elect.
 - e. If a budget committee is established, serve as chairperson of that committee.
6. *Duties of Parliamentarian include:*
- a. Provide guidance on conduct of meetings according to bylaws.
 - b. Address points of order according to Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised).
 - c. Advise Executive Committee on points of order.
 - d. Chair Bylaws Committee, if such committee is necessary and appointed.

- e. Keep and maintain the bylaws and serve as a resource for Council officers and Representatives regarding the bylaws and any standing rules.
 - f. Coordinate with the Chair in the event of either a Representative or officer vacancy or removal or a temporary absence of a Representative.
7. *Duties of Past Chair include:*
- a. Assume position after conclusion of term as Chair.
 - b. Serve as advisor to Executive Committee.
 - c. Assist Chair and Chair-Elect with duties as needed.
- C. Terms
- 1. Officers shall serve one-year terms.
 - 2. Officers can be elected to two consecutive terms. After two terms, individual must have a one-year break in service as an officer before being eligible for election as an officer again.
 - 3. A Representative who assumes an unexpired officer term (whether vacancy was due to resignation or removal) that has less than six months remaining in it shall be eligible for election for two consecutive, full terms as an officer.
- D. Election
- 1. Officers are elected at the last meeting of the fiscal year.
- E. Resignation
- 1. Officer resignations must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must then notify the body within one business day.
 - 2. Resigning officer must return any Council property (e.g. p-card, devices) to the Chair within two business days of resignation.
- F. Removal
- 1. Grounds for removal include:
 - a. lack of attendance at Council meetings;
 - b. failure to fulfill duties of office;
 - c. misrepresentation of the office or organization; or
 - d. unprofessional behavior.
 - 2. A call for resignation can come from any Staff Council Representative. A two-thirds majority vote at a meeting of the Council at which a quorum is present is required for removal.
 - 3. If an officer is removed from office, they shall still serve the remainder of their term as Representative.
- G. Vacancies
- 1. If a vacancy occurs in the Chair position, the Chair-Elect shall serve the remainder of the Chair's term. Upon completion of that term, the Representative shall then complete their Chair term as planned.

2. If a vacancy occurs in any other officer position, the Council shall elect a successor at the next regular meeting at which a quorum is present.
3. If a vacancy occurs in Past Chair position, the position shall remain vacant until the term concludes.

VI. Nominations and Elections

A. Oversight

1. Nominations and elections shall be overseen by the Nominations and Elections Committee. The committee shall identify individuals eligible for election, collect nominations, verify eligibility of nominees, inform nominees of meeting requirements and membership duties, verify nominees' willingness to serve, draft ballots, develop a voting schedule, distribute ballots, and ensure secure voting.
2. The Chair shall appoint a Representative not running for re-election to serve as Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee. Committee membership shall be determined prior to June 1.

B. Representative Nominations

1. All Staff eligible to serve on the Council may nominate themselves or others for election, regardless of the nominator or nominee's EEO category. Anonymous nominations shall be accepted. There shall be no limit on the number of nominations an eligible Staff member can make.
2. Supervisor approval is required for a nominee to run for election. If a supervisor does not approve, they will be required to justify their reasoning to the Director of Human Resources.
3. Nominations shall be accepted for a minimum of seven days across a two-week period. Nominations shall be accepted in paper and electronic form.
4. Nominations shall open in early June.
5. If there is an insufficient number of nominees to fill vacancies, the option to run for one additional term will be extended to previously elected Representatives who have met term limits. If none of those individuals desire to serve, the Council will open nominations for an at-large Representative(s) to fill the open seat(s).
6. If the number of nominees is at least equal to the number of vacancies, the election must be held. To be elected, a nominee must receive more than one vote.

C. Representative Elections

1. Voting shall be held in early to mid-July. Voting shall remain open for a minimum of seven business days across a two-week period.
2. Election ballots must be closed; thus, constituents can only vote for candidates within their own EEO category. Each voter votes for as many candidates as there are open seats available from their EEO category.
3. Ballots must be cast electronically.

4. In the event of a tie, a runoff election shall be held with the same conditions, except that voting shall remain open for at least two days.
5. The Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee shall notify all candidates on a ballot of election or non-election prior to making or posting a general announcement of election results. Vote totals will not be shared publicly. Names of those elected will be shared with the campus community via email, the Staff Council website, and other appropriate electronic or physical venues.
6. A list of alternates for each EEO category shall be retained. The list of alternates for each category shall consist of individuals who were nominated but not elected in descending order by vote total.

D. Officer Nominations

1. Nominations for officers shall be solicited from Representatives in June.

E. Officer Elections

1. Elections will be overseen by the Nominations and Elections Committee.
2. Officers will be elected at the August meeting of the Council and will take office on September 1.

VII. Committees

A. Membership

1. All Council Representatives are required to serve on at least one committee in each year of their terms.
2. The term of membership on a committee is one year. Representatives can serve multiple terms on the same committee.
3. Membership is determined by the Executive Committee, which will provide Representatives the opportunity to indicate committee preference.

B. Duties

1. Committee members shall attend all committee meetings.
2. Minutes shall be taken at all committee meetings.
3. Committees shall make recommendations to the Executive Board for consideration, action, or vote. Committees shall report the work of the committee to the Council.

C. Standing

1. *Executive*

- a. The Executive Committee is comprised of the elected officers of Staff Council and is responsible for reviewing agenda items, distributing proposals to appropriate committees for review, and any other work necessary for the successful regular functioning on the Council.
- b. The committee meets in advance of Council meetings to determine an agenda and on other occasions as needed.

- c. The committee adheres to meeting provisions listed in Article VIII, Section D.
 - d. The Past Chair serves as advisor to the committee but is ineligible to vote.
2. *Bylaws*
- a. The Bylaws Committee is established to receive, review and recommend proposed amendments to the Bylaws of the Staff Council. At the Council's request, the committee may review and recommend changes to the Bylaws.
 - b. Parliamentarian will serve as Bylaws Chair and is responsible for providing a record of all activities of the committee and for reporting on the committee's work at Council meetings.
3. *Nominations and Elections*
- a. The Nominations and Elections Committee maintains oversight of nominations and elections.
 - b. Committee chair is named by the Staff Council Chair. Chair is responsible for providing a record of all activities of the committee and for reporting on the committee's work at Council meetings.
 - c. If the committee chair chooses to run for an officer position, they must recuse themselves from the officer election process.
4. *Communications*
- a. The Communications Committee is tasked with working with all Staff Council committees to communicate activities, events, and projects related to or sponsored by Staff Council.
 - b. Committee chair is named by the Staff Council Chair. Chair is responsible for providing a record of all activities of the committee and for reporting on the committee's work at Council meetings.
5. *Worklife*
- a. The Worklife Committee shall examine issues related to Staff work at SFASU, including but not limited to benefits, wellness, inclusion, equality, and respect.
 - b. Committee chair is named by the Staff Council Chair. Chair is responsible for providing a record of all activities of the committee and for reporting on the committee's work at Council meetings.
6. *Staff Recognition*
- a. The Staff Recognition Committee is responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing employee recognition events as recognized by the Council and Chair.
 - b. Committee chair is named by the Staff Council Chair. Chair is responsible for providing a record of all activities of the

committee and for reporting on the committee's work at Council meetings.

D. Ad Hoc

- i. The Staff Council Chair can create ad hoc committees as necessary to investigate issues or conduct additional work.

VIII. Meetings

A. General Meetings

1. Schedule and Notification

- a. A minimum of nine meetings shall be held each year, with a calendar of meetings set at the start of each fiscal year. Chair will announce meetings to the Council by email. Announcements of meetings shall also be posted to the Council website and advertised in appropriate electronic and physical venues.
- b. All meetings shall be held during normal university business hours, Monday through Friday. When setting meeting times, the Executive Committee shall be mindful of different standard work hours across campus.
- c. A quorum of two-thirds of Representatives (including proxies) must be met for meeting to be held.

2. Agenda

- a. An agenda for each general meeting must be distributed to Representatives and/or posted to the Council website three business days prior to meeting date.
- b. Representatives may request to add items to the agenda by submitting the item to the Executive Committee ten business days before the meeting date. Executive Committee can add items to the agenda if necessary to provide for the Council's timely consideration of matters.

3. Minutes, Attendance, and Governance

- a. Minutes and attendance shall be taken at all meetings.
- b. If a Representative cannot attend a meeting, the procedures in Article IV, Section D for selecting a proxy and notifying the Parliamentarian will be followed.
- c. Procedure and protocol for general meetings shall adhere to Robert's Rules of Order.

4. Floor Privileges

- a. Only Representatives shall introduce proposals, measures, and resolutions on the Staff Council floor. Persons who are not Representatives may be granted the right to speak, but not to vote, on matters before the Staff Council. When a request is made for this privilege, the Chair shall ask the Staff Council for objections and, hearing none, shall grant permission to speak. If

objections are raised, the privilege shall be extended only by majority vote of the Staff Council.

5. *Executive Session*

- a. Meetings shall be held in open session. By a majority vote, meetings can transition to executive session, in which all individuals who are not Representatives or proxies are excused and discussion continues.

6. *Voting*

- a. A quorum (two-thirds of Representatives, including proxies) must be met to hold a vote.
 - b. Only elected Representatives are eligible to vote on Council matters. Proxies are ineligible to vote.
 - c. Voting will take place by show of hands, voice, or email/online methods unless a Representative calls for a secret ballot.
 - d. Remote voting (e.g. via Zoom) is allowed and requires that the Representative have logged into the web conferencing platform via SFA authentication systems.
 - e. All votes will be decided by a two-thirds majority of elected Representatives in attendance.
7. Statements and votes shall not be coerced. Representatives and guests shall not be subject to reprisal as a result of the professional expression of their views at Staff Council meetings to the extent such statement falls outside the scope of their professional responsibility and does not violate university policy. See also Article IV, Section D, Item 6.

B. Special Meetings

1. Special meetings can be called by the Council Chair or at the request of five Representatives.

C. Executive Committee Meetings

1. Executive Committee shall meet monthly. Two-thirds of the committee must be present to constitute a quorum. Meetings are closed, but minutes are taken and a report on the meeting is provided at the next general meeting.

D. Committee Meetings

1. All other committees meet as needed or at the discretion of the committee chair.
2. Minutes must be taken at committee meetings, and a report of meetings shall be provided at the next general meeting.
3. Committee meetings are closed unless the committee wishes to invite a guest. Committee members will take care not to disseminate information discussed in committee.

IX. Budget

- A. The Treasurer shall seek an operating budget sufficient to meet the reasonable operating expenses of Staff Council through the University's budget request process.
- B. Budget will adhere to university budget cycle and follow university guidelines.
- C. Treasurer and Chair or Chair-Elect must co-sign all budget expenditures.

X. Amendments to Bylaws

- A. Amendments can be proposed via the following means:
 - 1. Written proposal from a Staff Council Representative to the Executive Committee.
 - 2. Written petition signed by not less than 10% of the Staff eligible for Staff Council Representatives to the Executive Committee.
- B. Executive Committee must submit proposed amendments to the bylaws to Staff Council within 30 days of receipt. Proposal must be circulated for Representative discussion with constituents at least 10 business days prior to vote.
- C. Adoption of a proposed amendment shall require two-thirds majority vote to pass.
- D. All amendments adopted by the Staff Council must be submitted to the President of Stephen F. Austin State University for final approval.
- E. The bylaws of Staff Council must be reviewed by committee every two years.

Historical Amendment Record:

April 18, 2022
September 19, 2022
October 17, 2022
November 14, 2022
April 10, 2023

Responsible for Implementation: Stephen F. Austin State University President, Staff Council Chair

Contact for Revision: Staff Council Parliamentarian