

DRAFT ARTICLES OF CONSTITUTION

Staff Senate Stockton University

Article I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Staff Senate (hereinafter "Senate") of Stockton University (hereinafter "University").

Article II: MISSION

The Staff Senate (hereinafter Senate) of Stockton University serves as an official representative body elected by the staff (hereinafter Electorate) to provide the electorate a voice in the formulation of University policies and procedures, and accepts and shares responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students for attaining and advancing its goals and mission using shared governance, and to foster a spirit of community. As an integral part of University's commitment to Shared Governance, the Senate may consider any University matter on its own initiative or at the request of the Senate committee, individual staff members, students, the University administration, the Board of Trustees, or any campus organization. The Senate is not intended to supplant existing procedures for addressing issues.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The Senate is intended to be a group gathered in the meaningful purpose of providing a voice to the many individuals that compose the staff of the University and serve as an advisory board to the University and seeks to do the following:

- Create an open forum to facilitate communication among staff and the administration.
- Engage in activity and dialogue to facilitate shared governance among staff to the university.
- Engage staff and voice out the interests and issues of concern unique to staff before the administration.
- Advise and make recommendations regarding issues of concern or policies and procedures impacting staff and/or the University.
- Explore solutions for more efficient and effective University operations.
- Build a sense of community by encouraging the exchange of ideas and concerns.
- Promote a positive campus climate and strengthen the sense of community among staff.
- Propose and support programmatic efforts to enhance and encourage professional development.
- Fostering expanded opportunities for staff involvement in campus governance
- Promoting the growth and welfare of Staff and contributing to the success of Stockton

Senate is an official Stockton staff organization. The Senate is not intended as a vehicle to address individual issues, grievances, or complaints, nor to circumvent regular administrative channels. The Senate shall not act in an advocacy role in any specific employee/employer dispute within the University, nor shall it assume the role of arbitrator in any such matter.

ARTICLE IV: AUTHORITY OF STAFF SENATE

Senate is an official Stockton staff organization. The Senate is not intended as a vehicle to address individual issues, grievances, or complaints, nor to circumvent regular administrative channels. The Senate shall not act in an advocacy role in any specific employee/employer dispute within the University, nor shall it assume the role of arbitrator in any such matter.

As an integral part of University's commitment to Shared Governance, the Senate may consider any University matter on its own initiative or at the request of the Senate committee, individual staff members, students, the University administration, the Board of Trustees, or any campus organization.

Article V: MEMBERSHIP

The Senate Electorate shall consist of all staff who are employed at the University, and organized under the following groups of employees:

1. **Professional Employees:** Professional employees include administrative officers and professional staff, as well as all employees in positions exempt from the provisions of the State Civil Service System. Employees in this category are sometimes termed "unclassified."
2. **Classified/Civil Service Employees:** Classified/civil service employees are all employees in positions covered by the provisions of the State Civil Service System. All actions affecting classified employees are made in accordance with civil service rules and regulations.
3. **Other Academic Employees:** Other academic employees include part-time members of the academic staff and full-time members of the academic staff below the rank of instructor, or equivalent. Employees with academic responsibilities who do not hold faculty rank are also included in this classification.

Individuals who are members of the following bodies are not members of the Staff Senate Electorate:

- President's Cabinet
- Faculty Assembly
- Board of Trustees
- Provost Council (*awaiting information*)
- Dean's Council
- Student Affairs Executive Staff

ARTICLE VI: SENATE STRUCTURE, ELIGIBILITY and RESPONSIBILITIES

Definitions:

Senate Electorate - All employees eligible for membership and representation. Refer to Article V for detailed representation language.

Senate: Elected representatives of the Electorate, chosen during annual elections for a term of 3 years, without term limitations.

The Executive Committee shall be composed of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. Executive Committee members are chosen by the Electorate during tri-annual elections, for a 3-year term, with no more than 2 consecutive terms of office. After a term break, prior Executive Committee officers may run for a new term, with an overall cap of 3 terms served at the same position.

I. Structure

The Senate shall be composed of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Parliamentarian, the Research Historian, Treasurer, and one Senator for every twenty staff members (as defined in Article V) serving in the University as of March 1 of the election year, elected as set forth in this Article. The term of office for Senators shall be three years, beginning at the transition meeting in April, with one-third of the Senate elected each year in order to ensure overlapping terms. Officers do not count as any unit's number of Senators.

In the event that a sitting senator changes categories due to a new position, the senator shall complete their term in the elected category.

II. Eligibility

A. Senators

Eligibility for election to the Senate shall be extended to all members of the electorate as defined in Article V who have served in a paid employment capacity as a staff member for a minimum of 12 consecutive months by the time of the Election. No staff member shall at any time represent a Division as a senator unless said person is a member of that Division, except for those nominated for Special Constituency representation.

B. Special Constituency Senator

Special Constituency Senators shall represent populations that would not naturally qualify to serve as a Senator for their institutional role but are inherently members of the staff and thus qualified for representation. These populations include but are not limited to seasonal employees, three quarter or other part time employees who are designated staff and would qualify in all capacities other than their terms of employment related to permanency and months in consecutive employment.

C. Executive Committee

Executive Committee Eligibility shall be limited to those members who have served a minimum of 1 term of office as an elected Senator.

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Parliamentarian
4. Research historian
5. Secretary
6. Treasurer
7. Three (3) Senators At-large elected by the Senate

D. Committee Chair

A Senator is eligible to hold a Committee Chair position after they have served in the elected Senator role for a minimum of 12 consecutive months. The length of term for Committee Chair position shall be 2 years, with a maximum of 2 consecutive terms. Fulfilling a term limit for one committee does not preclude a Senator from chairing any subsequent committees. Chairing a committee does not prevent a senator from being a member of another committee but does preclude a Senator from concurrent chairmanship of multiple committees.

E. Liaison Positions

Senate liaison positions are designated for representatives of:

- Faculty Senate
- Student Senate
- CWA union
- AFT union
- IFPTE
- PBA
- Sergeant Union
- Lieutenant Union

Liaisons will serve in an advisory capacity, without the eligibility to vote, for a term of 3 years. Specific eligibility criteria are reserved for the determination of the sending entity.

III. Responsibilities

1. President:

- Be present at all meetings of Senate and conduct Senate and Executive Committee meetings.
- Involve the Vice President in all decisions.
- Serves as a non-voting ex officio member of Senate non-Executive Committees.
- Ensure that projects undertaken by Senate are developed, organized, and implemented in an orderly and timely manner.
- Maintain the archives of important documents of Senate and Executive Committee with the aid of Senate Secretary.
- Act as the main spokesperson for the Electorate in discussions with the administration.

2. Vice-president:

- Assume the position and duties of President at such time as the president's seat is vacated (illness, vacation, other absence or incapacity).
- Become thoroughly knowledgeable of decisions of the President, so as to provide a smooth transition and continuity of duties.
- May serve as a voting committee member unless serving as Acting President.
- Serve as liaison between the Senate and the chairs of Committees.
- Assume other duties as directed by the Senate.

3. Secretary:

- Give formal notice of all Senate meetings. In consultation with the President, publish advance notification and agenda of all meetings of the Senate.
- In conjunction with the Research Historian, prepare and maintain an electronic archive of official minutes for all Senate meetings. The minutes and meeting summary shall be drafted after each meeting with corrections made as needed. Minutes and meeting summary shall be distributed to the Electorate within 7 business days.
- In consultation with the President, and within a specific time frame, ensure that actions of the Senate are communicated to the appropriate persons or media as the Senate may direct.
- In consultation with the President, conduct other communications pertinent to the Senate and its activities.
- In conjunction with the Research Historian, keep the history of the formation of Senate, all its members and actions.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the President or Senate.

4. Parliamentarian:

- Answer points of order in accordance with Roberts' Rules of Order- the newly revised.
- Advise the President on matters of procedure during Senate meetings.

5. Treasurer:

- Serve as a Senate accountant, bookkeeper and financial compliance officer.
- Reconcile receipts 30 days of receipt or purchase.
- Authorize expenditures or appointing someone else (orally or in writing) to authorize expenditures.
- Keep records of receipts and disbursements for three years from the filing date of the report to which they relate.

6. Research Historian:

- Archive the minutes of Senate meetings.
- Keep record of all Senate membership and terms of officers.
- Provide support and research findings as needed for Senate Executive Committee functions.

7. At-large members:

- Serve in the advisory capacity to the Executive Committee.
- Attend all Executive Committee meetings.

ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS

Section 1: Apportionment of Senators and Verification of the Electorate

The Elections Committee, in conjunction with the Office of Human Resources, shall finalize the staff population count by January 31 of each year.

No later than one week from the final population count, the Election Committee must apportion the Senate seats among the eight Divisions (refer to [University's Organizational Charts](#)).

In conjunction with the notification of apportionment, biannually, the Election Committee must notify the electorate of the pending vacancies of President, Vice President, Secretary, Parliamentarian, Research Historian and three (3) at-large members for election.

The Election Committee must notify the Electorate, in writing, of the concluded apportionment and the positions open for nomination and election. This notification must occur immediately after the conclusion of the apportionment, but no later than 7 calendar days thereafter.

The total number of Senators will fluctuate yearly, reflective of the total number of the Electorate. Each Division shall be apportioned no fewer than 1, but no greater than 5 senators, in a ratio of 1 Senator to 20 staff members.

Section 2: Procedure for Senator and Executive Committee Nominations

- i. The Elections Committee will be responsible for preparing, maintaining, and operating a nomination process.
- ii. The Elections Committee will provide information with the call for nomination to the Electorate and will certify the eligible Electorate from the census data provided in January (refer to Article VII, Section 1). The call for nominations shall describe eligibility requirements for serving in the elected position (as defined in Article VI), outline the responsibilities of the elected official (as defined in Article VI and VIII), explain how nominations should be submitted and specify the opening and closing dates of submission.
- iii. The Election Committee shall actively recruit staff across organizational units with vacancies through the help of the Senate and organizational unit leadership.
- iv. If there are no nominations for a Senator in an organizational unit, the Election Committee will contact appropriate organizational leadership (VP, AVP, Dean, Director, etc.) for support in providing nominations.
- v. The Elections Committee will verify that all nominees meet the eligibility requirements as specified in Article
- vi. Eligible nominees shall be members of the Electorate as defined in Article V

- vii. Nominations for Senate positions will be open for 14 calendar days following the notification of the Electorate.
- viii. Once the call for nominations closes, the Elections Committee will contact nominees to confirm nominations and request a brief biographical statement from them.
- ix. Nominated candidates may campaign for 14 consecutive calendar days after the close of nominations.
- x. During the month of March, the electorate shall elect as many senators for the next term as required to meet the apportionment model outlined in Article VII, Section 1, taking into account the number of senators whose terms shall expire at the last Senate meeting in April.

All candidates on the ballot shall be organized according to the Division they shall represent in the number of empty seats in that Division. Members of the electorate shall vote for candidates in all Divisions.

Section 3: Election of Senators and Executive Committee

A. Senators

During the month of March, the electorate shall elect as many senators for the next term as required to meet the apportionment model outlined in Article VII, Section 1, taking into account the number of senators whose terms shall expire at the last Senate meeting in April.

B. Executive Committee

During the month of March, those positions whose terms are expiring shall be up for re-election, following the Elections Procedure outlined in Article VII, Section 3.

C. Vacancies

In the event that any Senator or Executive Committee Member position should become vacant in the course of a current term, a special election shall be held mirroring the process outlined in Article VII, Section 2. The elected official, selected through the Special Election, shall complete the preceding position's term.

D. The Inaugural Election:

1. Senators:

In the inaugural election year, in order to organize the future staggered election procedure, term lengths shall be defined as follows:

- Special Constituency senators - 1 year term
- At Large senators - 2-year term
- Divisional Senators - 3-year term

Each subsequent election of senators shall be for the term of 3 years, without term limits, as defined in Article V.

2. Executive Committee:

In the inaugural election of the senate, term lengths shall be defined as follows:

- Vice-president - 3-year term
- President - 2-year term
- Parliamentarian - 2-year term
- At-large members:
 - Member #1 - 1 year term
 - Member #2 - 2-year term
 - Member #3 - 3-year term
- Treasurer - 1 year term
- Secretary - 1 year term

Each subsequent election of Executive Committee members shall be for the term of 3 years, with an overall term limit of 3 terms served, as defined in Article V.

E. Voting

The Election Committee shall conduct the election in such way that:

1. Voting occurs via secret ballot
2. Ballots can be certified and recounted if necessary
3. Each eligible staff member votes only once and the vote count is accurate
4. The report of election results occurs within 48-72 hours of close of voting.

The individuals receiving the highest number of votes are elected.

For uncontested Senate seats, where there are as many candidates in the organizational unit as vacancies, the candidates will be elected by acclamation.

In case of a tie, the employee with the longer time of employment at the University will be designated as the winner.

F. Results:

Election results will be shared with the University community including with the candidates, Senators, and general Electorate.

An email shall be sent to newly elected Senate members to welcome them to the Senate and give them a copy of the Senate Bylaws (*to be developed after the Constitution is ratified*).

ARTICLE VIII: Responsibilities, Attendance and Professional Conduct of Senate Members

Section 1: Responsibilities

- To understand and abide by this Constitution and its bylaws.
- To be available and open to the needs and concerns of all University staff.
- To inform colleagues in their work areas of an individual's Senate positions and to share information about the Senate and its activities with them.
- Execute their duties in a fashion becoming on the gravity of their leadership position.

- To encourage participation in University Shared Governance, including notification of Senate meetings, of opportunities to serve on standing committees and of upcoming elections.

Section 2: Attendance

Senators are expected to be present at each meeting. Should a senator need to be excused from a Senate meeting, the senator must notify the Senate Secretary prior to the meeting; if this is not possible, the senator may inform another officer or fellow senator, who in turn should notify the Senate Secretary.

Members of the Executive Committee are expected to be present at each Executive Committee meeting. Executive Committee members may participate in Executive Committee meetings via video or teleconference, and request appropriate technical accommodations to participate remotely, if the need arises. An absence may be excused by the President upon receipt of a written or verbal request either prior to the absence or within five (5) business days following the absence.

Excessive absenteeism may result in removal from office (per Article VIII, Section 3).

Section 3: Removal from Office

Any Executive Officer and/or Senator can be removed from office by the Senate for nonperformance of duties. A petition requesting such removal can be brought to the Executive Committee by a simple majority of the quorum of the Senate. The Executive Committee will investigate the matter on a case-by-case basis and will recommend action to the Senate.

The Senate will make the final decision by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote of the quorum will carry the vote. Possible causes of expulsion constituting grounds for removal from office shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of the powers of the Senate, real or implied, to further personal causes.
2. Excessive absenteeism defined as no more than four unexcused absences.
3. Failure to consistently fulfill the responsibility of the Senate positions.
4. Termination, retirement or other loss of staff employment category designation.

Resignation in good standing from the Senate shall require a formal, written letter of resignation to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

If a senator is unable to attend a minimum of four meetings during the course of a year, the senator shall be removed from the Senate. Removed senator(s) shall be notified in writing and shall have fifteen days to make a written appeal to the Senate, should they choose to do so to gain reinstatement.

Ratification of removal from office shall require a $\frac{2}{3}$ quorum majority of the senators present.

Article IX: Senate Meetings

Section 1: Regular Senate Meetings

Regular Senate Meetings shall be presided by the Senate President and held at least once a month throughout the calendar year. Dates and times of these monthly meetings shall be established by the President in consultation with the Vice-President. Place of meetings, times and dates shall be published on the Senate website by the Senate Secretary, and all meetings shall be open to Electorate Members. Meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the Electorate who may introduce new business through a Petition process, when recognized by the President. If the President chooses not to recognize such a member, the President may be overruled by a majority of Senate members present.

- a) **Transition Senate Meeting**
The regular meeting in April shall be known as the Transition Senate Meeting and shall be for the purpose of receiving annual reports and conducting any other business that may arise. This shall be a joint meeting comprised of the incoming, continuing, and outgoing senators.
- b) **Special Senate Meetings**
With at least five (5) working days' notice to all Senate members, special meetings may be called by the President, or three (3) voting members of the Executive Committee, or a majority of the Senate.
- c) **Quorum of the Senate** -- A simple majority (51%) of the elected senators shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2: Electorate Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Electorate may be called by the Executive Committee, majority of the Senate, or by petition of one-fifth (1/5) of the Electorate membership.

Article X: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, Parliamentarian, Research Historian and three (3) at-large members. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall include, but are not limited to, the responsibility to provide leadership direction for Senate appointed committees.

Purpose of the Executive Committee: The Senate delegates to its Executive Committee the authority to conduct routine business of the Senate, execute the will of the Electorate set forth by the vision, and solutions developed by the Senators, while organizing the work of the Senate, and responding to urgent matters.

Terms of at-large members of Executive Committee: No later than three Academic Weeks after the beginning of every Fall semester, the Senate shall appoint three (3) at-large members to the Executive Committee. At-large members of the committee shall begin serving immediately upon their appointment to the committee. Their terms on the Executive Committee shall expire

two Academic Weeks after their Senate terms expire, or when their replacements are elected, whichever is earlier.

Meetings: The President shall call regular meetings of the Executive Committee. Any three members of the Executive Committee may call additional meetings as needed.

Agenda: The Executive Committee shall set the agenda for its own meetings and also for meetings of the Senate. Any member of the University community may propose to the Executive Committee that an item be placed on the agenda of the Senate.

Quorum: A quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of the committee's members.

Observers: Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be closed except by invitation approved by a minimum of two committee members. Only members of the Executive Committee may vote.

Reports: The Executive Committee shall prepare an annual report to the Electorate on the work of the Senate.

Relationship with the Unions: The Executive Committee shall be mindful of the legal rights and responsibilities contained within the relevant collective bargaining agreements and ensure that actions of the Senate do not intrude on areas of concern for the collective bargaining agent. Senators will meet regularly with each of the unions to work on individual concerns to ensure that they do not impede on terms and conditions of employment.

- Staff members who serve as an officer for one of the University's bargaining units may not serve as an Executive Officer.

Release time: Any staff member that is a part of the Executive Committee, serving on a Task Force, serving on any Standing Committees, and/or those that are participants will be released from normal work duties, without loss of pay or other benefits, and shall not be required to utilize accrued time and/or make up the time missed to attend official Senate Meetings, Committee Meetings, and meetings with liaison groups dealing with items of concerns brought forth by the Senate with consideration for university obligations and staff needs. Such employees remain responsible for performing all regular work duties.

Article XI: COMMITTEES and TASK FORCES

Section 1: Committees

The Senate shall have Standing Committees which shall be responsible for addressing issues which were directed by the Executive Committee. The Senate shall have the power to propose:

- a. The creation of new Standing Committees,
- b. Changes in their composition,
- c. The dissolution of existing Standing Committees.

Each Committee member will be elected to the committee and shall adhere to the guidelines of the Senate Constitution and shall not act independently of the Senate. In the event of administrative reorganization that changes the titles of any of those identified as ex officio members of a committee, the Executive Committee may approve substitution of equivalent ex officio members.

1. **Eligibility:** Chairs of Standing Committees must be staff members that have been employed with the University a minimum of twelve months prior to the start of the term. Chairs may not serve as an Executive Officer but are not precluded from serving as a Senator. Vice Chairs of Standing Committees must be Senators. Where appropriate, because of their special nature, committees may include non-voting members.
2. **Composition:** Standing Committees shall be composed of a minimum of three divisions to ensure a variety of points of views and experiences. Staff that wish to participate in a Standing Committee should notify the Executive Committee of their interest.
3. **Selection:** Chairs for each Standing Committee will be elected to the position and shall serve two-year terms. Elections will follow the cycle outlined in Section II.
4. **Duties:** The Chair for each committee shall convene Standing Committee meetings regularly and shall submit meeting minutes to the Senate Secretary within seven working days. Each Standing Committee must establish annual goals and objectives subject to Senate approval.
5. **Committee Composition:** The committee shall be made up of at least five (5) staff members, not to exceed ten (10) staff members. The members of the committee shall be chosen in an election open to all staff that meet Senate membership criteria. There shall be no more than one (1) member from any department or office and no more than three (3) members from any one institutional division. If two or more staff members from the same department/office and/or four or more from any one division, then the next highest vote will be named the winner of the election.

Term: Committee members shall serve for three years. Committee members are eligible for election up to two consecutive terms and may run for additional terms after a break of at least one term.

Section 1.1: STANDING COMMITTEES of STAFF SENATE:

1. Constitutional bylaws committee
2. Elections committee
3. Technology committee
4. Diversity and Inclusion committee
5. Others are designated by the Senate

Section 2: Task Forces

The Senate shall have the power to propose the creation of Task Forces as needed. Task forces shall be automatically dissolved at the end of the academic year in which they were created, unless specifically continued by the Senate or the Executive Committee by a majority vote. In

the event of administrative reorganization that changes the titles of any of those identified as ex officio members of a committee, the Executive Committee may approve substitution of equivalent ex officio members.

1. **Eligibility:** Task Force Chairs must be staff members that have been employed with the University a minimum of twelve months prior to the start of the term. Chairs may not serve as an Executive Officer but are not precluded from serving as a Senator.
 2. **Composition:** Task Forces shall be composed of a minimum of three divisions to ensure a variety of points of views and experiences. Staff that wish to participate on a task force should notify the Executive Committee of their interest.
 3. **Selection:** The Senate President shall appoint a Chair and confirmation by majority vote of the full Senate.
 4. **Duties:** Each Task Force shall assess University events within the scope of their charge to determine impact on staff and provide suggestions to the Executive Committee. Task Force members do not purport to be a collective bargaining unit and will not negotiate terms and conditions of employment.
 5. **Task Force Composition:** Task forces shall be made up of at least five (5) staff members, not to exceed ten (10) staff members. The members of the Task Force shall be recommended by the Standing Committees and appointed by the Senate President. There shall be no more than one (1) member from any department or office and no more than three (3) members from any one institutional division.
- Term:** Task Force members shall serve for one year, unless renewed by the action of the

Task Force members are eligible for appointment for up to two consecutive terms and may be reappointed for additional terms after a break of at least one term.

Article XII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

- A. Any University staff member who serves as an officer of one of the University's bargaining units may not serve as an executive officer of the Senate but is not precluded from serving as a Senator.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing and in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitutional bylaws Committee.
- B. Staff members from the Office of Human Resources may not serve as executive officers of the Senate but are not precluded from serving as Senators.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing and in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitutional bylaws Committee.
- C. Staff Senators are obligated to adhere to the New Jersey State Ethics Commission, N.J.S.A. 52:13D-23.

Article XIII: Adoption of and Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1: Adoption

Initial adoption of this constitution requires a two-third affirmative vote of the entire staff electorate as defined in Article V.

Section 2: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any senator. Open debate and public comment forum must be undertaken before an official vote may be held. Once an official vote is called, a quorum of the total number of elected Senators must exist to move the vote forward. If a two-thirds majority in favor is achieved, the proposed amendment shall be considered approved. Once approved by the Senate, all changes to this Constitution, including those which necessitate modification of the sections of the Constitution must be sent to the Executive Committee Secretary for incorporation into the written Constitution.

Section 3. Technical Changes

Technical changes to this Constitution are to be understood to include renumbering articles and sections, updating administrative titles, and making other non-substantive revisions that improve accuracy and clarity. It shall be the prerogative of the Staff Senate Executive Committee to make technical changes to this Constitution by majority vote.

ARTICLE XIV: Rules of Order

In the absence of any special rules that the Senate may adopt, the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the conduct of procedure of Senate meetings.