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# *Staff Senate Bylaws*

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## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

The following bylaws are the rules adopted by Staff Senate for the purpose of managing its internal affairs, including the work of its officers, members and employees.

## 2.0 Purpose, Mission, and Administrative Status

Staff Senate shall: represent the position of the classified employees of Montana State University on University committees and all appropriate MSU organizations; promote and provide for improved working conditions and the professional welfare of the staff; facilitate communication and cooperation between ASMSU, the administration of MSU, Faculty Senate, Professional Council, the classified staff of MSU-Bozeman, all appropriate MUS organizations and the Board of Regents; promote the improvement of higher education in the State of Montana; assist in the development of staff training programs and policies; develop, foster, and promote recruitment and retention strategies for classified employees; and carry out such other goals and activities as Staff Senate shall determine to be consistent with the overall purpose of Staff Senate, the administration of MSU-Bozeman, and the promotion and practice of shared governance.

Staff Senate focuses on integrating classified staff priorities into the mission, goals and strategy of MSU, the MUS, and the Board of Regents. It places great emphasis on communications with its constituents, partners, and governing bodies such that its research, presentation materials, and input represent the priorities of classified employees and are relevant within the context of others' objectives. Staff Senate brings to the Shared Governance and MUS Staff Associations (MUSSA) a belief in the benefits of consolidating experience and strengthening communication to build foundations, and fulfill goals and objectives. Staff Senate is a unique entity of the Administration and Finance Division. For business and finance practices, Staff Senate should be considered an integral part of the Division. However for governance purposes, Staff Senate retains its independent status.

## 3.0 STAFF SENATE Representation

Staff Senate is composed of two groups of employees.

3.1. *Elected Representatives* who are nominated and elected "at large" from each of the following EEO categories:

- Secretarial/Clerical
- Technical/Paraprofessional
- Skilled Crafts
- Service/Maintenance
- Classified Professional

3.1.1. Additionally, one representative will be nominated and elected at large from off campus classified employees regardless of EEO category.

3.1.2. The number of elected representatives from each category will be determined as follows: there will be a minimum of two elected representatives from each EEO category; if there are more than 200 employees in a category, there will be one additional elected representative for each additional 100 employees within the category. For purposes of determining the proper representation of EEO categories, the number of staff within each EEO category as of the first working day of March each year will be used.

3.2. *Duly Appointed Classified Employees* who represent the staff on University committees.

## 4.0 Qualifications for STAFF SENATE Membership

With supervisor approval, classified staff members, union or union exempt, of .5 FTE or greater who have completed their probationary period by the commencement of the election process (first working

day of March each year) shall be eligible for Staff Senate membership (elected, or duly appointed). No direct employee of Staff Senate (i.e. the Program Coordinator) shall be eligible for voting membership but may serve on University committees.

#### 5.0 Elections and Terms of Appointment

- 5.1. Elected members will serve three-year terms with the intent of maintaining continuity. Terms will begin at the start of a fiscal year. Elections will be held each spring to replace those elected members whose terms expire on June 30th of each year. Nominations will be solicited from the particular employment category where the vacancy occurs, and election will be by popular vote of the employees in that category in 13.0 Staff Senate Standing Committees (below).
- 5.2. If for any reason, during an elected member's term of appointment, that member's employment category changes (e.g. as a result of a change in existing job duties or acceptance of a different position), but they remain a classified employee, that member may choose to complete the term, representing the category of employees that elected him/her, rather than resign his/her membership. Subsequent eligibility for re-election of such a member would fall within his/her actual employment category at the time the election process commences.
- 5.3. Elected members shall not serve more than two consecutive terms, with the exception mentioned in 6.0 Staff Senate Vacancies (below).
- 5.4. Duly appointed classified staff who represent the staff on University committees serve as members of Staff Senate in exact correlation to the term of their committee appointment.
- 5.5. If, during any member's term of appointment, that member's employment changes such that they are no longer a classified employee, that member shall resign from Staff Senate effective at commencement of his/her employment status change. The resulting vacancy will be filled through usual channels in 6.0 Staff Senate Vacancies (below).

#### 6.0 STAFF SENATE Vacancies

- 6.1. *Declaration of Vacancy:* An elected Staff Senate member's seat shall be declared vacant following three (3) consecutive absences at regular monthly Staff Senate meetings. A member whose seat has been declared vacant may petition for reinstatement at any time prior to the vacancy having been filled by another individual. Requests for reinstatement will be considered during the next regularly scheduled Staff Senate Meeting. The individual may be reinstated by a majority vote of the members in attendance at the meeting.
- 6.2. *Filling Vacancies:* Vacancies occurring during an elected member's term may be filled by the person receiving the next highest number of votes during the election in which the incumbent was elected. Alternatively, with the consent of the Staff Senate members at a regular meeting, the University President may fill vacancies in the following manner. The appointee shall be from the same category as the Staff Senate member whose seat has been vacated. The replacement will serve out the remainder of the three-year term. Should a replacement not be found using these methods, the position shall remain vacant until the next election cycle. For future election eligibility purposes, the replacement for the elected member shall be deemed to have served a full term. An elected Staff Senate member shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms unless the election process fails to nominate potential new members in any EEO category. In this case, the out-going member may be invited to run again. Newly elected members will attend the May meeting. Newly appointed members will attend the first meeting following appointment.

#### 7.0 STAFF SENATE Meetings

- 7.1. Staff Senate shall hold open meetings at least once each month.
- 7.2. All regular Staff Senate meeting dates shall be published in the MSU Today and Staff Senate website no later than two days prior to the meeting date.

- 7.3. A “quorum” shall be declared when 50% of the elected and duly appointed members are present at a meeting. A “majority vote” shall be a majority of all members present at the meeting.
- 7.4. Staff Senate shall have the ability to adopt such standing rules as are deemed necessary.

## 8.0 STAFF SENATE Responsibilities

- 8.1. Staff Senate elected and duly appointed members shall, at minimum, attend each Staff Senate two-hour monthly meeting, as well as the meetings of any committee, board, or task force on which they sit. A member may be excused for the following reasons: sick leave, annual leave, or professional obligations.
- 8.2. As the representative body of the classified staff, Staff Senate members shall be available to act and speak for the staff on matters concerning the staff. Staff Senate may examine all matters related to the welfare of the University and classified staff, and is charged with promoting the general welfare of the classified staff.
- 8.3. Staff Senate shall be available to meet with the faculty, administration and others for advice and consultation, and shall disseminate information to the classified staff.
- 8.4. Staff Senate members and officers and the Staff Senate Program Coordinator may voice their individual opinions on any matter as appropriate, so long as such opinions are identified as personal. Members, officers, and the Program Coordinator are expected to be mindful that, when speaking for Staff Senate they are effectively representing the consensus view of the entire classified workforce, and to be aware of the implication of so doing.

## 9.0 STAFF SENATE Officers

- 9.1. *Officers:* All members (elected and appointed) of Staff Senate are eligible to run for office. Elected officers (Chair and Vice Chair) shall, when possible, serve the full term of their elected appointment. Appointed members of Staff Senate are eligible to serve the full year term of an elected officer even if their committee appointment ends before that date. The general membership shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair at its regular meeting in May of each year.
- 9.2. *Election of Officers:* Election of officers shall be by paper ballot and elected by a majority vote of the members present.
- 9.3. *Term:* The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve a one year term beginning July 1 of each fiscal year.
- 9.4. *Vacancies:* A vacancy in the office of Chair will be filled by the Vice Chair. It is however possible for the Vice Chair to decline the chair vacancy with good reason, in which case Staff Senate members (new and existing) may elect a Chair from within their number.
- 9.5. When a Vice Chair vacancy exists, a replacement will be chosen from Staff Senate’s members, by nomination from the floor, and appointed by majority vote.
- 9.6. *Removal of an Officer:* The officers of Staff Senate shall include the Chair and the Vice Chair. Each officer serves at the pleasure of the majority of Staff Senate and may be replaced only by a “positive vote of no confidence” duly processed as an agenda item with a majority vote.

## 10.0 Responsibilities

### 10.1. Chair Responsibilities

- 10.1.1. To preside over Staff Senate meetings;
- 10.1.2. To call special meetings and represent Staff Senate at meetings with campus and MUS organizations;
- 10.1.3. To attend meetings of the Board of Regents as the official representative of Staff Senate;
- 10.1.4. To be the official spokesperson to represent the interests of, and to communicate information about, the activities of Staff Senate;
- 10.1.5. To ensure that Staff Senate is available to assist the campus on matters that concern the classified staff as well as the University at large;

- 10.1.6. To fulfill the obligations of supervisor to the Staff Senate Program Coordinator, as required under the MUS Staff Compensation Plan;
- 10.1.7. To report to the Vice President for Administration & Finance as regards Staff Senate's employee recruitment, compensation, reward, and discipline (discussing concerns, proposals and/or actions);
- 10.1.8. To report to the Vice President for Administration & Finance, in matters related to Staff Senate's budget development, reporting, amendment, and fiscal emergencies, although associated tasks are performed by the Program Coordinator;
- 10.1.9. To meet with the Vice President for Administration & Finance in the spring of his/her election as Chair, to discuss Staff Senate's financial and business practices;

#### 10.2. *Vice Chair Responsibilities*

- 10.2.1. To assume the duties of the Chair in his/her absence;
- 10.2.2. To be the principal nominee for Chair at the end of his/her term as Vice Chair. Whenever possible, the Vice Chair shall serve for one (1) year in that position before assuming the position of the Chair. If for any reason the Vice Chair must assume the position of Chair before the one (1) year term of Vice Chair has ended, a new Vice Chair must be elected immediately;
- 10.2.3. To meet with the Vice President for Administration and Finance in the spring of his/her election as Vice Chair, to discuss Staff Senate's financial and business practices;

#### 10.3. *Program Coordinator Responsibilities*

The Program Coordinator is a paid position, appointed via the usual classified recruitment processes. On issues relating to classified employees, the Program Coordinator is Staff Senate's key liaison with the MSU Administrative leadership, other MUS campuses, Human Resources, Faculty Senate, Professional Council, ASMSU, and classified employees. The Program Coordinator operates under the direction of the Chair to:

- 10.3.1. Perform administrative, planning, and fiscal management tasks in support of the Staff Senate office;
- 10.3.2. Conduct research, compile findings, and make recommendations to Staff Senate in the conduct of its business, including the reporting of findings or the results of research to MSU administrators or other external bodies as appropriate;
- 10.3.3. Coordinate the MUS, MUSSA, OCHE and Board of Regents activities of Staff Senate;
- 10.3.4. Coordinate and facilitate the regular internal and external communications of Staff Senate;
- 10.3.5. Facilitate the recruitment and coordinate the appointment of classified representation on university committees;
- 10.3.6. Call for agenda items from members one week prior to the next scheduled meeting, and make the agenda available on the Staff Senate website not later than two days prior to the next scheduled meeting;
- 10.3.7. Tally votes in association with the Chair and Vice Chair;
- 10.3.8. Prepare and publish written minutes for every Staff Senate meeting. Unapproved minutes will be published on-line not later than two days prior to the next scheduled meeting;
- 10.3.9. Request and publish committee reports monthly;
- 10.3.10. Maintain meeting attendance records;
- 10.3.11. Perform all other duties relating to the business of Staff Senate.

### 11.0 **Participation in Governance**

- 11.1. Staff Senate embraces the practice of Shared Governance within the culture of MSU and supports the concept through its participation in ASGL (the Association of Shared Governance

Leaders) and the broad range of committees on which its representatives serve. Standing committees that require Staff Senate nominated representation include: Budget Council, Campus Sustainability Advisory Committee, Facilities Services Advisory Committee, International Programs Committee, MSU Benefits Committee, Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee, Parking Appeals, Personnel Board, Planning Council, Recreation Sports Advisory Board, Space Management Committee, University Facilities Planning Board, University Council, University Marketing Committee, and other committees as established.

- 11.2. Vacancies for representatives on shared governance committees shall be filled as needs arise and as dictated by the committee's structure. The Staff Senate Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, will announce vacancies and call for volunteers by all appropriate methods, the Staff Senate website, and at regular Staff Senate meetings. Volunteers will be asked to submit a statement of interest to the Staff Senate Program Coordinator by a set deadline. If there is more than one volunteer, the Staff Senate Chair and Vice Chair shall conduct interviews. The Staff Senate Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, shall forward the name of the proposed representative for approval.

## 12.0 Amendment of Bylaws

Amendments to these bylaws may be made as follows:

- 12.1. Bylaws changes must be on the agenda for discussion at two regularly scheduled Staff Senate meetings prior to being posted on the Staff Senate web site for comment. Input shall be invited for a period of ten days, and duly considered, before any final vote is taken.
- 12.2. Proposed amendment(s) to the bylaws shall be placed on the next agenda by a majority vote of a quorum of elected members at any regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting. Staff Senate's intent to take a final vote shall also be included on the appropriate meeting's agenda.
- 12.3. Each proposed change to the Bylaws shall be voted on separately and adopted following a 2/3 yes vote of a quorum of elected members.
- 12.4. If any Bylaws change fails to be adopted upon taking the final vote then the proposed change may not be brought before Staff Senate again for a period of 3 months unless a 2/3 majority of all voting members requests that it be considered again.

## 13.0 Staff Senate Standing Committees

Staff Senate internal governance includes standing committees. Additionally, interim committees and task forces may be convened at the discretion of the chair or membership to perform specific tasks in the interest of the Senate.

Standing committees meet and perform specific duties.

- 13.1. The Chair shall appoint a *Nominating Committee* at the March meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least two Staff Senate members. The Nominating Committee's charge is to determine which members of Staff Senate are eligible and willing to run for office for the next fiscal year. A list of nominees will be circulated to the members prior to the April meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the time of the election process. Elected members, whose terms begin July 1, may be included on the ballot and may vote along with existing members, in the election of officers.
- 13.2. The Chair shall appoint a *Bylaws Review Committee* biennially at the September meeting. The Bylaws Review Committee may be called to form by request, with approval by majority vote at any regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting. The Bylaws Review Committee shall consist of at least two Staff Senate members. The Bylaws Review Committee's charge is to review the

bylaws on a periodic basis. If changes or updates are deemed necessary, the committee shall initiate the guidelines provided in 12.0 Amendment of Bylaws.

#### **14.0 History**

Section 4:00, "Personnel Services Advisory Committee, "MSU Classified Personnel Manual, dated June, 1976. Committee's reorganization approved by President Tietz in January, 1979. Revisions approved July 1981, July 1983, and November 1987. Revision approved by the Vice President for Administration on April 1, 1992. Revision approved by the Vice President for Administration & Finance on November 29, 2001. This revision approved by the Vice President for Administration & Finance on May 6, 2005. Notification that Leslie Taylor had approved the CEPAC By Laws' removal from Personnel Policy & Procedure for lodging with Staff Senate under Shared Governance, November 6, 2007. Revision approved Staff Senate meeting January 28, 2009. Revision approved Staff Senate meeting September 28, 2011.