

Staff Senate By Laws

formerly known as the Classified Employees Personnel Advisory Committee (CEPAC)

1.0 Introduction and Purpose

The following by laws 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: facilitate communication and cooperation between the administration, Faculty Senate, Professional Council, ASMSU, the classified staff of Montana State University-Bozeman, and all appropriate MUS organizations; promote improvement of higher education in the State of Montana; promote and provide for improved working conditions and professional welfare of the staff; assist in the development of staff training programs and policies; and carry out such other goals and activities as Staff Senate shall determine from time to time 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 tying 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 our research, presentation materials, and input are relevant within the context of others' objectives. Staff Senate brings to the Shared Governance and MUS Staff Associations (MUSSA) forums 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 must retain its independent status, so that it can fulfill its mission of representing all campus classified employees.

3.0 STAFF SENATE Representation

Staff Senate is composed of employees elected "at large" from each of the following EEO categories:

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

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

4.0 Qualifications for STAFF SENATE Membership

As defined in Staff Senate Representation, a classified staff member, union or union exempt, of .5 FTE or greater who has completed at least two years of continuous employment at the commencement of the election process shall be eligible for election to Staff Senate. No direct employee of Staff Senate (i.e. the Administrative Associate) shall be eligible for voting membership of the committee.

Ad-hoc members are non-voting members, which serve on committees as classified employee representatives.

5.0 Elections and Terms of Appointment

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 members whose terms expire on June 30th of each year. Nominations will be solicited from the particular category where the vacancy occurs, and election will be by popular vote of the employees in that category.

If for any reason, during a 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.

If, during a 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 (6.0 Staff Senate Vacancies).

6.0 STAFF SENATE Vacancies

Declaration of Vacancy. A Staff Senate member's seat shall be declared vacant following three (3) unexcused absences at regular monthly Staff Senate meetings. Excused absences include sick leave, annual leave and professional obligations.

Filling Vacancies. Vacancies occurring during a 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

For future election eligibility purposes, and regardless of the duration of the remainder, the replacement member shall be deemed to have served a full term. A 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 which case, the out-going member may be invited to run again. New members will attend the May meeting.

7.0 STAFF SENATE Meetings

Staff Senate shall hold open meetings at least once each month.

All regular Staff Senate meeting dates will be published in the MSU Today and Staff Senate website prior to the meeting date.

Notice of the meetings, agendas and minutes shall be available via the Staff Senate web site no later than ~~the Monday~~ two days before the Staff Senate meeting.

A "quorum" shall be declared when 50% of the total number of voting members are present at a meeting. A "majority vote" shall be a majority of the quorum present at the meeting, rather than a majority of the total number of voting members, whether or not present at the meeting.

Staff Senate members may be released from normal work duties a minimum of two (2) hours each month for the purpose of attending Staff Senate meetings. This release time shall not be charged against the employee's annual leave.

8.0 STAFF SENATE Responsibilities

Staff Senate, as the representative body of the classified staff, shall be available to act and speak for this staff on matters concerning this staff.

Staff Senate may examine all matters related to the welfare of the University and classified staff, and it is charged with promoting the general welfare of the classified staff.

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.

Staff Senate members and officers, and the Staff Senate Administrative Associate may voice their individual opinions on any matter as appropriate, so long as such opinions are identified as personal. Members, officers, and the Administrative Associate 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.

Staff Senate shall have the ability to adopt such standing rules as are deemed necessary.

9.0 STAFF SENATE Officers

Officers: Staff Senate members shall elect from its membership a Chair and a Chair-Elect at its regular meeting in May of each year.

Nominations: The Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee at the March meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least two Staff Senate voting members. The Nominating Committee's charge is to determine which voting 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 voting members prior to the May meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the time of the election process. New members, being introduced at the May meeting and whose terms begin July 1, may be included on the ballot and may vote, along with existing members, in the election of officers.

Election of Officers: Election of officers shall be by paper ballot and elected by a majority vote of the quorum present.

Term: The Chair shall serve for one (1) year, to assume official duties July 1. The Chair-Elect will serve one year with the intent of filling the Chair vacancy for the subsequent term. It is, however, possible for the Chair-Elect to decline the Chair vacancy with good reason.

Vacancies: A vacancy in the office of chair will be filled by the chair-elect. It is however possible for the Chair-elect to decline the chair vacancy with good reason, in which case Staff Senate voting members (new and existing) may elect a Chair from within their number.

When a Chair-Elect vacancy exists, replacement will be chosen, by nomination from the floor, and appointed with the approval of Staff Senate voting members by majority vote.

Removal of an Officer: the officers of Staff Senate shall include the Chair and the Chair-Elect. These officers serve 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.

Chair Responsibilities:

- To preside over Staff Senate meetings
- To call special meetings and represent Staff Senate at meetings with campus and MUS organizations
- To attend meetings of the Board of Regents as the official representative of Staff Senate
- To be the official spokesperson to represent the interests of, and to communicate information about, the activities of Staff Senate.
- 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
- To fulfill the obligations of supervisor to the Staff Senate Administrative Associate, as required under the MUS Staff Compensation Plan
- 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)
- 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 Administrative Associate
- 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.

Chair-Elect Responsibilities:

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

Administrative Associate:

The Administrative Associate is a paid position, appointed via the usual classified recruitment processes.

Responsibilities:

- The Administrative Associate performs the duties previously attributed to the Secretary
 - Call for agenda items from members and ad-hoc members one week prior to the next scheduled meeting, and make the agenda available on the Staff Senate web site not later than two days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

- 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, at which they will be approved
- Request committee reports from Staff Senate members or the ad-hoc members so they can be reported at the next scheduled meeting.
- Tally votes if consensus cannot be reached.
- Maintain attendance records.
- The Administrative Associate performs the duties previously attributed to the Committee Manager:
 - Call for classified staff to submit their names for University committees, search committees, or other needs the University may have for representation of classified staff.
 - Coordinate the list of candidates of Staff Senate representatives or classified employees who wish to serve on University committees to the University President. This will provide the President with a pool of classified staff for representation on University committees related to the welfare of classified staff.
 - Coordinate regular communications between ad-hoc members and Staff Senate according to methods or policies approved by Staff Senate
 - Organize all committee reports for the minutes.
- In addition, the Administrative Associate is the key liaison with classified employees, Faculty Senate, Professional Council, ASMSU, Administrative leadership, other MUS campuses, and Personnel and Payroll Services on issues relating to classified employees. This position also performs administrative, planning, and fiscal management tasks in support of the Staff Senate office as this is the sole employee of the Staff Senate office, under the direction of the Staff Senate Chair.
- The Administrative Associate shall be ineligible for election as a voting member of Staff Senate.

Standing committees that require Staff Senate -nominated representation include:

Calendar Committee, Debt Planning and Management Committee, Facilities Services Advisory Committee, International Programs Committee, Information Technology Committee, Labor Management Committee, MSU Benefits Committee, Personnel Board, Space Management Committee, Strategic Planning and Budget Committee, To Improve Productivity Program Committee, Traffic Appeals Committee, University Facilities Planning Board, University Planning Budget & Analysis Committee.

History

Section 4:00, "Personnel Services Advisory Committee," *MSU Classified Personnel Manual*, dated June, 1976. Committees 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.