



# Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws

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## CONSTITUTION OF THE LSUS STAFF SENATE

### ARTICLE I - Purpose:

The Louisiana State University in Shreveport Staff Senate is made up of duly elected representatives from the staff employees of the University. To this end, the Staff Senate shall:

- Provide the LSUS staff with a forum for expressing views on matters relating to their well being.
- Promote and protect the welfare of the LSUS staff to the extent that the Staff Senate policies are consistent with State Civil Service regulations, University Board of Supervisors bylaws and regulations, University policy statements, and System permanent memorandum (PM), and compliments and supports the academic mission of the University.
- Review policies proposed or previously adopted by others that may affect the welfare of the staff, and make recommendations about them to the Chancellor.
- Promote the effective exchange of information between the LSUS staff, administration and faculty.
- Propose and maintain programs to enhance the personal and professional well being of the staff as well as encourage their vocational and educational development.

### ARTICLE II - Authority:

Within the bounds of this constitution, the Staff Senate will have the authority to adopt bylaws, rules, and resolutions and to take actions necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. After adoption, all formal actions of the Staff Senate shall be forwarded to the Chancellor for review, recommendation, and approval.

### ARTICLE III - Organization:

#### Section 1. Representation

The LSUS Staff Senate shall represent all non-faculty persons who are employed at least half-time in established positions and who have been with the University for a minimum of six consecutive months.

#### Section 2. Senate Membership

The LSUS staff senators will be elected by the various groups of non-faculty, currently defined as “Classified” and “Unclassified and Other Academic” by the University’s Office of Human Resource Management.

There will be one senator representing every 14 employees, with a minimum of two senators from each group. If the final count is less than 14 but greater than 9, an additional senator will be elected from that group.

Re-evaluation of the representation process will take place at such a time as Staff Senate membership reaches 20 or another group of employees is created.

- a. Qualifications

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Senators must be qualified under Article III, Section I of this Constitution. In addition, the staff member must have completed at least one year of continuous employment at LSUS immediately prior to the Staff Senate election.

b. Terms in office

Senators will be elected for three-year terms. Terms in office will be staggered to ensure that approximately one-third of the Staff Senate is elected each year. Senators may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

c. Senate officers

The Staff Senate shall elect from its membership a president, a vice-president, and a secretary. Each shall be elected in accordance with the Staff Senate Bylaws. A parliamentarian will be appointed by the president from the Staff membership.

## ARTICLE IV - Meetings:

### Section 1: Regular Meetings.

Regular meetings shall take place on a day and at an hour designated by the Staff Senate Executive Committee during the second week of each month, except June, July, and August, unless a conflict occurs with the University academic Calendar. The President shall determine the place and time of special meetings. With the exception of executive sessions, these meetings will be open to the public.

A simple majority of the membership of the Staff Senate will constitute a quorum. Each member of the Staff Senate will have one vote. Voting by proxy is permitted.

### Section 2: Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by

- a. the president;
- b. the Executive Committee;
- c. written petition of five Senators; or
- d. written petition of 40 staff members.

Special meetings will be open to the public, with the exception of executive sessions. Five working days notice will be posted for a special meeting except in case of an emergency.

### Section 3: Agenda

Meetings of the Staff Senate will follow an agenda prepared in advance by the Executive Committee. Requests for items to be placed on the agenda by non-senators must be presented in writing to the President at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting. A published notice of the meeting will be posted in an appropriate place.

### Section 4: Release Time

Senators will be released from normal work duties without loss of pay or other benefits to attend official Staff Senate meetings.



## ARTICLE V - Committees

### Section 1: Standing Committees

The Staff Senate shall establish standing committees as follows: Elections, Benefits and Policies, and Long Range Review and Planning. Other standing committees may be established by majority vote of the senate as needed. Each standing committee shall be composed of one representative from each category nominated from within the group and confirmed by the Senate for a term of one year.

### Section 2: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will consist of four voting members of the Staff Senate as follows: president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. The past president may serve as an ex-officio member.

### Section 3: Ad Hoc Committees

Additional special committees may be established by the majority vote of the Senate as needed. Any member of the staff community may be invited to serve on an ad hoc committee.

### Section 4: University Committees

The Staff Senate shall request representation on University Administrative Committees which affect the welfare of the staff and the University. The representative to serve on these committees shall be recommended by the Staff Senate.

### Section 5: Release Time

Committee members will be released from normal work duties without loss of pay or other benefits to attend official standing and ad hoc committee meetings, and meetings with liaison groups dealing with items of concern to LSUS and state employees.

## ARTICLE VI - Ratification

This constitution shall be considered ratified and official upon approval by a two-thirds majority of the total votes cast by qualified staff members as defined in Article 111, Section 1.

## ARTICLE VII - Amendments

### Section 1: Proposals

An amendment to this Constitution may be proposed either by a Staff Senator or in the form of a petition signed by at least twenty qualified staff members. Proposed amendments must be presented at a regularly scheduled Senate meeting.

### Section 2: Senate Approval

A proposed amendment must be introduced at least one regularly scheduled meeting prior to being voted on. To pass, the proposed amendment must receive the vote of two-thirds of the Senators present.



### Section 3: Vote by Staff

An amendment approved by the Staff Senate shall be submitted to the staff for a vote. To become effective, the amendment must receive two-thirds of the votes cast by qualified staff members.

### Section 4: Chancellor's Approval

An amendment which has been approved by the Staff Senate and qualified staff members shall be submitted, when appropriate, to the Chancellor for review and approval. All such copies of the approved amendment will be distributed to the staff members.



## BYLAWS OF THE LSUS STAFF SENATE

### Article I - Election to Staff Senate Membership

- A. Election of members to the Staff Senate shall be conducted by the Elections Committee in accordance with the guidelines established by the Staff Senate. Nominations from anyone within the category or written applications will be accepted by those wanting to serve on the Senate. In cases where there are only as many candidates in a category as vacancies, the candidates shall be declared elected.
- B. In case no one files for a particular Staff Senate position, that position shall be filled, by appointment from within the category in which the vacancy occurred. Such appointment shall be made by the president with approval of the Staff Senate and with the subsequent majority approval of that entire category.
- C. Staff Senate elections will be held in the month of April at a time determined by the Elections Committee and approved by the Staff Senate.
- D. Administrative year and terms:
  - The administrative year of the Staff Senate shall be from May 1 to April 30.
  - Terms of newly elected senators shall begin May 1 and shall run three consecutive administrative years ending on April 30 of the third year.
  - The seat of any senator whose term is expiring whether elected or appointed to serve shall be vacated as of April 30 in the last year of the term.
- E. Vacancies
  - If following elections a vacancy on the Staff Senate occurs, that category will meet as soon as possible and elect an eligible member of the staff from within their group. The person elected will serve until the term of said position expires.
  - If a position is vacated after elections and before the first general meeting, the position will be filled by the candidate with the next highest number of votes for the category with a vacancy.
  - Senators whose categories change will not complete the term to which they were elected. Such category changes shall constitute vacancies and shall be filled as in Article I, E 1. above.

### Article II - Removal

- A. A senator may be removed for due cause by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire Staff Senate in a regular meeting or a special called meeting after a due process hearing.
- B. A Senator shall be removed by written petition stating cause signed by at least 60% of the constituents in the Senator's category. Signatures on said petition must be validated by the Elections Committee.
- C. Non attendance at Staff Senate meetings will also be cause for removal.
  - A record of attendance for the year (May 1 through April 30) will be kept at each Staff Senate meeting.

- If a Senator is absent without proxy for two meetings during their term, the President shall declare the seat vacant. Only two proxies are allowed per Staff Senate year (a total of six per term).
- Before any Senator is removed for non-attendance, the Executive Committee must meet with the Senator in question and review on an individual basis any special circumstances. This review must take place within 5 working days after the Senator's first absence. The findings of the Executive Committee will be reported to the Senate. The Senate as a whole will vote by written ballot to allow or not to allow an excused absence.
- Nonattendance at special meetings or absences caused by a change in the regular meeting date will not count as an absence for purposes of this section.
- A Senator may petition for reinstatement to the Senate only once during the term. Such a petition must be submitted in person by the individual at the first regularly scheduled meeting following removal from office. Reinstatement may be granted by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those Senators present.

### Article III - Officers

There shall be a president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary.

- A. Election for president shall occur during the regularly scheduled meeting of May for one administrative year.
  - The newly elected president after election in May shall hold the title of president-elect from the end of the regularly scheduled meeting in May to May 31 of an administrative year.
  - The president-elect shall assume office on June 1 of the next administrative year.
  - If the president-elect should resign or vacate his or her office for any reason before the first regularly scheduled meeting of the next administrative year, the senators for the next administrative year shall elect a president in the first regularly scheduled meeting.
- B. The vice-president, treasurer, and secretary shall be elected for one administrative year following the installation of the senate of the regularly scheduled meeting in May. The vice-president, treasurer, and secretary shall take their positions immediately.
- C. The administrative year of every officer shall end as of April 30 in the following year.
- D. Election procedures
  - Nominations for officers shall be made verbally from the floor of the Senate. Nominees must accept or reject the nomination.
  - Elections shall be held by written ballot. If no one receives a majority vote on the first ballot, there shall be a runoff between the two persons receiving the largest number of votes. The second ballot is final except in the event of a tie.
  - In the event of a tie in the election of any officer, a runoff shall be held between the tied candidates. If the tie is not broken after the runoff, then the selection shall be made by a flip of a coin by a neutral party.



- In the event an officer resigns his/her position, an election to fill the vacancy shall be held by the Senate members at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

E. Duties

- **President:** The president shall be the presiding officer at meetings of the Staff Senate, and shall be primarily responsible for preparing the agenda for each meeting. The president shall see that agendas, as well as minutes of previous meetings are properly circulated and posted. As an elected representative, the president may vote on any and all issues. The President shall serve as liaison between the Staff Senate and the Chancellor.
- **Vice President:** The vice-president shall assume the responsibilities of the president whenever the president is absent or otherwise unable to perform specified duties. The vice-president shall serve as liaison with the Faculty Senate.
- **Secretary:** The secretary shall assume the responsibilities of the president in the absence of both the president and vice- president. The secretary shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records of all business conducted by the Staff Senate. The secretary shall keep a record of attendance and notify the category membership of the nonattendance of their representative after the second such absence. A stenographer will be permitted to assist the secretary in these duties if needed. The approved minutes shall be distributed to the campus community via email and a copy will be posted on the website.
- **Treasurer:** The treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the Staff Senate fiscal operations. The treasurer shall give budget reports at each meeting and shall oversee the paying of invoices for all expenditures of the Staff Senate.

#### Article IV - Meetings

- Regular meetings shall take place each month at a day and time designated by the President except June, July and August, unless a conflict occurs with the University academic calendar. The president shall determine the place and time of special meetings.
- Notices of regular meetings shall be emailed to the campus community no less than five days in advance. Either written or telephone notification will be given to all members of the Staff Senate in advance of special meetings.
- The agenda of regular meetings will be circulated to all members of the Staff Senate at least three calendar days in advance of the meetings. The president or Executive Committee may add items to the agenda at any time.
- Meetings of the Staff Senate will be open to the public, but only Senators and speakers identified on the agenda are entitled to speak. However, the presiding officer may recognize others to speak, time permitting. (See Article V, A., 3.).
- The Staff Senate reserves the right, upon majority vote, to go into executive session in accordance with the laws of the State of Louisiana. No final action can be taken in executive session.

- F. The president of the Staff Senate by majority vote is authorized to invite guests from any part of the University Community to speak about matters of interest to the Staff Senate.
- G. A majority vote of the Senators present will be necessary to take action on all matters. Members from all categories must be represented in order to conduct business.
- H. In case of a tie vote, the motion fails.
- I. Absent Senators may be represented by proxy. Said proxy must be eligible for Staff Senate election and be from within the absent Senator's employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2). At the meeting the proxy will present written authorization to the presiding officer. A Senator may hold more than one proxy for absent Senator(s) provided he or she is their designee in the same employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2).
- J. Copies of all approved minutes of the Staff Senate meetings shall be kept on file on the LSUS Staff Senate webpage.

#### Article V - Order of Business

- A. Attendance
  - Each member will register his or her attendance.
  - Proxies will present written authorization of representation to the secretary.
  - The secretary will verify a quorum.
- B. Revision and approval of minutes.
- C. Administrative reports
- D. President's report
- E. Committee reports
- F. Old business
- G. New business
- H. FYI (Any senator may speak on any subject)

#### Article VI - Committees

- A. Executive Committee
  - The Executive Committee will consist of four voting members of the Staff Senate as follows: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The immediate past president will serve ex-officio for a period of one year.
  - The priority of topics on the regular Staff Senate agenda will be established by the Executive Committee.
  - The regularly scheduled Executive committee meeting will be held no sooner than the week following the regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting and no later than eight calendar days Prior to the next Staff Senate meeting.

- Special meetings of the Executive committee can be scheduled by any Executive Committee member.
- B. Standing committees
- Standing committees shall be Elections, Benefits and Policies and Long-Range Review and Planning.
  - Each standing committee shall be composed of one representative from each category nominated from within the group and confirmed by the Senate for a term of one year. Any committee member may serve no more than two consecutive terms on the same committee.
  - Once confirmed, the President will appoint a chair pro tem until the committee can meet and select a chair from among its members. The chair may appoint a vice chair, if appropriate, to act in the absence of the chair.
  - Each standing committee chair will meet as many times as needed during the year and shall submit written reports of the meetings to the Staff Senate.
  - Charges of the standing committees are listed in the Appendix.
- C. Special Committees
- The Staff Senate shall appoint special committees as deemed necessary. Once confirmed, the President will appoint a chair pro tem until the committee can meet and select a chair from among its members.
  - Special committees shall submit written reports when their work is finished.

### Article VII - Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a simple majority of the Staff Senate, providing that the proposal for such change was introduced at least one regular meeting in advance of the vote. The Chancellor shall have final approval on any amendment before it becomes a part of the bylaws.



## APPENDIX

### ELECTIONS COMMITTEE CHARGE

The Elections Committee will have full responsibility for conducting elections. Duties of the committee will be to:

1. Certify the number of senators to which each employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2) is entitled.
2. Provide filing statements.
3. Verify eligibility as defined in the constitution of all staff members filing for office.
4. Make all physical arrangements pertaining to the election.
5. Report election results to the president of the Staff Senate.

### ELECTION PROCEDURES

Notice of election procedures to be followed in electing representatives to the Staff Senate will be sent to each staff member at least one month prior to the elections. The number of senators to be elected from each employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2) will be included in the notice of election procedures. In the case of an eligibility dispute, the University's Office of Human Resource Management shall verify employment and appropriate category.

### FILING INFORMATION

The deadline for candidates filing for Senate elections will be no sooner than one week after the election procedure notice has been distributed.

Candidates who wish to withdraw their names from the election must indicate their intent by sending a letter to the Elections committee no later than ten calendar days after the filing date. After this date, all names certified in the filing process will appear on the ballot.

In case no one files for a particular Staff Senate position, that position will be declared vacant, and filled according to procedures in Article 1, Section B, of the Staff Senate Bylaws.

### CAMPAIGNING

Candidates will be responsible for their own campaign, including expenses, should they wish to campaign.

Each candidate will be provided with a complete list of all persons in their employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2), upon request. Each candidate will be provided with a copy of the constitution and bylaws.

### ELECTION

Elections of members of the Staff Senate will be carried out in accordance with Article 111, Section 2, of the Constitution of the Staff Senate.

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## VOTING

The Elections Committee will conduct the elections in accordance with Article 1, Section C, of the Staff Senate Bylaws.

Each eligible staff member may vote for as many candidates as there are positions to be filled in their specified employee group (as defined in the Constitution, Article III, Section 2). The candidates who receive the most votes will be elected. Ties will be broken by the flip of a coin by a neutral party.

If any ballot should contain more votes than called for in the ballot instructions, that ballot will be disqualified and kept with the election process records for audit.

Voting results will be tabulated by the Election Committee and the results will be publicly reported to the Staff Senate.

## RECORD KEEPING

The Elections committee will be responsible for keeping records of elections on file until the next regular election in each group. The ballots will be sealed upon the completion of official election tabulations and announcement of results.

## BENEFITS AND POLICIES COMMITTEE CHARGE

The Benefits and Policies Committee shall maintain an ongoing study to determine the needs of the staff; review and make recommendations regarding policies pertaining to conditions of employment, employment grievances, promotion, compensation, leave, insurance, retirement, and other fringe benefits affecting the welfare of the LSUS employees and their dependents.

The Benefits and Policies committee shall consider all matters brought to the committee's attention by the Staff Senate and/or the University administration.

## LONG RANGE REVIEW AND PLANNING COMMITTEE CHARGE

The Long Range Review and Planning Committee shall: maintain an ongoing study to determine future needs and priority of University matters relating to staff; advise the Senate on matters identified by this committee and other Senate committees worthy of consideration; review the work of other committees and assist them when appropriate to accomplish their objectives.

This committee shall also monitor the actions affecting the LSUS staff and higher education taken by the Louisiana Legislature. This committee shall also monitor actions taken by the Governor's office, as well as the actions of the Louisiana Department of Civil Service, and report to the Staff Senate any and all actions that may affect the LSUS staff. The committee will also recommend to the Staff Senate methods of communicating the concerns of the staff to these various agencies and offices. The Human Resource Management Director shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of this committee.



## CHANGE LOG

Amended in May 2006 to add the role of treasurer.

Amended in March 2021 to move from selecting senators based on EEO class to based on Classified/Unclassified designations.

Amended in October 2022 to change the timeframe of electing the Staff Senate President, remove language concerning the appointment of a Parliamentarian, and update the ways by which campus is notified of meetings. (Updates to Bylaws Only)

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