

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Staff Senate of the University of Louisiana Monroe

Adopted August 18, 2021

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. Name:

- A. This organization of elected representatives of the unclassified staff of the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM) shall be known as the Staff Senate.

Section 2. Purpose:

- A. The Staff Senate serves as liaison between the unclassified staff, hereinafter referred to as "staff," and the University President on substantive matters impacting the quality and excellence of the institution. In this capacity, the Staff Senate strives to foster a spirit of unity within the staff and encourage cooperation among unclassified staff, faculty, students, and administration for the benefit of the university.
- B. The functions of the Staff Senate include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Provide official representation for the unclassified staff members of the University in matters that affect the enhancement of the student experience and the goals of the University;
 - b. Receive and consider recommendations from, and consult with the University President and the campus community on matters of concern to staff;
 - c. Receive proposed policies or policy changes for review and make recommendations regarding interests and concerns that affect staff; encourage the professional growth and development of staff members;
 - d. Facilitate and enhance communication between the staff and the University President;
 - e. Act as a collective voice for presenting the concerns and needs of the staff to the University President.

Section 3. Authority:

- A. Within the bounds of the Constitution and Bylaws, the Staff Senate will have the authority to adopt bylaws, rules, and resolutions to fulfill its responsibilities. After adoption, all formal actions of the Staff Senate shall be forwarded to the Staff Senate President for review, recommendation, and approval of the institutional administration.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition:

- A. Constituents are defined as unclassified staff, not including civil service employees, and those not meeting the membership requirements of Article III of the ULM Faculty Senate Constitution.
- B. Senate membership shall be composed of representatives from each university organizational unit as established by the institution annually on March 15. The members of the President's Executive Council are not eligible for election to the Staff Senate.

Section 2. Representation:

- A. Senate membership shall be composed of representatives, hereinafter referred to as "senator(s)," from each university organizational unit. The number of representatives is based on the number of full-time unclassified employees working within an organizational unit as established by the institution annually on March 15.

- B. Representation shall be proportional based upon the total number of unclassified staff therein, per the institution's organizational structure as of March 15. There shall be one (1) senator elected from each organizational unit with twenty (20) employees or less. There shall be two (2) senators elected from each organizational unit with forty (40) employees or less with an additional senator elected for each forty (40) additional employees in that organizational unit. The maximum number of senators serving on the senate from any organizational unit shall not exceed four (4).
- C. The numbers of unclassified staff employees from each organizational unit as of March 15 will be used to determine membership representation, and shall be applicable for the ensuing academic year. Any change in the number of unclassified staff employees, that would increase organizational unit representation, will be calculated in the next annual election.

Section 3. Eligibility:

- A. Individuals eligible for election to the Staff Senate include any unclassified staff member, as detailed in Article II, Section 1, A., who have been employed full time at ULM for a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months, as of March 15 of the current year.

Section 4. Terms of Office:

- A. Senators shall be elected annually in April and shall serve a term of office, defined as two (2) years from installment at the May meeting of the elected year. Senators may serve two (2) consecutive terms in office, after which a one (1) year absence is required before candidates may be eligible for re-election to the Staff Senate.
- B. If, during a senator's term, institutional/organizational realignment, or a departmental position change occurs where a senator is moved to another organizational unit, that senator will:
 - a. Exercise the first option to complete the year representing their elected organizational unit until the next regularly scheduled election, then if an open seat is available in the new organizational unit, the senator will represent their new organizational unit.
 - b. If the first option is not available, then the second option is to complete the year representing their elected organizational unit until their term ends if no open seat in the new organizational unit is available.

Section 5. Replacement:

- A. In the event of resignation, incapacity, or change in status, the Staff Senate President shall notify the Staff Senate of the senator's leave or removal and then recommend a replacement to fill the vacancy. This appointment shall be approved by the Staff Senate at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- B. In the event of neglect of duties or non-attendance, the Staff Senate Secretary shall notify the Executive Board of the senator's record. A motion may be brought to the Staff Senate to debate and vote on removal of the member.
 - a. Neglect of duties shall be defined as intentional refusal, indifference, or unwillingness to perform the duties and responsibilities that reasonably can be expected.
 - b. Non-attendance shall be defined as being absent without an approved excuse from two (2) regular meetings in one (1) semester.
 - c. If the motion for removal passes, the Staff Senate President shall then recommend a replacement to fill the vacancy. This appointment shall be approved by the Staff Senate at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE III. LEADERSHIP

Section 1. Officers:

- A. The Staff Senate will elect from its membership a President, President-Elect, and Secretary for one (1) year of service. Candidates shall have completed one (1) year of current service on the senate to be eligible for election as President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Parliamentarian.
- B. Officers shall be extended to two (2) consecutive terms in the same office only in the event of attrition.
- C. The Staff Senate President shall schedule and create an agenda for all meetings; facilitate all meetings; meet with the University President as necessary; submit written reports, responses, and recommendations to the University President as necessary; provide email updates as appropriate to all unclassified Staff; recommend representation from the Staff Senate as requested; submit approved minutes to the University President; and shall appoint the Parliamentarian.
- D. The President-Elect shall fulfill the Staff Senate President's obligations in his/her absence; assist with the President's duties as requested by the President; announce elections, make ballots available to all unclassified Staff, clear Election forms through Human Resources; report election results to the Staff Senate; and coordinate the work of subcommittees.
- E. The Past President, if willing, shall serve a one year, non-voting, advisory role to the Executive Board in an "At-Large" position.
- F. The Secretary shall record minutes of all the Staff Senate meetings and submit them for posting on the Staff Senate web page.
- G. The Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the Staff Senate President and advise the Executive Board by ruling on the validity of the conduct of related business.

Section 2. Executive Board

- A. The Executive Board (EB) will be composed of the President, President-Elect, Past President, Secretary, and Parliamentarian.
- B. The Executive Board may act in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws on matters that arise between regular meetings of the Staff Senate.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. General Meetings

- A. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate will be held monthly at a time and place specified by the President, who is empowered to cancel or reschedule meetings. A schedule of all meetings shall be posted on the Staff Senate website.
- B. With the exception of executive sessions, these meetings will be open to the public. Only members of the Staff Senate or their proxies and invited speakers will be eligible to speak.
- C. A simple majority of the membership of the Staff Senate will constitute a quorum. Each member of the Staff Senate will have one vote, with the exception of the President and Past President, as they are non-voting members. Voting by proxy is permitted by submission to the President-Elect no later than two (2) days before the vote is to take place.

Section 2. Special Meetings

- A. Special meetings may be called by (a) the President; (b) the Executive Board; (c) written petition of five senators; (d) telephoned/emailed requests of five senators. Special meetings will be open to the public, with the exception of executive sessions. Only members of the Staff Senate or their proxies and invited speakers will be eligible to speak.

Section 3. Electronically Held Meetings

- A. Meetings can be conducted, when applicable, through use of Internet meeting services designated by the President that support visible displays identifying those participating, identifying those seeking recognition to speak, showing or making available the text of pending motions, and showing the results of votes.
- B. The roll call and the presence of a quorum shall be established by the Secretary's roll call at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members, unless any member demands a quorum count by audible roll call. Such a demand may be made following any vote for which the announced totals add to less than a quorum.
- C. Each member is responsible for their audio and Internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.
- D. To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall use a "Hand Raise" feature within the Internet meeting service.
- E. A member intending to make a main motion, to offer an amendment, or to propose instructions to a committee, shall, before or after being recognized, post the motion in writing to the online area designated for this purpose.
- F. Votes shall be taken by the anonymous voting as designated by the President. When required or ordered, other permissible methods of voting are by electronic roll call or by audible roll call. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

Section 4. Release Time

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

Section 5. Conduct & Order of Meetings

- A. The conduct of Staff Senate business shall be according to the procedures outlined in Robert's Rules of Order.
- B. The order of business to be followed at Staff Senate meetings shall be as follows:
 - a. Call to Order & Roll Call
 - b. Guest Speakers
 - c. Approval of Minutes
 - d. Reports of Committees
 - e. Unfinished Business
 - f. New Business
 - g. General Discussion
 - h. Adjournment
- C. An agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting shall be distributed by the Staff Senate President at least five (5) days prior to the meeting and posted on the Staff Senate web page.
- D. A draft of minutes as recorded by the secretary shall be sent to all senators at least five (5) days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The minutes shall be posted on the Staff Senate web page after formal approval at the next regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Formation.

- A. The Staff Senate President shall appoint at least three (3) senators to all standing committees and appoint a chairperson. A senator shall not be a member of more than two (2) standing committees.

Section 2. Standing Committees

- A. Standing committees shall be Constitution and Bylaws, Elections, Communications, and Staff Welfare. Any member of the University community may be invited to serve on a standing committee.
 - a. Constitution and Bylaws: The purpose of this committee shall be to study needed changes in the Constitution and Bylaws and to recommend amendments of these documents to the Staff Senate. All proposed amendments must be submitted in writing.
 - b. Elections: The President-Elect shall serve as the chairperson of this committee. This committee shall establish the procedures and a calendar for the annual election of senators. They shall notify the unclassified staff of available senate seats, receive an election Staff Senate Nomination Form (SSNF) from interested candidates, verify the eligibility of candidates, post the slate of candidates for senate positions, supervise the voting process and counting of votes, and provide official verification of the winning candidates.
 - c. Communications: The responsibilities of this committee shall include oversight of the staff senate web page and any vehicle used for the distribution of information by the Staff Senate to unclassified staff.
 - d. Staff Welfare: This committee shall maintain the Staff Handbook and research, report on, and recommend to the Staff Senate any action to be taken on issues concerning the general welfare of staff at ULM. All matters submitted to the committee and all recommendations of the committee to the Staff Senate shall be in writing.

Section 3. Ad Hoc Committees

- A. Additional committees may be established by the Executive Board as needed or as requested by the University President. Any member of the University community may be invited to serve on an ad hoc committee.
- B. Ad Hoc committees shall submit written reports to the Senate when their work is finished.

Section 4: University Committees

- A. The Staff Senate will request representation on, and appoint members to, University committees that affect the welfare of the staff and the University.

Section 5: Release Time

- A. Committee members will be released from normal work duties without loss of pay or other benefits to attend official Staff Senate Standing or Ad Hoc Committee meetings and University Committee meetings and meetings with liaison groups dealing with items of concern to ULM and state employees.

ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS

Section 1. General Election

- A. The President-Elect and the elections committee shall be responsible for conducting the election to be held in April of each year.
 - a. In determining representation as defined in Article II, Section 2, A., the Staff Senate President is considered a non-voting member and the President-Elect is known at the time of general election, therefore the organizational unit of the President-Elect will have that seat open for the upcoming election.
- B. Eligible voters are constituents, as detailed in Article II, Section 1, A., and may vote regardless of length of employment.
- C. Eligible, as defined in Article II, Section 3, A., and interested candidates for Staff Senate shall declare their interest by submitting an election Staff Senate Nomination Form (SSNF). Persons may also be nominated by other unclassified staff, within or outside their organizational unit, and the nominee will be asked to accept the nomination before being placed on the ballot.
- D. In the event no qualified Unclassified Staff submit an SSNF for one (1) or more of the available positions, the following course of action will be taken:
 - a. Eligibility will be extended to Unclassified Staff from the organizational unit lacking a nominee who have been employed at ULM for at least six (6) consecutive months.
 - b. Extend eligibility to Senate members from that organizational unit who are completing their term limit.
 - c. If after the above two (2) provisions have been exhausted and the organizational unit is still lacking a nominee, the senate seat will be forfeited until the next annual election.
 - d. The President-Elect shall automatically be eligible for election unchallenged if their term would normally expire in the course of progression to President. The President shall automatically be eligible for election unchallenged if their term would normally expire in the course of progression to Past President.

Section 2. Officer Election

- A. Officers shall be elected at the May meeting. The outgoing President shall be responsible for conducting the meeting and the elections process.
 - a. Elections should be a secret vote held by secure, electronic or paper methods.
 - b. In the event of a tie, a runoff between the candidates will be held. If the tie is not broken after a run-off, then the tie will be broken by Executive Board vote.
- B. Eligible, as defined in Article II, Section 3, A., and interested candidates for Staff Senate officer positions shall declare their intent to run by emailing the President-Elect no later than April 30 before the vote is to take place. Persons may also be nominated by current Senator(s) and Senator(s)-elect, by the same method and deadline, and the nominee will be asked to accept the nomination before being placed on the ballot.

ARTICLE VII. VOTING

Section 1: General Election

- A. The President-Elect and the elections committee shall be responsible for conducting the election to be held in April of each year.
- B. Staff Senate elections are conducted online via the secure ULM voting website. All eligible voters will be sent an email with a link to the secure site. The link to the voting site will also be available on the Staff Senate webpage (ulm.edu/staffsenate).

- C. Senators are elected by a simple majority. In the event of a tie between two candidates out of three or more candidates within an organizational unit, a runoff will be held and the organizational unit will vote again. In the event of a tie between two candidates who were the only candidates nominated within an organizational unit, the Staff Senate, at the time of the original election, will vote to break the tie.

Section 2: General & Special Meetings

- A. The Staff Senate President may call votes as necessary during meetings. Any member may request at any time that the President call for a vote on a particular item. A quorum must be present for a vote to take place, and a simple majority will decide the outcome.
- B. Any senator absent from a meeting at which a vote has been previously scheduled may cast an absentee vote either in writing or via email. If submitted by email, a printed copy must be brought to the meeting. Voting by proxy is permitted by submission to the President-Elect no later than two (2) days before the vote is to take place. All votes by proxy shall be duly recorded in the meeting minutes.
- C. The Staff Senate President may call for an email vote of the senate members if expedience is required and a meeting is not scheduled. The Staff Senate President shall explain the issue and senators will have 24 hours to respond with their vote. An email shall be sent to senators by the Staff Senate President announcing the outcome of the vote. The results of the vote shall be noted in the minutes of the following meeting.
- D. The Staff Senate President is considered a non-voting member. In the event of a tie, the Staff Senate President shall cast the deciding vote.

ARTICLE VIII. RATIFICATION & AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Ratification

- A. This constitution will be considered ratified and official upon the date of approval by a majority of the total votes cast by staff senators, provided there is a quorum.

Section 2: Proposals

- A. A proposed amendment must be presented to the Parliamentarian and introduced at least one (1) general meeting prior to the general meeting at which the vote is taken, by either written motion or by a petition signed by at least 100 unclassified staff members.
- B. The Parliamentarian will review the proposed amendment for validity and will present it to the Executive Board within five (5) working days of initial presentation.
- C. A copy of proposed amendments shall be sent to each senator at least ten (10) working days prior to the meeting at which the vote on the amendment is taken.

Section 3: Senate Review

- A. Debate of and voting on amendments may only occur during a regular meeting where a quorum is present.
- B. To pass, the proposed amendment must receive a two-thirds vote of the senators during a regular meeting where a quorum is present.

APPROVED AUGUST 2021 BY: Melissa Rhodes, President & the Staff Senators of 2021-2022