

CONSTITUTION OF THE STAFF SENATE THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

I. PURPOSE

Responsibility and authority for personnel administration matters has been delegated by the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama, the body given general governance powers by Alabama law, to the president of this campus and by him/her to other institutional officials. These officials recognize the contribution that a consultative staff employee organization can make in dealing with personnel issues. Such a body can provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, a resource for evaluating proposals, and a mechanism for expressing suggestions and concerns.

Therefore, a Staff Senate has been recognized by the university administration as a representative body of eligible non-faculty staff. Its purpose and charge shall be to serve an ancillary, advisory function with respect to the UAH administration in the area of staff personnel matters, and to do so in a positive and constructive way. In carrying out this role it shall work to promote better understanding, cooperation, and communication within the campus community for the benefit and betterment of all.

The Staff Senate shall respond to issues presented to it by its own members and committees, the university administration, the student government, or UAH staff employees. Communication from the Staff Senate shall be provided to the university administration by submission to the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

II. REPRESENTATION

Eligibility

For purpose of this Constitution, as well as representation by and membership in the Staff Senate, eligible "staff" shall be defined as half time or greater non-faculty employees with an indefinite term of employment and with at least six months of continuous credited service at the university.

Membership

The Staff Senate will consist of 24 members, elected one week prior to the Staff Picnic by university staff. The election of Staff Senate members will be apportioned as follows:

- a. Two Senate members will be elected from each of six university divisions and departments by the university staff within their divisions or departments, as follows:
 1. Academic Affairs
 2. Advancement/University President's Office
 3. Finance and Administration, (except Physical Plant)
 4. Physical Plant Department
 5. Research
 6. Student Affairs
- b. An additional 12 Senate members shall be elected at-large by the university staff.

The Vice President for Finance and Administration will be ex officio, a non-voting member of the Staff Senate.

The election of Senate members will be staggered as follows:

One representative for each of the six divisions and departments and six at-large representatives will be elected annually for a two-year term. The term of service will be from the first day of June following their election until the last day of May two years later. In order to initiate staggered elections there will be a onetime special election for 1992. At that time the six at-large representatives receiving the largest numbers of votes will serve a two-year term and the representatives from each division/department receiving the largest numbers of votes will serve a two-year term. The remaining six divisional/departmental representatives and six at-large representatives will serve a one year terms. No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

III. ELECTION GUIDELINES

Nominations

The Election Committee shall designate or appoint nominations chairperson, who will receive and record nominations to the Staff Senate. The Election Committee shall set the beginning and ending dates for accepting nominations.

Any staff employee may nominate an eligible staff employee for Staff Senate membership. The person nominated must approve the nomination. If the employee accepts the nomination, he/she shall choose to run as either a divisional/departmental candidate or as an at-large candidate.

Elections

All eligible staff may vote in the Staff Senate elections. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot with absentee balloting procedures available to eligible voters who cannot be present at the time of election. Each staff member will vote for no more than one candidate for Staff Senate representative of their division or department, and for no more than six university at-large nominees. Voting for more than one divisional or departmental candidate or for more than six at-large candidates will void that ballot.

The Elections Committee shall prepare six ballots, each listing the names of all *NOMINEES* for at-large seats and the names of nominees for divisional/departmental seats for one division/department, such that there are separate ballots for each division/department. The appropriate division/departmental ballot shall be mailed to each eligible staff member as determined by Human Resources on the date specified for the start of the election procedure.

Voting shall take place annually beginning one week prior to the Staff Picnic on a Monday and concluding at 11:00 a.m. on the following Friday. Ballots must be delivered by campus mail or in person to the location designated by the Election Committee. There will be a public counting of ballots at noon of the same day. The results will be made know by the Election Committee in a timely manner. The newly elected and recruiting representatives will be introduced at the Staff Picnic during the following week.

Terms of Office

Each representative elected to the Staff Senate shall serve a two-year term to run from the first day of June through the last day of May two years later. No representative shall serve more than two consecutive terms as a member of the Staff Senate.

Unexpired Term

In the event a divisional or at-large vacancy occurs on the Staff Senate by the termination of employment, by transfer from one division to another, or by request of the representative with six months or more remaining of the unexpired term, a representative(s) shall be replaced from the list of unsuccessful candidate(s) from the most recent election based upon votes received and willingness to serve. In the absence of such a person(s), the Executive Committee shall nominate a replacement and the nominee confirmed by two-thirds of those present and voting to serve until the next general election.

IV. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

Executive Committee

Within the Staff Senate, leadership shall be provided by the Executive Committee, which consists of a President, Vice President/President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and the immediate past president of the Staff Senate, who shall be a non-voting ex-officio member. In the event the immediate past president is unavailable, the President may select an officer from the previous Executive Committee to fill this seat. The Executive Committee will be selected by all the Senate members at the first official Staff Senate meeting of the new term in June. Executive Committee members will serve for a one-year term and may not be elected to serve more than two consecutive terms in any capacity on the Executive Committee.

The President shall preside at meetings of the Staff Senate; act as official spokesperson for the Staff Senate to the university community; serve as ex-officio member of all Staff Senate committees; and perform such duties as are customarily performed by presidents of similar bodies.

The Vice President shall perform duties of the President when the President is absent, is unable to serve, or resigns the position. The Vice President serves as the President-Elect and takes office at the new term beginning in June.

The Secretary shall prepare minutes of each meeting and supervise their distribution to Senate representatives and to the university library for public and historical record; ensure member notification of meetings; and maintain a record of attendance at Senate meetings. All official correspondence from the Staff Senate and its committees will be distributed by the Secretary.

The Treasurer shall record and maintain financial records of the Staff Senate.

Meetings

Staff Senate meetings will be held the third Wednesday of each month, including summer semester, at a time of the day which is sensitive to work schedules. The Executive Committee will be responsible for scheduling and the agenda for Senate meetings; however, floor discussions are always open at Senate meetings. The agenda for any regular meeting shall include the call to order, reading and approval of minutes, unfinished business, committee reports, new business, discussion and recommendations, and adjournment, but need not necessarily be in any prescribed order.

- **Special Meetings:** Special meetings of the Staff Senate shall be called by the Executive Committee in cases where urgent university issues must be addressed before the next regularly scheduled meeting is to occur.
- **Proxy:** In the event that an elected representative of the Staff Senate cannot attend a meeting of the Staff Senate, the representative shall designate a proxy, with voting privileges, to attend the meeting. The proxy shall register his or her name with the secretary when he or she reports to the meeting. A proxy must be a voting member in the current Staff Senate

Quorum

A Senate majority of voting members present shall constitute a quorum.

Resolutions

Resolutions or proposals shall be introduced to the Staff Senate at one meeting, and become an action item no later than the Senate meeting of the following month. Voting shall be by the polling of each representative (or his/her proxy), the results of which will be recorded in the Minutes.

Amendment of Constitution

The Constitution may be reviewed and/or amended as needed by the Staff Senate. Any member of the Staff Senate may make a recommendation to the Executive Committee for a revision or amendment to the current Constitution. A proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be distributed in writing to all members at least *ONE* week prior to the meeting where the proposed change is to be introduced. There shall be two official readings of the proposed change, during two consecutive meetings, preceding a vote to amend the Constitution. To pass the amendment into the Constitution at least two-thirds of the Staff Senate's voting membership shall approve the amendment after the second reading. The Staff Senate Constitution, and suggested amendments thereto, must be submitted to and receive final approval from the University administration before they become effective and are distributed to all staff members.

The Staff Senate is self-regulating with the respect to its organization and purpose, and, as such, may create such committees as are deemed necessary to facilitate its work. Committee membership is on a volunteer basis and is solicited from the Staff Senate by the President. Chairs of each committee shall be expected to submit committee reports to the Staff Senate. Standing committees shall serve as advisory bodies for specific matters falling within their province. The Standing Committees of the Staff Senate are:

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and the non-voting ex officio member.

The Bylaws Committee

The Bylaws Committee shall establish and maintain a set of simple but effective bylaws to establish acceptable rules of conduct and behavior for the Staff Senate. Any member of the Staff Senate may make a recommendation to the Bylaws Committee or Executive Committee for a revision or amendment to the current bylaws. To pass the amendment into the bylaws, a majority of the Staff Senate's voting membership shall approve the amendment.

The Election Committee

The Election Committee prepares for and conducts annual and special elections.

The Employee Benefits Committee

The Employee Benefits Committee shall identify and study changes that may be recommended to enhance the existing benefits program for staff employees. Recommendations from this committee shall be submitted to the Senate for consideration. Recommendation approved by the Senate shall be presented to the appropriate university administrators.

The Employee Development Committee

The Employee Development Committee shall develop and present, for approval by the Staff Senate, a program of activities which shall provide opportunities for the personal and professional development of all staff employees.

The Governmental Relations Committee

The Governmental Relations Committee shall establish a relationship with the University's Governmental Liaison. The Committee will inform, promote awareness, and provide information to the Staff Senate on issues related to the University. The committee will work with the Governmental Liaison and Employee Development Committee to provide educational seminars and forums to inform university staff about current issues and concerns.

The Policies and Procedures Committee

The Policies and Procedures Committee shall be available to provide guidance and support, as needed, to any UAH staff employee on issues relating to university policies or procedures. The Committee shall not, however, involve itself in the grievance procedure provided by the university for the resolution of individual complaints by an employee regarding his or her employment.

At the invitation of the president or provost of The University of Alabama in Huntsville, the Executive Committee shall appoint representatives to serve on university committees as requested. Selected Senate representatives shall be expected to submit university committee reports to the Staff Senate.

V. RATIFICATION

Ratification of this Constitution shall be by majority of those voting of eligible UAH staff prior to the 1992 general election at a date to be specified by the Staff Senate.