

# **Staff Senate Bylaws Revisions Spring 2024**

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the University of Nebraska at Kearney Staff Senate is to promote and facilitate communication between members of the university staff and the administration, faculty, and students. The Staff Senate serves as a medium for addressing topics affecting staff in order to foster a better working environment. The Staff Senate, hereafter referred to as Senate, acts in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor, the administration, and other university groups on behalf of the staff.

## **II. MEMBERSHIP**

- a. Staff Senate, representing three staff employee groups, is composed of twelve (12) members:
  - i. Administrative/Managerial/Professional staff members – 6
  - ii. Office staff – 3
  - iii. Service staff – 3
- b. Members of Staff Senate should be...
  - i. employees of the University of Nebraska Kearney, and
  - ii. employees of the University of Nebraska system who primarily offices on the University campus and provides services to University of Nebraska Kearney students, faculty, or staff as part of their responsibilities.
- c. Staff members of UNL, UNO, IANR, and UNMC do not qualify for membership in UNK Staff Senate.
- d. Representation will be reviewed prior to elections every five (5) years, in a year that is a multiple of five (5), to ensure maintenance of proportional representation.  
Terms of membership are three (3) years. A member may be removed from Staff Senate by two-thirds quorum vote. Members are term-limited after serving two (2) consecutive terms or a total of 7.5 years or 90 months if they are completing the term of seat that has been vacated on the Senate, they must wait at least one year before running again.
- e. The Director of Human Resources or designee from UNK Administration serves as an ex-officio member.
- f. If the immediate past president is not re-elected to Staff Senate, that individual will become a non-voting ex-officio member for the year immediately following their presidency.

## **III. MEETINGS**

The Senate year runs July 1 through June 30, with monthly meetings to be held beginning in July. Meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order and are expected to run no longer than 90 minutes. Additional meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Senate President.

## **IV. QUORUM**

A simple majority of the voting members, i.e., seven (7) members, will constitute a quorum for any meeting.

## **V. ABSENCES**

Meeting attendance is a vital part of the success of the Senate. More than 3 absences during a Senate year may be grounds for the Senate, by majority vote, to remove that person from the Senate. Senators must attend meetings in-person, unless the meeting itself is held virtually.

## **VI. BUDGET**

Senate will receive an annual budget which will be presented to the general membership in March. A simple majority vote of the quorum present at March's regular meeting is needed to approve this proposed budget

## **VII. MINUTES**

Senate minutes are to be provided to Senate members electronically for review within two (2) weeks following the Senate meeting. Members will be notified of a deadline of at least three (3) days to suggest changes to the minutes. Final approval of the minutes will be voted on via email prior to the next meeting by the Senators or at the next regular meeting. Minutes will be released to campus via email after final approval.

## **VIII. OFFICERS**

The officers of Staff Senate are President, President-elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. The duties of the officers are as follows:

### **a. President**

- i. Presides at Senate meetings.
- ii. Makes committee appointments with consideration of Communications Committee on recommendations for Staff Senate or University Wide Committees.
- iii. Prepares an annual report of Senate activities to be presented to, and approved by, the Senate before submission to the Chancellor by the end of the Senate year.
- iv. Chairs Senate Executive Committee meetings.
- v. Prepares, in cooperation with the Executive Committee, an agenda for each regular and special Senate meeting.
- vi. Signs off to disperse funds, along with the Treasurer and Ex-Officio Member.
- vii. Ensures the distribution of the agenda and minutes for each regular and special Senate meeting.

### **b. President-elect**

- i. Assumes the responsibilities of the President, Secretary and/or Treasurer in their temporary absence. If multiple officers are absent simultaneously, appoints a senator to assist.
- ii. Collects reports from committees prior to meetings of Executive Committee and reports committee information at the regular senate meeting.
- iii. Chairs the Policy Committee and serves as Parliamentarian of the Senate and should become familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.
- iv. Shall become the President of Staff Senate the following year.

### **c. Secretary**

- i. Provides accurate minutes of each Senate meeting as stipulated under the Minutes section of these bylaws.
- ii. Maintains all Senate records with the assistance of the Communications Committee.
- iii. Provides oversight to assure timely dissemination of pertinent information.

- iv. Works with the president to ensure distribution of the minutes for each regular and special Senate meeting.
- d. **Treasurer**
  - i. Provides reports on financial accounts of the Senate at Senate meetings.
  - ii. Collects and accounts for funds received through fundraising or budget efforts, including Foundation accounts.
  - iii. Maintains a filing system for deposits and payments from Staff Senate accounts.
  - iv. Serves as Ex-Officio member on all fundraising projects.
  - v. Signs off to disperse funds, along with the President and Ex-Officio Member.
  - vi. Presents a proposed annual budget for approval to the Senate at the March regular meeting.

## **IX. STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **a. Executive Committee:**

The Executive Committee is composed of the Senate President, President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer and Ex-Officio (Director of HR or Designee from UNK Administration). The Executive Committee is responsible for the following:

- i. Reviewing all committee reports.
- ii. Planning the agenda for Senate meetings.
- iii. Making recommendations to the Senate.
- iv. Reviewing performance management issues relevant to staff mission, compensation, and evaluation.
- v. Reviewing nominations for and selecting winners of the Staff Award for Excellence.
- vi. Coordinating advocacy on behalf of all staff.
- vii. Meeting with UNK Administration at least two (2) times during the Senate year to provide a staff perspective at a meaningful juncture.
- viii. Hosting UNK Faculty Senate President and Student Body President annually at a regular Senate meeting.
- ix. Serving in an ad hoc capacity if matters of professional conduct arise, to ascertain facts, interpret standards of professional conduct, and address concerns applicable to staff.
- x. Managing Dependent Scholarship duties.

### **b. Communications Committee:**

The Communications Committee consists of six (6) staff members and at least one (1) but not more than two (2) Senate representatives. Each year two (2) staff members of the committee will rotate on/off the committee. Each year elections for a chair and co-chair will take place at the first committee meeting following the annual elections. In the event a staff member of a committee is elected to Senate, the member's seat will be replaced for the remainder of the term. Preference for a member of the Communications and Marketing to serve as an advisor to the committee. The advisor would act as a consultant in matter of the committee but not required to attend committee meetings. The Communications Committee is responsible for the following:

- i. Coordinating Senate elections as outlined in the Election Procedures.
- ii. Continuously monitoring Senate webpage. Ensuring changes are to be made within a timely manner – within a month of the change
- iii. Welcoming new employees to the campus.
- iv. Serving as a liaison between all committees.

- v. Collaborating with Staff Senate President regarding correspondence from other committees for activities and events.
  - vi. Recommending appointments for standing and ad hoc committees as stipulated under the Election Procedures of these bylaws.
- c. Professional Development and Engagement Committee:**
- i. The Professional Development and Engagement Committee consists of six (6) staff members and at least one (1) but not more than two (2) Senate representatives. Each year two (2) staff members of the committee will rotate on/off the committee. Each year elections for a chair and co-chair will take place at the first committee meeting following the annual elections. In the event a staff member of a committee is elected to Senate, the member's seat will be replaced for the remainder of the term. Preference for a member of the Wellness Team to act as an advisor to the committee. The advisor would act as a consultant in matter of the committee but not required to attend committee meetings.
  - ii. The Professional Development Committee supports participation in education/training opportunities that enhance job performance and wellness.
- d. Recognition Committee:**
- i. The Recognition Committee consists of six (6) staff members and at least one (1) but not more than two (2) Senate representatives. Each year two (2) staff members of the committee will rotate on/from the committee. Each year elections for a chair and co-chair will take place at the first committee meeting following the annual elections. In the event a staff member of a committee is elected to Senate, the member's seat will be replaced for the remainder of the term. Preference for a representative from Human Resources to act as an advisor to the committee. The advisor would act as a consultant in matter of the committee but not required to attend committee meetings.
  - ii. The Recognition Committee promotes processes and incentives for rewarding excellence in performance and service including awarding the monthly Teamwork Excellence Award and Employee Achievement Award.
    - 1. The Teamwork Excellence Award is given to a department, committee, or group of employees and may include faculty and students in addition to staff.
    - 2. The Employee Achievement Award is given to a singular staff employee. An employee may receive the award only once in a 5-year period.
- e. Policy Committee:**
- i. The Policy Committee meets on an as needed basis. The committee consists of two (2) Senate members, an Ex-Officio (Associate Vice Chancellor for Business & Finance), and four (4) at staff members at large.
  - ii. The Senate President-elect serves as Chair of the Policy Committee.
  - iii. The Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing Regental bylaws, Staff Senate bylaws and the Employee Handbook for Managerial/Professional and Office/Service staff to recommend revisions as appropriate.
  - iv. The Policy Committee will provide an avenue for the regular exchange of ideas on personnel policies, employee benefits, University policies and procedures, and other matters that relate to University Staff, including by not limited to:
    - 1. Serve on staff-focused NU system or HR taskforce committees.
    - 2. Conducts staff climate survey on a three-year recurring basis. Distributes climate survey report to all staff members. Incorporates climate survey into annual Staff Senate strategic planning.

3. Make recommendations for changes that affect staff.
  4. Propose new benefits and policies that would benefit staff.
- f. **Ad Hoc Committees:** When deemed necessary, ad hoc committees will be formed.

## **X. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ALL SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **a. Election of Officers**

- i. Each standing committee will select a Chair and a Secretary at the first business meeting in the new Senate year. Senate representatives on the committee should not be selected as chair or secretary of the committee.

### **b. Committee Reports**

- i. Committees are to provide a written monthly report to the Senate President-elect at least seven (7) calendar days before the next regular Senate meeting. Senate members serving on a committee will assist the President-elect in reporting activities of the committee at monthly Senate meetings.
- ii. All committee chairs will file a year-end report by 30 days prior to the end of the Senate year so that the year-end report can be voted on at the last Senate meeting of the Senate Year.

### **c. Budget Allocations**

- i. Submit any budget requests to the Senate Treasurer by March 1.

### **d. Correspondence**

- i. All campus-wide Senate correspondence regarding announcements, activities, or events will be distributed through the Communications Committee and sent via the official Senate email account.
- ii. Emails will be drafted by the applicable standing committee and sent to the Communications Committee for review and distribution.

## **XI. ELECTION PROCEDURES**

### **a. Election of Staff Senators**

#### **i. Pre-elections**

1. The Communications Committee will contact the Ex-Officio for the list of staff members, categorized by staff employee group.
2. The committee will review the list of names and remove any ineligible staff members.
3. The nomination forms and ballots will be prepared in Qualtrics.

#### **ii. Nominations**

1. The Communications Committee will disseminate nominations annually to all staff by the second to last Tuesday in April.
2. The nominations will list all eligible staff. The instructions will inform staff that they may nominate one person from the list, including themselves. Only nominations that follow this guideline will be accepted. Nominations are to be complete by the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Tuesday in May.
3. Nominees will be sent an electronic message with a link to the bylaws asking them to reply if they are willing to serve, if elected. They will also be notified that, if elected, they will be invited to the Senate's June meeting to vote on officers.
4. Responses from nominees must be received by the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Tuesday in May.

### **iii. Ballots**

1. Ballots reflecting the nominations will be disseminated electronically by the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Tuesday in May.
2. Completed ballots must be returned to the Communications Committee one week after nominations are disseminated.
3. The counting and tallying of ballots by the Senate Communications Committee should take place on the Wednesday immediately after the close of ballots.
4. In the event of a tie, the Communications Committee will refer to the nominating ballots and determine which nominee had the highest number of nominations. If a tie still exists, a vote will be determined via email with consideration for achieving diversified representation.

### **iv. Post-Election**

1. The Communications Committee will notify the newly elected members of their election and their first meeting date by the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday in May via the Senate email account.
2. The Senate President will notify the Chancellor and campus with the election results by the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Friday in June.
3. Election results are to be maintained by the Communications Committee.
4. The Communications Committee will update the website with the new list of senators and committee members by the end of July. The committee will also update the Senate email template with the new senators and officers.

### **v. Vacancies**

1. Should an elected seat be permanently vacated, the President will consult with the Communications Committee and the seat will be awarded to the staff member who placed next highest in that category of employment in the most recent election.
2. Should an elected seat be temporarily vacated due to illness, leave of absence, etc., the President will consult with the Communications Committee and the seat will be awarded to the staff member who placed next highest in that category of employment in the most recent election. The replacement senator would then serve until the sitting senator returns from absence or until the senator's term of office expires, whichever comes first.
3. In case of a tie between the staff members who placed next highest in that category of employment in the most recent election, the Communications Committee will make the selection with consideration for maintaining diversified representation. If no additional election data is available, Senate members in the same category of employment as the vacancy will identify a candidate, contact them regarding their willingness to serve, and if agreeable, forward their name to the President for Senate approval by a simple majority vote. If the candidate is not approved, this process is repeated. The President will notify new members of their selection.

### **vi. Service Area Changes**

1. Staff Senators, whose service area changes during their three-year term, will continue in their current capacity until the next election.

## **b. Election of Officers**

- i. Senate members vote for officers as the last item of business at the last meeting of the senate year. Treasurer and Secretary are elected for one (1) year terms. President-elect

is elected for a two (2) year term and therefore nominees must have at least two (2) years left in their senate term. Newly elected Senate members are asked to attend the meeting and participate only in the election. Outgoing Senators are not eligible to vote.

- ii. The Ex-Officio will conduct the election of Staff Senate officers. In the event of the Ex-Officio's absence, they will designate an out-going member of Staff Senate to conduct the actual election and/or any portions thereof as deemed necessary due to the Ex-Officio's absence.
- iii. The Ex-Officio, or their designee, shall solicit nominations from continuing and newly elected Staff Senate members during the month of June prior to the meeting. Persons can self-nominate or nominate another member. The Ex-Officio, or their designee, will ascertain a nominee's willingness to serve as an officer after receiving a nomination.
- iv. The Ex-Officio, or their designee, will prepare a ballot with all nominations listed and nominations will be accepted from the floor. Election will be by secret ballot, to be counted by the Ex-Officio, or their designee. A simple majority of the votes will elect.
- v. The President will refrain from voting except in the event of a tie per Robert's Rules of Order. When a tie occurs, a revote will be taken which includes the President. New officers will assume their duties effective for the Senate year.

**c. Vacancies**

- i. Should the President resign, the President-elect will assume the President's role for the remainder of the elected term of office. A new President-elect will be elected during a vote at the next regular Staff Senate meeting. If the President-elect takes over as President during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the senate year, they will remain President for the following year. The new President-Elect will fulfill the remainder of the term, but will not succeed as president the following year.
- ii. Should a vacancy occur in the other offices, an election will be held at the next meeting to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the elected term of office.

**d. Appointment of Committee Members**

**i. Standing Committees**

**1. Senate Representation on Standing Committees**

- a. Senate members must serve on at least one (1) but not more than two (2) standing committees each year.
- b. Members of the Senate Executive Committee are asked to serve on Ad Hoc Committees as needed.

**2. The Communications Committee will provide each standing committee with a list potential new members after the regular Senate elections are complete. The list will include Senate nominees who were not elected, and recommendations from existing members. Committees may use this list or submit their own candidates for approval. Standing committee members (not including Senate members) will be reviewed by Senate at the first regular meeting of the senate year.**

Committee members are appointed for a term of three (3) years with an option to remain on the committee for a second term if approved by Senate. Staff members may be appointed for two (2) consecutive terms or a total of 7.5 years or 90 months if they are completing the term of a seat that has been vacated must sit off for one (1) year before returning to the same committee. Staff members may serve back-to-back terms on different standing committees. It is strongly recommended (if possible) that all employee groups be represented on

the standing committees. One-third of the staff representation for each committee will be replaced or reappointed each year.

- ii. Ad hoc committees must consist of at least four (4) members with at least one (1) of the members being a Senate member. Any staff member may request and be nominated by Senate to serve on an ad hoc committee. It is strongly recommended that all employee groups (if possible) be represented on ad hoc committees.

## **XII. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

Recommended changes to these bylaws will require an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Senate.

- a. *Revised June 2024*
- b. *Revised January 2023*
- c. *Revised January 2022*
- d. *Revised May 2019*
- e. *Revised May 2017*
- f. *Revised May 2016*
- g. *Revised December 2014*
- h. *Revised February 2012*
- i. *Revised July 2010*
- j. *Revised February 2010*
- k. *Revised May 2009*
- l. *Revised April 2008*
- m. *Revised September 2007*
- n. *Revised March 2007*
- o. *Revised July 2006*
- p. *Revised June 2004*
- q. *Revised October 2003*