Policy Statement

Authority and Purpose

The Staff Council of The University of Texas at Dallas, hereinafter referred to as Staff Council, in keeping with the mission of UT Dallas, is an advisory body through which eligible Staff members, hereinafter referred to as Staff, can convey information and make recommendations to the President regarding interests and concerns of Staff. The Staff Council is constituted by the President and by the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System, with the goal of continually improving university operations and the well-being of UT Dallas’ Staff. The Staff Council is constituted to address matters of general concern to the University Community, and in particular to members of UT Dallas’ Staff.

The Staff Council shall serve as a consultative and deliberative body for Staff in:

1. addressing issues of concern that are unique to Staff,
2. fostering expanded opportunities for Staff involvement in campus governance,
3. building a sense of community by encouraging the exchange of ideas and concerns,
4. providing advice on university policy and procedures impacting Staff,
5. advising the University on Staff nominations to University Standing Committees as equal members,
6. promoting the growth and welfare of Staff, contributing to the success of UT Dallas,
7. increasing the sense of identity, recognition and worth of each staff member in his / her relationship to the University,
8. identifying concerns relating to Staff and to seek their solutions,
9. promoting the development and adoption of policies which will aid in retaining qualified personnel,
10. integrating the Staff into existing University affairs,
11. establishing and promoting University-wide activities, publications, workshops and seminars, and
12. creating a stronger bond within Staff.

Constituency

Eligible Staff, represented by Staff Council, shall consist of all of UT Dallas’ benefits-eligible Classified Staff and administrative and professional employees below the level of Vice President/Vice Provost not represented by the Academic Senate. In addition, eligible staff must have a minimum of six months of continuous employment at UTD at the start of the term of office in September.

Representatives are elected solely from the eligible Staff. Upon termination or retirement, membership in Staff Council will cease.

Staff Council Membership

1. Membership
   1. Staff Council representation shall be proportional based on the number of employees from designated voting districts as determined by the Staff Council.
   2. Representation will be reviewed every odd-numbered year, after the Staff Council is established to consider reallocation of the member seats.
   3. Changes in the designated areas, the total membership, or the distribution of representatives can be accomplished without amendment of the Bylaws, with the approval by the Staff Council.
   2. Non-Voting Members: The Past President of the Staff Council is a non-voting member unless elected as a representative. The Secretary is a UT Dallas employee who serves as a non-voting member unless elected.
as a representative.

3. Voting Members: Voting members of the Staff Council shall consist of eligible Staff elected or appointed to serve as representatives from voting districts as defined below.
   
   1. Duties of representatives. Representatives shall attend all meetings of the Staff Council and shall serve on at least one Staff Council standing committee. Representatives shall be available to their constituents. They shall be willing to hear concerns, to receive information and suggestions, and to communicate those effectively to the Staff Council. In turn, representatives must keep their district's constituents informed of the work of the Staff Council and matters that the University administration communicates to the Staff Council.
   
   2. Term of Office.
      1. The term of a member of Staff Council shall be two years.
      2. The term will be linked to even and odd years so that half of Staff Council will be reelected each year.
      3. There is no limit to the number of terms a member of Staff Council may serve.
      4. If a member of Staff Council changes jobs to another area, that member may tender their resignation or continue to serve on Staff Council for the completion of the term as an at-large member.
   
   3. Vacancies: A vacancy that occurs through termination of employment, change of voting district, promotion to a noneligible position, resignation from the Staff Council, or expulsion from the Staff Council, shall be filled by an alternate from the district where the vacancy exists within thirty (30) days of the date of vacancy. The Executive Board of the Staff Council shall refer to the list of eligible alternates in order to fill the vacancy. The alternates list shall consist of, in descending order of the number of votes received those persons who were nominated, but not elected, in the previous election. If there is no person remaining on the alternate list or no alternate is willing to serve where the vacancy exists, then the Staff Council shall appoint a replacement to fill the vacancy from the constituents of the district where the vacancy occurred. After exhausting the list of alternates from the district with the vacancy, Staff Council can appoint a person from another district to serve in an at large position. In order to be appointed, that person must have been nominated in their respective district. This appointment must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Board and a two-thirds majority of all Staff Council representatives. Nominations for appointments may come from any Staff Council member. Once appointed, the new members are responsible for all duties and are entitled to all rights and privileges of elected representatives.
   
   4. Members-at-Large: Any representative moving from one voting district to another may serve out his/her term as a voting member-at-large.
   
   5. Removal from Office: Any elected representative can be removed from office for nonperformance of Staff Council duties. A petition requesting such removal can be brought to the Executive Board by a simple majority of the members of the district, or such removal may be initiated by action of the Staff Council. The Executive Board appoint an Investigating Committee. No one under investigation shall appoint or be a member of the Investigating Committee. The Investigating Committee shall investigate the matter on a case-by-case basis and shall recommend action to the Staff Council Executive Board for placement on the agenda for a vote. The final decision shall be made by the Staff Council. Removal will be effective upon the vote of a simple majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Staff Council at which a quorum is present. (Possible causes of removal shall include, but not be limited to: deficient attendance [missing more than two consecutive Staff Council meetings or a total of more than four Staff Council meetings per year; or, missing more than two consecutive Standing Committee meetings or a total of more than four Standing Committee meetings per year]; failure to consistently report on activities of the Staff Council to the district; and unavailability of the representative to constituents).
   
   6. Compensation: Representatives shall be excused from their regular working hours up to six (6) hours per month to devote to Staff Council work, inclusive of time spent at Staff Council meetings. Additional time for Staff Council officers' work or assignments may be negotiated with each officer's supervisor. No other form of compensation shall be received by any member for their service on the Staff Council.
7. Constituent Relations: Staff Council members shall be expected to communicate regularly with their constituents.

Officers

Officers of Staff Council shall be elected by Staff Council. Officers will make up the Executive Board of Staff Council. The Secretary (see III.B.) will assist the officers and the chairs of the standing committees in the operations of the Staff Council. The Secretary is not an officer of the Staff Council, unless elected as President, Vice President, or serving as Past President.

1. Titles of Officers: Officers include: President, Vice President, and Chairs of the Standing Committees.

2. Duties

1. President - The President shall:
   1. preside at all meetings of the Staff Council and chair the Executive Board;
   2. abide by Robert's Rules of Order when conducting meetings;
   3. communicate all matters submitted for the Executive Board's attention to the appropriate committee(s), appropriate university administrative official or organization, and/or to the UT Dallas President;
   4. make a report of the actions of the Executive Board to the Council at each regular meeting;
   5. prepare a written annual report of the past year's activities and progress and make it available to all members of the Staff Council for the September meeting;
   6. serve as ex-officio member of all Staff Council committees;
   7. serve as liaison to the Academic Senate;
   8. serve as liaison to the UT Dallas President, both keeping the UT Dallas President informed regarding concerns of the Staff Council and seeking the UT Dallas President's support and advice on behalf of the Staff Council.

2. Vice President - The Vice President shall:
   1. preside over the Staff Council in the absence of the President or in the event the President requests the Vice President to serve during the course of a meeting;
   2. assist the President in performing leadership responsibilities;
   3. maintain attendance records for Staff Council and standing committee participation;
   4. accept names of persons interested in serving on standing committees and make appointments on the basis of the person's preference where possible or, in the absence of volunteers, make the necessary appointments to committees in consultation with the Executive Board;
   5. call a meeting of any committee that is not fulfilling its responsibilities;
   6. make and distribute yearly, immediately following appointments, a list of Staff Council committees and their members to all Staff Council members;
   7. be responsible for the duties of the Secretary in the event the Secretary is unable to perform them.

3. Secretary - The Secretary shall:
   1. serve as recording secretary for the Staff Council meetings, including the distribution of minutes to representatives at least ten working days before the next scheduled meeting of the Staff Council;
   2. serve as recording secretary for the Executive Board and keep minutes of the Executive Board's meetings to be distributed to the Executive Board at least ten working days before the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Board;
   3. ensure that the President or presiding officer abides by Robert's Rules of Order during meetings;
   4. serve as a resource to Staff Council officers and members regarding the Staff Council Bylaws and Standing Rules and usages of the stated rules of order.
5. serve as the historian and repository for all minutes and official correspondence, and other official and historical documents of the Staff Council and the Executive Board;
6. notify members of meeting dates and send out agendas for the meetings of the Executive Board and the Staff Council meetings;
7. initiate and maintain the system of overlapping terms and the system for verifying the number of representatives authorized for each voting district, including the membership list and committee lists;
8. assist the President in composing correspondence as directed by the Staff Council;
9. maintain the suggestion and proposal logs;
10. serve as the treasurer and be responsible for the financial aspects of Staff Council functions;
11. operate under the Accounting procedures followed by UT Dallas;
12. be responsible for monthly budget reports to the Staff Council and for an annual financial statement to be provided each representative.

4. Past President: In the interest of continuity in the Staff Council's work, following the President's term of office, the President shall become the Past President for one year to act in an advisory capacity to the Staff Council and the Executive Board. Unless reelected as a representative, the Past President shall be an ex-officio member of the Staff Council.

3. Terms of Office
   1. The term of office for all officer positions will be one year.
   2. No member may hold more than one office at a time and no member shall be eligible to serve more than four consecutive terms in the same office.
4. Unexpired Term: In the event that the President is unable to complete the elected term of office, the Vice President shall assume the vacant office for the length of the unexpired term. In the event that the office of Vice President becomes vacant, a special election shall be held by the President in order to fill the vacant office for the remainder of the term and shall be by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting. Such an election may be held at any regular meeting of the Staff Council.
5. Transfer of Records: All papers pertaining to current Staff Council business shall be transferred from outgoing officers to those incoming. The Executive Board and the Secretary shall insure that past records of the Staff Council are maintained according to the UT Dallas Policy on Records Management and Retention.
6. Recall: An officer may be recalled by a majority vote at a special meeting called for that purpose. The officer will continue to serve as a Staff Council member. However, the officer will be ineligible for any future election to an officer position without a unanimous decision by Staff Council.

The Executive Board

1. Membership: The membership of the Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the Staff Council, the chairs of standing committees, and ex officio members.
2. Meetings: The Executive Board shall meet monthly. Additional meetings may be called by the President, by the UT Dallas President, or upon request of two members of the Executive Board. The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying Committee members of meeting dates and locations and shall keep minutes of all meetings. In the event the Secretary is unable to perform these duties, the Vice President shall be responsible for the secretarial duties. A two-thirds majority of the Executive Board membership shall constitute a quorum.
3. Duties: The Executive Board shall:
   1. consider all matters presented to it by the Staff Council President, the UT Dallas President or the UT Dallas President's designee(s), the Staff Council, standing committee chairs, or others, and make recommendations;
2. assist the President in setting the agenda for Staff Council meetings;
3. advise the Staff Council of the apparent need for special meetings;
4. review periodically the purpose and membership of each standing committee to assure each is functioning as intended by the Staff Council;
5. assist the Vice President in appointments to the standing committees;
6. appoint, considering Staff Council volunteers first, the Nominations and Elections Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed;
7. recommend to the Staff Council such special committees as it deems necessary;
8. resolve questions related to the Staff Council elections process;
9. fill any vacancy on the Staff Council with an eligible alternate (see “Vacancies under Voting Members”);
10. make recommendations to the Staff Council regarding the removal of Staff Council members from their positions;
11. insure that past records of the Staff Council are maintained according to the UT Dallas Policy on Records Management and Retention.

Other Committees

1. Standing Committees: The standing committees of the Staff Council shall be the Communications Committee, Benefits Committee, Staff Development Committee, and Fund Raising Committee. Membership on these committees shall be open to all Staff Council constituents. The chair of a committee can appoint one or more subcommittee(s) and subcommittee chair(s) for specific terms to deal with assigned issues; the subcommittee chair(s) shall report to the appointing committee. Each standing committee shall consist of a minimum of five members who shall serve for one year. Committees shall meet monthly or as convened by the chair. Each standing committee shall elect a chair and a secretary, each of whom shall serve for one year or until replaced in the next election. Members may not serve as chair on more than one standing committee.

2. Duties: Each standing committee shall accept business items assigned to it by the Staff Council and deal with the item(s) in a responsible and timely manner; have the chair make a report to the full Staff Council at each monthly meeting; have the committee secretary maintain and provide the President, Vice President, and Secretary with a written report of each committee meeting and copies of any official correspondence; prepare and submit an annual report, including all items placed on the committee agenda and the disposition of each, to the President, Vice President, and Secretary by the last meeting of each year.

1. Communications Committee: This committee shall plan and coordinate activities at which constituents can meet their representatives and learn about Staff Council activities; serve as the public relations committee of the Staff Council while working with the UT Office of Communications to publicize the Staff Council and its activities; and generally promote the Staff Council as opportunities arise. The committee chairperson shall be responsible for dispensing information.

2. Benefits Committee: This committee shall review staff members' concerns regarding benefits and make recommendations to the Staff Council. The Assistant Vice President for Human Resources Management or designee will serve as an ex officio member of the Benefits Committee.

3. Staff Development Committee: This committee shall review ways in which constituents can benefit from training programs and may address such issues as career and professional development, orientation/mentoring, diversity training, and basic skills development. The Assistant Vice President for Human Resources Management or designee will serve as an ex officio member of the Staff Development Committee.

4. Fund Raising Committee: This committee shall design, propose and facilitate all activities to raise funds for Staff Council Scholarships. The committee chairperson will be responsible for reporting the plans and results of fund raising activities to the Staff Council and coordinating the efforts of the committee members.
3. Special Committees: Special Committees may be proposed by any member of the Staff Council to fulfill specific goals. A majority vote of the Staff Council will establish the committee. Special committee functions may be changed when needed by a majority vote.

4. Committee Member Replacement: A member of any committee may be replaced or removed by a majority vote of the Staff Council.

Meetings of the Staff Council

1. Scheduled Meetings: Regular meetings of the Staff Council shall be held monthly. An agenda shall be sent to all representatives at least three working days prior to the meeting. The President and Executive Board reserve the right to cancel a regular meeting, but must notify the Staff Council at least three working days prior to the meeting.

2. Special Meetings: Special meetings of the Staff Council may be called by the Staff Council President, or upon petition of thirty (30) percent of the membership of the Staff Council. Seven (7) working days notice should be given of any special meeting except in an emergency situation. Only business specified in the call of the special meeting may be conducted at such a meeting.

3. Staff Council Forum: A forum shall be held annually to which all constituents of the Staff Council shall be invited and encouraged to attend. The UT Dallas President or designee shall be invited to serve as guest speaker. Purposes of the forum shall be to make an annual report of Staff Council activities, share common concerns, pose questions, and provide the UT Dallas President or designee an opportunity to share information with Staff.

4. Quorum: Neither the Staff Council nor a committee shall conduct business without a quorum. A simple majority of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of the Staff Council's business or the business of any of its committees. Simple majority constitutes one-half of the voting membership plus one.

5. Voting
   1. A quorum is required for a Staff Council vote to be taken.
   2. Only elected representatives have the right to vote.
   3. Except as otherwise specified by these Bylaws, all votes shall be decided by a majority.

6. Meeting Length: Meetings are not to exceed two hours. At ten minutes prior to the expiration of the two hour limit, the item currently on the floor will be finished, and the remaining agenda items will be tabled to the next month's meeting. However, if an important item has yet to come up on the agenda, the meeting time may be extended by a majority vote.

7. Minutes: The approved minutes of the Staff Council meetings shall be made available to all constituents.

8. Floor Privileges: Proposals, measures, and resolutions may be introduced on the Staff Council floor only by members of the Staff Council. Persons who are not members of the Staff Council may be granted the right to speak, but not to vote, on matters before the Staff Council. When a request is made for this privilege, the President of the Staff Council shall ask for objections and, hearing none, may grant permission to speak. If objections are raised, the privilege will be extended only by vote of the Staff Council.

9. Agenda: Meetings of the Staff Council shall have an agenda that includes the time and place of the meeting, the order of business, and copies of any substantive proposals. The Executive Board shall set the agenda; however, items may be added to the agenda at the meeting, if approved by a majority of the members present and voting. The agenda shall be posted on the Staff Council website at least three days prior to the general meeting. The Executive Board shall (1) receive proposals for Staff Council action or other presentations to the Staff Council from any committee of the Staff Council, from any member of the Staff Council, from individual staff members, or from the UT Dallas President or designee; (2) include on the agenda of a regular meeting as soon as practical all items presented from various sources; and (3) set the agenda so that the business can be disposed of in a meeting of reasonable duration.

10. Order of Business: The order of business for meetings shall be as set forth as follows, except that the order of business may be altered by an action approved in the meeting. The order of business
shall be: (1) call to order; (2) approval of previous meeting’s minutes; (3) committee reports; (4) old business; (5) new business; (6) miscellaneous (comments, announcements, tributes, etc.); and (7) adjournment.

11. Attendance: All University Staff are welcome to attend regular meetings as guests. The UT Dallas President or his designee(s) are welcome to attend regular meetings as guests. Prior to the beginning of their term, newly-elected representatives are required to attend the August meeting as guests.

Elections

The nominations and elections process shall be handled by the Nominations and Elections Committee. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be appointed in February of each year by the Executive Board and chaired by the Secretary. Nominations shall be completed by June 30 and elections shall be completed by July 31.

1. Nomination Procedures
   1. The Nominations and Elections Committee will obtain from the Executive Board the list of eligible staff.
   2. All members of the constituency as defined in Article II shall be eligible to nominate and to vote.
   3. A nomination form shall be made available to each constituent.
   4. Each constituent within a district may nominate one eligible staff member from the district for each representative that district is entitled to elect. Nominations shall be in writing.
   5. After the closing date for nominations, the Nominations and Election Committee shall count the nominations. There should be at least two nominations for each vacancy.
   6. The Nomination and Elections Committee shall notify the nominees that their names will be placed on the election ballots, unless withdrawn by a specified date. If there are insufficient nominations in any district, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Board for recommendation on further nominations.

2. Election Procedures
   1. Voting shall be held for no less than two days in order to accommodate varying work schedules.
   2. Elections shall be by secret ballot.
   3. Ballots, indicating the name of the district, the names of the nominees ordered alphabetically, the number to be elected, and instructions for voting, shall be prepared, distributed, and collected by the Nominations and Elections Committee in a manner determined by the Executive Board.
   4. The Nominations and Elections Committee will, at the close of the election, count the votes.
   5. Those elected shall be declared on the basis of the highest number of votes received. If a tie occurs, the matter shall be referred to the Executive Board for resolution.
   6. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall inform the Executive Board in writing of the names of the newly-elected representatives within three working days after such notification.
   7. All records pertaining to the nominations and elections process shall be stored in the office of the Secretary in compliance with the UT Dallas Policy on Records Management and Retention.

Amendments and Standing Rules

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by representatives of the Staff Council. Amendments must be submitted in writing to the Executive Board to be brought to the Staff Council. Amendments are subject to a favorable vote by a two-thirds majority of all Staff Council representatives. Votes on amendments will
be by roll call and will be published and posted.

Any amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted through the President to System Administration for review and approval.

These amended Bylaws shall take effect when approval has been received from U.T. System Administration.

The Staff Council shall make any Standing Rules it deems necessary to facilitate the transactions of its business as long as such Standing Rules are consistent with the provisions of these Bylaws and are approved by a simple majority vote of the members present and voting.

Rules of Order

Except where it may conflict with procedures stated within these Bylaws, Roberts’ Rules of Order Newly Revised, shall govern the procedures of the Staff Council. It is understood that these rules shall be used for the practical and orderly governance of Staff Council but may be waived by a vote if shown to be a hindrance.

Policy History

- Issued: 1996-08-30
- Revised: 1996-12-02
- Revised: 1998-04-28
- Revised: 1999-04-16
- Revised: 2000-12-15
- Revised: 2003-01-22
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- Revised: 2007-04-11
- Revised: 2008-01-25
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Policy Links

- Permalink for this policy: https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdpp1073
- Link to PDF version: https://policy.utdallas.edu/pdf/utdpp1073
- Link to printable version: https://policy.utdallas.edu/print/utdpp1073