

McNeese State University Staff Senate Bylaws

Chapter I: Attendance, Participation, and Duties of Senators

Section 1: Term of Office

1. Senators shall be elected to a full term of two (2) years or to fill a vacancy with less than two years remaining.
2. Newly elected Senators shall begin their terms at the final monthly Staff Senate meeting of the academic year.

Section 2: Duties of Senators

1. Senators are required to attend an orientation meeting at the start of their term to familiarize themselves with Senate operations, duties, and expectations.
2. Senators are expected to attend all general monthly meetings of the Staff Senate.
3. Each Senator shall serve on at least two (2) Senate committees, actively participating in committee activities and responsibilities.
4. Senators shall be accessible to their constituents, providing a platform for staff to voice concerns, suggestions, or recognitions.
5. Senators are responsible for keeping their constituents informed of Senate activities and decisions and shall share communication efforts as directed by the Staff Senate Secretary.

Section 3: Attendance Expectations

1. All Senators are expected to attend monthly Staff Senate meetings and actively participate in assigned committees and Senate responsibilities.
2. Senators may have up to two (2) consecutive unexcused absences or a total of three (3) unexcused absences in an academic year.
3. Valid causes for excused absences include personal illness, family emergencies, or unavoidable work-related conflicts. Prior notification must be provided to the President or Secretary to excuse an absence.

Section 4: Removal for Non-Attendance

1. A Senator who exceeds the permitted number of unexcused absences may be considered for removal by the Executive Committee.
2. The President shall provide the Senator with a formal written notice of potential removal, outlining the reasons and inviting a response within fourteen (14) days.
3. The Executive Committee shall review any responses and vote on the removal. A simple majority is required to confirm removal.

Section 5: Removal for Failure to Fulfill Duties

1. Senators are expected to actively fulfill the responsibilities of their role, including committee assignments, communication with constituents, and participation in Senate projects.

2. If a Senator consistently fails to perform their duties, the President, with input from the Executive Committee, may initiate a removal process.
3. The President shall issue a formal notice outlining the specific duties not fulfilled and provide the Senator an opportunity to respond within fourteen (14) days.
4. After reviewing the response, if any, the Executive Committee shall vote on the removal. A simple majority vote is required to confirm the removal.

Section 6: Removal for Violations of University Policies

1. Senators are expected to uphold all University policies and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the Staff Senate.
2. Any Senator found in violation of University policies may be subject to removal, pending an investigation and review by the Executive Committee.
3. The President shall issue a formal notice to the Senator outlining the policy violation(s) and provide the Senator an opportunity to respond within fourteen (14) days.
4. The Executive Committee shall review the circumstances and the response, if any, and vote on the removal. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required for removal in cases of policy violations.

Section 7: Appeal Process

1. A Senator removed under Sections 4, 5, or 6 may submit a written appeal to the Executive Committee within fourteen (14) days of the removal notice.
2. The Executive Committee shall present the appeal at the next regular Staff Senate meeting, and the removed Senator may present their case.
3. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senators present is required to overturn the removal decision.

Chapter II: Nomination and Election Procedures

Section 1: Nomination of Senators

1. Eligible candidates must submit a completed Staff Senate Nomination Form (SSNF) to the Nominations and Election Committee during the designated nomination period, which shall open in mid-March and remain open for two (2) weeks.
2. Candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by any full-time staff member, with confirmation of their willingness to serve.
3. Nominees must confirm in writing their acceptance of the nomination before being placed on the ballot and are encouraged to inform their immediate supervisor of their candidacy.

Section 2: Election of Senators

1. The Nominations and Election Committee shall conduct an annual election in the spring semester, using an online voting system accessible to all full-time staff. All eligible constituents will receive an email with a secure link to their ballot.
2. Senators are elected by a simple majority of votes within their respective areas of representation. In the event of a tie:

- a. If the tie is between two (2) candidates out of three (3) or more candidates within an area, a runoff election shall be held, with constituents in that area voting again.
- b. If the tie is between two (2) candidates who were the only candidates nominated within an area, the Staff Senate shall vote to break the tie.

Section 3: Uncontested and Vacant Positions

1. If the number of eligible nominations does not exceed the number of vacancies, the eligible nominees shall be named Senators without the need for a formal election.
2. In the event that no qualified employees are nominated for one or more available positions, the following steps will be taken to fill the vacancy:
 - a. Eligibility will be extended to employees from the area lacking a nominee who have been employed at McNeese State University for at least three (3) consecutive months.
 - b. Eligibility will be extended to Senators from that area who are completing their term limit.
 - c. If no candidate is available after exhausting the first two steps, the seat for that area will be forfeited until the next annual election.

Section 4: Special Elections

1. If a Senator position becomes vacant with more than six (6) months remaining in the term, a special election shall be conducted.
2. The Nominations and Election Committee shall solicit nominations from the affected area of representation, following the general nomination and election procedures outlined in these Bylaws.

Chapter III: Officer Election and Duties

Section 1: Nomination and Election of Officers

1. Officers shall be elected at the final monthly Staff Senate meeting of the academic year.
2. Nomination for officer positions:
 - a. Any current Senator in good standing who wishes to run for an officer position must declare their candidacy by submitting a written statement of intent to the Nomination and Elections Committee Chair no later than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting at which the election will take place.
 - b. Senators may also be nominated for an officer position by another Senator. In such cases, the nominated Senator must accept the nomination in writing to be placed on the ballot.
3. The outgoing President shall oversee the election process, which shall be conducted by secret ballot using secure electronic or paper methods.
 - a. The outgoing Executive Committee shall not vote.
4. In the event of a tie for any officer position, a runoff election shall be held. If the tie remains unbroken after the runoff, the outgoing Executive Committee shall cast the deciding votes.
5. Newly elected officers shall begin their terms immediately following the election and shall serve for one (1) year.

Section 2: Officer Duties

1. The President of the Staff Senate will:
 - a. Serve as the principal executive officer of the Staff Senate.
 - b. Preside over all meetings of the Senate and set the agenda for each meeting in consultation with Senate officers and chairs of standing and/or special committees.
 - c. Represent the Staff Senate in all official University and external matters.
 - d. Work with University leadership to address staff concerns and advocate on behalf of staff.
 - e. Appoint chairs to standing and ad hoc committees as needed.
 - f. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nomination and Elections Committee.
 - g. Ensure that the Staff Senate operates within its Bylaws and University policies.
2. The Vice President will:
 - a. Assist the President in their duties and preside over Staff Senate meetings in the President's absence.
 - b. Oversee the functioning of committees and ensure their objectives align with Staff Senate's goals.
 - c. Assume the duties of President if that position becomes vacant.
 - d. Serve as liaison to University administration regarding policy changes or updates that affect staff.
3. The Secretary will:
 - a. Record and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings.
 - b. Distribute meeting agendas, minutes, and Staff Senate communications to Senators in a timely manner.
 - c. Maintain an up-to-date roster of Senators.
 - d. Manage correspondence for the Staff Senate, including maintaining records of Senate activities.
 - e. Coordinate with Senators and the Historian to share information about Senate activities with all campus employees.
 - f. Ensure compliance with University records retention policies.
4. The Treasurer will:
 - a. Be responsible for the financial management of the Staff Senate, including the preparation of an annual budget.
 - b. Present financial reports at each regular Staff Senate meeting.
 - c. Maintain accurate records of all Senate transactions, including receipts and disbursements.

- d. Oversee fundraising activities and ensure compliance with university financial policies.
 - e. Ensure proper accounting and submission of financial reports to university officials as required.
- 5. The Parliamentarian will:
 - a. Advise the President on parliamentary procedure according to Robert's Rules of Order.
 - b. Ensure meetings are conducted in an orderly and efficient manner.
 - c. Assist in resolving procedural questions and ensuring Bylaws are followed during meetings.
- 6. The Historian will:
 - a. Document events and activities of the Staff Senate outside of meetings in coordination with the Secretary.
 - b. Photograph Senate events and activities for the Senate SharePoint or arrange for such documentation.
 - c. Oversee the Staff Senate's records retention.
 - d. Preserve Staff Senate history.
 - e. Coordinate and prepare an annual report on activities for submission to the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and the University President.
- 7. Committee Chairs will:
 - a. Lead specific standing or ad hoc committees as appointed by the President.
 - b. Coordinate committee meetings and report progress to the Staff Senate.
 - c. Ensure their committee fulfills its responsibilities and contributes to the overall objectives of the Staff Senate.
- 8. The Immediate Past President will:
 - a. Serve in an advisory position at the end of their term (if willing) to the President.
 - b. Act as an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the Executive Committee for one (1) year.
 - c. Provide advice, consultation, and support to the Staff Senate and its officers.
 - d. Preside over meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
 - e. In the event the current Past President is no longer a member of the Staff Senate, the most recent Past President shall assume this role (if willing).

Section 3: Officer Vacancies

- 1. In the event of an officer vacancy, the President shall appoint a temporary replacement with the approval of a simple majority of the Staff Senate.
- 2. A special election for the vacant officer position may be held at the next regular Senate meeting.

Section 4: Removal of Officers

1. Grounds for Removal:

- a. An officer may be removed from their position if they fail to fulfill their duties as outlined in Section 2 of this Chapter.
- b. An officer may also be removed for acting in a manner contrary to the interests of the Senate or in violation of University policies.

2. Removal Process:

- a. The Executive Committee shall initiate the removal process by reviewing the circumstances and deciding whether removal is warranted.
- b. If removal proceedings are deemed necessary, the President (or Vice President if the President is under review) shall issue a formal written notice to the officer in question, specifying the grounds for removal and providing an opportunity for response within fourteen (14) days.

3. Executive Committee Review and Vote:

- a. After receiving the officer's response, if any, the Executive Committee shall convene to review the case and the response.
- b. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Executive Committee is required to remove the officer from their position.

4. Appeal Process:

- a. An officer removed from their position may appeal the decision by submitting a written appeal to the Staff Senate within fourteen (14) days of the removal notice.
- b. The appeal shall be presented and reviewed at the next regular Staff Senate meeting, where the officer may present their case.
- c. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senators present is required to overturn the removal decision.

Chapter IV: Committees

Section 1: Standing Committees

- 1. The Staff Senate shall establish standing committees each year, which shall include:
 - a. Executive Committee: Composed of the Senate officers, responsible for setting agendas and overseeing Senate activities.
 - b. Nominations and Election Committee: Manages the nomination and election process for Senators and officers.
 - c. Constitution and Bylaws Committee: Reviews and proposes changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.
 - d. Communications Committee: Coordinates internal and external communications for the Senate.

2. Each standing committee shall consist of a minimum of three (3) Senators, all of whom shall serve for a term of one (1) year. Committee membership is open to all Senators, except for the Executive Committee.
3. The President may appoint Senators to standing committees and establish one or more subcommittees and subcommittee chairs for specific tasks as needed.

Section 2: Meeting Frequency

1. Committees shall meet quarterly or as convened by the committee chair to address agenda items.

Section 3: Limit on Committee Chairs

1. A Senator may serve as the chair of only one (1) standing committee at a time.

Section 4: Duties of Standing Committees

1. Each standing committee shall:
 - a. Accept business items assigned by the Executive Committee and may also initiate its own agenda.
 - b. Address assignments in a responsible and timely manner.
 - c. Provide a report to the full Staff Senate at each monthly meeting.

Section 5: Ad Hoc Committees

1. The Staff Senate may appoint ad hoc committees as necessary. These may be established by the President or upon request from the Staff Senate.
2. Ad hoc committee membership shall be open to all eligible staff members, and the President may appoint members as needed.

Section 6: Committee Chairs

1. The President shall appoint committee chairs, subject to Senate approval.
2. Committee Chairs must be elected Senators and are responsible for achieving the committee's mission and presenting reports to the Senate.

Section 7: Term of Office for Committee Members

1. Each committee member shall serve a term of one (1) year and may be reappointed.

Section 8: Vacancies

1. The President may fill any vacancies within committee memberships.

Section 9: Committee Rules

1. Each committee may adopt rules for its meetings, provided they are consistent with these Bylaws.

Chapter V: Meeting Procedures

Section 1: General Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the Staff Senate shall be held monthly at a time and place during regular business hours as specified by the President, who is empowered to cancel or reschedule meetings.
 - a. A schedule of all meetings shall be posted on the Staff Senate webpage at the beginning of the academic year.
 - b. The President shall provide at least 48 hours' notice to Senators before canceling or rescheduling a meeting, except in emergency situations.
2. With the exception of executive sessions, general meetings shall be open to the public. Only Senators, or their proxies, and invited guests listed on the agenda shall be eligible to speak.
3. A simple majority of the Staff Senate shall constitute a quorum. Each Senator shall have one vote, with the exception of the President and Past President (if applicable).
 - a. The President shall only vote in the event of a tie.
 - b. Voting by proxy is permitted with a written submission to the President or Secretary at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which the vote is to take place.

Section 2: Special Meetings

1. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Executive Committee, or by a written petition of five (5) Senators.
 - a. The President shall provide at least 48 hours' notice to Senators of special meetings.
2. With the exception of executive sessions, special meetings shall be open to the public. Only Senators, or their proxies, and invited speakers shall be eligible to speak.

Section 3: Electronically Held Meetings

1. Meetings may be conducted electronically when in-person attendance is impractical due to inclement weather, health concerns, or other unforeseen circumstances.
2. Electronic meetings shall be held via Internet meeting services that support:
 - a. Visible displays identifying those participating,
 - b. Identification of those seeking recognition to speak,
 - c. Displaying or making available the text of pending motions, and
 - d. Showing the results of votes.
3. 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 Senators, unless any Senator requests a quorum count by audible roll call. Such a request may be made following any vote for which the announced totals constitute less than a quorum.
4. Each Senator is responsible for their audio and Internet connections; no action taken with the presence of a quorum shall be invalidated on the grounds that a Senator's poor connection prevented participation in the meeting.
5. To seek recognition by the President, a Senator shall use a "hand raise" feature within the Internet meeting service.

6. A Senator intending to make a main motion, offer an amendment, or propose instructions to a committee shall, before or after being recognized, post the motion in writing to the designated online area.
7. Votes shall be taken by electronic roll call or audible roll call. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

Section 4: Release Time

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

Section 5: Conduct and Order of Meetings

1. Staff Senate business shall be conducted according to the procedures outlined in Robert's Rules of Order.
2. The order of business to be followed at Staff Senate meetings shall be as follows:
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Approval of Minutes
 - d. Guest Speakers
 - e. Committee Reports
 - f. Old Business
 - g. New Business
 - h. Discussion
 - i. Adjournment
3. An agenda for each regularly scheduled meeting shall be distributed by the President at least 48 hours prior to the meeting and posted on the Staff Senate webpage.
 - a. Senators may submit items to the President for inclusion on the agenda but must do so at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting.
4. 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 webpage after formal approval at the next regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting.

Chapter VI: Budget and Finance

Section 1: Budget Request and Approval

1. The Treasurer shall seek an operating budget sufficient to cover the reasonable operating expenses of the Staff Senate through the University's budget request process.
2. The budget shall align with the University's budget cycle and follow all applicable University guidelines.

Section 2: Budget Presentation and Approval

1. By the second meeting of each annual cycle, the Executive Committee shall present a proposed budget to the Staff Senate for approval.
2. The budget presentation shall include:
 - a. Current available balances,
 - b. Expected revenue, and
 - c. Expected expenditures for the upcoming cycle.

Section 3: Expenditure Authorization

1. When necessary, both the Treasurer and the President must co-sign all budget expenditures to ensure accountability.

Chapter VII: Amendments to the Bylaws

Section 1: Proposal and Approval

1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by any Senator during a regular meeting.
2. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and introduced at the next regular Senate meeting.
3. A simple majority vote of Senators present is required to adopt an amendment, provided quorum is met.

Adopted January 13, 2025