

# **McNeese State University Staff Senate Constitution**

## **Preamble**

The McNeese State University Staff Senate was established in 2024 to represent and amplify the voice of the staff community within the University. The organization exemplifies the concept of shared governance existing among all aspects of the McNeese community. The Staff Senate joined the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association as the third influential body that helps to shape the culture and vision of the University. The Staff Senate is a hallmark of trust, respect, and dignity among the McNeese workforce.

## **Article I: Name, Mission, and Objectives**

### **Section 1: Name**

The name of this organization shall be the McNeese State University Staff Senate, hereinafter referred to as the Staff Senate.

### **Section 2: Mission**

The Staff Senate serves as an advisory and advocacy body representing the interests of the collective staff community. The organization operates cohesively to convey information and make recommendations to the University administration. Members of the Staff Senate are expected to be selfless individuals with high integrity, given the magnitude of their role. The Staff Senate shall promote and foster the effective contribution of staff expertise toward University goals.

### **Section 3: Objectives**

The Staff Senate shall continuously strive to:

1. Address and resolve issues of concern that affect staff.
2. Establish a sense of community among members.
3. Provide advisement and advocacy concerning University policies and procedures impacting staff.
4. Enhance the knowledge of the staff community through exposure to the challenges and strengths of administrative units.
5. Promote honesty and transparency.
6. Foster opportunities for professional development, University service, and networking.
7. Celebrate accomplishments within the staff community internally and throughout the campus.

## **Article II: Membership and Representation**

### **Section 1: Eligibility**

All full-time, classified and unclassified staff employed by McNeese State University for a minimum of six (6) consecutive months, who are in good standing, are eligible for Staff Senate membership. Executive leadership and deans are not eligible for Senate seats.

### **Section 2: Representation**

1. Senate representation shall be determined annually based on the number of eligible employees in each of the following areas of representation as of January 1:
  - a. Office of the President (excluding Enrollment Management)
  - b. Academic Affairs
  - c. Athletics
  - d. Business Affairs
  - e. Student Affairs
  - f. Enrollment Management

- g. Classified Employees (from all areas)
2. Each area of representation shall have one Senator for every 20 eligible staff members, with a maximum of three Senators per area of representation.

### **Section 3: Terms of Office**

1. Senators shall serve a term of two (2) years and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.
2. After serving two consecutive terms, Senators must observe a one-year break before becoming eligible for re-election to the Staff Senate.

### **Section 4: Election and Nomination**

1. Senators shall be elected by full-time staff within each area of representation.
2. Candidates for Senate seats must be nominated prior to being placed on the election ballot. Nominations may be submitted by the candidate or by another full-time staff member.

### **Section 5: Removal of Senators**

A Senator may be removed from office if they fail to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined by the Staff Senate. The specific grounds and procedures for removal shall be detailed in the Bylaws.

## **Article III: Officers**

### **Section 1: Officer Positions**

The officers of the Staff Senate shall include:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Parliamentarian
6. Historian
7. Committee Chairs (as needed)
8. Immediate Past President (ex officio)

### **Section 2: Terms of Office**

1. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year and may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.
2. A one-year break is required before any officer who has served two (2) consecutive terms in the same position may run again for that office.

### **Section 3: Removal of Officers**

An officer of the Staff Senate may be removed from their position if they fail to fulfill their duties or act in a manner contrary to the interests of the Senate. The specific grounds and procedures for removal shall be detailed in the Bylaws.

## **Article IV: Meetings**

### **Section 1: General Meetings**

1. The Staff Senate shall hold regular monthly meetings throughout the academic year.
2. Meetings are open to the public, although only Senators may vote.

## **Section 2: Special Meetings**

1. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Executive Committee, or through a written petition signed by at least five (5) Senators.
2. Senators shall receive at least 48 hours' notice prior to any special meeting.

## **Section 3: Quorum and Voting**

1. A quorum for conducting business shall consist of a simple majority of the Staff Senate.
2. The President may only vote in the event of a tie.

## **Article V: Committees**

The Staff Senate shall establish standing and ad hoc committees as needed to fulfill its objectives and responsibilities. The structure, duties, and procedures for committee operations shall be outlined in the Bylaws.

## **Article VI: Ratification and Amendments**

### **Section 1: Ratification of the Constitution**

1. This Constitution shall be ratified upon receiving a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of approval by the Staff Senate members present and voting at a regular or specially called meeting, provided a quorum is met.
2. Following Senate approval, the Constitution shall be presented to the University President for endorsement to ensure alignment with University governance structures.
3. Upon endorsement by the University President, the Constitution shall become the governing document of the McNeese State University Staff Senate.
4. Notification of the ratified Constitution shall be distributed to all University staff via official communication channels.

### **Section 2: Proposal of Amendments**

An amendment to this Constitution may be proposed by any of the following methods:

1. Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any Senator in writing to the Parliamentarian.
2. Amendments may also be proposed through a petition signed by at least twenty (20) qualified staff members and submitted to the Parliamentarian.
3. Upon receipt, the Parliamentarian shall present the proposed amendment to the Executive Committee for initial review at their next meeting.

### **Section 3: Introduction and Notification**

1. After the Executive Committee's review, the proposed amendment shall be introduced at the next regularly scheduled Staff Senate meeting.
2. The Secretary shall distribute the proposed amendment to all Senators at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting where it will be discussed.
3. The proposed amendment must be introduced at least one (1) regularly scheduled meeting before it is eligible for a vote.

### **Section 4: Ratification of Amendments**

1. To ratify an amendment to this Constitution, a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Senators present and voting is required during a regular meeting where a quorum is present.
2. If the proposed amendment receives the necessary votes for approval, it shall be ratified and become effective immediately, unless a different effective date is specified in the amendment.
3. Ratified amendments shall be communicated to all University staff through official Staff Senate channels, including email and the Staff Senate webpage.

#### **Article VII: Adoption of Bylaws**

1. The Staff Senate shall adopt and maintain Bylaws to govern specific operational details, including but not limited to:
  - a. Election and nomination procedures,
  - b. Duties and responsibilities of Senators and officers,
  - c. Committee structures and functions,
  - d. Meeting procedures, and
  - e. Budget and financial management practices.
2. The Bylaws shall be consistent with this Constitution and may be amended as outlined in the Bylaws amendment procedures.
3. In cases of conflict between the Bylaws and the Constitution, the Constitution shall take precedence.

*Adopted January 13, 2025*