

## **Staff Senate By-Laws**

*Amended March 2024*

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### **Article I: Purpose**

The Staff Senate of the University of Mount Saint Vincent serves as a representative body for all full-time non-faculty employees of the University, to promote the welfare and development of the staff, and to contribute to the success of the University and its mission. As a constituent organization, the Staff Senate serves alongside the Faculty Senate and Student Government Association (SGA) as a recognized component of the University's governance system. It serves to facilitate communication and dialogue between faculty, exempt staff, non-exempt staff, the administration, and students, and has authority, as a deliberative and representative body, to make recommendations on all matters pertaining to the welfare and working environment of University staff.

### **Article II: Duties**

The duties of the Staff Senate are to:

1. Serve as the representative body for all full-time, non-faculty employees (exempt and non-exempt staff) of the University (heretofore referred to as "staff");
2. Serve in an advisory capacity to the University's governance and administrative structure;
3. Appoint and recommend representatives to University committees;
4. Serve as a liaison, where helpful, between staff and administration;
5. Foster a culture of collaboration, cooperation, and service;
6. Regularly poll the staff on important issues;
7. Hold an open session for all staff (Town Hall Meeting) at least once each Fall and Spring semester;
8. Maintain, post on the University intranet, and deposit in the Office of the President all minutes and actions of standing committees of the Staff Senate and all minutes and actions of the Senate itself; and
9. Share responsibility with faculty and staff to pursue and attain the University's goals and support the mission and values.

### **Article III: Membership**

In addition to the Chair, membership in the Staff Senate shall consist of eleven (11) voting Senators, apportioned by recommendation of the Staff Senate and ratified each year by the Staff Assembly (at the Spring Town Hall Meeting) according to the number of employees in each administrative division, with the maximum number of Senators from any one division being three (3). As of FY25, representation shall be:

1. Chair (non-voting)
2. Academic Affairs – 3
3. Advancement – 1
4. Enrollment – 1
5. Facilities/Operations – 2
6. Finance – 1
7. Information Technology – 1
8. Student Affairs – 2

In addition, the Faculty Senate, Human Resources, and the Student Government Association (SGA) shall appoint one (1) non-voting ex officio member to serve as its liaison to the Staff Senate. These representatives will be called upon as needed.

### ***Senate Elections***

Elections for representatives to the Staff Senate shall be conducted no later than April 1 of each year. The Staff Senate's Elections Committee shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Each division (see Article III) of the University must be represented and apportioned based upon the roster of staff provided by Human Resources, with members of the division responsible for electing representatives from their respective division;
2. All full-time, non-faculty staff are eligible for election;
3. Nominations are to be reviewed during the February Staff Senate meeting, with nominations opening on or around January 2<sup>nd</sup> and closing on January 31<sup>st</sup>;
4. Ballots shall be distributed to staff within respective divisions no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> and collected no later than March 15<sup>th</sup>;
5. The Elections Committee shall tally votes and announce results at a bi-annual meeting of the Staff Assembly (Town Hall Meeting) to be held in the Spring of each year; and
6. Newly-elected Senators will assume positions on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Senate Officer Elections (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary)***

Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary Officer positions shall be conducted annually by the Elections Committee in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Elections are to be held annually from among the eleven (11) Senators announced at the Spring bi-annual Town Hall meeting;
2. The Elections Committee shall solicit nominations from Senators scheduled to take office on July 1<sup>st</sup> for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary between the announcement of election results at the Spring Town Hall meeting and the subsequent Staff Senate Meeting (or, if the subsequent Staff Senate meeting falls in less than ten (10) days from the Spring

Town Hall meeting, no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>;

- a. Nominations for the Chair must come from along the returning Senators (those preparing to serve the second year of their term).
3. Senators scheduled to take office July 1<sup>st</sup> shall be polled by the Elections Committee by secret ballot no later than the May Staff Senate Meeting, with Officers announced to the University community no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>; and
4. Newly-elected Officers will assume duties on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Article IV: Duties of the Officers**

1. **Chair:** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Staff Senate. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Vice-Chair shall preside in her/his stead. The Chair shall represent the Senate to official University functions and shall serve as Senate liaison to the Faculty Senate.
2. **Vice-Chair:** The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in the fulfillment of her/his duties. The Vice-Chair shall chair meetings when necessary, and shall succeed to the Chair in the event of a vacancy until the election of a new Chair.
3. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall record the proceedings of all Senate meetings; provide minutes to all members of the Senate for approval at subsequent meetings; receive minutes of all Standing Committees of the Senate; submit to the University community copies of all approved minutes of the Staff Senate; and maintain, post on the University intranet, and deposit in the Office of the President, all minutes and actions of Standing Committees of the Staff Senate and all minutes and actions of the Senate itself.

#### **Article V: Vacancies**

1. Vacancies that arise in the Senate membership, including for those on leave, will be filled by a special election;
  - a. If there is a vacancy, a special election will take place. The newly elected Senator will assume the role for the remainder of the previous Senator's term.
  - b. For a vacancy due to a leave, the interim Senator will fill the role until the Senator returns from leave or their term is up (whichever occurs first).
2. A vacancy in the Senate Chair will be filled by the Vice-Chair until a Chair can be elected;
3. A vacancy in the Senate Vice-Chair will be filled by the Secretary until a Vice-Chair can be elected;
4. A vacancy in the Secretary will be filled by the Vice-Chair until a Secretary can be elected;
5. If a Senator misses two meetings in a semester, the Senate will declare the position open and hold an election to fill the seat; and
6. If an Officer or Senator moves to a position outside of the division they were elected to serve, or if they are promoted to an executive level position with a seat on the Senior Administration Team, they must step down and a special election must take place to fill

the vacancy in their previous division.

*Note: For special elections, both nominations and elections must take place among the represented division within two weeks of the vacancy.*

#### **Article VI: Term of Office**

1. The Chair shall serve a one-year term and is elected annually;
2. All other members of the Senate shall serve for a two-year period with eligibility for reelection for a second term. Elected annually, the Vice-Chair and Secretary may serve in an Officer role for one year of their two-year term and can continue their second-year as a Senator if their Officer term is during the first year of their two-year term. The Vice-Chair and Secretary may serve as an Officer for both years of their two-year term; and
3. Election to future terms may occur after an interim of one full term (two years). In the first session of the new Staff Senate, half of the Senators were elected for three-year terms and half for two-year terms to ensure continuity.

#### **Article VII: Meetings**

1. Meetings are held once per month unless business warrants otherwise, with a minimum of five (5) meetings per academic semester;
2. Meetings are called to order by the Chair of the Senate;
3. The agenda of all meetings shall be distributed to all members of the Senate at least one week prior to the Senate meeting;
4. Special meetings of the Senate may be called by the Chair. The Chair must call a special meeting of the Senate if so requested by the President or one-third (1/3) of the members of the Senate; and
5. The Senate for each academic year shall be constituted and Senate Officers elected by June 1<sup>st</sup> of the prior academic year.

#### **Article VIII: Actions of the Senate**

1. Proposals must be submitted in writing to the Staff Senate by any council, commission, division, or standing committee or by any University officer;
2. The Executive Committee of the Senate may divide the Senate's agenda between a calendar of non-debatable (routine) action items and debatable items. A majority vote of the Senate may move any action item from the non-debatable to the debatable calendar;
3. Ordinarily, proposals may not be voted on during the meeting at which they are first presented. However, if three-fourths (3/4) of the Senate membership present agrees, action may be taken at the time the proposal is introduced;
4. All policy proposals approved by the Senate must be submitted by the Senate Chair via email to the President for final approval;

5. Upon approval of the President, consistent with the by-laws of the Board of Trustees, certain proposals must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for their approval. If the President vetoes a proposal of the Senate, this action will be final. The President will communicate to the Senate the reason(s) for her/his decision. Human Resources will ensure that all approved proposals are reflected in the appropriate documents, e.g. Employee Handbook and archived online;
6. The action of the Board of Trustees shall be final; and
7. The President may ask the Senate to reconsider any proposal submitted. The Senate may not refuse to reconsider a proposal when requested by the President.

#### **Article IV: Quorum**

Two-thirds (2/3) of the membership shall constitute a quorum. Issues shall be determined by a simple majority of the Senate, unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws.

#### **Article X: Minutes**

Approved minutes will be distributed to all faculty, staff, and administrators and posted and archived on the University intranet.

#### **Article XI: Standing Committees of the Staff Senate**

The Standing Committees of the Staff Senate shall be:

1. **Elections Committee:** Manages the Staff Senate election process. This committee is responsible for ensuring adherence in the elections process to the Staff Senate By-Laws and University governance policies. It is also responsible for reviewing and recommending to the Staff Senate changes to the election process.
2. **Events Committee:** Brainstorms, establishes, plans, and executes events on behalf of the Staff Senate. Communicates with Campus Events and Catering to book space and dining services. Creates and, with the Chair, distributes fliers and invitations advertising events to staff and administrators.

*Note: Ad hoc committees will be formed as needed and called to formation by the Chair.*

#### **Article XII: Amendments**

See By-Laws of the University Governance System: General Information.

Approved: August 11, 2021

Revised: March 2024