

# HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY

# STAFF SENATE

## CONSTITUTION

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### ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization is the Henderson State University Staff Senate, hereinafter referred to as the Staff Senate.

### ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

#### Section 1. Mission Statement

The Henderson State University Staff Senate promotes and protects the welfare of the HSU staff by representing the interest of and the issues impacting all staff members.

#### Section 2. Vision

The Staff Senate seeks to enhance its visibility as a vital governance organization, recognized as the voice of the HSU staff. The Staff Senate will be an essential partner and valued resource by the administration when critical decisions are made that affect staff members. The Staff Senate pledges to continually support the vision, mission, and core values of Henderson State University.

#### Section 3. Purpose

The Henderson State University Staff Senate is comprised of duly elected representatives from the staff of the university. To this end, the Staff Senate will:

- promote and protect the welfare of of the HSU staff;
- review policies proposed by the university Shared Governance Committee, or previously adopted, that may affect the welfare of staff and make recommendations about these to the SGC or the President;
- recognize HSU staff accomplishments in conjunction with the university Staff Recognition Awards Committee;
- promote the effective exchange of information between the HSU administration and staff;

- propose and maintain programs to enhance the personal and professional well-being of the staff, as well as encourage educational development; and
- Will at all times direct its activities in a positive, constructive manner.

**ARTICLE III. AUTHORITY**

Within the bounds of this constitution, the Staff Senate will have the authority to adopt bylaws, rules, and resolutions to fulfill its responsibilities. After adoption, all formal actions of the Staff Senate will be forwarded to the University President for review, recommendation, and approval.

**ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** All full-time classified and non-classified staff with at least six months of service are eligible to be members of the HSU Staff Senate.

**Section 2.** The Staff Senate shall include one ex-officio representative of the HSU Faculty Senate.

**Section 3.** The Staff Senate shall include one ex-officio representative of the HSU Student Government Association.

**Section 4.** Staff Senate members shall be elected from the following university divisions based on departments under the jurisdiction of the President and/or a Vice President of the University. The staff shall elect representatives from within their own university division only.

- Area I: Academic Affairs
- Area II: Finance & Administration
- Area III: Student Affairs & Student Success
- Area IV: University Advancement
- Area V: President’s Area

**Section 5.** Staff Senate representation is determined by 1 senator for every 10 staff members within a division – rounding up to the next denominator (i.e. a division with 34 staff members would have 4 senators). Populations shall be based on the most current listing available from Human Resources for the month preceding the nomination call. Each Senator will be assigned an equal number of constituents from their division to whom they are the primary senate contact. Assignment of constituents will be determined alphabetically.

There shall be 1 alternate for each 2 Senate seats (Ratio 1:2); if there is an odd number of seats, round to the lowest number.

**Section 6.** The official term for a Senator elected during an annual election shall be two official years. An official year begins with the January meeting of the Staff Senate and ends with the call to order of the January meeting of the following year.

**Section 7.** Senators are expected to attend all regularly scheduled Staff Senate meetings. Senators who must be absent from a Staff Senate meeting are expected to send a proxy selected by the Senator from his/her own area of representation. The proxy may not be someone who is already serving as a Senator. The proxy will have all the rights and privileges of the Senator that is absent. Any elected Senator may miss three meetings within a calendar year without a proxy. Upon the fourth absence said position shall

be declared vacant and filled according to Article 5, Section 11. The President will notify the former Senator of action taken.

**Section 8.** A Senator shall have served a full term if his/her membership is held for twelve full months or more.

**Section 9.** Senators shall not serve consecutive full terms.

**Section 10.** Senators who transfer from one university division to another shall not relinquish membership in the Senate and any Senate committee.

**Section 11.** Approximately half of the Senate membership shall be elected each year. Should there be an imbalance of three over half, the Staff Senate president has the authority to ask for volunteers to either extend their term for another year or end their term early in order to restore balance and retain institutional memory from one operating year to another.

**Section 12.** Senators shall not use job status, rank, position, or salary as advantages over other members. Senators shall conduct business in a manner respectful of the trust exhibited by those who elected them and shall work toward the fulfillment of University and Senate goals in a positive manner. If such confirmed behavior is brought to the attention of the Senate, the Senator may be asked to resign following a majority vote of the Senate.

## **ARTICLE V. ANNUAL AND SPECIAL ELECTIONS**

**Section 1.** Annual nominations for and election of Staff Senators shall be held prior to the December meeting. The Election Committee of the Staff Senate shall be responsible for all annual and special elections.

**Section 2.** For each university division, the Election Committee shall devise and distribute by email the link to a valid online website (i.e. Survey Monkey) with a list of all eligible Senate candidates to each staff member. This will be done at least five business days prior to the nomination deadline set by the Committee. The use of a survey site is mandated for the preservation of election data.

**Section 3.** Each staff member shall be allowed to make a nomination for each position to be filled from his/her university division only. Staff must have six months of continuous service with the university prior to being nominated to serve on the Staff Senate.

**Section 4.** Eligible nominated staff have five business days to accept or decline the nomination. They are to be notified by campus e-mail.

**Section 5.** For each available position, the three persons who receive the highest number of nomination votes shall be contacted by the Election Committee to confirm their acceptance of the nomination. If a nomination is not accepted, the Committee shall contact the person(s) with the next highest number of votes.

**Section 6.** If more than three persons share the highest number of votes, all shall be considered official nominees.

**Section 7.** The starting date for elections shall be set by the Election Committee and remain open for 5 business days. The Election Committee shall notify all staff about the final election period one week before elections open. This notification will include instructions on how a staff member may request an absentee ballot if they will have no access to email during the allotted election time period.

**Section 9.** The Senate Secretary shall be given the names of the appropriate number of individuals in each university division who received the highest number of votes and shall announce their names and positions accordingly within two business days after an election.

**Section 10.** The candidate receiving the next highest number of votes shall become an alternate, and serve in the event a seat is vacated in that respective area. If an election results in a tie, the candidate(s) who receive the tie votes shall be placed on a second ballot. A run-off email election shall be held within two business days. In case of another tie, the Election Committee shall notify the individuals concerned and the winner shall be determined according to a method devised by the Committee.

**Section 11.** Using the above guidelines, Senate seats that become vacant between annual elections shall be filled by an alternate, if available, within twenty business days after the vacancy is noted by the Senate.

## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS**

### **Section 1. Executive Officers**

The executive officers of the Staff Senate are the President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past-President.

### **Section 2. Elected Officers**

The officers to be elected each term year are the President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers shall be elected during the first Staff Senate meeting of the official year. Officers shall be nominated from the floor. Only new and continuing members are eligible to vote. Those receiving the greatest number of votes for each position are declared the officers. Term of office shall be one official year or until successors are elected. Officers shall not serve consecutive terms. An officer shall have served a full term if his/her office is held for six full months or more.

### **Section 3. Officer Vacancy**

Should any officer's position, other than the President, become vacant during the term year, a senator will be elected by the Staff Senate to fill the vacant officer position for the remaining term year. If the position for President becomes vacant, the President-Elect assumes the duties of the President for the remainder of the term year.

### **Section 4. Officer Responsibilities**

#### **A. President**

- act as official spokesperson for the Staff Senate;
- preside over all regular meetings of the Staff Senate;
- organize the agenda for each meeting and email to each Senator and the University President within five business days prior to a scheduled meeting;
- attend University Board of Trustee meetings and report on each meeting to the senate;
- appoint Senators committees or to perform other duties as deemed necessary;

- assist the University President in selecting Senators or other members of the Staff to serve on University committees;
- protect the Staff Senate from obviously frivolous or dilatory motions by objecting to consideration of the questions;
- have a monthly conference with the University President to discuss the upcoming agenda items or other Staff Senate business and report on the meeting to the senate;
- have a monthly conference with Vice President of Finance & Administration to discuss upcoming agenda items or other Staff Senate business and report on the meeting to the senate;
- present proposed constitutional amendments to the Staff Senate;
- be allowed to vote on motions only when his/her vote shall affect the outcome of the results;
- be granted "Senate Time" as approved by the University President and coordinated with his/her supervisor. The "Senate Time," is not to exceed five hours per week, is to be used for Staff Senate business only, and must not interfere with assigned job duties or the mission of the University;
- notify former Senator(s) of the lost seat immediately following the third absence according to absenteeism policy Article 3, Section 6;
- shall approve/oversee the posting of all information on the Staff Senate website.

#### **B. President-Elect**

- be elected from first year senators;
- assist the President;
- preside over Staff Senate meetings in the President's absence;
- succeed the President at the end of his/her term;
- succeed the President if he/she cannot complete his/her term (this shall not deprive the President-Elect from serving a full term as President the following year);
- attend Senate committee meetings if requested by the President;
- serve as Senate Parliamentarian. The Parliamentarian shall advise the Senate President on procedures in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

#### **C. Secretary**

- certify that a quorum is present at the beginning of each Staff Senate meeting;
- keep an accurate and complete record of all proceedings of each Staff Senate meeting;
- keep an accurate and complete record of Senator attendance at each Senate meeting;
- distribute approved minutes of each Staff Senate meeting to the Staff and the President of the University within five business days after a meeting's adjournment;
- officially announce election results;
- keep an accumulative account of minutes and all pertinent Staff Senate dates and pass them to the successor.

#### **D. Treasurer**

- maintain all fiscal records of the Staff Senate
- in conjunction with the other officers, prepare an annual budget for approval by the University Budget Committee, the University President, and the University Board of Trustees;

- verify and present all bills to the Senate President for approval and pay approved bills promptly;
- submit quarterly financial reports to the Staff Senate;
- other duties as deemed necessary.

**E. Immediate Past-President**

- serve in an advisory capacity as a non-voting, ex-officio member;
- assist with transition of new officers and archival information;
- other duties as deemed necessary.

**ARTICLE VII. SENATE COMMITTEES**

**Section 1. Senate Election Committee**

This is the committee that will hold special elections for the Staff Senate, and it will also conduct the main Staff Senate election at the end of the year. The committee is to follow these guidelines:

- be appointed by the Senate President;
- consist of one Senator from each university division;
- shall be bound by the guidelines provided in Articles V and IX of this Constitution.

**Section 2. Staff Scholarship Committee**

This committee meets to determine the staff member who will receive the Textbook Scholarship — and any future scholarships established by Staff Senate. The Textbook Scholarship is \$100 and can be used in the Reddie bookstore for that designated semester. This process is done in the fall and in the spring. The committee is to follow these guidelines:

- be appointed by the Senate President;
- consist of no less than 3 Senators;
- review staff applicants for scholarships and vote on the recipient based on greatest financial need.

**Section 3. Staff Survey Committee**

This committee meets to create and conduct surveys as needed by the Staff Senate. This is particularly vital when proposed policies or procedures from the University Shared Governance Committee require feedback from university staff. The committee is to follow these guidelines:

- be appointed by the Senate President;
- consist of no less than 3 Senators;
- Chair of this committee will also serve as staff-at-large on the University Shared Governance Committee;
- prepare any Staff Senate recommendations/changes to Shared Governance proposals within 5 days of senate meetings and present to the SGC at the next scheduled meeting.

**Section 4. Staff Handbook Committee**

This committee meets to review and update the staff handbook as needed. The committee is to follow these guidelines:

- be appointed by the Senate President;
- consist of one Senator from each university division;
- conduct a full review of the staff handbook at the end of each spring semester;
- present any proposed changes at the regularly scheduled June Staff Senate meeting;

- make any additional changes and submit a final copy for the next academic year to the Senate President by August 1 each year.

**Section 5. Staff Engagement Committee**

This committee is responsible for creating new initiatives that will benefit the staff of Henderson State University as well as administer the Staff Emergency Fund.

- be appointed by the Senate President;
- consist of the Senate President, President-Elect, Immediate Past-President, and 3 additional Senators from which one will be elected Chair;
- review all applicants for emergency funds or additional staff senate support.
- Chair of this committee shall serve as a confidential person to which all support requests are received.

**Section 6. Additional Committees**

The Senate President may create and appoint additional committees on a temporary or permanent basis as needed.

**Section 7. Committee Reports**

Committee shall report on their meetings to the Senate if requested by the President.

**ARTICLE VIII. SENATE MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** The Staff Senate shall meet monthly.

**Section 2.** The Staff Senate may be called into a special session by the Senate President, the University President, or a majority of Senators, and must be scheduled at a time subject to the approval of the University President.

**Section 3.** Any Staff member may attend regular or special sessions of the Staff Senate and may participate in deliberations with the consent of the presiding officer; however, only Senators have voting privileges.

**Section 4.** A quorum for any meeting for the transaction of business of the Senate shall consist of a simple majority of the entire Staff Senate.

**Section 5.** The current edition of *Robert's Rule of Order* shall be the authority for conducting business of the Staff Senate, provided that if any of its provisions are in conflict with this Constitution, the Constitution shall prevail.

**ARTICLE IX. RESIGNATIONS**

**Section 1.** A Senator may resign from the Staff Senate upon a personal letter of resignation to the Senate President and, in doing so, shall terminate his/her membership in any Senate committee.

**Section 2.** A Senator may relinquish membership in a Senate committee without affecting his/her Staff Senate membership.

**Section 3.** If a vacancy in the Staff Senate should occur through termination of employment, resignation from the Senate, or through automatic termination due to lack of attendance, the position shall be filled by an appropriate alternate.

#### **ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** Twenty or more Staff members may petition the Senate to amend the constitution by signing the petition and delivering copies to each Senator no fewer than ten business days prior to the next Senate meeting.

**Section 2.** Upon the favorable vote of the majority of the total Senate membership, a petition for amending this constitution shall be submitted to the Staff by the Election Committee via email.

**Section 3.** A proposed amendment to this constitution shall be adopted when a majority of the Staff approves the amendment by a two-thirds vote, and when approved by the University President, and the Board of Trustees of the University.

#### **ARTICLE X. ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

**Section 1.** The Staff Senate Constitution shall be adopted when approved by a majority vote of the Staff, the University President, and the University Board of Trustees.

The Staff Senate was established with the endorsement and approval of President Charles D. Dunn in Spring 1988.

Amended dates: August 26, 1999; December 1, 2006; December 8, 2010; February 27, 2020.