



## STAFF SENATE CONSTITUTION

### I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The organization shall be known as the Athens State University Staff Senate, hereafter referred to as the Senate.

### II. AUTHORITY AND MISSION

The Senate was established with the encouragement and approval of the President of Athens State University, May 2002.

The mission of the Senate is to:

1. represent non-faculty employees of Athens State University, hereafter referred to as Staff;
2. serve in advisory capacity to the President of the University with respect to matters pertaining to Staff of the University;
3. provide a means of communication to Staff of the University;
4. and provide a forum for all Staff of the University.

### III. MEMBERSHIP

#### **Section 1. Electorate:**

The Senate electorate shall be composed of all Athens State University Staff, excluding the President, Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents. Any member of the Electorate shall have the right to vote for the candidate(s) for Senator (to represent his/her designated organizational unit) and to vote in any and all other elections held with Senate activities as provided by the Constitution. All members of the electorate will follow the policies and procedures of Athens State University.

#### **Section 2. Membership:**

Membership to the Senate is on the basis of one representative for every one to eighteen employees (or major fraction thereof) in each of the University's organizational units reporting to area VPs, with a minimum of one Senator per unit, and the Senator-at-Large. Senators are elected every two years in direct proportion to the number of regular Staff in their organizational units as provided by Human Resources. The Senator-at-Large position shall be filled by the outgoing Presiding Officer, and the Presiding Officer shall be selected by the newly elected Staff Senate. All Senators with the exception of the Presiding Officer and Senator-at-Large are eligible for reelection for the immediate next term.

### **Section 3.Representation:**

Based on data as provided by the Office of Human Resources, the University's organizational units reporting to area VPs are currently as follows: Academic Affairs, Enrollment and Student Support Services, Financial Affairs, and University Advancement.

### **Section 4. Representation Change:**

Should a Senator change to a different organizational unit during his/her term, he/she shall have the option to continue the term and represent the original unit to which he/she was elected or to resign. Should the Senator choose to resign, he/she may be eligible to run in the new organizational unit in the next Senate election. The vacancy shall then be filled from the election list of ranked alternates as maintained by the Senate Secretary.

## **IV. OFFICERS**

The officers shall be a Presiding Officer, an appointed Secretary, and Senators.

## **V. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES**

### **Section 1. The Presiding Officer will:**

1. schedule and preside over all meetings of the Senate;
2. ensure that all Senate activities are conducted in a professional manner;
3. appoint such committees as are deemed necessary for the business of the Senate;
4. ensure that all actions conform to the Senate Constitution and bylaws;
5. serve ex-officio on all committees of the Senate with voting rights determined by the committee;
6. represent the Senate at meetings and functions including but not limited to Administrative Council meetings and Budget Advisory Committee meetings;
7. make presentations to the Board of Trustees to inform them of staff activities;
8. serve as the communication liaison between the President of the University and the Senate;
9. act as a nonvoting member of the Senate, except in the case of tie votes and special meetings;
10. appoint a Secretary from the elected Senators;
11. distribute the agenda to all Senate members prior to each Senate meeting;
12. distribute Senate minutes to all Senate members for approval;
13. assume responsibility for the Senate's fiscal affairs;
14. administer a fair process for recommending or appointing staff representatives to serve on university-wide committees, planning councils and program councils within the University's governance structure other than those appointed by the University President or Provost.

### **Section 2. The Secretary will:**

1. take and maintain the minutes of each meeting of the Senate, including roll call/attendance records and provide to the Presiding Officer;

2. notify a Senator of impending removal from the Senate after the second absence without proxy;
3. maintain the election ranked alternates list and notify an alternate in the event of a Senator vacancy;
4. maintain an accurate record of all resolutions duly adopted by the Senate and the vote on such resolutions;
5. receive and keep all communications and report to and from the Senate;
6. maintain updated copies of the Staff Senate Constitution and bylaws and make the information available to all Staff.

**Section 3. Senators will:**

1. attend all regular and special meetings or authorize a proxy;
  - missing more than two regular meetings without a proxy will result in the possibility of being asked to resign;
  - provide written notification to the Senate Secretary in the event the Senator chooses to resign;
2. participate in all business brought before the Senate;
3. serve on committees as appropriate to facilitate the business of the Senate;
4. serve on university committees as appointed by the Presiding Officer;
5. represent his/her respective organizational area.

## VI. COMMITTEES

**Section 1. Purpose:**

Senate committees will be established to provide the Senate with working bodies entailing specific areas of responsibility to enable a planned and coordinated direction for the business of the Senate.

**Section 2. Members:**

Committee members may be appointed from within the Senate, as well as from Staff. Committee members appointed from the Staff will have voting rights within their assigned committee(s) only.

**Section 3. Election Committee:**

An election committee established by the Senate shall solicit nominations for the Senate every other summer by an open nomination process from current Staff employees and/or the committee. No member's name shall be listed on the official ballot without that person's consent. The Election Committee and the Office of Human Resources will verify eligibility of all nominations.

## VII. NOMINATIONS

**Section 1. Eligibility:**

Eligibility for election to the Senate shall be extended to all full-time members of the Electorate who are no longer on probationary status.

**Section 2. Term of Office:**

The term of office shall be two (2) years, except for the member serving as Presiding Officer whom shall automatically be named Senator-at-Large for an additional term for a total of four (4) years. The regular term of office commences on September 1 and terminates on August 31 of the 2nd year.

## VIII. ELECTIONS

Nominations will be solicited by the Election Committee in July of the election year. Voting will be conducted at the beginning of the Fall semester. Ballots will be tabulated by the Election Committee and ranked in order by the number of votes in each organizational unit. The individuals receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected to fill the Senate seats within their organizational units. Should any organizational unit not have enough nominees to fill the representative spots required, these spots shall be filled by the candidates who receive the next highest number of votes from other organizational units. In the case of a tie, the nominee with the earliest hire date at Athens State University will be elected. All remaining names will be placed on a ranked list of alternates for each organizational unit. The outgoing Presiding Officer shall call a meeting with the newly elected Senators no later than August 31. The new Senators shall select a new Presiding Officer from within the Staff Senate's new membership. The outgoing Presiding Officer shall not vote in the selection of a new Presiding Officer unless to break a tie vote. In the event of a vacancy, the Secretary will notify the next member on the ranked alternate list of his or her appointment. If a permanent vacancy shall occur in the office of Presiding Officer, the Senator-at-Large shall call a meeting within two weeks of the vacancy to oversee the selection of a new Presiding Officer following the guidelines stipulated in Article III, Section 2. Additionally, the vacancy shall be filled according to Article III, Section 4.

## IX. MEETINGS

The meeting times of the Senate shall be determined by a consensus of the Staff Senate. Special meetings may be called by any Staff or Senator. Notice, stating the purpose, place, date, and time of each meeting must be delivered to the entire membership not less than five working days before a special meeting. The delivery method will be email. If a quorum of the electorate attends this meeting, business may be conducted but is strictly limited to the stated purpose of the meeting. If no quorum of the electorate exists, the meeting will be discussion only. Issues that can be handled by special meetings will be presented and voted on by email if the issue can be fully explained in written correspondence and provided that there are no objections by members of the Senate. The Presiding Officer and Secretary will compile a strictly informational, non-prescriptive agenda for all Senate meetings. All meetings shall be open meetings unless otherwise required by law, or unless the Senate, by a two-thirds majority, shall declare that a meeting or a part of a meeting shall be conducted in closed session. No vote shall be taken while a meeting is in closed session.

**Section 1. Quorum:**

A quorum shall be a simple majority of all eligible to vote for regular/official meetings.

**Section 2. Parliamentary Authority:**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority used to settle procedural objections or points of order.

**Section 3. Proxy:**

If for any reason a Senator is to be absent from a Senate meeting, such Senator is empowered to authorize a proxy to attend a meeting and to vote on behalf of the absent Senator. The authorization shall be in writing and must be presented to the Presiding Officer of the Senate prior to participation by proxy at the Senate meeting. The proxy must also be a regular voting member from the same organizational unit as the absent Senator. In the event that there is not another member from the same organizational unit present, the proxy shall be assigned to the Senator-at-Large.

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