

NORTHEAST STATE STAFF SENATE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this body is the Staff Senate of Northeast State Community College, hereinafter referred to as the Staff Senate. Staff Senate members will be referred to as senators.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Staff Senate provides open discussion among its members on matters of concern to the College, student body, and non-faculty staff members and ensures open communication among staff members and between the staff and the senior leadership of the College. The objectives of the Staff Senate are:

- 1) To serve as a vehicle for ascertaining staff attitudes and expressions and for dissemination of these attitudes and expressions to the senior leadership of the College.
- 2) To maintain a direct line of communication to the senior leadership of the College through the president of Staff Senate.
- 3) To promote better communication between staff and senior leadership, between staff and other staff, between staff and faculty, and between staff and students.

ARTICLE III – CODE OF ETHICS

Senate Members Pledge:

- 1) To understand that my selection to Staff Senate is for the purpose of enhancing the mission of the College while supporting fellow staff, students and faculty.
- 2) To strive to be inclusive, to embrace diversity and to act without prejudice.
- 3) To champion fair treatment for all employees of the College.
- 4) To seek equitable compensation for staff in accordance with their duties.
- 5) To display the highest level of personal and professional conduct, which may include, but is not limited to disclosure of conflicts of interest or any affiliation that may influence my decision-making within the Staff Senate.
- 6) To build positive working relationships with fellow staff and faculty members that foster creativity and collaboration.
- 7) To uphold the majority decisions of the Staff Senate, its By-Laws, and Constitution.

- 8) To only speak on behalf of the Staff Senate when granted express permission by the Senate majority.
- 9) To allow other members to share their opinions openly without fear of retribution.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

- 1) The membership of the Staff Senate shall be open to all non-faculty employees with fringe benefits up to the level of Administrative Dean, unless they are a member of the President's Cabinet, thus making them ineligible to serve on the Staff Senate. The President, Vice President(s), and Assistant Vice President(s) shall not be eligible for membership.
- 2) Voting members will represent the following divisions/offices:
 - a. **Academic Affairs** – (2) members
 - b. **President's Office, Administration, Grant Development, and Advancement** (1) member
 - c. **Economic and Workforce Development** – (2) members
 - d. **Finance and Information Technology** – (2) members
 - e. **Institutional Excellence and Student Success** – (3) members
 - f. **Safety, Security and Plant Operations** – (2) members
- 3) There shall be three possible non-voting members representing the following areas/organizations:
 - a. One representative from the Faculty Senate.
 - b. Past-President of Staff Senate if no longer serving as a member.
 - c. One member from Human Resources to serve as a resource.
- 4) A majority vote may be taken to remove any Staff Senate member following three consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings during any calendar year.
 - a. Excused absences shall be defined as events where a Staff Senate member is on documented leave or otherwise detained by work duties that require their immediate attention.
 - b. In the event that a member needs to be absent from a regular meeting, notification shall be sent to a member of the Executive Committee prior to the scheduled meeting time.
 - c. Senators may appeal decisions to terminate their term of office due to absence by submitting an appeal to the Staff Senate Executive Committee.
 - d. Any Senator whose term of office is terminated due to absences or other reasons and has not been reinstated following the appeals process shall not be eligible to run for office until at least one year has passed since his/her dismissal.

ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Elected officers of the Senate will comprise the Staff Senate Executive Committee and shall consist of the:

- 1) President - The President of the Staff Senate will preside at regular council meetings and chair the Staff Senate Executive Committee. The President will serve as an ex-officio member of all Staff Senate committees.
- 2) Vice-President - In absence of the President of the Faculty Senate, the Vice-President will assume the duties of the President. If special circumstances prevent the President from completing the term of office, the Vice-President will become President, assuming the duties of the President. A special election will be held to elect a new Vice-President.
- 3) Secretary - The Secretary will keep the minutes of the Staff Senate and the Staff Senate Executive Committee meetings and will post and distribute copies of minutes upon approval by the Staff Senate.
- 4) **Parliamentarian** – The Parliamentarian shall ensure the Staff Senate adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order during all meetings, educate Staff Senate members on parliamentary procedures, and advise the Staff Senate Executive Committee in the use of parliamentary procedure as needed.

Removal or replacement of officers:

- 1) The Staff Senate may, by two-thirds vote of senators present, remove any officer.
- 2) In the event that an officer, excluding the President, assumes office and for some reason becomes unable or unwilling to complete his/her term of office, a special meeting shall be called and a special election held to fill the vacated office for the remainder of the vacating officer’s term.

Staff Senate Executive Committee:

The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, and immediate Past-

President, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and chairs of all standing committees.

- 1) The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Staff Senate between regular meetings. All such actions shall be reported at the next Staff Senate meeting.
- 2) The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month at a time determined by the committee at its first meeting following annual elections. Other meetings of the Staff Senate Executive Committee may be called by the Staff Senate President or at the request of a simple majority of the Staff Senate Executive Committee. The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall approve all committee memberships. All Staff Senate Executive Committee meetings shall be open to the public.

ARTICLE VI – ELECTIONS AND TERM OF OFFICE

1) Elections will be conducted by members of the Election Subcommittee. The Election Subcommittee shall consist of the following members:

- Chair: Staff Senate Secretary
- Staff Senate Vice President
- One Staff Senator as determined by Staff Senate majority vote

2) Elections for the Staff Senate senator shall take place no later than May 31. Information concerning the election process will be distributed to all staff at least thirty days prior to May 31.

3) The Staff Senate, through use of a secret ballot, elects officers annually. Each term will begin July 1 and conclude June 30.

4) Officer elections must occur at least one week prior to the election for representatives.

5) Officers shall be eligible for re-election but may not serve more than four consecutive terms in the same office.

6) To be eligible for an officer position, eligible employees must have served as a Senator the year prior to the upcoming election term.

7) Current Senators shall vote on officers, whereas representatives are elected and appointed by majority vote of all eligible staff members within their respective divisions through the election process.

8) As vacancies occur, the Staff Senate Executive Committee may appoint an eligible staff member, as defined in article IV, with priority given to a person receiving votes for that vacant seat's division/office in the most recent election.

9) A majority vote may be taken to remove any Staff Senate member following three consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings during any calendar year.

10) Those who have completed their terms or voluntarily retired from a position on Staff Senate Executive Committee shall act as mentors to the incoming officers for one year. They shall have a non-voting position on the Staff Senate Executive Committee. If they are elected as representatives for their division, they can also serve on the Staff Senate Executive Committee as former officers, following the same rules as other Senators..

11) Elections by the Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES

The Senate shall determine what additional standing committees should be established. By-Laws will be revised to address additions of standing committees. Senate members to the standing committees and college- wide committees shall:

- 1) Represent the position of the Staff Senate in the discharge of responsibilities.
- 2) Inform the Staff Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and action taken by either:
 - a. Forwarding copies of meeting minutes to the Secretary within ten days after approval of minutes by the respective standing committees and college-wide committees, or
 - b. Verbally presenting a summarized report at the next Staff Senate meeting.
 - c. Bring matters of staff concern before the respective college-wide committee.

ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS AND RULES OF ORDER

- 1) The Staff Senate will agree to abide by Robert’s Rules of Order while conducting all sanctioned meetings.
- 2) Quorum requirements will be seven Staff Senate members including at least one Executive Committee member. There must be seven “yes” votes in order to pass a measure.
- 3) The Staff Senate shall meet a minimum of once per month. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Staff Senate Executive Committee.
- 4) The Staff Senate Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month at a time to be determined by the committee at its first meeting following annual elections. Other meetings of the Staff Senate Executive Committee may be called by the Staff Senate President or at the request of a simple majority of the Staff Senate Executive Committee.
- 5) Each meeting will adhere to the following order of business: call to order, roll call, reading and approval of minutes, reports from officers and committees, unfinished business, new business.

ARTICLE IX – ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION AND AMENDMENTS

- 1) This Constitution and any amendments thereof are to become effective immediately upon adoption by vote of the Staff Senate membership.
- 2) To be ratified, the proposed amendment(s) must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a Staff Senate meeting, provided that:
 - a. They were submitted in writing to the Staff Senate at the previous meeting; or
 - b. They were electronically submitted to all Staff Senate members at least seven days prior.

- 3) Alternatively, to be ratified, the proposed amendment(s) must be approved by a four-fifths majority vote of the members present at a Staff Senate meeting.
- 4) In rare situations, the Staff Senate Executive Committee may deem it necessary to act on a proposed amendment before the next Staff Senate meeting. In such cases, it must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of all Staff Senate members. This vote will be conducted electronically.