

## Bylaws of the Seattle University Staff Council

### Preamble

As a Jesuit university, Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world. In order to achieve this mission, all voices of the Seattle University community must be valued and heard. Students, faculty, and staff play an integral role in shared governance in order to share opinions, interests, and exchange dialogue concerning institutional affairs and policies regarding campus culture. In acknowledging that shared governance is critical to Seattle University's mission, and that staff voices are essential to this work and fulfilling the University mission, we hereby establish the Seattle University Staff Council.

### Article I: Name

- A. The name of this body will be the Seattle University Staff Council. The abbreviation for this body is SUSC.

### Article II: Authority

- A. The Seattle University Staff Council derives authority from the approved creation on November 13, 2018 by the President of Seattle University upon the advice and agreement of the Cabinet of Seattle University, and as duly elected by the University-wide community of staff and academic and administrative professionals. SUSC shall be a self-directed body that consults with University leadership on matters that impact staff. SUSC is part of the shared governance of the university. SUSC shall be administratively linked to the Human Resources office through the Vice President for Human Resources.

### Article III: Purpose

- A. The chief purpose of the Seattle University Staff Council (SUSC) is to serve as a formal representative voice of our diverse and intersectional staff community. The Staff Council will advocate on behalf of staff as a whole and make recommendations to University Leadership, including the President's Cabinet, on matters which impact staff, including Seattle University culture. To ensure a positive environment and the personal and professional growth of all staff, Staff Council will partner to develop opportunities for staff across all levels and departments.

### Article IV: Eligibility and Membership

- A. The Seattle University Staff Council is composed of 19 representatives, consisting of 15 focus area representatives who are elected by the staff and 4 At-Large representatives who are appointed by the Nominations and Elections Committee as well as the sitting Staff Council.
  - 1. Focus area seats are apportioned between Academic Focus, Student Focus, and Structural Focus, proportional to the staff population of these areas. These categories, and the departments/divisions within each area are determined by Human Resources.

2. Seats are distributed proportionally between Non-Exempt staff and Exempt staff across the council as a whole.
  3. One structural nonexempt will be designated for a Union represented staff member.
  4. The proportion of these seats is to be re-evaluated every election cycle to determine how many seats are allotted to each area and the current division of FLSA status.
  5. At-Large seats allow for increased diversity on the Staff Council and to amplify voices of under-represented groups on campus.
- B. The Council may add ex-officio members if needed. Ex-officio members will attend Council meetings as needed but do not vote in Council decisions.
- C. To be eligible for nomination to the Staff Council, staff membership is defined as follows:
1. Any full-time or regular part-time employee whose primary designation is staff rather than faculty or student,
  2. and who has been employed by Seattle University for a least one (1) year,
  3. and is in good employment standing may be elected to the Staff Council,
  4. and who is not a member of the University Cabinet.
  5. Good employment standing in this context is to mean that the staff member is not currently on a performance improvement plan.
- D. Staff Council work is University-supported time. No Council member shall be subject to retaliation for approved participation in the official business of the Staff Council.
- E. The Staff Council shall not discriminate against any individuals for reasons of color, race, sex, gender, gender identify and expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, political ideology, national origin, marital and family status, veteran status, ability, genetic information or other categories routinely recognized by federal, state and local law.

### **Article V: Responsibilities of Council Members**

- A. Attend and participate in all meetings.
- B. Act as a liaison between the Staff Council and staff members in campus community, facilitate the flow of information and ideas and actively seek opinions of constituents.
- C. Serve on Council committee(s).
- D. Vote on matters brought before the Council.

### **Article VI: Removal of Council Members**

- A. Council members who miss three consecutive regular meetings without notifying the President, will be dismissed from the Council.
  - a. Attendance remotely by telephone conference or video conference will be considered as attending for the purposes of this section.
- B. Council members may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote for failure to uphold responsibilities in Article V of the Bylaws.
- C. A Council member may appeal their removal from the Council by submitting a written appeal, to the Staff Council President, within 10 business days following the meeting from which the Council member was removed.

- a. The written appeal must include a detailed explanation, which will be distributed to all Council members for review.
- b. The appeal will be voted on by the entire Council and tabulated by the Leadership Team.
- c. A two-thirds majority vote of the entire membership will be necessary for reinstatement. The Council member subject to removal will not vote.
- d. A Council member removed from the Staff Council, will be replaced as described in Article IX of the Bylaws.

### Article VII: Term of Office

- A. The first group of elected SUSC members will self-select so that half of them have one-year terms and the other half have two-year terms, allowing for continuity among the body.
- B. Starting with the second election, all SUSC terms will be two years, including At-Large seats. This is to allow any SUSC member to take on a leadership role. The SUSC term will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the second following year.
- C. If a Staff Council member changes roles within the university staff (i.e. moving to a different focus area or changing FLSA status) after being elected to the Council, they will continue to serve in the seat to which they were elected for the duration of the term.

### Article VIII: Nominations and Elections

- A. Nominations and Elections Committee
  1. Elections will be facilitated by a Nominations and Elections Committee to ensure the process is thorough and transparent.
  2. The Nominations and Elections Committee will be made up of Seattle University Staff Council members who are not candidates in the upcoming general election.
  3. This committee will coordinate all aspects of the election, including: gathering nominations; confirming nominees' willingness to run; coordinating with Human Resources to ensure nominees' eligibility to run; organizing and notifying the community about the nominations and elections processes including creating, updating and distributing the voters' pamphlet; and tabulating, certifying and reporting the elections results.
    - i. A voters' pamphlet shall include the candidates' photos and personal statements.
  4. Additionally, the Nominations and Elections Committee is charged with prioritizing the SUSC's commitment to diverse representation and will have over-sight for selecting At-Large positions.
- B. Nominations
  1. Staff members may self-nominate or nominate a staff colleague to run for a seat on the Staff Council.
  2. If a staff member is nominated by a fellow staff member, the potential candidate must consent to their name being included in the election. The Nominations and Elections Committee confirms this consent.

3. Human Resources will help the Nominations and Elections Committee determine which staff members are eligible to run for a seat based on the eligibility criteria in Article IV.
- C. Supervisor Notification
  1. All staff who wish to run for a seat on the SUSC must inform their supervisor of said decision.
  2. Supervisor approval is needed only for staff members who work on a part-time basis and wish to run for a seat on the SUSC.
- D. Annual Elections
  1. Voting eligibility
    - i. All staff members at Seattle University (including University Cabinet members) can vote in the SUSC election regardless of length of employment with the University.
    - ii. Voters will be able to submit one vote for every open seat from within each focus area on the Council.
  2. Voting period
    - i. The Voters' Pamphlet shall be released prior to the opening of the voting period.
    - ii. Voters shall have one week to complete their ballot.
  3. Election results
    - i. Election results will be announced shortly following the end of the voting period.
    - ii. As part of the election certification, two alternates (if applicable) will be identified for each focus area from among the candidates to potentially serve on the SUSC in the case of a vacancy.

### Article IX: Vacancies

- A. In the event a position on the SUSC is vacated before the term is up, the position will be filled by an alternate identified at the time of election, if available.
- B. If a seat is vacated less than three months before the end of term, the seat may remain vacant due to overlap with the election and transition period for the next Council term.
- C. If an alternative is unavailable, and at the discretion of the Nominations and Elections committee, a special election may be held to fill a vacant seat.

### Article X: Officers

- A. SUSC Officer roles include the president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer.
  1. All non-officer Council members are eligible to run for officer roles.
  2. Officers are elected by the sitting Council.
  3. Officer roles and representative Council roles are distinct.
    - a. Once the officer term begins, the officer vacates their representative role, if applicable.

- b. The Nominations, Elections, and Bylaws Committee will fill an open representative seat with an alternate from the most recent election.
  - c. Officers remain voting members of the Council.
- B. Term of Office
  - 1. Officer terms will be two years and begin on July 1.
  - 2. Officers who serve a full term in their role may not be elected to a consecutive second term in any officer role.
  - 3. If an officer assumes their role mid-term due to a vacancy and serves less than half of the overall term, they are eligible to run for a full two-year officer term in the next officer election. Officer terms are limited in this way to ensure that all staff on campus have regular input on Council representation. This guarantees each Council member has a voting touchpoint in either the general election or internal Council officer elections every two years. The maximum timeframe a Council member can serve without being on the general election ballot for a second time is four years: two years of representative service and a possible two years of officer service.
  - 4. Officers at the end of their term are eligible to run for and serve on Council again in future terms through the general election process, subject to the regulations concerning running for representative roles.
- C. Election of Officers
  - 1. In preparation for new officers beginning their role on July 1, nominations and voting for officers will be held at a Staff Council meeting early in spring term
  - 2. Officer elections will be staggered according to role to allow for continuity in leadership from year to year. For FY23, Council will elect a president to a one-year term and will elect both vice president and secretary/treasurer to two-year terms. In FY24, the president elect's term will be two years.
  - 3. Individuals may self-nominate or be nominated by another Council representative.
  - 4. Voting will be by ballot.
- D. Minimum Responsibilities of President
  - 1. Schedule Council meetings.
  - 2. Prepare meeting agendas with input from other officers and Council members.
  - 3. Chair Council meetings.
  - 4. Represent SUSC at meetings of Trustees, Cabinet, or other meetings with University executives.
  - 5. Outgoing President, unless removed by council, will hold Non-Voting Ex-Officio presidential role for one year after their term ends. This role serves as an official resource to the SUSC Leadership Team to ensure continuity in knowledge. Meeting attendance is on an as needed basis, though not required.
- E. Minimum Responsibilities of Vice-President
  - 1. Assist in President's responsibilities as needed.
  - 2. Substitute for President at any time President is unavailable.

- F. Minimum Responsibilities of Secretary
  - 1. Record and distribute minutes for Council meetings.
  - 2. Assist President and Vice-President as needed.
- G. The Council may identify additional duties for the officers.
- H. The Council may create other officers or roles as needs develop.

### Article XI: Removal of Officers

- A. Any Staff Council member may move to remove an officer for failure to fulfill responsibilities or for cause.
- B. An officer may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote, which will be cast in secret ballot.
- C. Any officer subjected to a vote for removal will have the opportunity to defend their position prior to the Council vote.
- D. Any officer removed from office will retain their Council seat unless removal is for failure to fulfill responsibilities as both an officer and as a Council member.

### Article XII: Meetings

- A. Schedule
  - 1. The Council will schedule meetings on at least a monthly basis.
    - i. The Council may schedule extra meetings at any time by Council decision.
- B. Agenda and Minutes
  - 1. The President will propose the meeting agenda and distribute it to members in advance.
  - 2. The Council may define additional methods by which members can request to modify or add to the agenda during the meeting.
  - 3. The Secretary will ensure that meeting minutes are recorded and distributed to members.
- C. Meeting Session Descriptions
  - 1. Open Session is a portion of the meeting that campus community members may attend in order to observe the discussions of the council. Comments are allowed with prior consent of the SUSC President.
  - 2. Closed Session is a fixed period set aside for candid discussion among council members without external community members in attendance. Agendas provided ahead of the meeting will note when open session and closed session will occur.
  - 3. Executive Session is an optional session used for specific items flagged as confidential.
- D. Meeting schedules, agendas, and meeting summaries will be posted publicly on the SUSC website.
- E. All SUSC decisions will be made by open voting at open meetings.
- F. Executive Session is attended only by Council members.
  - i. Any Staff Council member can call for an executive session.

- ii. For the sake of transparency, an Executive Session should be scheduled only on rare occasions when a specific issue requires extra privacy, and may only be used to discuss that specified issue.
  - iii. No decisions may be made during an Executive Session.
  - iv. An Executive Session may be scheduled only by a vote at a regular open meeting, and the vote must include a statement of the reason for the Executive Session.
- G. Guest Speakers or Public Input
- 1. Guest speakers or presentations may be scheduled through the agenda process.
  - 2. The Council will invite input from all staff through the SUSC website, email to SUSC, and other events such as open forums.
- H. Attendance
- 1. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they will notify the Leadership Team.
  - 2. Where possible, the Secretary (or designee) will arrange for remote access to representatives who are unable to attend in person.
  - 3. If a member has repeated, unexplained absences, the President may request that the member resign.

### Article XIII: Voting

- A. Quorum. A quorum for voting will consist of two thirds elected representatives, including:
- 1. Representatives present at the meeting,
  - 2. Representatives participating remotely via phone or email, and
  - 3. Representatives participating by proxy. The proxy vote must be submitted in writing to an officer in advance of the meeting.
- B. Majority Vote
- 1. Voting will be by simple majority unless defined elsewhere in the Bylaws.
- C. Voting Procedure
- 1. Voting may only take place at public meetings.
  - 2. The President will state the proposal to be voted on, call for the vote, and state the result of the vote.
  - 3. Secretary will record the vote and post it in the minutes.
- D. Voting Methods
- 1. Roll Call Vote
    - i. If any member requests, voting will be roll call, so that the votes of all members can be recorded and accountable.
  - 2. Simplified Voting Methods
    - i. In most cases, where a full roll call is not needed, voting may be by other majority methods, such as a voice vote, show of hands, written ballot, or general consent (vote passes if there are no objections).
  - 3. Electronic Voting

- i. Where a vote is necessary between meetings, voting may be done electronically, either by email or through Canvas.
- ii. Electronic votes will be included in the minutes of the next regular meeting.

#### **Article XIV: Staff Appointments to University-Wide Committees**

- A. The Council may be consulted for advice and recommendations for appointments of staff members to university-wide committees where faculty and students may be appointed. The Council may appoint from within the Council or work with the committees to name staff from the campus community, if applicable.

#### **Article XV: Staff Council Committees**

- A. SUSC may create Staff Council Committees as needed.
- B. Initial membership of a Staff Council Committee will consist of Council members who volunteer for the committee. Committees may choose to add non-council members if needed.
- C. Staff Council Committees will report to the Council and will bring proposals to the Council for approval as needed.

#### **Article XVI: Amendments**

- A. Amendments to the Bylaws may be proposed by any representative.
- B. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Secretary no later than 15 business days prior to any annual, regular or special meeting.
- C. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to the Council with the meeting notice no less than 10 business days prior to the meeting in which it shall be considered and debated.
- D. Proposed amendments shall be voted upon at the meeting immediately following the meeting in which it was considered and debated, provided such meeting is called as defined in the Bylaws.
- E. Amendments to the Bylaws shall become effective upon approval by a two-thirds majority of those representatives making up the quorum, as defined in Article XIII.
- F. Amendments to the Bylaws that materially change the nature or authority of The Council shall be submitted for recommendations by the University President's Cabinet and approval of the University President.