

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS

Preamble

The following bylaws are hereby enacted for the University Staff Advisory Council (USAC) of The Pennsylvania State University.

Article I: Purpose and Definition

Section 1

The purposes of this organization are:

- A. To be an advisory and consultative body to the Administration, through the Vice President for Human Resources, on issues, policies, and practices that relate to staff employees
- B. Serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas among Members of the University staff
- C. Suggest revisions and initiatives to improve staff policies via executive summary reports to Human Resources
- D. Advocate for staff welfare and development through partnerships with university leadership

Section 2

In these Bylaws, the following words have the meanings indicated:

- A. "USAC" and "Council" mean University Staff Advisory Council
- B. "Ex-officio" means a member of a body who is part of it by virtue of holding another office
- C. "Officer" means Executive Board Member
- D. "Parliamentarian" means expert in rules of order and the proper procedures for the conduct of meetings.
- E. "Board" means Executive Board
- F. "Council" means the full body of Members, sometimes referred to as "general council"
- G. "Present" at meetings means either in person or via technology

Article II: Governing Bodies and Membership

Section 1

The Executive Board shall be comprised of:

- A. Chair
- B. Past Chair
- C. Chair-Elect
- D. Secretary
- E. Secretary-Elect
- F. The Chair/Co-Chairs of every committee

Section 2

The Executive Board shall:

- A. Represent and act on behalf of USAC at University meetings
- B. Set agendas for each USAC meeting
- C. Meet once a month the week prior to the general council meeting or when deemed necessary
- D. Have the power to establish, maintain, and dissolve temporary committees with the advice and consent of the Members
- E. Resolve situations as they arise
- F. Conduct the affairs of the Board in accordance with the Bylaws
- G. Oversee the budget allocated through the Vice President of Human Resources

Section 3

The duties of the Chair shall be as follows:

- A. Preside over all USAC meetings
- B. Actively manage the business of the Council
- C. See that all orders and Resolutions of the Council are acted upon
- D. Respond to and initiate communications with the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources and with any external constituencies on behalf of the Council
- E. Report to the Council at each monthly meeting the status of all new and pending Council business
- F. Attend and participate in Penn State Board of Trustees meetings as required
- G. Perform all duties and exercise all authority associated with the office of Chair or prescribed by the Council
- H. The Chair serves a one-year term from August 1st -July 31st, after which the Chair assumes the role of Past Chair

Section 4

The duties of the Past Chair shall be as follows:

- A. Assist the new Chair in transitioning to the role
- B. In the absence of the Chair and Chair-Elect, assume the roles and duties appropriate to that office
- C. Serve as a resource for USAC
- D. Maintain membership in outside committees as required (ex: Board of Trustees) or invited.
- E. Serve as Committee Chair for the Membership and Elections committee
- F. Attend and participate in Penn State Board of Trustees meetings as required
- G. Perform all duties associated with the office of Past Chair or prescribed by Council or the Board
- H. The Past Chair serves a one-year term from August 1st -July 31st

Section 5

The duties of the Chair-Elect shall be as follows:

- A. In the absence of the Chair, assume the roles and duties appropriate to that office
- B. Serve as USAC Parliamentarian

- C. Perform all duties associated with the office of Chair-Elect or prescribed by Council or the Board
- D. The Chair-Elect serves a one-year term from August 1st -July 31st, after which the Chair-Elect assumes the role of Chair
- E. The Chair-Elect may be excused from serving directly on a Committee, but shall support Committee work as necessary

Section 6

The duties of the Secretary shall be as follows:

- A. Schedule meetings in consultation with the Chair
- B. Record and monitor attendance at meetings
- C. Assist the Chair with preparing and distributing the agenda
- D. Coordinate audio-video needs for meetings with the Logistics and Events committee
- E. Take meeting minutes
- F. Provide access to meeting minutes to the Council within two weeks of meetings
- G. Perform all duties associated with the office of Secretary or prescribed by Council or the Board
- H. Record and monitor votes at meetings and submitted by absentee Members as needed
- I. Maintain record of annual budget for monthly reporting at General Council meetings
- J. The Secretary may be excused from serving directly on a Committee, but shall support Committee work as necessary
- K. The Secretary serves a one-year term from August 1st -July 31st

Section 7

The duties of the Secretary-Elect shall be as follows:

- A. In the absence of the Secretary assume the role and duties appropriate to that office
- B. Perform all duties associated with the office of Secretary-Elect or prescribed by Council or the Board
- C. The Secretary-Elect serves a one-year term from August 1st -July 31st, after which the Secretary-Elect assumes the role of Secretary

Section 8

The duties of a Committee Chair shall be as follows:

- A. Serve as an Executive Board Member representing their standing or ad-hoc committee
- B. Represent and report on behalf of their committee to the General Council
- C. Coordinate and schedule committee tasking / meetings
- D. Document committee responsibilities, outcomes, and decisions

Section 9

Succession planning and continuity

- A. Executive Board Members shall deliver to their successors all material pertaining to the respective committee or office in the shared drive.
- B. USAC alumni, Members which leave the council in good standing, may continue to provide information and present on relevant topics from other parts of the University by invitation or request

Section 10

The other levels of membership shall be

- A. Member
- B. Ex-officio Member
- C. Affiliate

Section 11

Members:

- A. Are eligible Exempt or Non-exempt Staff employees appointed as outlined in Article VI Section I of these bylaws
- B. Have voting privileges
- C. Are eligible to hold elected positions
- D. Shall participate on at least one committee within USAC
- E. Shall share what is discussed and distributed with their units and University wide, unless confidentiality is explicitly requested

Section 12

An Ex-officio Member:

- A. Represents another University organization or unit such as the President's Commissions for Equity or the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources
- B. Does not have voting privileges
- C. Is not eligible to hold elected or committee Chair positions

Section 13

An Affiliate Member:

- A. Is a staff person who is recruited on an as-needed basis for USAC endeavors requiring expertise outside of USAC Council
- B. Shall not be considered a Member
- C. Does not have voting privileges
- D. Is chosen as needed by the appropriate Committee Chair and approved by the Executive Board
- E. Will have the length of affiliation determined by the Executive Board based on need
- F. Is not eligible to hold elected or committee Chair positions

Article III: Committees

Section 1

The following Standing Committees shall be established and maintained:

- A. Awards and Recognition Committee
- B. Communications Committee
- C. Inclusion, Equity & Diversity Committee
- D. Logistics and Events Committee
- E. Membership and Election Committee
- F. Outreach Committee

Section 2

Duties of the Committees:

- A. All Standing Committees are responsible to the Board and shall report their activities to the Board
- B. Each Committee shall maintain a record of their activities, associated tasks, and processes to support continuity
- C. All Standing Committees shall meet as needed outside of General Council meetings; and
- D. The Board shall make every effort to assign at least two Members with one or more years of USAC experience to each Standing Committee.

Section 3

The Awards and Recognition Committee:

USAC Staff Awards (Excellence, Leadership, Morale)

The committee is responsible for overseeing the Staff Recognition Award program

- A. Annually review the awards criteria and nomination form and propose changes as necessary
- B. Chair shall work with Communications Committee to publicize nomination details
- C. At close of nomination period, the Committee shall review nominations and send recommendations to the Vice-President for Human Resources for vetting and approval
- D. Plan and participate in award presentation annually in May
- E. Chair shall work with Communications Committee to publicize award winners
- F. Members of this committee are not eligible to be nominated for an award during their period of service on the committee unless recused from the committee

Staff Recognition Programming

Encourage participation, promotion, and distribution of information about the following staff recognition programs

- A. We Are
- B. Positive Paws

Section 4

The Communications Committee:

- A. Maintain USAC web presence, including website, social media, etc.
- B. Write and distribute official USAC information
- C. Distribute press releases and monthly meeting briefs
- D. Liaise with Strategic Communications
- E. Work with USAC Executive Board and standing committees as needed
- F. Publicize the Council's mission, accomplishments, and work to increase its visibility throughout the Penn State Community
- G. Promote communication, education, and the exchange of ideas across the Commonwealth

Section 5

The Inclusion, Equity & Diversity Committee:

- A. Review and maintain diversity statement for USAC

- B. Conduct a diversity audit periodically to examine and improve USAC processes and communications
- C. Work with the membership and elections committee to integrate inclusive practices including the application and interview processes for USAC Council
- D. Collaborate with Human Resources, Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity officers, and other University diversity councils to support inclusion, equity, and diversity efforts and initiatives
- E. Solicit information and serve as a confidential resource for staff-related questions and concerns about inclusion, equity, diversity, and belonging
- F. Raise awareness of diversity and inclusion-related professional development and educational opportunities for university-wide staff

Section 6

The Logistics and Events Committee:

- A. Reserve General Council meeting spaces
- B. Be responsible for the technology in any USAC meeting space
- C. Be responsible for the video conferencing connection (e.g. Zoom, Teams, etc.) and monitoring input from online participants during USAC meetings
- D. Assist the Chair/Secretary with arranging presenters/guests at the General Council meetings
- E. Assist General Council and other Standing Committees with event planning as needed
- F. Assist the Secretary with any USAC meeting set-up/clean-up as needed
- G. If the Secretary is not on this Committee, this Committee will work in collaboration with the Secretary when sharing the support responsibility of USAC events
- H. Lead the development of “USAC Presents” professional development series
- I. Provide information on accessibility, accommodations and accommodation requests for all meeting and event conveners
- J. Serve as contact for USAC accessibility requests

Section 7

The Membership and Election Committee:

Membership

- A. The Committee shall annually review the application process and form for USAC membership; propose changes as necessary.
- B. Committee Chair will work with Communications Committee to publicize USAC membership recruitment
- C. At the close of the application period, Committee shall review applications, select a slate, conduct interviews as necessary, and send new Council recommendations to the Vice-President for Human Resources for vetting and approval
- D. The Committee shall create and maintain a database of and connections with former USAC Members to provide historical and institutional knowledge.
- E. Track and invite (at least twice annually) any Alumni USAC Members who continue to serve on University Committees to attend and provide updates about the committee to the general USAC council meeting.

Elections

- A. Committee Chair shall solicit nominations of eligible members from the Council
- B. Committee will schedule time for each nominee to give a brief speech during the general council meetings in May (Chair-Elect and Secretary-Elect) and June (Sub-Committee Chairs) and distribute ballot material to voting Members
- C. Committee shall announce results within a week of voting
- D. In the event no nominations are received, the process shall be repeated

Section 8

The Outreach Committee:

- A. Forge connections and interactions with Staff Advisory Councils (SACs) or similar staff organizations at locations throughout the Penn State system
- B. Maintain a record of other advocacy groups as well as points of contact within these organizations
- C. Provide resources for establishing SACs and support for staff across the Commonwealth
- D. Plan and participate community engagement meetings no less than quarterly, including an annual USAC Summit
- E. Chair shall work with Communications Committee to promote participation in and visibility to the Summit and other community events

Section 9

Ad Hoc Committees:

- A. Shall be created in order to research and review specific topics as necessary
- B. Shall be disbanded at the completion of their work
- C. Shall report findings and recommendations to the Board or General Council as necessary at the conclusion of the ad hoc committee's work

Article IV: Meetings

Section 1

Regular Meetings of USAC shall be held monthly, typically taking place during normal University hours, and are considered official University Business

Section 2

Special Meetings may take place for any reason and may be called at any time by the Chair or a majority of USAC voting Members

Section 3

A simple majority of the voting Council shall be present at all meetings in which votes are taken

Section 4

Each Committee shall decide on meeting frequency, at least one a month, and report at USAC's monthly meeting.

Section 5

Orientation and Retreat:

- A. A retreat for all Members shall be held in August and replace the regular General Council meeting
- B. Retreats shall include an orientation for new Members
- C. Retreats may include selection of committee membership
- D. USAC goals, priorities, and member expectations for the year will be discussed at this meeting

Section 6

All business of USAC shall be governed by the rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* in all cases in which they are not consistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order USAC may adopt.

Article V: Resolutions

Section 1

Resolutions shall be considered non-binding advisory and consultative business to the Pennsylvania State University. The purpose is to provide the clear and tangible position of the Council on relevant staff issues.

Section 2

All Council Members shall have the authority to draft and sponsor resolutions for consideration by the Council. To introduce a resolution:

- A. The Resolution requires at least one sponsor, someone acting in support of or representing the positive outcome of the Resolution
- B. Another Council Member is required to second the Resolution to move to consideration then move toward a vote by the Council
- C. The Resolution should then be sent to the Chair in writing
- D. The Chair shall distribute the Resolution no later than one week before the next monthly meeting
- E. The monthly meeting shall include agenda time to discuss and consider the disposition of the Resolution
- F. Alternatively, a special session may be called to discuss the resolution depending on the circumstances and time required
- G. The Resolution, having been properly distributed and subject to open comment and fair discussion shall be moved to a vote and can be approved by a simple majority

Article VI: Appointments and Elections

Section 1

Appointment of Membership:

- A. USAC shall be composed of a minimum of twenty (20) and a maximum of thirty (30) Members
- B. The Membership and Elections Committee will make every effort to include a diverse representation of staff from a variety of University units and locations

- C. Ineligible staff employees: Office of Human Resources Strategic Partners, Hershey Medical Center employees (except for those affiliated with the College of Medicine), and University Administrators whose title contains the phrases Associate Vice-President, Assistant Vice-President, Chief, Chancellor, Deputy, Director, President, Special Assistant, General Counsel, or University
 - a. The Executive Board reserves the right to assess eligibility of staff employees who fall into the above titles, based on responsibilities and other factors, in order to overcome inconsistencies in organizational titles and “interim” positions
- D. Each Member is approved by the Vice President of Human resources to serve a three-year term
- E. Each term commences August 1
- F. Members cannot serve consecutive three-year terms; there is no limit to the number of three-year terms an individual can serve
- G. Officers elected in their second or third year may extend their appointed term up to an additional three years in order to accommodate their Board duties

Section 2

Election of the Chair-Elect, Secretary-Elect, and committee chairs shall be held by anonymous ballot and shall be conducted by the Membership and Elections Committee. The election process and casting of ballots shall be carried out regardless of the number of nominees.

Article VII: Vacancy and Removal

Section 1

In the event that the Chair or Secretary resigns or is unable to serve at a time when there is no designated Chair-Elect or Secretary-Elect, respectively, the Executive Board shall initiate a nomination and election process to fill the position until the next regular election, when the Chair would assume the position of Past Chair.

Section 2

In the event that the Chair resigns or is unable to serve, the Chair-elect shall assume duties of the Chair immediately. The Chair-Elect position will be refilled during the next scheduled election for the position, or sooner at the request of the Executive Board.

Section 3

In the event that the Chair-Elect resigns or is unable to serve the executive board shall initiate a nomination and election process to fill the Chair-Elect position until the next regular election, when the newly appointed Chair-Elect would assume the position of Chair.

Section 4

In the event that the Secretary resigns or is unable to serve, the Secretary-Elect shall assume the duties of the Secretary immediately. The Secretary-Elect position shall be refilled during the next scheduled election for the position, or sooner at the request of the Executive Board.

Section 5

In the event that the Secretary-Elect resigns or is unable to serve, the Executive Board shall initiate a nomination and election process to fill the Secretary-Elect position until the next regular election when the Secretary-Elect would assume the position of Secretary.

Section 6

In the event that that Past-Chair resigns or is unable to serve, the Membership and Election Committee will nominate a new Chair of their committee for approval to the Board to serve until the next scheduled election.

Section 7

Resignations from USAC shall be submitted to the Chair. Requests for a temporary leave of absence from USAC shall be submitted to the Chair. Such requests shall be granted whenever possible. Since such leaves are temporary, the resulting vacancy shall not typically be filled by a new Member during the length of the individual's term.

Section 8

The Executive Board shall make a recommendation to the Vice President for Human Resources regarding appointments of new Members for the remainder of the current term. Vacancies may be filled with qualified applicants who remain in the applicant pool. In the event no qualified applicants are available, the Membership and Election Committee may re-open the nomination process.

Section 9

If the general Council falls below the minimum of 20 Members, the Executive Board may reach out to past USAC Members to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the current year.

Section 10

Members are expected to attend monthly USAC meetings, committee meetings as required, and special meetings as needed

- A. An absence is considered excused if a Member unable to attend a meeting notifies the Secretary in advance
- B. All other absences are considered unexcused
- C. Members with four or more unexcused absences during an academic year may be declared inactive and asked to resign by the Executive Board

Section 11

Members with repetitive excused absences totaling four or more of the regular meetings during an academic year may be subject to removal from USAC

- A. The Secretary shall the notify Chair of any Member(s) who are not meeting the attendance requirement in writing
- B. The secretary shall notify the Member of their status, and the procedure for removal, via email twice, three business days apart
- C. The Member will be given ten business days from the date of the second email to respond.

- D. Based on the nature of the response or non-response from the Member, the Executive board shall make a recommendation for appropriate remedial action to the USAC general Council for vote

Section 12

Executive board shall reserve the right to address with a Member and make a recommendation for appropriate remedial action to the USAC general Council for vote based on any Member's conduct

Article VIII: Amendments and Revision

Section 1

The amendment and revision of any Bylaws of the University Staff Advisory Council shall be governed by the following procedure

- A. These Bylaws may be amended at any time
- B. Amendments shall be presented to all Members of the Council in writing or via email a minimum of one week prior to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting where they will be discussed
- C. Amendments to these Bylaws, having been properly distributed and subject to comment and fair discussion, shall be adopted by a two-thirds affirmative vote of all eligible voting USAC Members
 - a. Any individual who may not be present may submit their vote and/or comment to the secretary at least two days prior to the meeting
- D. The chair shall share any absentee votes and/or comments with USAC
- E. Votes during the meeting shall be recorded by the Secretary.

Section 2

These bylaws shall be reviewed by an ad hoc committee at least every two years, on the odd numbered years

Adopted: September 20, 1999

Amended: February 7, 2007

Amended: November 24, 2008

Amended: July 25, 2011

Amended: January 16, 2012

Amended: April 16, 2012

Amended: September 17, 2012

Amended: October 15, 2013

- Various Articles: All references to Associate VP Human Resources replaced with Vice President Human Resources
- Article 3: Chair Elect duties- Parliamentary responsibility clarified and defined.

Amended: December 11, 2013

- Article 3, Section 2 – (Committee Consolidation) Election and Membership combined, Recognition added to Awards, Outreach and Publicity combined and renamed “Staff Relations.”

Amended: June 2017

Amended: September 2019

Amended: December 2020

- Addition of new USAC standing committee on Inclusion, Equity & Diversity

Amended: September 2022

- General Updates: change “memberships/members” to “Council/General Council” throughout the document. Renumber Roman Numerals, they were out of sequence

- Article I, Section 1:
 - C&D modified to include executive summary report expectations and advocacy to all university leadership, not just Human Resources
- Article II, Section 6: Remove secretary-elect language from Secretary duties.
- Article III Committees:
 - Section 1: Reorder the committees to be alphabetical
 - Section 6: Add “USAC Presents” to logistics and events committee duties, add I & J bullets related to accommodation requests
 - Section 7: Split Membership & Elections committee responsibilities into two sub sections “membership” and “elections”; Add: sub-committee elections process
- Article IV: Meetings
 - Section 4 add “at least monthly”
- Article VI: Appointments & Elections
 - Section 1, letter F: Combine “...no limit to number of terms” and “cannot serve consecutive terms” into one bullet.
- Article VII: Vacancy & Removal
 - Section 7: Add “during the length of the individual’s term”
 - Section 10, Letter C: Change “single term” to “academic year”