

BYLAWS
Sul Ross State University Staff Senate

Article I: NAME AND MISSION

NAME: The name of the organization shall be the Sul Ross State University Staff Senate, hereinafter referred to as Staff Senate.

MISSION: The mission of the Staff Senate shall be to promote an atmosphere of unity and cooperation among Staff across departments of the University, promote recognition of Staff as an integral part of the institution in keeping with the mission of the University, provide a forum for Staff members to discuss openly any matter associated with the University, provide the Staff with a positive and collaborative voice in University matters affecting Staff, and serve as an advisory body to the University President regarding interests and concerns of the Staff.

Article II: MEMBERSHIP

ELIGIBILITY: Membership is limited to all benefits-eligible staff employees who have been employed at Sul Ross State University for at least 90 days at the time of selection. The University President, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents, and Deans shall not be eligible for membership in the Staff Senate and shall attend meetings as guests by invitation only.

Note: All Staff are free to attend Staff Senate meetings regardless of membership status.

SELECTION: At the beginning of July each year, the Secretary of Staff Senate will obtain a list of benefits-eligible staff members (organized by divisions) from the Human Resources department. By the end of July, the Staff Senate's Parliamentarian will have used the list of staff members to form the following fiscal year's election ballots. In August, Staff in each division with an outgoing representative will receive an election ballot with all candidates from the division who meet the eligibility for membership and will vote for the new representative from their division. Once new representatives have been elected, the Staff Senate Chair and Vice Chair will contact each elected representative to determine their ability to serve for the upcoming term.

Beginning of July	Parliamentarian obtains list of benefits-eligible staff members
End of July	Parliamentarian creates election ballots
August	Election
August	Confirmation of elected Representatives
September	Representatives assume Staff Senate duties

ALLOCATION: Each division of the University shall have one (1) allocated representative. There are nine (9) divisions of the SRSU campuses represented in the Staff Senate: Academic Affairs, Academic Colleges, Athletics, Finance and Operations, OIT, Physical Plant, University Relations, Enrollment Management, and Student Affairs. Two additional representatives to the Staff Senate will represent Staff of the International campuses located in Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle

Pass. An additional three representatives will fill Members-at-Large roles, which will be filled in accordance with a small election process similar to the larger Staff Senate election.

LIST OF ALLOCATED REPRESENTATIVES:

Academic Affairs	1
Academic Colleges	1
Athletics	1
Finance and Operations	1
OIT	1
Physical Plant	1
University Relations	1
Enrollment Management	1
Student Affairs	1
International	2
<u>Members-at-Large</u>	<u>3</u>
Total Representatives	14

TERMS: Terms for new Staff Senate representatives will begin September 1. Representatives shall serve two (2) year terms, beginning on the first day of September and ending on the last of August the following fiscal year. A Staff Senate representative whose assigned division changes during their term of membership will continue to serve the constituency to which they were appointed for the remainder of the term.

VACANCIES: Replacements for vacancies occurring in unexpired terms of representatives shall be filled in accordance with a small election process similar to the Staff Senate Officer elections. A representative appointed to complete more than half of an unexpired full term shall be considered to have served a full term.

DUTIES: Representatives are expected to attend each monthly meeting of the Staff Senate. Staff Senate representatives shall serve on committees or be elected as chair of committees and may be elected as an Officer of the Staff Senate. Representatives shall be available to their constituents, willing to hear concerns, to receive information and suggestions, and to communicate these effectively to the Staff Senate. In turn, representatives must keep their constituents informed of the work of the Staff Senate and matters that the University Administration communicates to the Staff Senate.

Note: The Staff Senate will not hear grievances. University Staff wishing to file grievances must follow the established University procedures as outlined in the [Administrative Policy Manual](#) and The Texas State University System [Rules and Regulations](#).

Staff Senate representatives shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed more than 10% of their time per month (16 hours per month for full-time employees), to devote to Staff Senate meetings and work as part of their normal working duties. The Staff Senate representative shall keep their supervisor informed of time needed for Staff Senate work and ensure this time does not conflict with normal job duties.

CENSURE AND REMOVAL: Any active Staff Senate representative whose unexcused absences cause a group to be underrepresented during the year may be removed and notified in writing. Unexcused absences in excess of missing three (3) Staff Senate meetings will be considered cause for removal. A representative of the Staff Senate may also be removed from membership for a documented cause by a two-thirds vote of the full Staff Senate representatives' roster. A special meeting may be called for this. A removed representative will not be eligible to hold a position with the Staff Senate for three (3) years following their removal from the Staff Senate.

Article III: OFFICERS

SELECTION AND ALLOCATION: Officers shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Branding and Outreach Officer, and Parliamentarian. All officers shall be elected from the membership of Staff Senate Representatives at the August meeting. Newly elected, re-elected, and outgoing representatives shall be eligible to vote for officers. If the outgoing Chair is not re-elected to Staff Senate, they may still serve on Staff Senate during the subsequent year as immediate past Chair on an ex-officio basis for that year only, with voting rights. Officers will be voted on by the Staff Senate after all new and recurring membership positions have been filled. A call for nominations will be made, and, if a nomination is seconded by a representative, a vote to fill the position will be held. Elected officers from the previous year shall serve until new officers are elected and will then act in an advisory capacity to newly elected officers, as needed.

LIST OF ALLOCATED OFFICERS:

Chair	1
Vice Chair	1
Secretary	1
Branding and Outreach Officer	1
<u>Parliamentarian</u>	<u>1</u>
Total Officers	5

TERMS: Terms for officers will begin September 1. Officers shall serve one (1) year terms, beginning on the first day of September and ending on the last day of August the following calendar year. No member may hold more than one Officer position at a time, and no member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. After a one-year break following their term in office, a member may be reelected to a position they previously held for two consecutive terms.

VACANCIES: Staff Senate Officer vacancies shall be filled only from the remaining Staff Senate Representatives. The process of filling a vacancy shall be by nomination and vote of the remaining Representatives of the Staff Senate. Officers elected to fill a vacancy shall serve only for the remainder of the existing term.

DUTIES: All Officers are responsible for setting meeting agenda, making decisions on behalf of the Staff Senate between general Staff Senate meetings, establishing the direction for Staff Senate activities, reviewing the Bylaws on an annual basis, addressing staff concerns (excluding

grievances) with appropriate University Administration, and reviewing standing committee reports prior to meetings. Each Officer has additional duties relating to the office held.

THE CHAIR shall:

- Preside over all Staff Senate meetings;
- Represent Staff through updates to the University President;
- Create committees as needed, serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, appoint committee chairs and members, and hold committee chairs accountable;
- Sign all communications dispersed in the name of Staff Senate;
- Act as the official spokesperson for Staff Senate;
- Ensure the projects undertaken by the Staff Senate are developed, organized, and implemented in an orderly and timely manner;
- Involve the Staff Senate Officers in all decisions;
- House minutes, annual reports, and correspondence of Staff Senate; and
- Transmit recommendations of Staff Senate to the appropriate administrator(s) and keep Staff Senate informed of the disposition of each recommendation that is made.

THE VICE CHAIR shall:

- Assist new members;
- Be authorized to sign all documents for the Staff Senate in the absence of the Chair;
- Assume other duties and assist the Chair as directed by the Staff Senate;
- Be responsible for all financial functions (making deposits, processing purchase requisitions and vouchers, verifying each month's accounting summary/detail reports from the University Controller's Office, and following all applicable University policies and regulations governing University related accounts) of the Staff Senate; and
- Provide a Treasurer's Report at each meeting of the Staff Senate.

THE SECRETARY shall:

- Keep an accurate record of all proceedings of Staff Senate;
- Provide permanent copies of the agendas and official minutes for all meetings (print and electronic) to the University Archives and to the Branding and Outreach Officer to post onto the website;
- Serve as the historian of Staff Senate;
- Following any corrections and/or additions and approval, electronically distribute copies of the minutes to the University campus in a timely manner;
- Maintain the up-to-date listing of all Staff Senate Officers and Representatives; and
- Maintain records of all roll call votes conducted at the monthly meetings.

THE BRANDING AND OUTREACH OFFICER shall:

- Maintain the Staff Senate website and make changes as approved by the Chair.

THE PARLIAMENTARIAN shall:

- Offer guidance on the appropriate conduct of meetings, requiring adherence to *Robert's Rules of Order* as deemed necessary;

- Maintain updates of the Staff Senate Bylaws; and
- Prepare all election ballots and processes for the Staff Senate elections.

Article IV: MEETINGS

SCHEDULE: Staff Senate will hold at least ten (10) monthly hybrid meetings each calendar year. Each September, the Staff Senate shall establish regular meeting times and post dates to the Staff Senate website. All meetings shall be held during normal working hours Monday through Friday and must offer an option for online attendance. Staff Senate Officers reserve the right to adjust meeting times and locations throughout the year with an issued notification to Staff at a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Cancellations require notification at a minimum of three (3) working days.

QUORUM: A quorum shall consist of one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the Staff Senate representatives. Neither the Staff Senate nor its committees may conduct business without a quorum except to adjourn the meeting. In the absence of a quorum, the Chair may make announcements of an informative nature, and the Staff Senate Officers may convene a special meeting to consider time-sensitive issues requiring immediate action.

SPECIAL MEETINGS: Special meetings may be called by the University President, the Staff Senate Officers, or at the request of a quorum of the Staff Senate representatives. One (1) working day notice must be given of any special meeting. The University President shall host quarterly All-Staff meetings to provide University updates, general University information, and to serve as an open forum for Staff concerns. Without prior notice, the University President may call an emergency meeting at any time. Depending upon circumstances, notice may be given at Staff Senate meetings, on the official Staff Senate website and/or by email. Only business specified in the call of the special meeting may be conducted, unless new topics are approved by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Staff Senate Officers.

CODE OF CONDUCT: A general code of conduct for all attendees is expected to be followed at all times. All attendees are expected to be punctual and should limit side conversations to a minimum. If an attendee must take a phone call, they are expected to do so outside of the meeting area. Cell phone use should be limited to business or emergency use only. The Parliamentarian may require adherence to *Robert's Rules of Order* as deemed necessary.

VOTING: Only Staff Senate Officers and Representatives may vote. Voting shall be conducted through voice, show of hands, roll call, or secret ballot. Each Officer and Representative is entitled to one vote, and they may vote via email if a quorum is not present in the meeting. A simple majority vote shall decide an outcome with the Chair's vote serving as the deciding factor in the event of a tied vote.

AGENDA AND ORDER OF BUSINESS: Each Staff Senate meeting shall have an agenda including the time and place of the meeting, the order of business, and copies of substantive proposals.

Staff Senate Officers shall set the agenda, however, items may be added to the agenda at meetings by the Chair or if approved by a simple majority vote of Staff Senate Representatives. Staff Senate Officers shall solicit agenda items to be received at a minimum of five (5) working days prior to the next meeting. The agenda shall be posted two (2) working days prior to the meeting and distributed to Staff via email.

THE STAFF SENATE OFFICERS shall:

- Receive proposals for Staff Senate action or other presentations to the Staff Senate from any Staff Senate committee or individual Representative, from the general Sul Ross staff community, or from the University President or their designee;
- Include on the agenda all items presented from various sources;
- Set the agenda so that business may be addressed in a meeting of reasonable duration;
- If necessary, advise the Staff Senate of the need for a special meeting;
- Respond to the submitted proposals within a reasonable amount of time, considering the circumstance of the proposal.

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS for meetings shall be set forth in the agenda. Unless modified by the Chair, the order of business shall be:

- Call to order and establishment of a quorum;
- Approval of the previous meeting's minutes;
- Executive Reports;
- Committee Reports;
- Old Business;
- New Business;
- Open forum (comments, announcements, roundtable items, tributes, etc.);
- Adjournment.

MINUTES: Minutes shall be made available to the Staff Senate at the next meeting after which the notes were taken. After any corrections and/or additions and approval at the next regular meeting, the Secretary shall send a copy of the minutes to the Branding and Outreach Officer to post on the Staff Senate's official website within ten (10) working days. A permanent copy of the minutes shall be kept in the University Archives.

Article V: BUDGET AND FINANCE

FUNDING: The University shall establish and fund an operating budget to meet reasonable operating expenses of the Staff Senate. The Vice Chair shall supply the University President with a financial report of the Staff Senate account upon request.

MANAGEMENT: The Staff Senate Vice Chair shall serve as the account holder and financial manager with additional signature authority assigned to the Staff Senate Chair. The Staff Senate Officers will be empowered to allocate funds for the purchase of necessary items for Staff Senate operations and committee projects if voted on by Staff Senate Representatives.

REVIEW: At all times, details of expenditures made on behalf of the Staff Senate shall be available for review and audit. The Staff Senate Vice Chair shall maintain all transaction records. Staff Senate's financial records will adhere to the most recent Records Retention Schedule where applicable.

Article VI: COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP, DUTIES, AND TERMS: The Staff Senate Chair shall create committees as needed, serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, appoint committee chairs and members, and hold committee chairs accountable for addressing items in a responsible and timely manner. Membership of committees may include Staff Senate Officers, Representatives, members, and any other interested Staff. Each committee shall be composed of a minimum of two members who shall serve for a term determined by the time needed to complete the appointed task, and the committee shall disband following successful completion of the assigned task.

Article VII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

PROPOSALS: A proposal to amend the Bylaws may be made by a majority vote of the Staff Senate Representatives, a petition signed by a minimum of twenty-percent (20%) of Staff represented by the Staff Senate, or the University President and Systems Vice Chancellor and General Counsel following their determination that some portion(s) of the Bylaws are at variance with Texas state law or the adopted *Rules and Regulations* of The Texas State University System.

APPROVAL: Amendments proposed shall require the approval of a majority of current Staff Senate Representatives and by the University President.

PUBLICATION: Amendments must be made available to the Staff via the website or by email, within ten (10) working days of approval and adoption.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADJOURNMENT: The formal call by the Staff Senate Chair to end a meeting

HYBRID: A combination of in-person and online attendance options

MEMBER: Any non-elected SRSU Staff Member without voting rights who regularly attends and participates in Staff Senate meetings in any capacity

MINUTES: A written record of Staff Senate meetings, summarizing what was discussed, decided, and any action items assigned

OFFICER: An elected Staff Senate official with voting rights serving in the role of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Branding and Outreach Officer, or Parliamentarian

QUORUM: The minimum number of Staff Senate Officers and Representatives that must be present at a meeting to conduct business

REPRESENTATIVE: An elected Staff Senate official with voting rights serving as the representation for their University division as outlined in Article II