



# VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

## Staff Council

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## Article I. Name of the Council

The official name of this council shall be the Staff Council.

## Article II. Mission

The Staff Council serves as an advocate dedicated to the enhancement of the work environment and professional development of its diverse and intersectional constituents — hourly and salaried staff — to enable, motivate, and support the pursuit of individual growth and goals of excellence in their efforts to advance the mission of the University. We serve as an advisory council for our constituents' concerns to the University administration.

## Article III. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Council is to provide a forum for discussing matters of importance to our diverse and intersectional staff. The Council identifies and discusses issues affecting employment, operations, and the University community as a whole and, where appropriate, makes recommendations to University leadership on these subjects. The Council facilitates informational sessions to educate staff on a variety of topics relative to policies, procedures, and available resources. The Council also holds events to enrich the University community experience.

In accordance with procedures outlined in the Staff Employee Handbook, members of the Council are to serve as representatives in the Human Resource Services grievances process as needed.

## Article IV. Membership Eligibility

Any staff member who is a regular full-time, limited full-time, or regular part-time employee of Valparaiso University is eligible to serve as a voting representative on the Council.

## Article V. Council Membership

### A. Elected Membership

- a. The Council is composed of 30 elected staff. Four alternate members will also be appointed from the election pool. Each member will serve as an “at-large” representative for all staff on campus.
  - i. The Representation Subcommittee will strive to ensure representation of both salaried and hourly staff in a manner that reflects the current composition of the overall University employee breakdown. This will be reevaluated on an annual basis as part of the election process.
  - ii. The designation (hourly or salary) of a member at the time they are elected into the Council will remain that member’s designation for representation and composition purposes until the end of that member’s three year term.
- B. Ex-Officio
  - a. The Chief of Staff will serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member to participate in the regularly scheduled meetings of Staff Council.
- C. Alternate Membership
  - a. Two hourly and two salaried alternate members will be determined annually from the Staff Council election pool according to highest total vote counts. Alternate members may be appointed to serve the remainder of an elected member term should one become available. Alternates are encouraged to attend Staff Council annual orientation and serve if called. Once an alternate member is appointed to the Council, they are to serve in full capacity as a member-elect.
    - i. Allow staff of either designation (salary or hourly) to fill an open position if an alternate of the same designation as the outgoing member is unavailable.

## Article VI. Membership Expectations

Staff who choose to run for election to Staff Council should be committed to the mission and statement of purpose of the Council as well as the mission of Valparaiso University. Expectations include monthly council meetings, communication with University staff, and participation on subcommittees, task forces, or as a representative on other standing or ad hoc University committees.

Members of the Council participate in the internal governance of the University through the University Council and other committees as appointed.

The Council succeeds through the commitment, passion, and dedication of its members in enhancing the work environment. Each individual member is expected to coordinate with their department and/or supervisor to balance the commitment to Staff Council with their

normal work responsibilities according to the procedures outlined in the Staff Employee Handbook.

Any member who has three unexcused absences from general or subcommittee meetings in one academic year will be asked to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss continued membership.

## Article VII. Membership Terms

The membership term is three years with one third of members being elected each election cycle. Alternate membership terms vary. See VIII.

## Article VIII. Nominations and Elections

Any staff member of Valparaiso University may nominate another staff member to be a candidate for election to Staff Council. Staff may also self-nominate.

An election will be held annually. If either the hourly or salaried group is unable to recruit enough nominees to cover open positions, then staff from the other group may be recruited to fill the vacancies.

Uncontested nominations may be approved by a vote of the Council.

Elections will be conducted April-May each year. Elections will be conducted electronically. The official means of communication to staff is via the provided valpo.edu Gmail address. The Council will make a best-effort attempt to communicate through other channels such as the Campus Chronicle, printed materials, Staff Council Newsletter, and word of mouth. All staff are encouraged to vote in the elections.

If a position is vacated after the normal election cycle, then an alternate member will be selected by the Representation Subcommittee based on the current alternate list in order of election votes to complete the vacant term.

In absence of an adequate alternate member list, the Representation Subcommittee may be charged with seeking additional alternate candidates to compile a pool of alternate members.

## Article IX. Council Officers

There shall be four elected officers for each term: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The Executive Committee for the ensuing year will be elected using the following timeline:

- A. May: Nominations for chair and vice chair are collected throughout the month and must be accepted or declined prior to the June council meeting.
- B. June: Elections of chair and vice chair are held.
- C. July: The newly elected chair and vice chair coordinate the first meeting of the new academic year during which nominations and elections of the secretary and treasurer are held.
- D. Prior to the August general council meeting, the Executive Committee will determine subcommittee chairs.

If the vice chair, secretary, or treasurer positions are vacated for any reason, then elections for those officers will be determined by the majority of voting members at the next scheduled meeting.

#### ***Section IX.01 Executive Committee***

The Executive Committee for the Council will consist of the four officers. The immediate previous chair shall serve in an advisory capacity as needed for the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall set the meeting dates, times, and locations for monthly meetings and approve agenda items. The Executive Committee, seeking input from the entire Council to foster collaboration, will establish Staff Council action items. The overarching action items will be approved by vote to provide a record which will ensure continuity year to year.

The Executive Committee shall meet regularly with the University president and chief of staff.

In the event of extenuating circumstances and upon approval of the general council at the following meeting, the Executive Committee may take any steps necessary to ensure the continuity of Staff Council business.

#### ***Section IX.02 Chair***

The chair shall officiate and conduct regular meetings of Staff Council and its Executive Committee.

The chair shall serve as a representative for staff to the University Council and in the Human Resource Services grievances process. The chair will also serve as a representative for staff to the Strategic Planning Committee or may delegate representation to another Staff Council member.

In consultation with the Executive Committee, the chair will appoint members to serve on the University Council, Fringe Benefits Committee, Investment Oversight Committee, and any other University committees as necessary.

The chair shall meet regularly with the University president and chief of staff to share and discuss information on relevant issues before the Council.

### ***Section IX.03 Vice Chair***

The vice chair shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the chair should the chair be unable to fulfill them due to temporary or extended leave of absence, termination from the University, resignation from the Council, or resignation from the chair position.

In consultation with the Executive Committee, the vice chair will appoint the chairs and members to serve on the Staff Recognition Subcommittee, Representation Subcommittee, Staff Events Subcommittee, Communications Subcommittee, New Employee Subcommittee, and Staff Development Subcommittee.

The vice chair shall serve as an ex-officio member of all Staff Council subcommittees and as a representative for staff to the Strategic Planning Committee or may delegate representation to another Staff Council member. The vice chair will also be part of the Human Resource Services grievances process.

### ***Section IX.04 Secretary***

The secretary will be responsible for recording the official meeting minutes of the general council, the distribution of official meeting minutes to Staff Council members, and the distribution of approved minutes to the staff of Valparaiso University. At each regular and special meeting of the Council, the secretary shall take roll of all members and guests present.

The secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the print and electronic records of the Staff Council and shall serve as the chair of the Communications Subcommittee.

### ***Section IX.05 Treasurer***

The treasurer will be responsible for conducting an annual review of the preceding fiscal year expenditure, creating a report of this review, and providing this report to the Council no later than the August meeting. The treasurer will also provide a monthly report to the Council on recent expenditures, expected expenditures, and any changes to the annual budget.

The Council shall approve the annual budget no later than the October meeting. After the approval of the annual budget, the treasurer may make budget allocation changes as needed with approval of the Executive Committee.

Discretionary authority to allocate funds, up to an aggregate maximum of 10 percent of the annual budget, shall be reserved for the joint approval of the chair and vice chair. Budget changes in excess of 10% must be taken to the Staff Council for approval.

## Article X. Meetings and Voting

A quorum shall be one half plus one of the current Staff Council membership. Action may be taken upon a majority vote of the quorum. Issues decided without a quorum will be considered as a recommendation to the Council to be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

Only members present (in person or via an interactive media) may vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted. Council members who may be traveling or otherwise unable to attend the meeting in-person may make arrangements with the secretary to set up a teleconference option for that meeting.

Meetings may move to a virtual/telephonic, interactive format when deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

### **Section X.01 Electronic Voting**

The Executive Committee may authorize an online vote through electronic means to be conducted outside of a normal meeting. The window for electronic voting shall be no fewer than five business days.

Except for amendments to the bylaws, as noted in Article XII, electronic voting may take place when the issue to be voted on is emailed to each member's last known email address. Each member then has five business days to reply in support of or against the issue. Failure to reply within five business days is deemed an abstention.

### **Section X.02 Rules of Order**

Staff Council business shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent version of Robert's Rules of Order as articulated at [rulesonline.com](http://rulesonline.com).

## Article XI. Subcommittees

The Staff Council shall operate with six standing subcommittees: Staff Recognition Subcommittee, Representation Subcommittee, Staff Events Subcommittee, Staff Development Subcommittee, Communications Subcommittee, and New Employee Subcommittee.

Additional ad hoc committees, task forces, and/or research groups may be established to address specific issues at the discretion of the chair. To maintain operational functionality of the Council, the addition of a subcommittee or revisions to a subcommittee description shall not require comprehensive bylaw review and approval.

#### ***Section XI.01 Staff Recognition Subcommittee***

The Staff Recognition Subcommittee oversees the nomination and voting process for selecting the Staff Council's Employee of the Month.

- A. Nominations must be for a regular full-time, limited full-time, or regular part-time staff member who has worked at the University for at least 90 days. Faculty, members of President's Council, and students are not eligible.
- B. Any Valparaiso University staff member, faculty member, student, or alum may submit a nomination.
- C. The subcommittee will select the winning nominee each month at their regularly scheduled meeting.

#### ***Section XI.02 Representation Subcommittee***

The Representation Subcommittee manages and executes the nomination and election process, coordinates new member orientation, and recommends changes annually so that the membership distribution best reflects the changing demographics of the University over time.

#### ***Section XI.03 Staff Events Subcommittee***

The Staff Events Subcommittee plans and executes events that advance the mission of the Staff Council and enrich the University community experience.

There shall be a minimum of three staff appreciation events per fiscal year; at least one of these must be a family-oriented event.

#### ***Section XI.04 Staff Development Subcommittee***

The Staff Development Subcommittee plans and executes events that advance the mission of the Staff Council with a particular focus on offering programs and workshops to promote professional and personal development designed to maximize professional growth.

#### ***Section XI.05 Communications Subcommittee***

The Communications Subcommittee is responsible for maintaining and updating the Staff Council's website and for sending out the monthly Staff Council newsletter to all University staff. They may also assist other subcommittees in marketing and promotion of Council events.

#### ***Section XI.06 New Employee Subcommittee***



The New Employee Subcommittee receives a monthly list of new Valparaiso University staff members from the Office of Human Resources. Subcommittee members are assigned new staff members to drop off welcome gifts and introduce them to the work of the Staff Council.

## Article XII. Bylaw Amendments and Review

Amendments to these bylaws may originate in the Executive Committee or Staff Council new business and be presented to the Council for a vote. If the amendment is approved by a two-thirds vote at any regular Staff Council meeting, the amendment having been advertised in writing by the chair at least 10 business days prior to that meeting, then it will be adopted.

An ad hoc Bylaws Subcommittee will convene once every three years to conduct a comprehensive Staff Council bylaws review. Any proposed updates will be presented to the Council for adoption 10 days prior to the next general council meeting and must receive a two-thirds vote to be adopted.