



Bylaws
Pennsylvania Western University Staff Senate

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Pennsylvania Western University Staff Senate, hereinafter referred to as PennWest Staff Senate.

Article II - Purpose, Jurisdiction, and Authority

Section 1. Purpose

The PennWest Staff Senate serves as a representative body for PennWest University staff. For the purposes of these bylaws, “staff” refers to all non-executive and non-faculty employees of PennWest University. Its purpose is to:

- Strengthen communication and collaboration across campuses.
- Provide a forum for staff input on matters that affect the student experience and workplace environment.
- Support information sharing across campuses related to student-centered initiatives.
- Promote staff engagement in shared governance and institutional decision-making through collaboration with the Faculty Senate, Student Government/Senate, and administration.

Section 2. Jurisdiction

The Staff Senate is an independent advisory body meant for information gathering, information sharing, deliberation, and making recommendations. It does not act as a bargaining unit or grievance forum. Matters under union jurisdiction will remain with the appropriate bargaining representatives.

Section 3. Authority

The Staff Senate may provide recommendations on staff-related issues referred to it by staff members, administration, Faculty Senate, Student Government/Senate, or other governance bodies. Recommendations will be forwarded to the President or designee for consideration.

Article III - Membership

Section 1. Members

All non-executive staff at PennWest University are general members of the Staff Senate. Representation should include at least one Senator elected or appointed from each divisional area by campus (California, Clarion, Edinboro) (defined in Article IV, Section 1) to create a balanced mix of campuses and divisions and ensure broad perspectives across the university.

A. **Voting members** are the elected or appointed representatives (**herein referred to as Senators**) from each divisional area by campus of PennWest.

B. **Non-voting members** may include:

- The University President or designee
- Faculty Senate liaison (if designated)
- Student Government/Senate liaison (if designated)

Article IV - Senators/Officers

Section 1. Eligibility

- A. All permanent full-time staff employees, employed for a minimum of one year at the time of election, are eligible to serve as a Senator.
- B. Senators shall be apportioned using the divisions indicated in the organizational chart in use in January of the election year. The Executive Committee shall complete the determination of staff divisions in January of each year.
- C. Staff Senate will make their best effort to ensure all Divisions and campuses are represented on the Staff Senate.
- D. Representation of Divisions should be reviewed annually with Human Resources.

Section 2. Responsibilities of Senators

- A. Attend meetings regularly.
- B. Report Senate actions back to their constituencies in their respective divisional area.
- C. Gather input from colleagues for presentation to the Senate.
- D. Participate in voting on matters brought before the Senate.

Section 3. Elections, Terms, and Vacancies

- A. **Elections:** Elections for representatives to the Staff Senate shall be conducted no later than April of each academic year. The Staff Senate's Elections Committee shall adhere to the following guidelines:
 1. Each division should be represented and apportioned based upon the roster of staff provided by Human Resources
 2. All permanent full-time staff employees, employed for a minimum of one year at the time of election, are eligible to serve as Senators.
 3. Nominees for election should obtain permission from their immediate supervisor to serve, ensuring their participation is supported within their work unit.
 4. Timeline:
 - a. Nominations are to be solicited during March.
 - b. Elections within the respective divisional area shall occur no later than April.
 - c. The Elections Committee shall tally votes and announce the results by May 1 annually.
 - d. Newly elected senators will assume positions at the beginning of the next academic year.
 5. Elected senators shall be determined by the highest votes by division and their campus
- B. **Terms:** Senators shall serve two-year terms with eligibility for reelection for a second term. Election to future terms may occur after an interim of one full term (two years).
- C. **Vacancies:** Vacancies shall be filled by special election or appointment within the affected division and campus.
- D. If a senator misses two unexcused meetings in a semester will constitute removal, and the Staff Senate will declare the position open for election or appointment. Change in employment status will constitute removal or withdrawal from the Staff Senate.
- E. Any Senator can make a personal decision to resign from the Staff Senate.
- F. In the first session of the new Staff Senate, half of the senators will be elected for 1-year terms and half for 2-year terms to ensure continuity.

Section 4. Officers

The Senate shall elect officers: a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and three Senators-at-large.

- A. **Chair:** The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Staff Senate. If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the Vice-Chair shall preside. The Chair shall represent the Staff Senate at official University functions.

- B. **Vice-Chair:** The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in the fulfillment of her/his duties. The Vice-Chair shall chair meetings when necessary and shall succeed to the Chair in the event of a vacancy until the election of a new Chair. The Vice Chair shall chair the election committee.
- C. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall record the proceedings of all Senate meetings; provide minutes to all members of the Senate for approval at subsequent meetings; receive minutes of all Standing Committees of the Senate; submit to the University community copies of all approved minutes of the Staff Senate; and maintain, post, and send to the Office of the President, all minutes and actions of Standing Committees of the Staff Senate.
- D. **Senators-at-Large:** Senators-at-Large shall perform duties as assigned by the Senate. One shall serve as Staff Senate liaison to the Faculty Senate. One shall serve as the Staff Senate liaison to the Student Government/Senate.

Article V - Executive Committee

Section 1. Duties

The Executive Committee shall coordinate Senate activities, set meeting agendas, assign committee membership, and serve as liaison to administration and other governance bodies.

Section 2. Membership

The Executive Committee shall include the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and three Senators-at-large elected by the Senate.

Section 3. Elections, Terms, and Vacancies

Officers are elected at the first meeting of the new academic year. The Chair, Secretary, and one Senator-at-large are elected in even years. The Vice Chair and two Senators-at-large are elected in the odd years. Officers may serve two consecutive terms if re-elected. Vacancies shall be filled by special election or appointment for the remainder of the term. An officer can make a personal decision to resign from the Executive Committee.

Article VI - Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Senate shall meet monthly during the academic year. Meetings may be held virtually or in person, depending on scheduling and participation needs. Meetings may be attended by elected senators, invited guests, or speakers, and open to all staff.

Meeting minutes and updates will be shared with the general membership following each meeting (add link once created – see Note at end).

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Chair, a simple majority of the Executive Committee, or by petition of at least 10% of general members.

Section 3. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of voting Senators.

Section 4. A staff open forum shall be held annually during the academic year.

Session 5. Executive Sessions are defined as closed meetings when confidentiality is required and will be called by an officer or any senator during a Staff Senate meeting. An Executive Session will be a private meeting that will only consist of Staff Senate voting members. The purpose of the session is to allow Staff

Senators to speak freely and privately, void of outside entities. Meeting minutes during this time may be suspended unless official business is conducted.

Article VII - Committees

Standing or ad hoc committees may be formed as needed to address specific initiatives or goals.

Article VIII - Ratification

These bylaws shall become effective upon approval by a two-thirds vote of the Staff Senate and confirmation by the University President.

Article IX - Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern PennWest Staff Senate in all cases in which they are applicable unless otherwise specified.

Article X - Review and Amendments

- A. The bylaws shall be reviewed every three years by an ad hoc committee.
- B. Amendments may be proposed by any senator or by petition of at least 10% of general members provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing and disseminated/published one month prior to the meeting.
 - 1. Adoption of amendments requires a two-thirds vote of the Staff Senate and confirmation by the University President.
 - 2. All approved amendments shall be communicated to staff through official university channels.

Approved by: 
Jon Anderson, Ph.D., President

Date: 03-06-2026