

# SMITH COLLEGE STAFF COUNCIL CHARTER

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4.29.92

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## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Smith College Staff Council is to give staff members a focused and direct involvement in the governance of non-academic affairs and the life of the Smith College community.

To this end, Staff Council will ensure participation of staff in the policymaking process, promote visibility of staff as valuable members of the Smith community, and facilitate a sense of belonging within the community. The Council will examine policies affecting the employment environment and the community and make recommendations to the appropriate committees and administrators. The Council will actively seek to involve all segments of the College's diverse staff in the College's decision making process.

## **ARTICLE I: Establishment**

This organization shall be known as the Smith College Staff Council. Articles I through XI of this document constitute the Charter for Staff Council.

## **ARTICLE II: Purpose**

The purpose of the Staff Council is to promote the welfare of the staff and the College and to enhance the role of staff within the College. The Council will engage in the following activities in order to realize these goals.

1. Act in an advisory capacity to the President.
2. Advocate for the rights and needs of College staff.
3. Support and enhance the exchange of information among staff, as well as between staff members and the college.
4. Examine personnel policies and other policies affecting the employment environment and make recommendations to appropriate administrators and committees.
5. Establish standing and ad hoc committees as appropriate to the performance of the Council's functions.
6. Recommend staff to the President or other appropriate administrators for appointment to College committees.
7. Conduct public meetings, forums, surveys, etc., to determine staff needs and opinions and to discuss topics of interest.
8. Exercise control over the internal operations and maintenance of the Staff Council.

Staff Council is not a labor organization. Nothing contained in this Charter will be construed as authorizing the Staff Council to negotiate grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

## **ARTICLE III: Membership**

1. Staff refers to all staff members of Smith College. All staff members are represented by Staff Council. All staff may vote in elections for Staff Council, attend Staff Council meetings, and serve on Staff Council committees as non-voting members (with the exception of the Personnel Policy Committee).
2. The Staff Council will consist of 25 voting representatives, elected by staff. It is the goal of the Council to maintain approximately the same distribution between administrative, administrative support, and service staff as the general population.

#### **ARTICLE IV: Attendance**

1. While in-person attendance at the monthly Staff Council meetings is preferred, a Zoom option will be available for those whose schedules make it difficult to attend otherwise. This also applies to any applicable subcommittee meetings.
2. Regular attendance at subcommittee meetings is required. Of the approximately ten meetings held per academic year, members are expected to attend at least seven to be considered in good standing. (Please note: Personnel Policy Committee meets more frequently and requires attendance at 15 or more meetings per year.) If the meeting schedule prevents you from meeting this expectation, please speak with a cabinet member about opportunities to serve on a different subcommittee.

#### **ARTICLE V: Elections**

1. The Membership and Recruitment Committee shall propose and the Staff Council shall approve an initial election plan to be reviewed each year for election of its successor members. The plan will provide for election of members who represent, in approximate proportion to staff, the various classifications, departments, and other significant staff member groups. In the absence of a Membership and Recruitment Committee Chair(s), the Vice-Chair will serve in this role.
2. There may, from time to time, be the need on the part of Staff Council to take steps to ensure election to the Staff Council of representatives from a group of staff members that has been consistently underrepresented on the Staff Council, e.g., encourage staff from these underrepresented areas to run for election.
3. Representatives of the Staff Council shall be elected for a two-year term (June 1 –May 31).
4. Half of the Council representatives will be elected each year. No representative shall serve more than four consecutive years.

#### **ARTICLE VI: Vacancies and Mid-term Replacements**

A Staff Council member may be replaced at any point during their term, even after agreeing to serve.

1. Staff Council vacancies are filled by elected staff members in the order in which they appear on the waitlist. The waitlist is created following the election and ranks candidates based on the number of votes received, from highest to lowest. When a vacancy arises, the co-chairs will contact the next person on the list to offer them the opportunity to serve.
2. Staff members who fill a vacancy between June and the end of December will be considered first-term Staff Council members.
3. Staff members who fill a vacancy between January and the end of May will start their first term with the new academic year.
4. If someone has to vacate their position before completing at least twelve months of their two-year term due to circumstances beyond their control, i.e., going on leave, etc., they remain eligible to run for two additional consecutive terms.

#### **ARTICLE VII: Officers**

1. The Staff Council shall elect the following officers from its elected members to serve on the cabinet:

Chair or Co-Chairs, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

2. The officers shall be elected by majority vote of a quorum by ballot for a one-year term.

3. An officer may be removed by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the elected members of Staff Council.

4. The Chair/Co-Chairs have the following responsibilities:

- Call regular meetings at least once a month during the academic year and special meetings as necessary and appropriate.
- Set the agendas of all meetings and preside over all meetings.
- Delegate Responsibility as necessary to ensure the effective functioning of Staff Council.
- Notify Members of meetings and distribute the agendas for meetings.
- Provide Nominations for appointments to campus committees.
- Act as Liaison to the President's Office for the purpose of sharing necessary information and collaborating.
  - matters regarding legal status will be referred to the College's General Counsel.

5. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair/Co-Chairs with their responsibilities and preside over meetings in the Chair/Co-Chairs absence.

6. The Secretary has the following responsibilities:

- Assist in making public the reports, meetings, and actions of Staff Council.
- Take the minutes of all meetings and be responsible for their distribution on a timely basis.
- Assist with updates to Staff Council social media platforms, as well as any eDigest notices related to Staff Council business, as needed.
- Serve as a member of the Communications Committee.

7. The Treasurer has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that any funds allocated to Staff Council are accounted for properly, and will report to the Council on disbursement of such funds.
- When appropriate, keep Staff Council informed of the budget process of the College.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: Staff Council Committees**

1. The Staff Council shall have 6 standing sub-committees. Since much of the work of Staff Council is conducted in committee sessions, each Staff Council member is expected to serve on and attend meetings of said committee, as they are able.
2. Except as otherwise stated, membership on Staff Council standing committees shall be drawn from the membership of Staff Council and will represent the three major staff groups: Administrative, Administrative Support and Service.

The chairperson of each committee shall be elected by the committee and shall have the responsibility of reporting regularly to the Staff Council on the committee's work and progress unless another Staff Council member has been designated for this purpose. All committee chairs, or their designees, shall also serve as members of the Staff Council Steering Committee.

3. The Staff Council shall have the following standing committees:

- a. **Steering Committee** – responsible for meeting and communicating as needed to ensure that issues are brought to and discussed with administrators and committees and ensuring that information is gathered from various segments of the College community for discussion at Staff Council meetings, as appropriate. This committee will consist of:
  - i. Staff Council Cabinet
  - ii. the Chair of each Staff Council standing committee (must be a Staff Council member)
  - iii. the editor of the Council Chronicle. The editor of the Council Chronicle will serve on

the Steering Committee in a nonvoting capacity.

- iv. The Chair/co-Chair of the Staff Council shall also act as Chair of the Steering Committee.
- b. **Membership and Recruitment** – responsible for all elections. This committee will ensure that elections are conducted properly and fairly. This committee will consist of staff council members only, including the Vice-Chair.
- b. **Communications Committee** – responsible for keeping the staff informed of the actions of Staff Council and other issues of interest to staff, thereby fostering a sense of community via the Council Chronicle newsletter and other means. This committee also advises the administration regarding the dissemination of other information to staff and the community at large. This committee will consist of members of Staff Council, including the Secretary of Staff Council.
- c. **Personnel Policy Committee (PPC)** – responsible for examination, review, and comment on College personnel policies and for promoting improved staff training and development. This committee will consist of members of Staff Council, as well as the Chair or Co-Chairs.
- d. **Activities Committee** – responsible for coordinating, organizing and publicizing special events, which allow staff to meet and interact with colleagues in other departments across campus, thereby, fostering an atmosphere of cooperation and community spirit. This committee will consist of members of Staff Council.
- e. **VIBE (Values, Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity) Committee** – responsible for seeking ways to promote diversity on campus. This includes maintaining an awareness of and sensitivity to creating an inclusive community as well as identifying and planning activities that reflect Staff Council's commitment to diversity. This committee will consist of members of Staff Council.

Whenever the need arises, a committee can appoint an information liaison according to the needs of the committee. Each committee will take minutes for their meetings to foster communication with all staff.

5. The Staff Council will create ad hoc committees as the need arises. Ad hoc committees should have broad representation. Staff members who are directly involved in an issue that is being studied should be represented. A staff member need not be a member of Staff Council to serve on an ad hoc committee.

## ARTICLE IX: College Committees

1. College Committees (standing and ad hoc) play an important role in the affairs of the College. Many committees consider issues of concern to staff. Staff Council will review each committee, its mandate, and its composition. For each committee that deals with issues of concern to staff, the Staff Council will:

A. Request the appropriate individual or group to nominate at least one staff representative (or two, depending on the committee's needs) nominated by Staff Council,

or,

B. Request the appropriate individual or group to provide other opportunities for staff input and periodic reports on discussions and actions of the committee.

In many cases, any interested staff members, not just elected members of Staff Council, may be nominated by Staff Council to represent the staff on College committees unless otherwise indicated in the Faculty Code guidelines.

2. The Faculty and the Student Government are entitled to send a nonvoting representative, with speaking privileges to Staff Council meetings, provided a reciprocal agreement exists with these organizations.

## **ARTICLE X: Procedures**

1. At least once a semester Staff Council will hold an open forum for the express purpose of allowing staff to raise questions and concerns.
2. The Chair or Co-Chairs may call special meetings to consider matters demanding immediate attention or such meetings shall be called when requested by  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the elected members of Staff Council.
3. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the elected members of Staff Council.
4. The Staff Council and standing committees are open to all staff (with the exception of Personnel Policy Committee), but may go into executive session to discuss confidential matters if a majority of the voting members present concur.
5. An open discussion period shall be included on every agenda. It permits staff the opportunity to be recognized by the Chair or Co-Chairs, and to make comments without prior arrangement.

## **ARTICLE XI: Amendment Process**

1. An affirmative vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the elected members of Staff Council is required to amend this Charter, except Articles II, III, VII, and IX. These articles concern the relationship between Staff Council and the College Administration and, therefore, shall also require the approval of the President.