

## **ARTICLE I. PREAMBLE**

In 2001, the framework was developed for the university staff to share their voice on our campus. The University Staff Senate (USS) was established for this purpose. Section 36.115 of the Wisconsin Statutes made various changes to UW System policies and procedures, relating to the university staff. As part of the implementation of these changes, it became necessary, desirable and appropriate for a substantive discussion with university staff to determine whether there was strong support for USS to formally serve as the official governance body having voting power for all university staff and to solely act on their behalf. This change in the governance role was approved by a majority of the university staff at UW Oshkosh. In 2017, the UW System Board of Regents (BOA) approved the proposal to merge the University of Wisconsin Fox Valley (herein referred to as UW Fox), University of Wisconsin Fond du Lac (herein referred to UW FDL) and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (herein referred to as UW Oshkosh). Because of this, the three (3) university staff governance groups merged into one. USS will officially be incorporated into the shared governance structure within UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh, to the extent as authorized by state statute, and as consistent with any applicable policies, procedures and regulations put forth by the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents.

All truly successful organizations recognize the value and the importance of the contributions and suggestions that are made by its employees. The university recognizes the tremendous value of suggestions received from all segments of the UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh communities, including those from the members of the university staff. The University Staff Senate was created and established to ensure that all members of the university staff have the opportunity to be actively involved in setting the priorities and future direction for UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh.

In 2017, as this new role was established, the University Staff at UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh expressed support for the principles, the processes, and the practice of effective, engaged, and transparent shared governance at UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh.

## **ARTICLE II. VISION**

All university staff who work at UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh will have opportunities to help shape and advance the University through active and involved patterns of collegial communication and interaction with UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh's administration and groups and organizations participating in the process of shared institutional governance as provided under Chapter 36 of the Wisconsin Statutes and any applicable rules, policies, or procedures that are set forth by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

## **ARTICLE III. NAME**

The name of the organization is the University Staff Senate (USS).

## **ARTICLE IV. CHARACTER AND CHARGE**

USS is created as an unincorporated organization that operates within the administrative and shared governance structure of UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh. USS is charged with the following responsibilities: (1) To participate in the development of future plans for the University while also promoting and sustaining a positive professional environment for all university staff employees (whether represented, non-represented, limited term, or project appointment); (2) To promote programs and services that support professional development activities; (3) To encourage informed communication among university staff and with the broader University community, including the recognized governance groups; (4) To serve as advisors to the Chancellor and other University administrators; and (5) To perform such other duties and functions as befits a voluntary organization committed to creating and sustaining an affirming and supportive operational environment that supports, promotes and encourages excellence in teaching, working, leading, and serving the communities that make up UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh.

## **ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP**

All university staff members holding permanent (expectation of continued employment) or project (with the ability to fulfill the commitment) positions are eligible, and encouraged, to be members of USS. Temporary employees (formerly LTEs) are not eligible to serve on USS, or participate in elections, but are welcome to participate in the University Staff Professional Development Day. USS has 19 members, each serving a three-year term with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

The USS is elected by vote of all participating and interested members of the university staff at UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh. The seats within the senate are determined by evaluating/analyzing the number of university staff constituents served in each area (i.e. Academic Affairs, Administrative Services/Chancellor, Student Affairs, Academic Colleges, UW Fox, UW FDL, Non-Represented, and Union Representation). These numbers will be reviewed every two years (even numbered years) to update representation on the senate accordingly. USS's structure also includes roles for both a Historian and a Webmaster, of which they may or may not be current members. In the event they are current members, then they would hold voting power.

## **ARTICLE VI. ADMINISTRATIVE LIAISON**

The Chancellor, in consultation with the President and/or Executive Committee, shall appoint an individual to serve as the Administrative Liaison to USS. In making this selection or designation, the Chancellor shall identify an individual with the background, training, experience, commitment, and current work responsibilities that provide orientation and perspective to the broad array of issues impacting the University. The Liaison shall be chosen from among the

ranks of the faculty, academic staff, or administrative staff. The Liaison is expected to have regular and recurring access to the Chancellor and to the University's administrative leadership. The Liaison is expected to be familiar with the University's system of shared governance and have understandings and sensitivities that will ensure that the work of USS operates in an orderly and efficient manner with these other recognized governance structures and processes.

## **ARTICLE VII. TERMS OF SERVICE**

Terms of service on USS are staggered so that between five and eight seats are open each year. Individuals can nominate themselves or other members of the university staff for appointment to serve on USS. Nominations to fill vacant seat(s), and the subsequent voting for all members, is done in May, with those chosen beginning their term in June. If an elected member leaves before the term is completed, the President will appoint a new member to complete the remainder of the term. The composition of USS is shown on Addendum 1, the University Staff Senate Representation and Terms of Office Table.

## **ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS**

USS shall have the following seven officers who serve single-year terms: (1) President; (2) President-Elect; (3) Treasurer; and (4, 5, 6, & 7) 4 USS Members-at-Large (1 from UW Fox, 1 from UW FDL and 2 from UW Oshkosh). If the UW Fox or UW FDL senator is elected to a different position on the executive board and the UW Fox or UW FDL senator membership does not allow for an additional at large position, the at-large position will go to the general Senate. The Executive Committee is comprised of these seven USS officers. The Past President (from the previous year) is invited to attend executive committee meetings if they choose to make that commitment. The Past President member will be a non-voting, ex-officio role.

## **ARTICLE IX. PRESIDENTIAL ALLOCATION**

Each spring the Senate Office (*record keeping office for Senate*) will transfer funds of \$10,000 to the department/area of the incoming President.

## **ARTICLE X. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The 19 USS members who have been elected or appointed to serve shall elect a President-Elect at the June meeting from among the 19 USS members who have been elected or appointed to serve. A newly elected member must be present to be nominated for an office or have indicated willingness to serve prior to the meeting. In order to be elected to serve as President-Elect, the individual must have been a member of USS for at least one year prior to that election or have served on USS previously. In the event that the President-Elect cannot serve as the President, USS will elect a new President from among the 19 USS members. The duties and responsibilities of each officer are set forth below:

**President:** Calls and presides over USS meetings; oversees the distribution of the agenda and minutes to Senate members prior to each meeting; calls executive committee meetings as needed; coordinates activities; attends meetings of the Leadership Council and Provost Administrative Staff; attends meetings with the Chancellor as requested; and makes recommendations to USS for all appointments to Search and Screen committees and other committees requested by the Chancellor and assists Committee on Committees with other appointments. The President also oversees the review and update of the USS shared drive and access to approve USS users; works with the Senate Office for meeting minute record keeping; the Senate bylaws; and coordinates the Senate website with the Senate webmaster.

**President-Elect:** Serves as Acting President (and performs all of those duties) when the President is absent or unable to perform those duties; attends Leadership Council and meetings with the Chancellor as requested; and becomes President after completing a one-year service as President-Elect.

**Members-at-Large:** Serves as an executive committee member; and if the president of Senate is unable to be the UW System University Staff Representative, one of the Members-at-Large is asked to serve in that capacity if able.

**Past President:** Serves as an executive committee member and in an advisory role as needed to the current President; serves on the USPDD Planning Committee as chair and reports back to Senate. If unable to serve as chair of USPDD, the President will appoint a replacement.

**Treasurer:** Manages, reconciles and reports on the budget to USS at all monthly meetings; attends the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee; and oversees all payments of any associated bills or obligations for USS and USPDD.

## **ARTICLE XI. MEETINGS**

**Scheduling:** Regular meetings of USS, as called by the President, shall be held at least once per month, during the two full semesters of the academic year with a minimum of nine meetings per academic year with no meeting the month of July. USS meetings are open to all University employees and are held between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Members of USS will be allowed to attend meetings in paid status. Any employee serving as an elected member of USS who is assigned to work the second or third shift will use flex work hours to attend these meetings. Arrangement to flex work schedule will be discussed with the appropriate supervisor, and the Administrative Liaison shall actively help to resolve any issues or problems that may arise relating to these scheduling and workload considerations.

**Quorum:** A quorum for any meeting of the Senate shall be one more than half the full membership of the Senate.

**Attendance:** Each USS member must attend at least 75 percent of the regularly scheduled meetings in person or through virtual access, unless excused, in a given calendar year to retain their seat. The President may identify persons with low attendance and USS may remove them from office by an affirmative, secret ballot vote of two-thirds of the membership. The President will appoint the next-highest vote-getter from the most recent election in the appropriate category to fill the remainder of the term. If no one is able to serve who had been on the ballot, the President may appoint any eligible university staff member in the appropriate category.

**Leave of Absence:** If a USS member knows he or she will not be able to attend meetings for a period of time, he or she may request a leave of absence from these assigned responsibilities. Leaves may be requested for up to one calendar year. The President will appoint an eligible university staff member from the appropriate category to serve on USS during the absence. Replacement members have full voting rights and privileges. USS members requesting a leave longer than one year are encouraged to resign from USS.

## **ARTICLE XII. COMMITTEES**

USS committees may be established by a majority vote of USS, and each will include at least one USS member, and one of those USS members will serve as liaison to USS. All committees select their own chair from among themselves. Committee meetings may be held during paid work hours. Any employee serving as an elected member of the Senate and working second or third shift will use flex work hours to attend Committee meetings, and the Administrative Liaison shall provide support and assistance toward this end, if needed. Arrangement to flex work schedule shall be discussed with the appropriate supervisor. Committees are reviewed annually and those that are no longer necessary will be eliminated by majority vote of USS. When requested a representative from each committee will attend or provide the monthly USS meetings with updates on the activities of the committee. Terms for committee chairs (USS including USPDD) are limited to two consecutive years with another term of service allowed after a two-year break. The number of terms of membership on committees is not limited. Committee members must be in permanent employment status.

**USS Committees - All USS committees are responsible to maintain a roster of duties and responsibilities.**

**Executive Committee:** As noted above, in Article VIII, the executive committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Treasurer, and four Members-at-large. The Past President (from the previous year) is invited to attend executive committee meetings if they choose to make that commitment. The Past President member will be a non-voting, ex-officio role. The President will call the meetings as necessary and shall preside over them. In extraordinary circumstances, and when necessary due to deadlines or timelines imposed by external parties or requirements, the executive committee shall be authorized to exercise the powers of the USS in the event that a quorum cannot be convened. All actions shall be reported in writing to the Senate which shall review and ratify or reject them at its next meeting.

**Bylaws Committee:** USS bylaws shall be reviewed at a minimum of every two years or as needed and propose changes to USS as necessary. Membership shall consist of at least two USS members, plus one past bylaws committee member.

**University Staff Grant Program Committee:** Provides professional development opportunities to university staff members by offering grants for participation in non-credit conferences, seminars, and workshops. This program was established by the UW Oshkosh University Staff Senate and is supported by a Perpetual Endowment Fund of the UW Oshkosh Foundation. This committee would oversee any additional grant opportunities.

**Committee on Committees:** The Committee on Committees (COC) will survey the university staff no later than May 1 of each year to determine interest and qualifications for service on preferred committees. It is composed of three university staff members: One past COC member and two other Senate members. USS President will name the Chair of the Committee. COC will find nominees for openings on the university committees. Committee appointees compiled by COC shall be presented to the USS President for consideration. The USS President will submit the COC recommendations to USS for approval. A confirmation letter will be sent to the appointee, USS President, the secretary of the Senate, webpage manager, and the chair of the appropriate committee.

University staff serving on All-University committees will report to USS as necessary and at least once a year by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Members not on USS should report at a USS meeting as necessary or at least once a year.

**Elections Committee:** This committee is charged by the Senate President each February. It is composed of three university staff members: One past USS President, one past Elections Committee member, and one current USS member not seeking re-election. USS President will name the Chair of Election Committee. This person will be the convener of the Election committee. They will report directly to USS President. The USS President will submit election results at an April USS meeting for Senate to see prior to announcing it to all university staff. New members will be invited to attend a meeting in May before their term begins in June. Elections are to be concluded by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Awards and Recognition Committee:** This committee is responsible for selecting the monthly Star Award winner. The objective of the monthly Star Award is to recognize performance above and beyond the expectations of their position and responsibilities for university staff, temporary employees and project appointment employees. This committee is also responsible for soliciting nominees, reviewing materials on nominees, and recommending the winners of the Outstanding Performance Award (OPA) to the Chancellor. If any committee member is nominated, they are to excuse themselves from the committee meetings and deliberations. The OPA recognizes excellence in providing service to the University community and emphasizes its importance to

the academic environment and overall reputation of the University. The Chancellor makes the final decision of the OPA.

**Marketing Committee:** Handles four responsibilities: webpage management, prepares and distributes the newsletter, publicity for USS and USPDD, and makes the decision of USPDD's main giveaway item(s) to all participants (joint USS and USPDD Committee).

**Leadership Development Program:** This committee is charged with providing professional development and leadership training to members of the university staff. The Leadership Development Committee is comprised of one University Staff Senate (USS) member, one past series participant, one Human Resources (HR) Liaison, and two other university staff members as approved by USS. The HR Liaison will provide consultation, guidance, and training to the committee. Term limits for the first year will be two members at one full cycle (two-year commitment), and two members at two full cycles (four-year commitment). Every cycle (two years), two new members will be selected by USS. Committee members serve for a maximum of two cycles (four years). The HR Liaison will continue as needed. The series will be held every other academic year, or as attendance allows. The committee will meet in the off year to approve the learning outcomes and plan the related activities for the upcoming series. Funding for the series is provided each fiscal year via approval from the Chancellor. University staff will have the opportunity in the spring semester to apply to participate in the series for the upcoming year. To be eligible, a university staff employee must have been employed at least six months at the time of application, and have written approval from their direct supervisor. If the employee has been employed less than six months, consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis. The application process includes the participants' review and acceptance of the intended learning outcomes, the participation expectations, the time schedule, the applicant's interest and commitment statement, and the direct supervisor's approval. The committee will select up to 35 university staff to participate in the series and will notify the supervisor and applicant of the decision.

**Compensation Committee:** This committee is responsible for working with the Human Resources Office and other administrative units on the development and oversight of various policies, procedures and approaches to compensation issues relating to the university staff. (The specific charge to this committee shall be modified and adjusted as the work of this group continues under active development.)

**USPDD (University Staff Professional Development Day) Subcommittees** - All subcommittees are responsible to maintain a roster of duties and responsibilities and they report to USS.

**Special USS Committees** –

The USS shall create such ad hoc committees as it considers necessary to assist in formulating policies and making decisions on special problems.

## **Hearing Committee**

The University Staff Senate shall be responsible for forming the hearing bodies required by the UW System and UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh university staff rules.

### **1. Membership.**

When it becomes necessary to form a hearing body, the president of the Senate shall be responsible for forming a three-member hearing committee according to the following procedures:

- a. The three members shall be chosen from the Senate by the president, using random selection procedures. The chairperson of the hearing committee shall be appointed from among these three by the Senate.
- b. The president of the Senate shall not serve as a member of any hearing committee.
- c. No member of the Senate shall serve simultaneously on more than one committee hearing individual cases.
- d. The following are disqualified from service on a hearing committee: (1) any individual who participated in the initiation, formulation, investigation or filing of allegations or charges; (2) any individual who is a member of the concerned university staff member's department or equivalent; and (3) any individual who is a material witness.
- e. If, in the opinion of the president of the Senate (and with concurrence of the Chancellor), members are needed to serve on additional hearing committees, they will be randomly selected by the president from university staff in at least their third year of service at UW Fox, UW FDL, and UW Oshkosh.

### **2. Procedures.**

If a hearing is determined to be necessary, the committee shall operate consistent with the procedures in this section. Where appropriate, additional procedural requirements indicated in the other sections of these rules shall apply. Requirements guaranteeing due process and assuring procedural uniformity include the following:

- a. At the request of the president of the Senate, and with the concurrence of the Chancellor, the University shall provide legal counsel to a hearing committee. All parties shall be notified if legal counsel is to be provided.
- b. University staff members shall be assured of a fair hearing, which will include the right to present testimony in one's own behalf, the right to offer witnesses, the right to cross-examine adverse witnesses, and the right to counsel or representation.
- c. The department or functional equivalent of the university staff member concerned shall be consulted and have the opportunity to present evidence or testimony through the unit Director or other representative(s), as appropriate.
- d. By a majority vote a hearing committee may, on the motion of one of the university staff members involved, or on its own initiative, disqualify any one



of its members for cause. In such case, the president of the Senate shall designate a replacement unless, in his/her opinion, the disqualification should occur after a significant portion of the hearing already has taken place. The same replacement procedures shall be followed in the event a member of the committee is not able to complete the assignment.

- e. Hearings shall be open or closed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.
- f. A verbatim sound recording shall be made of all formal hearings. Upon written request, a copy of the recording shall be made available at no cost within a reasonable period of time to anyone involved in the hearing.
- g. The committee shall have access to documentary evidence it believes to be pertinent, including public records and official documents specifically requested by the committee, and shall have the right to summon witnesses necessary to assure a fair hearing.
- h. The Chancellor shall assist committees in obtaining witnesses and documents required for proper conduct of hearings.
- i. The hearing committee shall not be bound by common law or statutory rules of evidence; it may admit evidence having reasonable probative value, but shall exclude immaterial, irrelevant or unduly repetitious testimony, and shall allow the exercise of legal privileges. Members of the hearing committee who participate in discussion of the merits and decision-making shall be familiar with all testimony, all deliberations, and all evidence presented.

### **ARTICLE XIII. REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER GOVERNANCE GROUPS**

#### **The University Staff Senate will appoint representatives to the following:**

- A.** Faculty Senate: A Senate member with at least one year experience on Senate is preferred.
- B.** UW System University Staff Representatives Council: A Senate member, with preference to be either the President or one of the four Members-at-Large when possible. If a non-senate member is appointed to this position, he or she will attend Senate meetings to report, as necessary, as ex-officio and a non-voting member.

### **ARTICLE XIV. CHANGING THE BYLAWS**

Changes require an affirmative vote by two-thirds of the USS membership. This vote will be done at a USS meeting. Before such a vote will take place, members of the Senate must be given notice regarding the intent to vote on proposed changes. All proposals must be discussed during at least one Senate meeting prior to a vote on the proposed changes. In extraordinary circumstances, and when bylaw changes are necessary due to deadlines or timelines imposed by external parties or requirements, the executive committee shall be authorized to exercise the

powers of the USS in the event that a quorum cannot be convened. All actions shall be reported in writing to the Senate that shall review and ratify or reject them at its next meeting.

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