

BYLAWS OF THE COUNCIL ON STAFF AFFAIRS

SECTION I: PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- A. The purpose of the Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) is to advance the mission of Valdosta State University (VSU) as a whole and to promote and foster the welfare of University staff, in non-collective bargaining issues, through the combined creativity of staff Representatives from University division areas.
- B. COSA participates in the process of University governance by advising the President of the University regarding matters concerning University staff and the general welfare of the University. In doing so, COSA may consult with and make recommendations to other appropriate units of the University.
 1. COSA will provide a forum for open communication of ideas on staff issues.
 2. COSA will develop and maintain a University-wide communications network to provide for efficient transmission of relevant information to University staff.

SECTION II: MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

- A. Voting Members
 1. Voting members of the Council on Staff Affairs consist of elected Representatives.
 2. Only full-time benefited classified employees (as defined by the USG BOR section 8.1.2 Classified Personnel) who have been employed full time for a minimum of six (6) months are eligible for election as a COSA Representative from the following Vice Presidential and Presidential Areas:
 - i. Academic Affairs
 - ii. Finance and Administration
 - iii. Institutional Advancement
 - iv. Office of the President
 - v. Student Affairs
 - vi. Student Success
 3. Each of the Vice Presidential and Presidential areas will elect Representatives to COSA in accordance to a 1-35 ratio. 1-35 staff employees will have one Representative, 36-70 staff employees will have two Representatives, 71-105 staff employees will have three Representatives, 106-140 staff employees will have four Representatives, 141-175 staff employees will have five Representatives, and so on (a 1:35 ratio).
 4. Representation on Committees
 - I. All voting Representatives must serve on a minimum of two (2) committees annually. This includes COSA, Faculty Senate, and University-wide Committees.
 - II. In addition to the two (2) committees, all voting Representatives must serve on the Employee Appreciation Committee.
 - III. All voting Representatives shall submit committee reports to the Secretary prior to the next regularly scheduled COSA Executive Committee meeting.
- B. Non-Voting Members
 1. All full-time benefited classified employees (as defined by the USG BOR section 8.1.2 Classified Personnel) serve as non-voting COSA members.
 2. The Director of Human Resources serves as a non-voting Representative.
 3. A Representative of the Retiree Association serves as a non-voting Representative.
 4. The President of the Faculty Senate serves a one (1) year term as a non-voting Representative.
 5. The President of the Student Government Association serves a one (1) year term as a non-voting Representative.

SECTION III: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- A. The COSA Executive Committee will consist of the following elected officers:
1. Chair
 2. Chair-Elect
 3. Secretary
 4. Parliamentarian
 5. Treasurer
 6. Public Relations Officer
 7. Immediate Past Chair
 8. Director of Human Resources, Ex Officio Representative
- B. Executive Committee Officer Responsibilities and Duties
1. Chair
 - i. Responsible for conducting all COSA monthly meetings and Executive Committee meetings, and shall confer with and report regularly to the President of the University.
 - ii. Attends monthly meetings of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Academic Scheduling & Procedures Committee, Planning and Budget Council, and the University System of Georgia Staff Council (USGSC), or appoints alternative Representatives..
 - iii. Serves as the primary contact and designated Representative to the USGSC for VSU.
 - iv. Coordinates with the Secretary to have the meeting agendas prepared and distributed.
 - v. Oversees issues and concerns related to membership and attendance in collaboration with the Parliamentarian.
 - vi. Notifies COSA Representatives in writing if the COSA Member has missed an excessive number of meetings.
 - vii. Keeps the COSA membership and University staff informed on various projects.
 - viii. Appoints Representatives to various University committees.
 - ix. Prepares annually, or more often if necessary, a report of the activities of COSA.
 2. Chair-Elect
 - i. Assists the Chair and performs the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
 - ii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iii. Serves as Chair of the Employee Appreciation Day Committee
 - iv. Serves as the secondary Representative to the shared University governance body.
 - v. Serves as the secondary contact and designated Representative to the USGSC for VSU.
 - vi. Attends the USGSC meetings, or appoints alternative Representatives.
 3. Secretary
 - i. Records meeting minutes, attendance, maintains records, and distributes information to University employees. Notifies University employees of all regular COSA meetings.
 - ii. Assists the Chair and performs the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair and Chair-Elect.
 - iii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iv. Communicates any proposed amendments to the Bylaws prior to the next regularly scheduled COSA meeting.
 - v. Maintains a binder containing written records of COSA activities, including committee minutes and reports, treasurer reports, newsletters, correspondence, etc.
 - vi. Updates the COSA website in collaboration with the Public Relations Officer.
 - vii. Communicates COSA Committee appointments to the Faculty Senate through the Faculty Senate Committee on Committees after the first COSA meeting that new representatives attend and as changes to the COSA representatives take place.

4. Parliamentarian
 - ii. Maintains the latest version of Robert’s Rules of Order, which are used to conduct the meetings.
 - iii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iv. Monitors Representative attendance at meetings for the purposes of quorum.
 - v. Serves as Chair of the Policy Committee and the Elections Committee.
 - vi. Reviews the Bylaws annually and updates as necessary with the Policy Committee.
 - vii. Oversees issues and concerns related to membership and attendance in collaboration with the Chair.
5. Treasurer
 - i. Maintains records and distributes information as it pertains to COSA finances.
 - ii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iii. Responsible for receiving and disbursing COSA funds. Verifies funds and signs completed service request forms from Chair, Chair-Elect, and Secretary before submission to printing, warehouse, central supplies, and other entities. Purchases supplies as needed. Makes deposits in Foundation accounts.
 - iv. Implements the audit of the financial records of COSA and provides audited records to the new Treasurer.
 - v. Serves as Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee.
 - vi. Maintains a binder containing written records of COSA financial activities, including treasurer reports and other financial documents.
6. Public Relations Officer
 - i. Notifies University employees of all upcoming COSA events and COSA elections.
 - ii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iii. Updates the COSA website in collaboration with the Secretary.
 - iv. Serves as Chair to the Social Recognition and Professional Development Committee.
7. Immediate Past Chair
 - i. Serves as the advisor to the Chair.
 - ii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a voting Representative.
 - iii. Serves as Chair of Ad-Hoc Committees.
8. Director of Human Resources, Ex Officio Representative
 - i. Serves as Chair of the Employee of the Semester Subcommittee.
 - ii. Attends Executive Committee meetings and COSA monthly meetings as a non-voting Representative.
 - iii. Serves as a resource to the Executive Committee on employment-related issues.

SECTION IV: TERMS OF SERVICE

A. Terms of Representatives

1. Terms of COSA Representatives begin July 1 of each fiscal year and conclude on June 30.
2. The term of service for elected Representatives is four (4) years.
3. Representatives may serve a maximum of two (2) successive terms.
4. Representatives who have served two (2) successive terms may run again after one (1) year out of service to COSA if a Representative position is open within their area.
5. Representatives who step down from their positions because of the inability to fulfill their duties may run again after one (1) full fiscal cycle out of service to COSA if a Representative position is open within their area.

6. The Elections Committee may fill a vacancy by appointment until the next general election; however, preference must be given to the second highest vote recipient from the election from which the exiting Representative was elected. The Appointee must come from the area where the vacancy occurred. When a vacancy is filled by appointment, the Appointee shall serve the remainder of the fiscal year, at which time the position must be filled by election.

B. Terms of Executive Committee Officers

1. Terms of Executive Committee Officers begin July 1 of each fiscal year and conclude on June 30.
2. The term of service for elected Executive Committee Officers is one (1) year.
3. The Chair-Elect shall serve one (1) term, followed by one (1) term as Chair, and one (1) term as Immediate Past Chair.

SECTION V: ELECTIONS

A. Election of Representatives

1. An election shall be held each year to replace Representatives whose terms have expired according to the following procedures:
 - i. At the March COSA meeting, open Representative positions shall be determined and announced and applications shall be made available immediately after the meeting. Information about the role and expectations of a COSA Representative shall be included in application materials.
 - ii. Applications shall be accepted no later than the April meeting.
 - iii. Electronic voting shall take place through the May meeting at which winners shall be announced. Only staff in each area shall see candidates running for a position within their area. If an opening occurs for an At-Large position, all eligible COSA members may vote.
 - iv. Newly elected Representatives shall be invited to the June meeting as a courtesy and their four (4) year term of office shall begin July 1.
2. Representatives shall be elected based on a popular vote of eligible members from that nominee's area. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall cast the tie-breaking vote.

B. Election of Executive Committee Officers

1. At the June COSA meeting, nominations for Executive Committee Officers shall be accepted from currently seated COSA Representatives. Nominees must have served one (1) full fiscal year as a COSA Representative to be eligible to run for Chair-Elect. Nominees must be currently seated Representatives in order to run for other Executive Committee Officer positions. All Representatives named on the ballot must have accepted the nomination and consented to his or her name being placed on the ballot.
2. At the June COSA meeting, Executive Committee Officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote. COSA Representatives will vote for Executive Committee Officers by paper ballot. Only currently seated COSA Representatives are eligible to vote for these officer positions. Proxies are ineligible to vote.
3. Should an Executive Committee vacancy occur during a term of office, the Executive Committee shall have the option to appoint an Interim Executive Committee Officer or hold elections during the next regularly scheduled COSA meeting to elect the Executive Committee Officer.
4. The Executive Committee has the option to recommend a vote of no confidence to vacate the Chair with the approval of a two-thirds majority vote by the COSA representatives. Should a vacancy occur during the term of office for the Chair of COSA, the Immediate Past Chair shall serve the remainder of the Chair's term. In the event that the Immediate Past Chair is unable to serve the remainder of the Chair's term, the Chair-Elect shall assume the position of Chair.
5. Should a vacancy occur during the term of office for the position of Chair-Elect, elections shall be held during the next regularly scheduled COSA meeting to elect the Chair-Elect.

SECTION VI: MEETINGS

A. Regular Meetings

1. Regular meetings shall be held monthly throughout the year.
2. The calendar of meetings is established each July, by the newly elected Executive Committee, and posted on the COSA website.
3. Items to be reported or discussed shall be included in writing to the Secretary before the next regularly scheduled COSA Executive Committee meeting. The nature of the item and the expected amount of time needed to present and/or discuss the item should be indicated. Agenda items will be discussed by the Executive Committee before the regularly scheduled COSA meeting.

4. COSA Chair shall prepare an agenda for each meeting. The order of business shall be:
 - i. Call to Order
 - ii. Roll Call
 - iii. Communication with Administration
 - iv. Special Order of the Day
 - v. Approval of the Minutes
 - vi. Approval of the Treasurer's Report
 - vii. Report from the Chair
 - viii. Staff Attendance and Participation
 - ix. Committee Reports
 - x. New Business
 - xi. Adjournment

B. Special Meetings

1. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee. The request for the meeting must include an agenda. At least two (2) working days must elapse between the announcement of a meeting and the scheduled date of the meeting.
2. The Executive Committee may call the meeting with the approval of the Chair or by a written petition, signed by a simple majority of the Representatives, addressed to the Chair.

C. Absences

1. Elected Representatives are expected to attend all COSA meetings. A Representative may have no more than three (3) absences in a fiscal year (July through June). After three (3) absences, the Representative may be removed from COSA. Representatives on a leave of absence beyond one (1) semester shall be removed from their position.
2. In the event that a Representative cannot attend a meeting, the Representative may appoint a proxy. The appointed proxy must be a full-time benefited classified employee (as defined by the USG BOR section 8.1.2 Classified Personnel). Representatives must notify the Secretary, in writing, the name of the proxy prior to the scheduled meeting. A Representative shall not be counted as absent if the proxy is in attendance at the meeting. No person may represent more than one (1) other Representative at a meeting.
3. COSA Representatives must attend a minimum of six (6) meetings per year, not including the designation of proxies.
4. Per Section VI. Subsection B. Article vi. In the event that an elected representative is absent for more than the minimum six (6) meetings per year, the Chair may arrange a meeting with them to address COSA participation moving forward.

D. Voting and Procedure

1. No new item of business shall be voted on until the next regularly scheduled meeting following the meeting at which the item was first discussed by COSA. This rule may be waived by a simple majority vote of the Representatives.
2. Passage of all main motions, unless otherwise indicated in Robert's Rules of Order (e.g., "Suspend the rules" required 2/3), is by simple majority of the Representatives present—a quorum being established.
3. Voting shall be by show of hands unless otherwise ordered by COSA. Only elected Representatives or their designated proxy may vote.

SECTION VII: COSA COMMITTEES

- A. Budget and Finance: Chaired by the Treasurer, is responsible for reviewing, investigating and recommending council action in all fiscal matters before COSA; including budgets, expenditures and general fiscal issues pertaining to COSA program administration and development. In addition, the committee will determine fundraising activities for COSA and will develop and plan them throughout the academic year.
- B. Policy Committee: Chaired by the Parliamentarian, is responsible for formulating and recommending University-wide policies and procedures related to all classified staff employees of the University, using the University Policy on Policy process. The Policy Committee shall perform maintenance to the Bylaws and shall present recommended changes at regularly scheduled meetings for discussions and make necessary corrections.

- C. Social Recognition and Professional Development Committee: Chaired by the Public Relations Officer, is responsible for providing forums for recognizing the contribution of full-time employees to the University as well as to promote the professional development of full-time employees by providing programs and services designed to recognize the dedication of University employees. In addition, the committee provides opportunities for University employees to gather at social events throughout the year. The committee is also responsible for coordinating, reviewing, and selecting recipients for the Staff Excellence Awards and the Blazer Book Awards.
- D. Employee Appreciation Committee: Chaired by the Chair-Elect, is responsible for planning and coordinating the annual Employee Appreciation Day.
- E. Elections Committee: Chaired by the Parliamentarian, is responsible for all COSA elections related concerns. This includes, but is not limited to: determining Representative openings in each division yearly, disseminating application materials and information in collaboration with the Public Relations Officer across campus to allow full-time classified staff members to be nominated for said openings, conducting elections and reporting the results of elections.
- F. Ad Hoc Committees: Chaired by the Immediate Past Chair, shall be created and disbanded as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee. Ad Hoc Committees shall be created to address short-term needs and shall be dissolved once those needs have been addressed as determined by the Executive Committee. If needs become part of COSA's long-term mission, the Executive Committee shall vote whether to make the Ad Hoc committee a standing COSA committee or subcommittee.
- G. University-wide and Faculty Senate Committees: COSA shall have representation on University-Wide and Faculty Senate committees as set forth in the University Statutes and Faculty Senate Bylaws.
 - 1. COSA will appoint members to committees in a way that will prevent potential conflicts of interest occurring when an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in direct or indirect personal gain and/or to ensure the transparency of University decision-making processes.

SECTION VIII: UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA STAFF COUNCIL

- A. The Council on Staff Affairs (COSA) at Valdosta State University (VSU) voted on 21 February 1996 to be a charter member of the University System of Georgia Staff Council (USGSC). The intent of the USGSC is to advance the mission of the system as a whole and to promote and foster the welfare of system staff through the collective creativity of Representatives from each system institution.
 - 1. The COSA Chair shall serve as the primary contact for USGSC at VSU.
 - 2. The COSA Chair and Chair-Elect shall serve as designated Representatives of VSU to USGSC functions.
 - 3. If the Chair and/or the Chair-Elect are unable to attend USGSC functions, the COSA Chair shall appoint alternatives from the current COSA Representatives.

SECTION IX: AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

- A. Any proposed amendments will be read at the next COSA monthly meeting, and voted on by the elected Representatives at the following COSA monthly meeting.
- B. Amendments to the Bylaws require a two-thirds vote of the COSA elected Representatives.
- C. Amendments are listed chronologically in the Amendments section of the COSA By-Laws and posted on the COSA website.
 - 1. (2019) Amendment A—Addressing Grammatical Changes in By-Laws
 - 2. (2019) Amendment B—Addressing Grammatical Changes in By-Laws
 - 3. (2019) Amendment C—Addressing Grammatical Changes in By-Laws
 - 4. (2020) Amendment D—Conflict of Interest Statement on Committees
 - 5. (2020) Amendment E—Committee on Committees Statement
 - 6. (2020) Amendment F—Appointments and Term of Service Clarification
 - 7. (2020) Amendment G—Absences Process
 - 8. (2020) Amendment H—Flow of By-Laws