



# Faculty and Staff Handbook

33<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2023-24 Version

## Chapter VII: University Staff Personnel Policies and Procedures

### 7.2 Bylaws

- 7.2.1 Scope

This policy authorizes the University Staff of UW-River Falls to structure themselves in a manner they determine and to select representatives to participate in institutional governance.

- 7.2.2 Purpose

Students, faculty and academic staff have governance rights granted by Wis. Stat. Chapter 36. On December 12, 2012, the Board of Regents adopted Regent Policy Document 20-20, under which, effective July 1, 2013, university staff may participate in institutional governance. This policy enables active participation in the immediate decision-making and policy development of the institution. Active participation in governance for University Staff under this policy is not collective bargaining and will not result in a labor agreement or contract. University Staff may make recommendations, consider proposals, and raise concerns to institutional leadership.

The Board of Regents is vested with the primary responsibility for governance of the University of Wisconsin System [sec. 36.09(1), Wis. Stats.]. In discharging this responsibility, the Board has an interest in providing University Staff the opportunity to participate in institutional decision-making. According to Regent Policy Document 20-20, each UW System institution shall:

1. Provide its University Staff members, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, and the chancellor and faculty of the institution, the opportunity to be active participants in the immediate governance of and policy development for the institution;
2. Provide its University Staff members the primary responsibility for the formulation and review, and representation in the development, of all policies and procedures concerning University Staff members, including University Staff personnel matters; and
3. Provide its University Staff members the right to structure themselves in a manner University Staff members determine, and to select their representatives to participate in institutional governance.

- **7.2.3 Mission Statement**

The UW-River Falls University Staff Senate (USS) promotes ongoing education, professional development activities and communication between University Staff and the broader University community. The Senate members will serve as advisors to the Chancellor and other University administrators. The USS will provide a forum for all University Staff employees (represented, non-represented, temporary, and project appointment) and for interactions with members of the University community, including faculty, academic staff, and students.

- **7.2.4 Name**

The name of the organization is the UW-River Falls University Staff Senate (Senate or USS).

- **7.2.5 Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the University Staff Senate to:

- a. Participate in the development of future plans for the University while also promoting and sustaining a positive professional environment for all University Staff employees (represented, non-represented, temporary and project);
- b. Promote programs and services that support professional development activities;
- c. Encourage informed communication among University Staff and with the broader University community, including the recognized governance groups by attending Academic Staff Council, Faculty Senate meetings (liaison) and meetings of joint shared governance leaders;
- d. Participate actively in the immediate decision-making and policy development of the institution, in accordance with Regent's Policy 20-20.
- e. Solicit nominees and make recommendations as requested by the Chancellor for University Search and Screen Committees and other designated committees;
- f. 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 community.
- g. Senate members are expected to conduct themselves as described in Ch. 7.12.1, "Workplace Conduct Expectations."

- **7.2.6 Membership**

The University Staff Senate serves on behalf of all permanent University Staff, University Staff-Temporary, and University Staff-Project employees at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. All members of the University Staff with the exception of temporary staff are eligible for membership on the University Staff Senate.

The Senate shall consist of nine (9) senators who are representative of all University Staff constituency groups at UW-River Falls. Each senator will serve a three-year term. Membership allocations will be reviewed and adjusted as needed annually by recommendation of the Bylaws Committee. All senators have equal voting rights.

- **7.2.7 Non-Voting Appointments**

A Human Resources Representative shall serve as an ex officio and nonvoting member of USS and provide guidance on relevant policy changes.

Liaison members shall be appointed by Faculty Senate and Academic Staff Council to attend USS meetings to facilitate communication among shared governance groups.

- **7.2.8 Elections**

The procedure for electing senators shall be initiated annually by April 1. The Elections Committee Chair will notify eligible staff of upcoming elections and provide nomination ballots. All eligible employees may be nominated by their colleagues or may self-nominate to serve on USS. If nominated by another, the Elections Committee will verify the nominee's willingness to participate

Elections are to be completed annually by the end of May. Candidates receiving the most votes will be elected. Ties shall be broken by lot, supervised by the Chair.

Upon request, the vote totals shall be made available through the Elections Committee. New members will be required to attend the June meeting.

- **7.2.9 Terms of Service**

The term of service for each senator will be three years. Members are elected by vote of all participating, interested, and eligible members of the University Staff at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. For purposes of continuity, terms of service are staggered, leaving three seats open for election each year. The term for new appointees will begin in the first week of June overlapping with outgoing members whose term ends the last week of June.

- **7.2.9.1 Vacancies**

If an elected senator leaves before the term is completed, the Vice Chair, in consultation with the Elections Committee, will ask the next highest vote-getter from the most recent election to complete the term.

If an elected Senator wishes to resign, a resignation letter must be submitted to the Vice Chair as soon as possible.

If there are no eligible nominees, the Senate may fill the vacancy by recruiting and appointing any university staff member.

- **7.2.9.2 Transitions**

To ease periods of transition between Senators/Committee Chairs, all committee work and other pertinent USS business should be saved to a shared location. This includes, but is not limited to, any documents used/created, important dates to keep in mind and contracts/forms used. Committee chairs should include notes from a wrap up meeting or a summary of what was done to be used the following year.

- **7.2.10 Executive Board**

The Executive Board of the Senate will consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Chancellor's Administrative Liaison and Ex-officio Chair will be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

- **7.2.10.1 Election of Executive Board Members**

The nine USS senators who have been elected or appointed to serve shall elect officers at the June meeting from among the nine USS senators who have been elected or appointed to serve in the upcoming term. Secret ballots may be used if needed. Outgoing senators cannot nominate candidates for the position and will not vote in this process. A newly elected senator must be present during this process, in order to be nominated for an office. In the event of a Board vacancy, the USS will elect a new representative from current Senate members.

- **7.2.10.2.1 Responsibilities and Duties of Executive Board**

The Executive Board will meet at least once per month, no less than 5 working days prior to regularly scheduled Senate monthly meetings.

- **7.2.10.2.2 Responsibilities of the Executive Board:**

- Attend meetings with campus Administration;
- Set meeting times and approve agenda items;
- Discuss pertinent matters and establish direction for Senate activities;
- Review committee reports, and provide direction as necessary;
- Take necessary action between general meetings;
- Review member nominations and attendance;
- Fill membership vacancies as appropriate;
- Perform other business as appropriate.

- **7.2.10.2.3 Duties of the Executive Board:**

Chair:

- Calls meetings of University Staff Senate and Executive Board and presides over the meetings;
- Coordinates Senate activities;
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Prepares agenda for meetings;
- Represents UW-River Falls at campus and/or System events;
- Liaison between University Senate and Chancellor;
- Assists with resolution of scheduling problems for meetings for USS members.

#### Vice Chair:

- Serves as acting Chair (and performs all requisite duties) when the Chair is absent or unable to perform the duties of the position;
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Chairs the committee on committees;
- Maintains an archival list of all Senate members;
- Maintains a roster of all sub-committees, which is posted on the USS web page;
- Acts in an advisory capacity to Senate subcommittees;
- Serves on the election committee and is responsible for notifying elected Senators of their appointments to University Staff Senate;
- Ensures newly elected Senators know how to access the shared drive and helps answer any initial questions.

#### Secretary:

- Records minutes at Senate and Executive Board meetings and provides draft minutes to Senate within two weeks of the meeting and retains a draft copy of the minutes in the University Staff Senate shared directory; Upon approval ensures the posting of minutes to the Senate webpage and shared directory no more than five (5) days following any meeting;
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Submits meeting notices to shared governance calendar a minimum of 24 hours before meetings per [Wisconsin Open Meetings Law](#).

#### Treasurer:

- Manages and reconciles Senate budget including verifying payment of bills and obligations;
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Provide summary of account activity to Senators prior to and at monthly meetings.

#### Human Resources Representative (non-voting):

- Attends University Staff Senate meetings;
- If necessary, assists Chair with resolution of scheduling problems for senator's attendance at meetings.
- Provides guidance for HR related matters.

#### Ex-Officio Chair (non-voting):

- Acts as a consultant to the executive board.

### • 7.2.11 Other Appointments

Webmaster: An appointed webmaster will receive training to maintain the content of the website.

### • 7.2.12 Meetings

Scheduling: University Staff Senate will hold meetings monthly. In June of each year, the initial meeting time for the new Senate will be established. After the initial fall meeting, the Senate will determine the schedule for the rest of the year. The July and/or January meeting(s) will not be held unless there is some pressing business that requires a change in the meeting schedule.

Senate meetings are open to all and are held during normal business hours; typically, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Members of Senate shall attend meetings in paid status. Any employee serving as an elected senator or serving as an approved representative will be allowed to use flex work hours to attend meetings. If the Chair is non-exempt (hourly), any additional time worked as a result of their University Staff Senate role must receive overtime for additional hours worked over 40 in a work week. If the Chair is exempt from overtime, a lump sum stipend of \$100 per month will be paid in the "A" payroll earnings for a maximum of \$1200 per year. Maximum of \$1200 to not guarantee that the person will receive \$1200. For example, if a Chair had to be replaced mid-year (previous Chair resigned) so the total will be less than \$1200.

The Chair shall actively help to resolve any issues or problems that may arise relating to scheduling and workload conditions. If a special unscheduled meeting is needed, the secretary or designee will send an email notification to all University Staff.

Quorum: A quorum for any meeting of Senate shall be six (6) senators.

Attendance: A Senator must attend at least eight of the regularly scheduled meetings in a given year (June-June) to retain his/her seat. If a senator is unable to fulfill the monthly meeting attendance obligation, the Vice Chair, in consultation with Senate, will ask him or her to submit a resignation.

If a senator is unable to attend a meeting, the senator may ask a substitute to attend in his/her place. The senator must send email notification of the substitute's name to the Chair prior to the meeting the substitute attends. The Senate, by majority vote, must approve seating the substitute at the beginning of the meeting. Because the substitute is authorized to vote on issues before the Senate, the Senate member should inform the replacement of his/her views/thoughts and ensure they have all necessary materials.

#### ○ 7.2.12.1 Meeting Absences

If a senator misses two (2) consecutive meetings without prior notice, the Chair will send a letter to the senator inquiring whether the senator intends to resign, and if so, to submit a resignation letter that will be attached to the Chair's letter. The resignation letter will include; the senator's

name and term of service remaining. This letter must be submitted to the Senate Chair to complete the resignation process.

After a senator misses three (3) meetings without prior notice, the Chair will submit to the Senate a recommendation to remove a senator; the Senate must vote to approve, by a two-thirds margin, by secret ballot.

If an elected senator is removed from office before the term is completed, a resignation letter listing member name, years of service remaining, and reason for removal is required. This letter must be submitted by the Vice Chair to the full Senate at the time of removal. If an elected member resigns before the term is completed, a completed resignation letter is required at the time of resignation. Upon acceptance of the removal or resignation, the resignation letter will be kept in the permanent Senate records by the Secretary.

If a senator (or authorized representative) chooses to leave university employment through retirement or resignation during the senator's current term, that senator must resign his/her seat effective his/her last work day with the university.

The Vice Chair, in consultation with the Elections Committee, will ask the University Staff member who received the next highest votes from the most recent election to complete the remainder of the term.

See 7.2.9.1 Vacancies for the complete process on filling a vacancy.

If any of these apply to an officer, the Senate will elect a replacement from the current membership to fulfill the balance of the officer's term.

- **7.2.13 Committees**

Committees may be established by a majority vote of the Senate membership, and each will include at least one (1) senator who will serve as liaison to Senate. At least one (1) member from the past year's committee will serve the following year unless specified below. All committees select their own chair (or co-chairs) from among themselves unless noted below. Each Chair is responsible to submit meeting notices to shared governance calendar a minimum of 24 hours before meetings per Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. Committee membership will be reviewed annually in May for potential changes in membership. The sitting committee is responsible for reviewing its membership to determine if changes need to be made. Committee meetings shall be held during paid work hours. Any employee serving as an elected senator or serving as an approved representative shall be allowed to use flex work hours to attend these meetings.

Committees are reviewed annually by the Senate at the June meeting and those that are no longer necessary will be eliminated by majority vote of USS.

The liaison for each committee will provide the Executive Board updates on activities as warranted.

- **7.2.13.1 University Staff Senate Standing Committees**

Each committee is responsible to execute the charge as listed below and maintain current member listing for posting on University Staff Senate (with the exception of the Impartial Hearing Officer Panel) website:

**Bylaws Committee Membership:** (3+ members)

**Duties:** Annually reviews USS bylaws and proposes changes to USS as necessary. At least one member from the past year's committee will serve the following year. The Bylaws Committee will meet as often as necessary to review the bylaws. Recommendations for changes will be voted on during the May meeting. Senate members will be provided with proposed changes prior to the April meeting.

**Committee on Committees Membership:** University Staff Senate

**Duties:** The Senate acts as the Committee on Committees to make recommendations for university staff membership on standing committees and Faculty/Administrative Committees.

**Elections Committee Membership:** (3+members)

**Duties:** This committee is charged by the Senate Chair each February. It is composed of three University Staff members: Senate Vice Chair (1), one (1) past Elections Committee member and one (1) current Senate member not seeking re-election. The committee chair will be chosen by the committee and will report directly to Senate Chair. The committee chair will submit election results at the May meeting and the Senate will vote to approve the election results at their May meeting.

**Employee Development Committee Membership:** (3+ members)

**Duties:** To organize various activities, opportunities for development, lunch & learns, campus employee perks directory and any other events for University Staff.

**Impartial Hearing Officer Pool (IHO) Membership:** (minimum of 10 members)

**Duties:** The IHO Pool is made up of University Staff called upon to review grievances. The University Staff Senate shall be responsible for forming required hearing bodies. Senate will annually compile/recruit a pool of individuals willing to serve on the Impartial Hearing Officer Panel. Terms start with the beginning of the new senate each year. The pool size shall not exceed the accumulative number of University Staff at UW-River Falls. In the event of a grievance, the Senate Chair will charge the panel as instructed in the applicable policy, to make up the IHO Panel for that grievance. Any individual in the pool may never serve, or could serve several times, as the selection process is random. The chair of the Senate shall not serve as a member of



any IHO Panel. A member shall be disqualified from serving on a specific hearing if there is a conflict of interest.

**Networking Luncheon Committee Membership:** (3 members)

**Duties:** To organize a yearly networking luncheon to allow University Staff members the opportunity to make inter-departmental connections and share opportunities for growth.

**Sally Margis University Staff Development Award Committee Membership:** (3+ members)\*

**Duties:** This committee is charged by the Senate Chair each August. Committee is responsible for posting announcements for award applications, reviewing the applications, selecting the recipient(s), making recommendations to the Chancellor, and confidentially notifying each applicant in writing of the outcome. The Sally Margis University Staff Development Award winners will be publically announced by the Chancellor. The award must be used within the fiscal year that it is awarded (by June 30).

*\*Individuals interested in applying for the current award are ineligible to volunteer for the committee.*

**Title Change, Career Progression & Major Change in Duties Committee Membership:** Chair of the University Staff Senate (or designee), Human Resources Manager or designee (non-voting), Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, and Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

**Duties:** This committee will review university staff title change, career progression, & major change in duties requests, and determine whether a revised new position description substantiates a change in the classification.

○ **7.2.13.2 Other Committees**

University Staff Senate must appoint all university staff members to committees. Membership listed for all other committees indicates Senate responsibility only and is not a comprehensive membership. The committee has provided any additional information included.

**Affirmative Action Advisory Committee**

**Membership:** (1) University Staff representative

**Disability Advisory Committee**

**Request:** Faculty Senate

**Membership:** (1) University Staff representative

**Diversity and Inclusivity Committee**

**Membership:** (1) University Staff representative

**University Safety Committee**

**Membership:** (1), University Staff Representative

**Chancellor's Award for Academic Staff and Limited Appointee**

**Membership:** Chair, University Staff Senate (or designee)

**Mission:** The University of Wisconsin-River Falls each year recognizes two outstanding Academic Staff members and one outstanding Limited Appointee

**Chancellor's Award for University Staff**

**Membership:** Chair, University Staff Senate (or designee).

**Mission:** The University of Wisconsin-River Falls each year recognizes two outstanding University Staff members.

**Advisory Committee on Veterans Affairs**

**Membership:** (1), University Staff Senate

**Competition Review Committee**

**Membership:** (1), University Staff Senate, Chair or designee

- **7.2.14 Amending Bylaws**

Bylaws may be changed by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of Senate. This vote will occur annually at the May regular meeting. Senate members will be provided with proposed changes prior to the April meeting.

- Proposed changes must be presented for public review and discussion at least one meeting prior to the vote.
- Proposed changes will be posted on the University Staff Senate web page. UW-River Falls University Staff will be notified via the list-serve and Falcon Daily of the open meeting where review of the bylaws changes will take place.

- The notice of any vote to change the bylaws will be posted not less than seven days prior to the meeting.