



# **Staff Advisory Council: Constitution and Bylaws**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Vision**

The University of Mary Washington Staff Advisory Council (S.A.C.) is committed to being an active partner in the continued success of the institution. We recognize the pivotal role all team members play as an integral part of the campus community and its success. Further, we are acutely aware of the importance of strengthening employee awareness of mission-critical issues at the University and seek to foster positive morale through increased channels of communication throughout all levels of the institution. Through our leadership, synergy, and ongoing collaboration with the administration, the Staff Advisory Council can provide valuable perspectives to the administration on matters of significant concern to classified, wage, and administrative employees.

The Staff Advisory Council seeks to:

- Improve communication among and between administration, faculty, and staff of important substantive University initiatives while providing an outlet for employee input and feedback;
- Build a strong, mission-driven community of dedicated and empowered employees that strive to exceed the expectations of our customers, both internal and external;
- Initiate and promote programs that enhance, improve, and sustain employee morale;
- Support University initiatives that provide effective mechanisms to increase employee participation in design, development, and implementation of furthering our mission.

## **2. CONSTITUTION**

### **2.1 Organizational Name**

The working name of this representative body shall be the University of Mary Washington Staff Advisory Council (S.A.C.).

### **2.2 Statement of Purpose**

The University of Mary Washington Staff Advisory Council accepts the responsibility and challenge of taking its place alongside faculty, administration, and students in working to provide first-rate service, develop ourselves and colleagues, both professionally and personally, and perpetuate a culture of excellence, one that is defined by: quality, inclusiveness, collaboration, cooperation, transparency, accountability, openness, and candor. In striving to meet these ideals, the Staff Advisory Council seeks to:

- Serve as a representative body for staff (classifies, wage, and administrative faculty)
- Act in an advisory capacity to the University administration
- Recommend staff representatives to University Committees when appropriate

- Provide a forum for the exchange of information between staff and other University constituencies
- Foster a spirit of respect, dignity, unity, and cooperation among staff, faculty, administration, and students
- Provide referrals for individual concerns and problems to appropriate University resources
- Accept and share responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students to attain the stated goals of the University

Items that are within the scope of the Staff Advisory Council to debate and comment upon include:

- Issues having University-wide impact on staff
- Issues that affect the general work environments
- Issues which have implications on all University employees
- University-wide policy or practices
- Issues in which the Administration has asked for Council opinion

## **2.3 Membership**

### **2.3.1 Voting Membership**

Membership of the Staff Advisory Council shall consist of twenty-three proportionately elected representatives from the university community. In an attempt to provide a balanced and reasonable outlet for all constituents within the University to be heard, new members shall be elected each year from among the University's three classifications as needed to ensure the S.A.C. is comprised of nine Administrative Faculty, twelve Classified, and two Wage personnel.

We promote and value the understanding that we are not defined by our employment category but rather by individual talents and values. Therefore, staff representatives shall be charged with speaking to the needs and concerns of all staff, classified, and administrative employees throughout the university, regardless of division or classification.

### **2.3.2 Non-voting Membership**

The University President shall appoint an ex-officio member to the Staff Advisory Council to act as an advisor and liaison to the Administration. The ex-officio shall have the privilege of full debate, but may not have voting capacity.

## **2.4 Terms of Office**

### **2.5 Length of Term and Term Limits**

Each member shall serve a three-year term beginning January 1. New members are elected as needed each year to fill vacancies so that the S.A.C. consists of nine Administrative Faculty, twelve Classified, and two Wage personnel. There are no term limits.

### **2.5.1 Vacant Member Seats**

If a representative is unable to complete the duties of office the representative shall relinquish his/her office. The President shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term upon the recommendation of the Elections Committee. The replacement shall become a voting member and serve the remainder of the term (including Committee assignments) relinquished by the former representative. At the end of the remaining term, the representative shall be eligible to run for office.

### **2.5.2 Removal from Office and Replacement**

Representatives may be removed from office for cause. To remove a member for cause, the representative shall be notified in advance of the process by which he/she is being removed. The removal shall begin with a formalized *Petition to Remove* that must detail the reasons for removal and be signed by at least a super-majority of eligible voting members of the Council. The representative shall have an opportunity to address the issues raised in the *Petition to Remove*. The member shall be removed from office with a seventy-five percent vote from total number of votes cast.

## **2.6 Election Process**

Any policy not specifically stated in the Constitution is under the purview of the Election Committee.

### **2.6.1 Nominations**

Nominations can be declared by any wage, classified, or administrative employee, including self nominations. Nominations are sent to the chair of the Election Committee. The Committee will contact each nominee to confirm the acceptance of the nomination, with directions for the election process. Candidates will then submit a short paragraph in response to a question set by the Election Committee, which will appear on the S.A.C. webpage.

### **2.6.2 Elections**

Annual election dates will be chosen by the Election Committee with the understanding that membership begins on January 1.

## **2.7 Officers**

### **2.7.1 Articulation of Officers and Terms**

Elected officers of the Council shall consist of President, Vice President/ President-Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers shall be elected annually for a one year term by representatives during the last meeting of the calendar year. Each term shall begin January 1. Officers shall be eligible for re-election but shall not serve more than two consecutive one year terms in the same office. A special election for vacated positions shall take place during the first meeting after the vacancy.

## **2.7.2 Removal from Office and Replacement**

Removal from office shall follow the same procedures as outline under general removal for cause.

## **2.8 Committees**

The Staff Advisory Council shall have both standing and ad hoc committees. Standing committees shall include an Executive Committee, Communications Committee, Elections Committee, Recognition Committee, and Activities Committee. Ad Hoc committees shall be formed by the President when the need arises.

### **2.8.1 Committee Creation**

The Executive Committee shall create and amend standing committees as dictated by the needs of the organization. Ad hoc committees shall be created and tasked by the President when a specific need arises.

### **2.8.2 Executive Committee**

The members of the Executive Committee shall include the President, Vice-President/President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, standing committee chairs, and the immediate past president. The immediate past president of the Council is not a voting member of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once prior to each full membership meeting to discuss agenda items and assignments. Executive Committee meeting minutes shall be made available on the Council website.

### **2.8.3 Communications Committee**

The Communications Committee shall create and maintain Council website and other means of communication. The committee will also promote and advertise the role and activities of the Council to the University and its constituents while ensuring the timely and accurate dissemination of official university information related to its mission.

### **2.8.4 Elections Committee**

The Elections Committee shall process and certify nominations, elections, and orientation procedures for the members. The committee shall also be responsible for review of the Constitution and By-Laws. See Section 2.10.

### **2.8.5 Activities Committee**

The Activities Committee shall coordinate, plan, manage, and execute special events to promote staff morale and university spirit.

### **2.8.6 Recognition Committee**

The Recognition Committee shall identify, organize, plan, and coordinate special events to recognize UMW staff for their contributions in the workplace, teamwork, and university spirit.

## **2.9 Amendments**

The Council may amend, change, or delete parts of this Constitution with the consent of a super-majority (two-thirds) vote of the entire S.A.C. membership.

### **2.9.1 Process to Amend**

The members may recommend to the University President amendments to the constitution with the consent of a super-majority of the entire S.A.C. membership.

### **2.10 Internal Review**

The Staff Advisory Council Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed and revised as needed at least every three years to ensure maximum efficiency. The review process shall be conducted by the Elections Committee, culminating in a written report presented to the Executive Committee. The report shall also be presented to the Council and posted on the Council's website for comment by the University community. Recommendations from the review shall be presented to the University President for consideration.

### **3. Bylaws**

#### **3.1 Duties of Council Members**

- Attend regular monthly meetings as well as special meetings;
- Review Council Mission, Constitution, and Bylaws for a clear understanding of the purpose, function, and structure of the Council;
- Actively serve on at least one standing committee;
- Faithfully represent staff perspectives when serving as a staff representative on University committees, if appointed;
- Provide accurate contact information to constituents as well as a preferred method of communicating issues or concerns that should be addressed by the Council;
- Bring matters of importance, concerns, and ideas of his/her constituents to the attention of the Council through proposals, resolutions, and agenda items;
- Communicate Council resolutions, proposals, and agenda items by distributing meeting agenda, minutes, and supplemental material in a timely and accurate fashion to constituents;
- Foster communication within and between divisions, faculty, student body, and administration.

#### **3.2 Duties of Officers**

##### **3.2.1 Duties and Responsibilities of the President**

- Preside over the Executive Committee as a non-voting member except in the event of a tie vote;
- Preside at all regular and special meetings of the Council;
- Review and revise the organizational chart of the Council;
- Call special meetings as necessary;
- Have the option to request a proxy vote by email to voting members of the Council or Executive Committee if a quorum is not present at a general session or Executive Committee meeting, respectively;
- Prepare an agenda for the Secretary to distribute to the representatives and invited guests/speakers within five working days prior to the next regular meeting;
- Appoint officers in the event no one runs for a particular office;
- Make appointment recommendations to the University President when asked
- Establish ad hoc committees as needed and appoint respective chairs and committee members;
- Authorize disbursement of funds in conjunction with the Treasurer and Administrative Liaison;
- Serve as an advisor to and as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee for one year following the completion of his/her term as President;
- Perform other such duties associated with this office.

##### **3.2.2 Duties and Responsibilities of the Vice-President/President-Elect**

- Preside in the absence of the President;

- Serve as the principal assistant to the President;
- Assume the office of the President after the term as Vice President/President-Elect ends;
- Complete any term vacated by the President, to include assuming the office of the President for the following term and appointing a member of the Executive Committee to fulfill the Vice President/President-Elect role until the end of the office year or opting to assign a dual role of Vice President/President-Elect and current Executive Committee position to an Executive Committee member;
- Review minutes from various University Committees for issues of interest prior to forwarding them to the Secretary and, as appropriate, for dissemination to Council members;
- Keep posted, in conjunction with the Secretary, a database of topics presented to the S.A.C.;
- Maintain and follow up on any outstanding topics in the database until resolved;
- Perform other such duties associated with this office.

### **3.2.3 Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary**

- Prepare and maintain minutes of all meetings (general session and Executive Committee) as permanent records;
- Distribute meeting minutes to Council membership prior to the next regular meeting and distribute University Committee minutes, as appropriate;
- Distribute copies of agenda and information packages to each member prior to the next regular meeting;
- Maintain records of the Council, including mailing lists, lists of members with terms of office and committee membership; as well as lists of individuals who have expressed an interest in serving on the Council;
- Conduct a roll call of members and record attendance in accordance with standard operating procedures;
- Communicate excessive unexcused absences to the Executive Committee (when appropriate) and the Council member;
- Advise the President of attendance records and if a quorum is present at the beginning of each meeting;
- Report to the Elections Committee when a vacancy;
- Maintain and update, in conjunction with the Vice President, a topics database;
- Perform other such duties associated with this office.

### **3.2.4 Duties and Responsibilities of the Treasurer**

- Maintain all fiscal records of the Council;
- Act as the accounts manager of the Council;
- Prepare an annual budget for approval by the Executive Committee;
- Submit semester financial reports to the Executive Committee and the Council and an annual financial report to the Council at the regular meeting in December;
- Approve, in conjunction with the President and Administrative Liaison, all disbursements after fund allocation has been appropriated by the Executive Committee;
- Perform other such duties associated with this office.

### **3.2.5 Duties and Responsibilities of the Administrative Liaison**

- Advise the Executive Committee on institutional strategic procedures and issues and will approve budget requests.

### **3.3 Article IV: Attendance Policy**

All representatives are expected to attend each regularly scheduled meeting. If a member finds it necessary to be absent from a meeting, or from any significant portion thereof, he/she shall notify the Secretary of the absence prior to the meeting. Four unexcused absences within one calendar year will result in the automatic removal of the representative from the Council.

### **3.4 Meetings**

#### **3.4.1 Open Meetings**

Meetings of the Council shall be open to employees, students, and the public to observe and make comments as appropriate. The Council may elect to close any meeting at any time with a simple majority vote. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least once a month. The Council may vote to suspend meetings during the summer months (June, July, and August) by a simple majority vote. Special meetings may be called as needed with appropriate notice given to members.

#### **3.4.2 Quorum and Voting**

Fifty percent (50%) of the representatives shall constitute a quorum, excluding ex-officio members. A simple majority (50% +1) of representatives voting is required to rule on measures except amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws, which require a two-thirds vote of the entire S.A.C. membership. The President shall abstain from voting except when necessary to break a tie. At anytime, the President or Committee chair may call for an out-of-session electronic vote, which follows the stated quorum rules.

## Appendices

### **3.5 University Mission Statement**

The University of Mary Washington is one of Virginia's outstanding public liberal arts universities, providing a superior education that inspires and enables our students to make positive changes in the world.

The University is a place where faculty, students, and staff share in the creation and exploration of knowledge through freedom of inquiry, personal responsibility, and service. UMW regards the provision of high quality instruction as its most important function. The University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs focusing on both disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies. These academic programs afford students opportunities to integrate and apply their knowledge within broad educational experiences, to develop their professional interests, and to practice the habits of mind necessary for life-long learning. Through a professionally engaged faculty, the University supports ongoing research appropriate to the development of student abilities and faculty interests. It especially encourages the participation of undergraduates in research.

UMW's size, dedicated faculty, and historical commitment to fine teaching create an institutional culture where both undergraduate and graduate students benefit from strong connections with their faculty and multiple opportunities for active learning.

Located in Fredericksburg between our nation's capital and the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the University of Mary Washington is a nexus for engagement among diverse communities and is dedicated to supporting professional advancement and economic development and to improving the regional quality of life.

We fulfill our mission by immersing students, faculty, and staff in local, regional, national, and international communities, and by inculcating the values of honor and integrity. UMW graduates are models of adaptive learning, personal achievement, responsible leadership, service to others, and engaged citizenship in a global and diverse society.

### **3.6 Statement of Community Values**

The University of Mary Washington is an academic community dedicated to the highest standards of scholarship, personal integrity, responsible conduct, and respect for the individual. We hold among our foremost common values:

- the importance of personal integrity as reflected in adherence to the Honor Code
- the right of every individual to be treated with dignity and respect at all times
- the appreciation of and respect for diversity in our community and adherence to the University's Principles of Diversity and Inclusion and the University's Statement of Non-Discrimination, and
- the freedom of intellectual inquiry in the pursuit of truth.

We accept responsibility to help create the environment we strive to achieve. We will live up to these values and work to support our collective and individual successes. As members of the University community we will not condone behavior that compromises or threatens these values.

As members of the University community, we refuse to tolerate behavior that in any way compromises or threatens these values.

### **3.7 Principles on Diversity and Inclusion**

The University of Mary Washington strives to create a climate of acceptance and will promote the values of diversity and inclusiveness. These values strengthen our community and are essential to our academic mission and institutional excellence.

The University of Mary Washington values diversity in all forms—including diversity of age, culture, disability, economic background, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, opinion, political affiliation, race, religious background, sexual orientation and veteran status.

The University of Mary Washington recognizes its responsibility to be a model of fairness and equal opportunity, providing intellectual and institutional leadership regarding diversity issues and initiatives.

As a public university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the University of Mary Washington embraces its obligation to provide educational opportunities to broader communities found locally and nationally, and to then reflect the diversity of peoples, backgrounds, and experiences in the student body, faculty, administration and staff.

The University is committed to providing broad administrative, programmatic and academic support to achieve its institutional goals for diversity.

The University seeks to prepare students from all backgrounds and identities to live, work and thrive in a global society.

The University seeks to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment of mutual respect for students, faculty, staff and community, internally and externally, of all backgrounds and identities.

The University of Mary Washington recognizes that the adoption of this Statement is the responsibility of the entire University community. To ensure the successful implementation of the statement, the University is committed to a system of responsibility, accountability, and recognition for all faculty, staff, and students that carries out the institutional values on diversity and inclusion and all related goals and objectives.

### 3.8 Definitions

**University:** all divisions and departments of UMW including all campuses, i.e. Stafford, Dahlgren, and Fredericksburg

**Staff:** full-time and part-time classified, administrative and professional faculty, and wage employees

**Quorum:** the minimum number of members who must be present at the meetings as a deliberative assembly for business to be legally transacted; a majority of the entire membership

**President:** the UMW Staff Advisory Council President

**University President:** President of UMW

**Unexcused Absence:** Any absence in which no notification was provided to the Secretary

**Simple Majority Vote:** is one more than one-half of the total eligible UMW Staff Advisory Council membership present and voting

**Super-Majority Vote:** the expressed approval of at least two-thirds of those present and voting