

Constitution of the VCU Staff Senate

Introductory Statement

In 1991, a Classified Staff Advisory Committee was formed to provide an avenue for employees to raise concerns, make recommendations, and provide input to University governance involving the classified workforce. As the years progressed, the University's environment has undergone many changes to meet the needs of a challenging competitive market. As a result of these changes, the vision of the original body has experienced many adjustments to effectively balance the concerns of the individual employee as well as the University community.

In July of 1996, the Classified Staff Advisory Committee became a Provisional VCU Staff Senate and was charged with establishing and ratifying a Constitution. In 2007, VCU's Board of Visitors approved a policy to allow a non-voting Staff Senate representative to join the board in equal standing with representatives of the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Associations on both the Monroe Park and MCV Campuses.

Glossary

Employees - full-time classified, UAP and hospital staff of VCU and the VCU Health System.

Honorary Senator - an advisory, non-voting role appointed to an individual for one year by the Executive Committee.

Meta-Unit - the districts from which Senators are elected as defined in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.

President - the VCU Staff Senate President.

Quorum - the minimum number of members who must be present or telepresent at meetings in order to hold a vote.

For this organization, a simple majority of Staff Senators must attend, either in person or electronically, for a quorum to be achieved. For online voting, a simple majority of Staff Senators must participate for an online quorum to be achieved.

Standard Operating Procedures - procedures and guidelines for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the VCU Staff Senate.

University - all divisions/departments of VCU and divisions/departments of the VCU Health System.

University President - the President of VCU.

VCU Staff Senate Bylaws - The standing bylaws of the VCU Staff Senate. Hereinafter referred to as “Bylaws” unless otherwise designated.

VCU Staff Senate Officer - An eligible Senator duly elected by the Senate in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws. Hereinafter referred to as “Officer(s)” unless otherwise designated.

VCU Staff Senator - An eligible VCU employee duly elected in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws. Hereinafter referred to as “Senator(s)” unless otherwise designated.

Vice President - The Vice President of the Senate duly elected in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.

1. Constitution Article I
 - 1.1. The name of this organization is the VCU Staff Senate.

2. Constitution Article II
 - 2.1. The VCU Staff Senate establishes its agenda independently through the voice and intentions of its members.
 - 2.2. Existence of the VCU Staff Senate does not preclude the right of any University employee to belong to any other organization.
 - 2.3. The Executive Committee derives its authority from the membership of the VCU Staff Senate.

3. Constitution Article III
 - 3.1. The VCU Staff Senate accepts the responsibility and challenge of taking its place alongside faculty, administrators, and students in working toward a better University community. The VCU Staff Senate shall enable the administration to establish better channels of communication, to draw upon the best ideas of all staff, and to provide staff employees with developmental opportunities. To that end, the purposes of the VCU Staff Senate are as follows:
 - 3.1.1. To serve as the representative body for staff, ensuring representation regardless of job classification, race, gender, and age categories;
 - 3.1.2. To act in an advisory capacity to the University administration and governance structure;
 - 3.1.3. To appoint or recommend staff representatives to University Council and other University Committees, as appropriate;
 - 3.1.4. To provide a forum for the exchange of information between staff and other University groups;
 - 3.1.5. To foster a spirit of respect, dignity, unity, and cooperation among staff;
 - 3.1.6. To provide referrals for individual concerns and problems to appropriate University resources; and
 - 3.1.7. To accept and share responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students to attain the stated goals of the University.

4. Constitution Article IV
 - 4.1. All full-time VCU employees with at least one year of service are eligible to become and serve as Senators.
 - 4.2. The number of Senators will be defined by the Staff Senate bylaws.
 - 4.3. The Executive Committee of the VCU Staff Senate may appoint Honorary Senators in instances when their continued membership is deemed beneficial to the work of the Senate.

- 4.4. Assignment of membership between the various University divisions and the VCU Health System shall be re-evaluated every two years for adjustments due to strategic planning and other workforce organizational changes.
 - 4.5. A call for new members shall be conducted annually at the end of the outgoing session, and prior to the election of Officers, to invite candidates for open Senate seats for the following year. The Vice-President of any division of the University or VCU Health System lacking representation on the current Staff Senate will be formally notified of such by the Elections Committee, so they may have the opportunity to encourage candidates from those areas to run for election.
 - 4.6. Employees in good standing interested in serving on the Staff Senate as Senators may notify the Senate of their interest by completing and submitting a nomination form.
5. Constitution Article V
- 5.1. Senators shall serve a three-year term. There are no limits on the number of terms an elected Senator shall serve.
 - 5.2. A transfer or change of position or duties shall not affect an unexpired term on the Staff Senate unless the individual in question transfers to a position that renders them ineligible for service in the Senate. In the event a Senator separates from VCU or is transferred into an ineligible position, a special election will be triggered in the meta-unit. The new Senator assumes the current term of that seat and will not begin a new three year term.
 - 5.3. The outgoing President of the VCU Staff Senate shall complete their term as a Senator and/or shall serve as an advisor to the Executive Committee for a one-year term.
6. Constitution Article VI
- 6.1. Senators will be elected by the Staff and UAP employees in each meta unit as defined in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.
 - 6.2. Elections of Officers, appointment of Standing Committee Chairs, and procedural operations related to elections to the VCU Staff Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.
7. Constitution Article VII
- 7.1. Officers of the VCU Staff Senate shall consist of:
 - 7.1.1. President
 - 7.1.2. Vice President
 - 7.1.3. Senate Chair
 - 7.1.4. Operations Manager

- 7.2. Appointed committee chairs of the VCU Staff Senate shall be determined according to the Staff Senate Bylaws
- 7.3. Senators must be Senators in good standing for at least twelve months before being eligible for election to an Officer role.
- 7.4. Officers shall be elected annually by current Staff Senators according to the timeline set forth in the bylaws. Officers will be installed during, and will immediately begin their terms at the first regular meeting after their election.
- 7.5. Officers shall be eligible for re-election, but may not serve more than two consecutive twelve-month terms in the same office.
- 7.6. The VCU Staff Senate may remove, with cause, any Officer by two-thirds vote of the VCU Staff Senate membership.
- 7.7. In the event the President is unable to complete their unexpired term of office, the Vice President shall complete the term. In the event any other Officer is unable to complete their unexpired term of office, the President shall appoint a Senator to complete the outgoing Officer's term.

8. Constitution Article VIII

- 8.1. The University President shall appoint a Senate representative to the University Board of Visitors, as well as Senators to the University Council and select University Committees. Terms of appointment and responsibilities are prescribed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the University Board of Visitors, University Council, and University Committees.
- 8.2. Senate representatives to the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees shall:
 - 8.2.1. Represent the membership of the VCU Staff Senate in the discharge of responsibilities
 - 8.2.2. Inform the VCU Staff Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and actions taken by the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees
 - 8.2.3. Introduce issues of interest of the VCU Staff Senate before the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees.

9. Constitution Article IX

- 9.1. Committees of the VCU Staff Senate shall be governed in accordance with VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.

10. Constitution Article X

- 10.1. The Senate is required to periodically review this constitution and amend according to procedures in the VCU Staff Senate bylaws.

- 10.2. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Senate membership, provided that the amendment has been submitted in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Bylaws.
- 10.3. The Bylaws serve as the operational rules for how the Senate functions. The Bylaws of the VCU Staff Senate stand separately from the VCU Staff Senate Constitution.
- 10.4. The Bylaws of the VCU Staff Senate may be amended through a simple majority vote.
- 10.5. Amendments to the Constitution shall become effective upon approval by the University President.

11. Constitution Article XI

- 11.1. The Constitution shall be ratified by a simple majority vote of the quorum.