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 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.

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GLOSSARY

1. University - all divisions/departments of VCU and divisions/departments of the VCU Health System (MCV Hospitals and MCV Physicians).
2. Staff - full-time classified and hospital staffs of VCU and the VCU Health System.
3. 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 (see 2.4 Article IV - Meetings Letter C. of the Bylaws).
4. President - the VCU Staff Senate President.
5. University President - the President of VCU.
6. Standard Operating Procedures - procedures and guidelines for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the VCU Staff Senate.
7. Majority Vote - is one more than one-half of the total eligible VCU Staff Senate membership present and voting.
8. Two-Thirds Vote - the expressed approval of at least two-thirds of those present and voting.

1.0 Constitution of the VCU Staff Senate

1.1 Article 1- Name

A. The name of this organization is the VCU Staff Senate of Virginia Commonwealth University.

B. In this document, the term "University" includes departments and divisions of VCU and the VCU Health System (including MCV Hospitals and MCV Physicians).

1.2 Article II- Governance

A. The VCU Staff Senate establishes its agenda independently through the voice and intentions of the staff.

B. Existence of the VCU Staff Senate does not preclude the right of any University employee to belong to any other organization.

C. In this document, the VCU Staff Senate President shall be referred to as
D. "President" and the University President shall be referred to as "University President."

E. The Executive Committee derives its authority from the membership of the VCU Staff Senate.
1.3 Article III- Purposes

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:

A. To serve as the representative body for staff, ensuring representation regardless of job classification, race, gender, and age categories.

B. To act in an advisory capacity to the University administration and governance structure.

C. To appoint or recommend staff representatives to University Council and other University Committees, as appropriate.

D. To provide a forum for the exchange of information between staff and other University groups.

E. To foster a spirit of respect, dignity, unity, and cooperation among staff.

F. To provide referrals for individual concerns and problems to appropriate University resources.

G. To accept and share responsibility with the administration, faculty, and students to attain the stated goals of the University.

1.4 Article IV- Membership

A. All full-time classified staff with at least one year of service are eligible to be members of the VCU Staff Senate.

B. The VCU Staff Senate shall consist of the following members:

1. 50 senators, with no more than 60 percent of staff senate membership representing either the University (Monroe Park and MCV Campuses) or the VCU Health System.

2. 24 alternates- 12 elected from the University (Monroe Park and MCV Campuses) and 12 elected from the VCU Health System.

3. Honorary Senators - the Executive Committee of the VCU Staff Senate will appoint honorary senators in instances when their continued membership is deemed beneficial to the work of the Senate.

4. Senators and alternates shall be elected at the beginning of 3 year term by the existing body of senators/alternates, either in a regular Staff Senate
meeting or remotely (i.e. electronic ballot). Should there be more applicants running for office than open seats in the Senate for the following year, the applicant(s) with the greatest number of votes will become a Senator. In the event of a tie, a run-off election will be held either in a regular session or remotely (i.e. electronic ballot).

C. 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.

D. A call for new members and alternates shall be conducted annually at the end of the outgoing session, and prior to the election of officers, to invite candidates for open Senator and Alternate 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 Senate Chair, so they may have the opportunity to encourage candidates from those areas to run for election.

E. Staff members in good standing interested in serving on the Staff Senate as Senators or Alternates may notify the Senate of their interest by completing and submitting an application.

1.5 Article V- Term of Office

A. Senators and Alternates shall serve three academic-year terms beginning on July 1 and ending June 30.

B. A Senator may be appointed to serve no more than two consecutive terms and shall have full voting privileges:

1. Should a Senator vacancy occur during a term, the Membership Secretary shall issue a call for membership from the pool of Alternate Senators to fill the vacant Senate seat for the remainder of the current year. If more than one alternate is interested, an election will be held at the next regular Staff Senate meeting, or remotely (i.e. electronic ballot) to determine which candidate will fill the vacant seat.
2. In the event an alternate is asked to fill a vacant Senate seat, their cumulative service will not exceed two consecutive terms.
3. 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 non-classified staff position.

C. An Alternate Senator may be appointed to no more than two consecutive terms and shall serve as a substitute with full voting privileges.
D. An Honorary Senator may be appointed annually, is eligible for reappointment without restrictions, and shall not have voting rights.

E. The outgoing President of the VCU Staff Senate shall serve as an advisor to and as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee for a one-year term.

1.6 Article VI- Appointments and Elections

A. Vice Presidents of the University and the VCU Health System shall be notified of the names of Senators and Alternate Senators elected as indicated in 1.4 Article IV (Membership) of this Constitution to assure that elected representatives are in good standing with the University.

B. Elections of officers within the VCU Staff Senate shall be conducted in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

C. Appointment of Standing Committee chairs shall be conducted in accordance with the VCU Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

1.7 Article VII- Officers

A. Elected officers of the VCU Staff Senate shall consist of:

1. President
2. Vice President/President-Elect
3. Senate Chair
4. Operations Manager

B. Appointed officers of the VCU Staff Senate shall consist of:

1. Technology Officer
2. Communication Officer

C. Officers shall be elected annually by Staff Senators during the regular March meeting and installed at the last regular meeting in April. Each term shall begin at the first regular Executive Committee meeting in May.

D. Officers shall be eligible for re-election, but may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

D. The VCU Staff Senate may remove, with cause, any officer by two-thirds vote of the VCU Staff Senate membership.
E. In the event the President is unable to complete his/her un-expired term of office, the Vice President/President-Elect shall complete the term. In the event any other officer is unable to complete his/her un-expired term of office, the President shall appoint a member of the Executive Committee to complete the term.

1.8 Article VIII- University Board of Visitors, University Council, and University Committees

A. The University President shall appoint a Senate representative to the University Board of Visitors, as well as Senators to the University Council and 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.

B. Senate representatives to the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees shall:

1. Represent the membership of the VCU Staff Senate in the discharge of responsibilities.
2. Inform the VCU Staff Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and action taken either by:
   a. Forwarding copies of meeting minutes for review by the Vice President/President-Elect, who shall then forward them to the Recording Secretary within ten working days after approval of the minutes by the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees; or
   b. Presenting, as appropriate, reports of discussions and actions taken at meetings of the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees.
3. Introduce issues of interest of the VCU Staff Senate before the University Board of Visitors, University Council, or University Committees.

1.9 Article IX- Committees

The VCU Staff Senate shall form the following committees:

A. An Executive Committee shall consist of the following members:
   1. President
   2. President Emeritus
   3. Vice President/President-Elect
   4. Senate Chair
   5. Operations Manager
   6. Administrative Liaison

B. Standing Committees shall consist of:
1. Professional Development Committee  
2. Awards and Recognition Committee  
3. Shared Governance (Engagement) Committee  

C. The Executive Committee of the VCU Staff Senate may appoint new standing, special, and/or ad hoc committees as needed.

1.10 Article X- Amendments

The approval process of amendments to the Constitution shall be as follows:

A. The Constitution shall be reviewed at least every two years. A proposal for an amendment should be submitted to the Executive Committee with referral to the Operations Manager for review and clarification.

B. A written notice that an amendment is to be proposed must be given by the Executive Committee to all members of the VCU Staff Senate at least five working days before the meeting when the amendment shall be formally proposed. The notice shall contain either the actual proposed amendment or a general statement regarding the proposed amendment.

C. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the VCU Staff Senate or remotely (i.e. by electronic ballot) by a two-thirds vote of the Senate membership, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

A. Amendments to the Constitution shall become effective upon approval by the University President.

1.11 Article XI- Adoption of Constitution

The Constitution shall be ratified by a simple majority vote of the quorum (defined in Article 2.4.B).

2.0 Bylaws of the VCU Staff Senate

2.1 Article I- Duties of Officers, Senators, and Alternates

A. The President shall:

1. Preside over the Executive Committee as a non-voting member except in the event of a tie vote;  
2. Review and revise the organizational chart of the VCU Staff Senate;  
3. Call special meetings as necessary;
4. Have the option to request a proxy vote by email to voting members of the Staff Senate or Executive Committee if a quorum is not present at a general session or Executive Committee meeting, respectively;
5. Appoint officers in the event no one runs for a particular office;
6. Appoint chairs of the standing committees;
7. Appoint a member of the Executive Committee to complete the term of an officer who is unable to complete his/her term of office;
8. Make appointment recommendations to the University President for the Board of Visitors' representative, University Council members, and University Committees, as appropriate;
9. Establish ad hoc committees as approved by the VCU Staff Senate and appoint respective chairs and committee members;
10. Authorize disbursement of funds in conjunction with the Operations Manager and Administrative Liaison;
11. 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; and perform other such duties associated with this office.

B. The Vice-President/President-Elect shall:

1. Preside at all regular and special meetings of the VCU Staff Senate;
2. Serve as the principal assistant to the President;
3. Assume the office of the President after the term as Vice President/President-Elect ends;
4. 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;
5. Coordinate any proposed contacts with the State Legislature through the Office of the Vice President for Government Relations;
6. Review minutes from various University Committees for issues of interest prior to forwarding them to the Recording Secretary and, as appropriate, for dissemination to VCU Staff Senate;
7. Scheduling meeting space for Staff Senate and Executive Committee meetings; and
8. Perform other such duties associated with this office.

C. The Senate Chair Shall:

1. Prepare agenda for the distribution to the Staff Senators and invited guests/speakers;
2. Prepare, maintain and distribute minutes of all VCU Staff Senate meetings (general session and Executive Committee) as permanent records, as well
as maintain copies of standing committee minutes and annual reports as permanent records;

3. Maintain records of the VCU Staff Senate, including:
   a. Mailing lists (electronic and campus addresses);
   b. Lists of Senators and Alternates with terms of office and committee membership; and Lists of individuals who have expressed an interest in serving on the Senate.

4. Conduct a roll call of members and record attendance in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures;

5. Advise the Staff Senate President of attendance records and if a quorum is present at the beginning of each meeting;

6. Contacts Alternates with a call for membership in the event of the vacancy of a regular Senate Seat;

7. Coordinate VCU Staff Senate elections and nominations processes, to include composing a list of nominations for VCU Staff Senate officers;

8. Ensure that VCU Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws are followed for the nomination and election of Staff Senators, Alternates, Officers, and representatives to the University Council and University Committees; and

9. Perform other such duties associated with this office.

D. The Operations Manager shall:

1. Maintain all fiscal records of the VCU Staff Senate;

2. Prepare an annual budget for approval by the Executive Committee;

3. Submit quarterly financial reports to the Executive Committee and the Staff Senate and an annual financial report to the Staff Senate at the regular meeting in May;

4. Approve, in conjunction with the President and Administrative Liaison, all disbursements after fund allocation has been appropriated by the Executive Committee;

5. Evaluate proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the VCU Staff Senate.

6. Revise, update, interpret, make and submit recommendations as needed to the VCU Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

7. Submit recommendations in accordance with Article 1.10 (Amendments) of the Constitution.

E. The Administrative Liaison shall advise the Executive Committee on institutional strategic procedures and issues and will approve budget requests.

F. Staff Senators shall:

1. Vote on matters brought before the VCU Staff Senate;

2. Serve on at least one standing or ad hoc committee;

3. Serve on University Council and University Committees as appointed;
4. Seek representation by an Alternate Senator if it is necessary to be absent from a Senate meeting, or from any significant portion thereof; and
5. Serve at the direction of the VCU Staff Senate.

G. Alternates shall:

1. Attend and participate in all VCU Staff Senate meetings, as possible;
2. Represent Senators who are unable to attend VCU Staff Senate meetings and, prior to the meetings;
3. Vote on matters only when representing Senators; and
4. Be available to serve as Staff Senators.

H. All members (Senators and Alternates) of the VCU Staff Senate shall:

1. Report to the constituents of their respective areas on issues brought before the VCU Staff Senate;
2. Seek opinions from the constituents of their respective areas on pertinent matters concerning the University and/or VCU Staff Senate;
3. Work actively toward the goal of improving the University and the working conditions for its staff members; and
4. Be free to express personal opinions to constituents and other members of the University community; however, members must clearly state that these opinions are their own and differentiate these views from Senate positions and actions when differences exist.
5. Senate members shall not misrepresent any Senate action, position, or decision to the University community.

I. The Honorary Senators shall serve at the direction of the President.

1.2 Article II- Attendance Policy

A. Staff Senators shall be expected to attend all Senate meetings.

B. If a Staff Senator finds it necessary to be absent from a Senate meeting, or from any significant portion thereof, he/she should first seek representation by an Alternate Senator.

C. If a Staff Senator is absent unexcused and not represented by an alternate at two regularly scheduled bi-monthly meetings or four regularly scheduled monthly meetings during an academic year, he/she shall lose his/her Senate seat.

D. An appeal to retain the seat may be filed in writing with the Executive Committee. Situations such as illness involving the Senator or his/her immediate family, including vacations, and unforeseen work requirements will be given due consideration.
E. Standing and ad hoc committees may establish their own attendance standards.

1.3 Article III- Appointments, Elections, & Nominations

A. The election of Staff Senators and Alternates shall be conducted as outlined in Article IV-Membership.

B. The Senate Chair shall begin taking nominations for elected offices beginning in February. Permission must be obtained from candidates before names are placed on the nomination ballot. Election of officers shall be held by secret ballot at the regular March meeting.

C. A simple majority vote of membership, either in meeting or remotely (i.e. electronic ballot) shall be necessary to elect officers. In the event no candidate receives a majority, the candidate receiving the fewest votes shall be removed from each successive ballot until one candidate receives a majority vote.

D. All elected officers and newly appointed Staff Senators and Alternates shall assume responsibilities at the end of the regular May meeting.

E. Appointments to the University Council and University Committees shall be made in time to meet appropriate deadlines.

2.4 Article IV- Meetings

A. Regular meetings of the VCU Staff Senate shall be held during normal business hours on one of two set schedules: monthly, or bi-monthly with the option of emergency meetings in the 'off months. The schedule for each year will be established in the first meeting by vote of the new assembly. The Executive Committee shall address occasional conflicts, such as University holidays or inclement weather.

B. The VCU Staff Senate shall invite the University President to meet with the VCU Staff Senate at least once each year.

C. A quorum at all VCU Staff Senate meetings shall be a simple majority of the membership present at the meeting.

D. Meetings shall be open to University staff. However, anyone who is not a VCU Staff Senate member may not participate in discussions, unless recognized by the Staff Senate Vice-President, and he/she does not have any voting privileges.

2.5 Article V- Committees

A. Executive Committee:
1. Meets at least once a month. The Executive Committee meeting planned for any month that includes a regular VCU Staff Senate meeting must be scheduled for the week prior to the general meeting;
2. Addresses changes to the regular meeting schedule of the VCU Staff Senate;
3. Acts on behalf of the VCU Staff Senate between regular meetings, with all such actions reported at the next VCU Staff Senate meeting;
4. Designs and implements the Standard Operating Procedures of the VCU Staff Senate;
5. Evaluates issues brought forth within the Senate and from other sources within the University and, according to Standard Operating Procedures, makes recommendations for VCU Staff Senate consideration;
6. Approves, by majority vote, initial composition and changes to the membership of standing committees made by the President;
7. Assists in interpreting the intent of the VCU Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws;
8. Assists the Operations Manager in preparing the budget;
9. Addresses Senators' attendance in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures;
10. Submits an annual report to the VCU Staff Senate at the regular June meeting; and
11. Performs other such duties as associated with this committee.

B. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees - These Committees perform a continuing function and remain in existence permanently or for a specified duration.

1. General Guidelines:
   a. Standing committee chairs and members of standing committees or ad hoc committees shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.
   b. Membership on a standing committee shall not change for each Senator's term of office unless requested in writing by the Senator to the Senate Chair.
   c. Each member of the VCU Staff Senate shall serve on at least one standing committee and/or ad hoc committee.
   d. Minutes shall be kept for each standing committee meeting. Each standing committee shall submit a written report of its activities and any pending matters to the Executive Committee at its June meeting.
   e. The scope of the responsibilities of the standing committees shall be established by the VCU Staff Senate in accordance with the Bylaws.
   f. Standing committees shall establish goals, objectives, and priorities. Members have authority to research, carry out activities necessary to perform their charges, prepare reports, and offer recommendations. Standing committee members may make motions at the regular monthly Senate meetings.
   g. Standing committees may establish subcommittees to address specific issues as needed. Membership of subcommittees shall consist of members of the
respective standing committee. The chair of the respective standing committee shall appoint chairs of subcommittees.

h. Standing committee chairs shall convene their committees at least once a year and on an as-needed basis thereafter.

i. Each outgoing committee chair shall provide to the respective incoming committee chair appropriate information to facilitate continuity (e.g., charges, goals, unfinished business, research materials, and past and pending parliamentary motions).

j. Each standing committee shall be established with a minimum of four members.

C: Standing Committees

1. Professional Development Committee - Primary Responsibilities:

   a. Coordinate, plan and execute the annual Staff Professional Development Event.
   b. Works with Staff Senate committees and VCU organizations to advertise and promote event.

2. Award and Recognition Committee– Primary Responsibilities

   a. Works to promote the accomplishments of staff members across the university.
   b. Establishes and maintains systems for recognizing staff accomplishments.
   c. Works with VCU entities and VCU Staff Senate to identify staff members deserving of recognition.
   d. Supports and finds new ways of promoting staff accomplishments both in Staff Senate and across both the VCU and VCUHS campuses.
   e. Work with Staff Senate committees and VCU organizations to advertise and promote event.

3. Engagement Committee – Primary responsibilities

   a. Coordinate and manage special events for VCU and the VCU Health System on behalf of the VCU Staff Senate in the area of Student Engagement, Staff Engagement and Community Engagement.
   b. Coordinate VCU Staff Senate signature events.
   c. Maintain relationships with community sponsors.
   d. Creates a culture of inclusion and value for staff within the VCU community.
   e. Works with other Staff Senate committees and VCU organizations to relay communications regarding information sessions, workshop events, etc.
2.6 Article VI- Procedures

Refer to the Standard Operating Procedures.

2.7 Article VIII- Amendments
Bylaws may be amended in the same manner as amendments to the Constitution.