

## Constitution and Bylaws of the Staff Senate

### PREAMBLE

Bismarck State College has established a Staff Senate to be a representative body of the non-faculty employees, hereinafter referred to as Staff.

### Constitution of the Staff Senate

#### Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Staff Senate of Bismarck State College.

#### Article II - Mission Statement

The Senate shall be a governing body for the Staff in the formulation and review of College policies, and in providing a means for the Staff to initiate action on matters of concern regarding the needs, welfare, and professional development of Staff.

#### Article III – Constituents

Constituents shall be comprised of all benefitted Staff.

#### Article IV - Officers

The officers of the Staff Senate of Bismarck State College shall be the President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer. These officers comprise the Senate Executive Committee.

#### Article V - Bylaws

The Senate may adopt or amend such bylaws as may be required for the accomplishment of its purposes.

#### Article VI - Amendments to the Constitution

Proposals for amending the Constitution may be initiated by:

- Any Senator.
- Petition signed by five percent of all constituents as defined in Article III of this constitution.
- The Senate Executive Committee.

Proposed amendments shall be:

- Presented in writing or electronically.
- Presented a minimum of 24 hours prior to next scheduled Staff Senate meeting.
- Amendments shall be approved by a simple majority vote (51%) of the Staff Senate and will become effective immediately following approval by the College President.

## **Bylaws of the Staff Senate**

### **Article I - Composition of the Staff Senate**

1. One (1) Senator shall be elected from each district. Districts shall be based on reporting relationships within the larger Bismarck State College organization. Those districts are:

Academic Affairs	Financial Aid
Academic Records	Food Services
Accounting Services	Human Resources
Admissions and Enrollment Services	Information Services
Athletics	Library
Bookstore	NECE
CETI	Office of the President
College Advancement	Buildings and Grounds
College Relations	Student Affairs
Counseling & Advising Services	Student Finance
Distance Learning	Student Life

2. The Officers of the Senate shall review the electoral districts makeup as needed and suggest modifications to ensure fair Senate representation of the Staff. The full Staff Senate shall then act on any suggested modifications to the electoral districts and implement by a majority vote of the Senate.
3. If a constituent is not best represented by the district in which they are a member due to a unique working relationship on campus, the Senate may make allowance on a case-by-case basis and allow a constituent to be represented by another district.
4. Executive officers shall be elected from the members of the Staff Senate.
5. The immediate Past President shall serve as a member of the Staff Senate but shall not represent any electoral district. The Past President shall be allowed to vote in the Senate only when necessary to break a tie vote of regularly elected Senators. In the event the Past President is a regularly elected senator, the tie breaking vote will be decided by a vote of the Senate Executive Committee.
6. The College Executive Vice President or his/her designated representative is a permanent ex-officio, non-voting member of the Staff Senate, but may not serve as an officer of the Senate.

### **Article II - Terms of Office and Election of Senate Members**

1. Each political district shall elect representatives to the Senate no later than May 15.
2. Benefitted Staff that have successfully completed their probationary period are eligible to serve on the Staff Senate.
3. The Elections Committee shall initiate the election procedures. All members of a political district not already Senators, and otherwise eligible to serve, shall be

considered potential candidates pending their acceptance. After the collection of the acceptances, a ballot will be sent out for the voting process to begin.

4. The Elections Committee shall report the election results to the Staff Senate and all members of the Staff. If there is a tie in voting, the Senate Executive Committee shall cast the deciding vote.
5. Senate membership shall be for two (2) year terms with approximately one-half of the members elected each June.
6. Senate terms begin June 1 and end May 31.
7. Senators are not limited to the total number of terms for which they may serve. However, no senator may serve more than two consecutive terms.
8. A Senator may resign for reason with written notice to the Staff Senate. The Elections Committee shall conduct a special election to fill the district vacancy.
9. If a Senator moves from one district to another, continued representation of that district will be determined by its constituents. In the event said district chooses to elect a new senator, the Senate Elections Committee will conduct a special election to fill the vacant seat.

### **Article III - Election of Officers**

10. The Senate Executive Committee shall be nominated and elected at the regular May meeting, which is called to order and presided over by the outgoing Senate Executive Committee. The elected officers will include: President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer.
11. The Presidential nominee must be in the second year of their first term, or either year of a consecutive term at the time of their nomination and election.
12. The remaining officers (Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer) may be in either year of their term.
13. Each officer of the Senate Executive Committee shall be filled by an elected member of the Senate. The term of each office shall be one year.
14. Officers will be decided by a majority vote of the Senate. The outgoing President shall cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie. The outgoing Senate Executive Committee shall tally the votes and the newly elected officers will assume their position at that time.
15. The Senate Executive Committee shall declare an office vacant when an officer is unable to, or improperly performs, the roles and responsibilities of their office. The officer in question may appeal the Senate Executive Committee's decision to the Senate Ethics Committee. All offices of the Senate Executive Committee vacated shall be filled by a special election at the first regular Senate meeting following the vacancy.

### **Article IV - Roles and Responsibilities of the Officers**

#### **1. President:**

- a. Presides over all meetings of the Senate and Executive Committee.

- b. Has the authority to appoint such committees as are deemed necessary for the business of the Senate.
- c. Is the spokesperson for the Senate at meetings and functions.
- d. Serves as the direct communication liaison between the College President and the Staff Senate.
- e. Serves as the Operations Council's Staff Senate Representative.
- f. Ensures that all actions conform to the Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
- g. Attends campus Strategic Planning retreat in July.

**2. Vice President:**

- a. Oversees standing committees of the Staff Senate.
- b. Presides in the absence of the President.
- c. Assumes the duties of the President should that office be vacated for any reason.
- d. Carries out additional duties as assigned by the President.

**3. Secretary/Treasurer:**

- a. Responsible for managing the Staff Senate website.
- b. Takes and maintains minutes at the Senate and Senate Executive Committee meetings.
- c. Distributes minutes and agenda of each Senate meeting to Staff Senate members prior to the next regular meeting.
- d. Posts all meeting minutes on the Staff Senate website within three days of each meeting.
- e. Maintains an accurate vote record of all resolutions adopted by the Senate.
- f. Receives and keeps records of all communications and reports to and from the Staff Senate.
- g. Maintains permanent records of Senators, terms served, meeting attendance, and offices held.
- h. Primarily responsible for the Senate's finances.
- i. Ensures all Senate records are available to succeeding Secretary/Treasurer.
- j. Serves as chair of the Elections Committee.

**4. Senate Executive Committee:**

- a. Serves as the governing board of the Staff Senate.
- b. Sets the yearly calendar of meetings and activities.
- c. Prepares the agenda for each Senate meeting.
- d. Receives proposals for consideration from Senators, Staff, or others.
- e. Prepares budgets, seeks funding, and approves disbursement of Senate funds.
- f. Serves on the ND State Staff Senate along with the Past President.

## **Article V - Roles and Responsibilities of the Senators**

1. Represents and acts on behalf of their constituents.
2. Reports to their constituents concerning matters of the Senate. The availability of meeting minutes will be conveyed to constituents within one week of publishing.
3. Misses no more than 1/3 of yearly scheduled meetings as well as committee or special meetings in any term, and shall not miss more than two consecutive meetings.
4. Serves as a member of at least one Staff Senate committee.
5. Appoints their temporary replacement in the case of extended leave of absence, who will act in full capacity of the absent senator.

## **Article VI - Standards of Conduct**

1. Any elected Senator may be removed from office for nonperformance of Senate duties.
2. A petition requesting removal may be brought to the Senate Executive Committee by a simple majority vote of the members of the Senate or constituents of the Senator's district.
3. The Senate Executive Committee will appoint an ad hoc Senate Ethics Committee. This committee will investigate the matter and offer its recommendation to the Senate.
4. If the recommendation is removal, a simple majority vote of the full Senate shall determine the outcome.
5. The Senate Election Committee shall conduct a special election in that district within fourteen (14) days of the Senator's removal.

## **Article VII - Recall of Senator**

1. Any elected senator may be recalled from office by their district.
2. A petition shall be brought before the Senate Executive Committee signed by a simple majority of the district's constituents.
3. The Senate Election Committee shall conduct a special election in that district within fourteen (14) days of receiving the petition for recall.

## **Article VIII – Committees**

The Staff Senate shall establish such committees as are necessary to conduct Senate business. Such committees shall be responsible to the Staff Senate and shall perform duties determined by the Staff Senate and/or the Executive Committee. All Senators are required to server on at least one Staff Senate Committee(s).

The following committees are established as standing committees:

1. Salary, Benefits, and Compensation
  - a. The Salary, Benefits, and Compensation Committee shall be responsible for the development and updating of recommendations for salary policies and distribution in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the College President and the State Board of Higher Education.
2. Staff Rights and Campus Life

- a. The Staff Rights and Campus Life Committee shall concern itself with matters of Staff standing, the policies and regulations of the State Board of Higher Education, and those issues that are of concern to the general well-being of BSC Staff.
3. Orientation and Campus Relations
  - a. The Orientation and Campus Relations Committee shall develop and recommend the scope and structure of the new employee orientation plan for Staff, as well as the orientation of newly elected Senators. It shall also develop the method in which the Senate will convey information between itself and its constituents, and increase Senate and Staff visibility through campus publications and activities.
4. Professional Development
  - a. The Professional Development Committee will assess Staff needs; then design, develop, deliver, or arrange for delivery, of Staff development programs for all Staff on campus. It shall advise the Staff Senate on matters pertaining to policies that will enhance Staff development.

The following committees are established as ad-hoc committees:

1. Elections
  - a. The Elections Committee conducts the nominations and election procedures for electing members to the Senate.
2. Senate Ethics
  - a. The Senate Ethics Committee shall establish rules as necessary to ensure the proper conduct of Senators in accordance with the Staff Senate Bylaws. In the event a Senator is accused of violating the Bylaws, the committee shall investigate and make recommendations to the Senate regarding the accusation.
3. Constitution and Bylaws
  - a. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall review the Constitution and Bylaws, as needed, and present recommendations for changes to the Staff Senate.

## **Article IX - Meetings and Actions**

1. The Senate shall schedule monthly meetings. If no agenda items exist or it is known that quorum will not be met, a meeting may be cancelled. However, no two consecutive meetings may be cancelled. The President, a majority of the Executive Committee members, or a majority of the Senators may call additional meetings.
2. A majority of the Senators shall constitute a quorum.
3. All meetings shall be open. Non-senators may participate in discussions of the Senate, but may not vote. The Senate shall establish and maintain reasonable procedures whereby any individual may propose items to be included on the agenda. No item, not given in the agenda, shall be considered until all regular business is completed.
4. Robert's Rules of Order shall be observed at all meetings.
5. Newly elected Senators shall be invited to the regular May meeting but will not have voting privileges.

6. The Senate shall conduct an annual retreat for the purpose of determining goals and setting the business of the Senate and its committees for the term.

### **Article X - Amendments to the Bylaws**

Amendments to the Bylaws may be made by ballot with a simple majority vote of the Senate, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing to the Senate in accordance with Senate voting procedures. If approved by the Senate, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to the College President for final approval.

### **Article XI - Senate Voting Procedures**

Senate Voting Procedures will be composed of three steps.

1. All proposals for vote will be brought to the Senate for initial presentation and first reading of the proposal at any scheduled meeting.
2. After the first reading, there will be a "cooling off" period in which the proposal will be discussed by Senators and their constituents. This period shall be from the first reading to the next scheduled meeting.
3. At the meeting following the first reading, a second reading of the proposal will be conducted. If there are no changes a vote will be taken by a quorum of the Senate on the presented proposal. Any changes made to the proposal will result in the process starting over until there is a vote on the proposal or it is withdrawn by its sponsor(s).
4. The Senate may, with a 3/4 majority, vote to suspend voting rules on any one proposal.

### **Article XII – Dissolution**

Upon dissolution of the organization all assets remaining, after payment of all costs and expenses of such dissolution, shall be turned over to the Office of the President of the College.

### **Change History:**

Drafted during the 1994-95 academic year by Marlene Anderson, Carol Cashman, Dave Clark, Jordis Conrad, Mary Eisenbraun, Buster Gilliss, Jackie Hagel, Rita Lindgren, Jon Martinson, Kristie Petersen, Mary Prochnow, Claudette Schmidt, and Charlene Schuchard.

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