

BYLAWS OF THE OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY STAFF COUNCIL

ARTICLE I. Name of Organization.

The name of the organization shall be the Oklahoma Christian University Staff Council, or “OC Staff Council,” hereinafter referred to as the Council.

ARTICLE II. Mission and Function.

Section 1. Mission

The Council is organized to foster a unified staff community by encouraging the exchange of ideas and concerns in keeping with the mission of the University. As such, the Council will seek to promote a positive and collaborative work environment that is committed to assessing, prioritizing, and communicating staff needs and staff contributions to the mission.

Section 2. Function.

- A. The Council is authorized to function in a study and advisory capacity to address issues brought before it by the University community.
- B. The Council shall serve as an advisory body to the University President and/or the President’s executive leadership team (“Team1” or a future equivalent) regarding issues affecting OC staff. The Council will act as a conduit for communication and creative problem solving on behalf of the OC staff--formulating, coordinating or recommending enhancements or priorities based on staff input. Any proposal or position paper regarding University policy or operations that is passed by the Council shall be presented in writing to the President’s leadership team or the President, as appropriate. The Council shall communicate the President’s timely responses through the most appropriate means.
- C. The Council shall seek opportunities to promote a positive, collaborative work environment among all employees at OC. The Council considers one of its directives to foster a fun, family-oriented culture in, through, and across all of OC’s professional offices. The Council will facilitate events, collaborative programs, networking opportunities, employee recognition programs, and other projects that bring people together and help make OC feel warm and like “home” to all.
- D. The Council is specifically responsible for managing the Staff Employee of the Month and Staff Employee of the Year programs (or their equivalents). Governing practice on these awards is articulated in Appendix I, “Guidelines for Staff Awards.” *The approved language in this appendix and all future appendices, while binding in its function with regard to Council practice, is not considered a formal element of the Staff Council Bylaws and can be amended, at will, by the acting Council in concert with University leadership.*
- E. The Council is empowered to appoint staff representatives to other campus committees, as requested (e.g. OC Benefits Committee). In cases when it is reasonable and appropriate, members of the acting Staff Council will fill these roles to ensure healthy collaboration and communication across all employee interest groups. Committee appointments like these must be made by a majority vote of the acting Council.

- F. For the reasons above, members of the Staff Council are empowered to solicit questions, concerns, and ideas from the OC staff community. Council members are also empowered to give answer to these items, as appropriate, if a member of the executive leadership team has provided clear and definitive responses and those responses have not been deemed confidential.
- G. The Council is not a labor union and does not function as a required intermediary channel between the OC staff and University leadership. The Staff Council will work to foster open communication both horizontally and vertically among OC employees. Moreover, the Staff Council will regularly encourage employees to handle conflict, ask questions, and present ideas directly to their supervisors or the appropriate decision-making party.
- H. The Council does not mediate individual employee grievances, but seeks to address global employee issues and needs (see ARTICLE III, Section 4).

ARTICLE III. Council Membership.

Section 1. Council Eligibility.

All full-time or part-time benefits eligible (as defined by the OC Policy Manual and interpreted by OC Human Resources), sub-vice-president-level staff employees of Oklahoma Christian University, who are not currently represented by the Faculty Association, shall be eligible for membership in the Council and shall be eligible to vote for candidates for membership on the Council. A non-voting administrative liaison will be appointed by the President.

The Executive Director of Human Resources (or his/her equivalent) is ineligible for inclusion as a voting member of the Staff Council; however, he/she has a standing invitation to attend Council meetings unless otherwise notified (see ARTICLE VI, Section 3).

Section 2. Council Representation.

The Council shall be comprised of **eleven (11) representatives elected at large from among the eligible employees**. Based on the staggered term calendar (see Article III, Section 3), six (6) Council seats will be open for election or reelection each spring.

The Council functions as a holistic representative body, and as such no member of the Council is solely responsible for representing a department, college, campus group, or zone. Council representatives are expected to be accessible, open, and warm to the questions, ideas, concerns, and general discussion of all OC employees.

To help ensure Council accessibility, a minimum of one (1) representative must serve from each of the following campus zones:

1. West – Physical Plant, Residence Life West, Athletic Venues, Payne Athletic Center
2. Central A – Gaylord University Center, Williams Branch Center, Mabee Learning Center
3. Central B – Benson Hall, Cogswell-Alexander Hall, Garvey Center, Harvey Business Center
4. Northeast – Gaylord Hall, Vose Hall, Davisson American Heritage Building, Prince Engineering Center, Herold Science Hall
5. East – Enterprise Square, Heritage Plaza, Heritage Village, Apartments

To help ensure fair, unbiased discussion and decision-making on the Staff Council, no more than two (2) representatives will be allowed from a single, closely associated work team. The philosophy

behind this restriction is to prevent members of one sub-group on campus, who share frequent contact and a common sub-culture, from forcing majority opinion on the Council. As an employee's defined department, office, or team does not necessarily dictate frequent contact or collaboration with all members of that group, the acting Staff Council at the time of yearly nominations may exercise discretion in interpreting this restriction.

One (1) seat on the Council will be filled yearly by a new, full-time staff member. To be considered "new," this staff member must have a consecutive tenure of less than 18 months at the time of his/her appointment. This special seat is a one-year term.

The Council may adjust designated campus zones, as appropriate, to ensure fair representation and accessibility. Adjustments must be made by a formal amendment to the bylaws, as outlined in ARTICLE IX. Council members appointed prior to these adjustments will not be subject to revised restrictions until their appointment comes up for renewal.

Section 3. Council Term of Office.

Each representative shall serve a two-year term, and elections shall be held for one-half the at large Council seats each year. Terms begin on the first day of May and end on the last day of April to coincide with the close of the academic year. No representative may serve more than two consecutive terms but may be re-elected after a one-year interval.

Vacant positions on the Council shall be filled by the runners-up from the last election for those seats. The employee filling the vacancy will complete the term of the representative being replaced.

Terms shall be staggered with elections conducted annually for one-half of the Council seats replacing those who have served the longest in their current term.

A representative may miss no more than three consecutive or four total meetings in one year, at which time they shall be deemed to resign the position for failure to fulfill the responsibilities of the office. In the case of summer meetings, if the Council elects to forego face-to-face meetings in June and July, these absences will not be considered in the count. In years when summer meetings are cancelled, the last meeting immediately prior to the summer break and the first meeting immediately after will be considered consecutive.

Section 4. Council Representatives' Duties and Time Allowances.

- A. Representatives shall attend all meetings of the Council. When a representative is unable to attend a Council meeting, the representative must notify the Chair. No substitute or proxy will be permitted.
- B. Representatives shall be available to their constituents (all staff of the University), and their contact information shall be made available campus-wide. They shall be willing to hear concerns, to receive information and suggestions, and to communicate these effectively to the Council. In turn, representatives must keep their constituents informed of the work of the Council and matters that the University administration communicates to the Staff Representatives. The Council will not hear personal grievances. University employees wishing to file grievances must follow the established procedures as outlined in the *Oklahoma Christian University Policy Manual*.

- C. On rare occasion, certain discussion items will be deemed “confidential.” The confidential nature of these discussions will be clearly and directly communicated to the Council. All representatives commit to preserving confidentiality in these scenarios. If a Council member is determined to have breached confidentiality, this breach could be grounds for dismissal.
- D. Representatives shall be allowed a reasonable amount of time by their supervisors to devote to Council meetings and Council work as part of their normal working duties. The Council has full support of the President and executive leadership in these reasonable endeavors. In instances when time commitment comes under question by a representative’s supervisor or work team, the office of the Executive Vice President commits to fairly investigating and, as appropriate, defending those time investments.

ARTICLE IV. Council Elections.

- A. Eligible staff employees may nominate candidates for the Council.
- B. The Chair will confirm each nominee’s willingness to run. This confirmation will be treated as an acceptance of the role and responsibilities of a Council seat if the nominee is elected.
- C. Of the typical six (6) elected seats, four (4) representatives shall be elected by secret, staff-wide ballot for a two-year term.
- D. Each voting cycle, two (2) seats—one at large position and the new employee position—shall be appointed by the incoming Staff Council from among all nominated parties. If less than two eligible nominees remain for either position, the Council is empowered to nominate new candidates by majority vote. The Council may not use either of its appointments to reelect a previous Council representative of the last two years. These Council appointments will be used to fill gaps in campus-wide representation and/or to ensure a variety of skillsets and experiences are represented on the Council. Appointments in this category will be made by majority vote of the acting Council.
- E. Voting may be limited to choices by category—either zone or work team—to ensure fair representation in line with restrictions outlined above (Article III, Section 2). These limitations will be communicated openly prior to the voting process and implemented fairly in that process. The acting Council at the time of nominations is responsible for communicating and enforcing these limitations in a timely and understandable manner.
- F. Once elected, each representative shall serve and represent all staff and not just his/her department.
- G. The terms shall be linked to even and odd years so that half of the at large positions of the Council will stand for election each year.
- H. Election of Council Representatives shall be held every March with terms beginning May 1.
- I. The outgoing Chair shall preside during the first half of the transitional May meeting. If new business dictates a closed meeting of the incoming Council, the incoming Chair shall preside over this closed second-half of the May meeting.

ARTICLE V. Council Officers.

Section 1. Titles and Membership.

- A. Officers of the Council shall be elected by the Council. The officers of the Council shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Officers shall serve one year terms. The Chair must have served on the Council six-months prior to holding said office.
- B. Officers shall be elected annually at the May meeting by majority vote.

Section 2. Duties of Council Officers.

A. Chairperson

- a. Shall preside at all meetings of the Council.
- b. Shall meet as needed with the President, liaison, and vice-chair.
- c. Shall bring such issues before the Council as may be deemed reasonable and worthy of consideration.
- d. Shall notify Council and campus staff employees of election of new officers.
- e. Shall organize annual representatives elections.
- f. Shall be on call to attend meetings of the President's executive leadership team as requested.
- g. Shall schedule, at minimum, six (6) two-hour walk-in appointment windows during the fiscal year. These times will be made known to all staff with a minimum of one week's notice.
- h. Shall advise and invest in all efforts of the Staff Council.
- i. Acts as a non-voting member except in instances of a tie. Exercises authority in interpreting voting results (based on bylaw standards) and issuing re-votes.
- j. Shall act as primary contact and face for the Staff Council, representing the group both to executive leadership and all staff. The Chair will make himself/herself available to other representatives as needed. Moreover, the Chair assumes responsibility for directly interfacing with employees who have significant questions, concerns, ideas, or grievances directed at the Staff Council.

B. Vice-Chairperson

- a. Shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence.
- b. Shall be on call to attend meetings with the President, Chair, and liaison.
- c. Shall assist in coordinating the work of ad hoc positions and committees, and will communicate regularly with the Chair on these efforts.
- d. Shall schedule and coordinate periodic visits from non-Council employees, who can share updates and help explain pertinent, near-term campus projects at Council meetings.

C. Secretary

- a. Shall maintain accurate records of all meetings of the Council.
- b. Shall be responsible for keeping accurate account of representatives' attendance.
- c. Shall post minutes of the Council Meetings to the Council shared file.
- d. Shall be responsible for annual review and dissemination of the bylaws.
- e. Shall be on call to sit in on Staff Council discussions, and meetings between the Chair and executive leadership, that happen outside of regular meetings. The Secretary may be copied on email conversations, digital forums, or conference calls that require objective record or historical insight, as well.

D. Ad Hoc Positions

- a. The Council may elect to appoint current representatives to ad hoc positions as needs arise (e.g. an Employee of the Month Coordinator, Event Planner, New Employee Liaison, etc.).
- b. Ad hoc positions will be determined at the outset of the year by the incoming Staff Council and representatives will be appointed by majority vote.
- c. In assuming ad hoc roles, assigned representatives commit to fulfilling all associated responsibilities as outlined by the current Council.

Section 3. Removing and Replacing Officers.

If any Council Officer is determined to be negligent in his/her responsibilities (Article V, Section 2), the Council may elect to remove him/her from office at any time based on a majority vote. In such an instance, the Council will immediately nominate and appoint by majority vote an eligible replacement. Officer positions will not be allowed to sit vacant.

If a current Officer steps off the Staff Council for any reason, the Chair will call a special meeting for the Council to determine a replacement from among existing, eligible Council members. Appointments will be made by majority vote based on the standards outlined in Article VI, Section 4.

Representatives assuming vacated Officer roles will serve out the remaining tenure of the replaced party only. To continue in said roles, the replacement Officer would need to be reelected at the outset of the new Council year.

ARTICLE VI. Meetings of the Council.

Section 1. Schedule of Meetings.

- A. The OC Staff Council shall meet once monthly, on a consistent date and time agreed upon by the incoming Council during the May board meeting.
- B. Standing meetings of the Council will be scheduled for one hour, but may be adjusted as needs require.
- C. The Council meeting schedule will be posted publicly for all staff, along with deadlines to submit items for discussion at upcoming meetings.
- D. The Council Chair is authorized to adjust meeting times, as necessary, to ensure a quorum.
- E. Special meetings may be called by the University President, Executive Vice President, administrative liaison, or the Chair of the Council as needed.
- F. Due to the challenge of summer scheduling, each year in May the incoming Council may vote to forego face-to-face sessions in June and July. In years this is the case, members of the Council will commit themselves to being available for teleconference or web-conference if situations require.
- G. The opening meeting of a new Council year (presently held each May) will be conducted as a special, two-part session. The first half of the meeting may include all outgoing and incoming Council members and will be presided over by the outgoing Chair. If new business demands, the incoming Council may then elect to have a closed second half presided over by the new or continuing Chair.

Section 2. Quorum.

- A. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority (more than one half) of the Council.
- B. In the absence of a quorum, (1) the Chair may only make announcements of an informative nature; (2) any business transacted shall be null and void; and (3) any issues that require immediate action can be handled through email.

Section 3. Meeting Attendees.

Unless adjusted with advance notice by the Chair, all Council meetings will be closed to all non-Council members other than the appointed administrative liaison and the Executive Director of Human Resources (or their equivalents). The Council Chair or Vice-chair may invite, with advance notice to the Council members, other representatives of the University community or the general public to designated meetings as informative resources.

The Staff Council may elect, by majority vote or by recommendation of the presiding meeting chair, to enter executive session at any time. Non-Council members, including the administrative liaison and Executive Director of Human Resources (or their equivalents), may not attend executive session. Minutes will not be taken during executive session. The Council will exercise integrity and conservatism in calling for executive session. If any Council officer is suspected of abusing the privilege of executive session, the remaining members of the Council are authorized to review this claim and make adjustments as appropriate and as approved in these bylaws (ARTICLE V, Section 3).

The Council may cancel invitations to any guest, including the Executive Director of Human Resources (or his/her equivalent), at any time. Likewise, the Council may ask current guests to leave a Staff Council meeting at any time.

Section 4. Voting.

- A. Only elected representatives may vote on issues before the Council.
- B. Unless a roll call vote or vote by secret ballot is requested by a majority of the voting representatives, voting on motions and issues brought before the Council shall be by voice or by show of hands. The Secretary will record all roll call votes in the meeting minutes.
- C. Representatives are not allowed to use proxy votes.
- D. A simple majority (more than one half) vote of the representatives present and voting at a meeting in which there is a quorum shall decide a question. The Chair will voice his/her opinion and offer guidance during voting discussions, but shall personally vote only to break tie votes.
- E. On matters that do not pertain to University policy recommendations or interpretation, bylaw amendment, personnel issues, or formal proposal review (e.g. Employee of the Month or “items to include in a Welcome Basket”), the acting Chair may elect to conduct voting online. Having the most votes—not necessarily a simple majority—will be considered enough to decide the outcome of these discussions. However, to ensure fairness, the Chair may exercise his/her discretion in calling for re-votes. Proxy votes are still not allowed in these instances—Council members will be expected to exercise integrity in this regard.
- F. Voting may occur during executive session, but voting results must be posted in the minutes.

Section 5. Agenda.

- A. Meetings of the Council shall have an agenda that includes the time and place of the meetings, the order of business, and copies of any substantive proposals.

- B. The Secretary shall solicit agenda items and set a deadline of seven working days prior to the next meeting of the Council for receiving agenda items. The agenda shall be distributed two working days prior to a regular meeting by e-mail.

Section 6. Minutes.

Minutes shall be made available to the Council within a timely manner after each regular meeting. After any corrections and/or additions and approval at the next regular meeting, the Secretary shall post minutes to the shared OC Staff Council electronic folder. A permanent copy of the minutes shall be kept in the University archives. Archived minutes of the Council shall be maintained in the Council electronic folder indefinitely and will be made available online to all OC employees.

Section 7. Order of Business.

The order of business for meetings shall be set forth in the agenda. Unless modified by the Chair, the order of business shall be: (1) call to order and establishment of a quorum; (2) prayer; (3) approval of the previous meeting's minutes; (4) unfinished business; (5) new business; (6) miscellaneous (comments, announcements, round table items, tributes, etc.); and (7) adjournment.

Quorum must be established prior to any activities that require a vote. Otherwise, the Chair may exercise his/her freedom in adjusting the order of business as necessary and at will.

Section 8. Parliamentary Authority.

The rules contained in the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the Council.

Section 9. Forum Meeting.

Annually there shall be an open forum of the University Staff. The Council Chair shall invite available University administrators to speak and answer questions from the floor.

ARTICLE VII. Council Committees.

Section 1. University Standing Committees.

The Council shall be responsible for placing staff representation on University standing committees as needed.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees.

The Council shall create ad hoc committees as the need arises. Ad hoc committees shall have broad representation and will include representatives of the staff who are directly involved in the issue being studied.

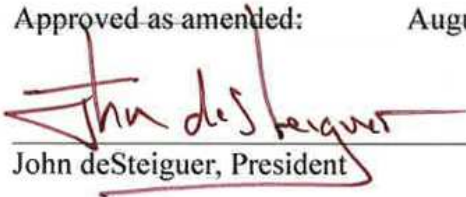
ARTICLE VIII. Legal Status of the Council.

The Council is not a separate legal entity apart from the University and may not enter into any legally binding contracts on behalf of itself or the University without the University's prior written approval.

ARTICLE IX. Amendments to the Bylaws.

A proposal to amend the Bylaws may be made by (1) a majority vote of the Council, (2) by a petition signed by not less than 10% of the campus staff employees represented by the Council, or (3) if it is determined by legal counsel of the University President that some portions(s) of the Bylaws are in conflict with Oklahoma state law or University policies. Amendment of the Bylaws shall require a majority vote of the Council and the written approval of the University President.

Approved as amended: August 1, 2014



John deSteiguer, President



Chair, OC Staff Council

Appendix I:
GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AWARDS
(Revised February 2012)

Staff Employee of the Month (SEOM)

1. At each monthly meeting, the Staff Council (SC) selects the next month's SEOM from nominations submitted by faculty and staff. A corresponding narrative must accompany each nomination. In the event SC does not have a monthly meeting, representatives will vote via e-mail.
2. A designated SC representative will collect and present all nominations for vote at each monthly SC meeting.
3. Full-time and part-time staff employees are eligible for nomination.
4. Nominations will remain current for six months, with the exception of those selected as SEOM.
5. SEOM recipients will be eligible for selection again after a two-year (2) period.
6. Each SEOM recipient will receive a monetary award in the amount of \$100. The payroll office will issue the \$100 check after receipt of an approved check request.
7. The public announcement will be made after the President or another leadership representative personally presents the award to the employee.

Staff Employee of the Year (SEOY)

1. The Staff Employee of the Year will be voted on by secret ballot by the Staff Council.
2. The twelve (12) Staff Employee of the Month recipients from the previous calendar year are eligible for selection as the Staff Employee of the Year.
3. If an SEOM is no longer employed by the University, that individual is not eligible for the SEOY award.
4. Each yearly recipient will receive a monetary award in the amount of \$1,000.00. The payroll office will issue the \$1,000.00 check after receipt of an approved check request.
5. The Office of Events will make arrangements for an award plaque with commemorative inscription.
6. The selection will remain secret until announcement and presentation of awards at the yearly Spring Appreciation Dinner.
7. After the SEOY award is presented, all nominations are cleared to begin the new (calendar) year of nominations.