

STAFF AFFAIRS COUNCIL:  
CHARTER AND BYLAWS

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# Overview of Staff Association and Staff Affairs Council Mission

The Colgate University Staff Association is a representative body of Colgate University staff. The Association is governed by a Staff Affairs Council which is charged with facilitating collaboration and communication between University leadership (i.e. the Cabinet), faculty, and staff members in full consideration of the diverse range of identities and roles held across campus. It has the responsibility of advising the president and the cabinet on staff concerns, questions, and ideas, as well as the responsibility to report outcomes of these meetings back to the staff at large. The council acts as a resource to the president and University administrators to offer staff feedback on University affairs upon request.

The council will work to identify inequities within the staff experience and elevate them to the appropriate department/division for resolution and will intentionally consider how its work impacts all staff across campus.

## Objectives

- ➔ Increase the sense of belonging, recognition, and value of staff members in their relationship to the University.
- ➔ Identify staff concerns and propose recommendations.
- ➔ Promote the development of inclusive policies aimed at retaining current staff members and attracting talented new staff members.
- ➔ Integrate staff more fully into University affairs while fostering a culture of mutual support, respect, and professionalism.

## Membership

Membership in the Staff Association includes all personnel, excluding classroom instructors and employees with voting faculty status. Staff personnel are identified as those employees who work full time, part time, or in a temporary capacity. For purposes of membership in the Staff Association, full-time students employed by the University will not be eligible. The Staff Association will elect members to the Staff Affairs Council.

The Staff Association/Staff Affairs Council is not a labor organization, and its purpose is not to negotiate grievances, labor disputes, wages, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

# Staff Affairs Council Bylaws

## Staff Affairs Council

The Staff Affairs Council serves as a steering committee for the Staff Association. The council will consist of officers (positions detailed below), division representatives, affinity representatives, non-voting liaisons, and at-large positions. The council will seek representation across social identity, positional authority, category (exempt and non-exempt; part-time and full-time; supervisory and non-supervisory) and divisional representation when nominating council members.

The Staff Affairs Council shall be composed of no less than 9 and no more than 20 members, including officers. Staff Affairs Council members will be elected by the Staff Association. Each division will elect their own representative; at-large and affinity representatives will be elected by the entire Staff Association. Council members are encouraged to nominate/recruit community members for service on the council.

## Council Elections

Annual elections for Council representatives will occur on a regular schedule:

Call for nominations: March 1–15

Election: April 1–15

Organizational meeting: after the close of elections, but no later than June 15

## Council Terms

Council members will serve three-year terms beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30, with the objective of a rotation of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the council each year. For the first election,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the members will be elected to a one-year term,  $\frac{1}{3}$  to a two-year term and  $\frac{1}{3}$  to a three-year term. Representative seats filled mid-cycle are for the duration of the representative term, not for a full three-year term.

Organizational Year: The inaugural year of the Staff Affairs Council, (July 2021—June 2022), will be an organizational year in which the Council will establish committees, working structure, University relationships, etc. The first election cycle will therefore take place in the spring of 2023. Executive Officers' terms will not be subject to the organizational year.

## Council Positions

Council members are expected to attend council meetings and report back to their respective representative group.

### Division Representatives (9 positions, each elected by the staff in the respective division)

- Administration
- Admission and Financial Aid
- Advancement
- Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics (PERA)
- Communications
- Provost and Dean of the Faculty
- Dean of the College
- Equity and Diversity
- Finance

### Affinity Group Representatives (5 positions)

(Additional affinity groups will be added as needed.)

- LGBTQ+
- Employees of Color
- People with Disabilities
- Part-time staff
- New staff <5 years

Affinity group representative positions are open to all staff employees. These representatives amplify the voices of these communities and help ensure their perspectives are heard and considered by the council.

### At-Large (up to 6 positions)

- To ensure representation from across the campus, from exempt and non-exempt staff, and to mitigate the disparity in the size of divisions

For three election cycles, beginning with the 2025–26 cycle and ending with the 2027–28 cycle, one existing At-Large Representative position will be designated for non-exempt employees until three of the six positions are filled with non-exempt employees.

At the conclusion of the 2027–28 election cycle, at least three (3) At-Large Representative positions will be designated for non-exempt employees. The remaining three positions may be filled by any employee, regardless of exempt/non-exempt status. If the total number of At-Large Representative positions changes (i.e., with the creation of a new affinity group or division representative) then an exempt position should be converted first, then proceed in an alternating fashion to retain a relative balance.

### Non-Voting Liaisons

- Faculty representative
- SCIC representative
- Committee on ALANA Affairs representative
- Cabinet liaison

## Officers

Officers will be nominated and elected during the annual Organizational Meeting. The council will seek representation across social identity, positional authority, category (exempt and non-exempt; part-time and full-time) and divisional representation when nominating officers.

### Officer Terms

Terms will be based on the fiscal year, beginning July 1. Officers hold terms of two years and can serve no more than two consecutive terms. An officer's representative term supersedes their officer term. In collaboration with the Equity and Diversity division, all officers will be required to participate in training annually, in support of Colgate's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan.

If any officer vacates their term prior to the organizational meeting, the SAC will hold a vote to determine if the vacancy will be filled immediately or wait until the next organizational meeting. The timing and needs of the council should be considered when voting on this matter. If filling immediately, the vote for an interim chair shall follow the organizational meeting procedures for nomination and voting. This can be done at the next regularly scheduled SAC monthly meeting or by special session, if deemed appropriate by the Executive Council.

If any co-chair vacates their term prior to the organization meeting and the SAC decides to fill this role immediately, the SAC will hold a vote to determine who fills the absent co-chair role with the corresponding employment status (i.e., vacant non-exempt co-chair role filled by non-exempt SAC member or vacant exempt co-chair role filled by exempt SAC member).

If for either co-chair position, there are no members who express interest in being nominated to fill the role of co-chair by the corresponding employment status, then the following occurs:

- The vacated co-chair role will be made available for all SAC members to nominate and fill this role, regardless of their exempt or non-exempt status.
- The person elected into the vacated role will serve as Interim Co-Chair.
- The term of the SAC member successfully voted to join the Executive Council as Interim Co-Chair will last until the close of the current academic year in which they were voted in as Interim Co-Chair.
- In the case where there is an exempt or non-exempt status not represented by the co-chairs, a corresponding Liaison position will be created to serve as a voting member on the SAC Executive Council. All SAC members with corresponding exempt or non-exempt status will be nominated to run for said Liaison position. An election will be held for the said Liaison role for all qualified candidates who accept the nomination for the Liaison role. The Liaison's term will last until the close of the current academic year in which they were voted in as Liaison.
  - In the instance that the Liaison role is not filled for the corresponding semester, then the Executive Council will proceed with SAC functions as normal.
  - If the following semester is a spring term, then the Executive Council will proceed with holding elections once again for the Liaison role. The person elected into this role will serve until the end of the academic year.
  - If the following semester is a fall term, then the Executive Council will proceed with holding elections for the vacant SAC co-chair(s), following regular election procedures.

## Officer Positions

Officer positions include: Co-Chair (exempt), Co-Chair (non-exempt), Vice Chair of Membership and Representation, Vice Chair of Governance, Vice Chair of Communications, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### Co-Chair (Exempt) and Co-Chair (Non-Exempt)

- Presides and keeps order over all council meetings; is fair and impartial and protects the rights of all members
- Manages the activities/direction of the council
- Represents the council at conferences, meetings, etc. and designates an alternate during absences
- Coordinates the annual report/summary
- Hosts the Staff Association meetings, and consults on all-staff meetings, in conjunction with the Communications Committee
- Oversees communications to the community
- Advances adopted resolutions to University administration and shares response with the Staff Association

### Vice Chair: Governance

- Oversees the election of the Staff Affairs Council and officers according to the adopted bylaws
- Oversees the process of amending the bylaws
- Performs the duties of secretary and/or treasurer in case of vacancy or temporary absence
- Is thoroughly familiar with and advises on the bylaws, parliamentary procedure (utilizing Robert's Rules of Order), and other rules of the Staff Affairs Council

### Vice Chair: Communication

- Creates strategies to ensure the council is communicating effectively with staff at large and oversees the conduit(s) by which staff communicate to the Staff Affairs Council
- Oversees regular and ongoing communication to the Colgate community regarding council programming, events, etc. In collaboration with the Office of Communications, these can be distributed through the Colgate employee newsletter, *Inside Colgate*, as well as on the Staff Affairs Council website, the Colgate calendar, etc.
- Organizes the all-staff meetings and associated events in consultation with SAC co-chairs and other University administrators

### Vice Chair: Membership and Representation

- Evaluating staff council representation
- Conduct training, facilitate DEI training
- Coordinate recommendations for staff membership on University committees

### Secretary

- Records all votes and minutes of the meetings
- Maintains and safeguards official records of the council, including but not limited to the council minutes and documentation
- Working with the co-chairs, sends notices of all meetings to the council
- Reserves conference space for meetings

### Treasurer

- Develops the annual budget in collaboration with the council and the appropriate University staff.
- Records expenditures made by or on behalf of the council
- Completes accurate reports of the group's finances
- Assists in the auditing of program funds, when needed
- Manages and monitors the Staff Affairs Council organization and accounts

## Organizational Meeting

The Council will hold an annual organizational meeting to occur as soon as possible after the conclusion of elections, but no later than June 15. In this meeting, the Council:

1. elects the officers of the SAC for the vacant positions in the next term in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Bylaws;
2. receives nominations and appoints representatives to committees with vacancies that occur in the next term;
3. receives nominations and appoints representatives to standing University committees with vacancies that occur in the next term; and,
4. sets a schedule of regular meetings for the next session.

All members who will be seated as of the start of the next term of the Council are voting members for the purposes of the meeting and must make every reasonable effort to attend and participate. Representatives who are unable to attend the organizational meeting but wish to be nominated for a role may self-nominate prior to the meeting by contacting the person who will be chairing the organizational meeting. Members whose terms expire in the coming year shall not attend this meeting. The meeting must be held in closed session.

### Chairing of the meeting:

1. If one co-chair is up for re-election the other will chair this meeting
2. If both are able to chair, they may co-chair this meeting
3. If both are running for re-election, this meeting is chaired by a Vice Chair not up for election in this order: Governance, Membership, Communications

### Order of business:

1. The first order of business will be to nominate and elect vacant officer positions. If any positions are uncontested, the Chair may decide to vote by hand instead of by secret ballot.
2. The second order will be to establish SAC committee roles for the coming term. Representatives will self-appoint their role on the committee(s) for which they choose to serve.
3. The third order of business will be to identify any vacant University committees and begin the nomination process. If any positions are uncontested, the Chair may decide to vote by hand instead of by secret ballot.
4. The final order of business will be to decide on the schedule of regular meetings for the next session.

## Committees of the Staff Affairs Council (SAC)

### Standing Committees

- Executive Council: Chaired by the Co-Chairs; manages the executive council governance, runs the executive council meetings. Council members will include all elected officers
- Governance: Chaired by the vice chair, governance; manages the annual election of Council members and officers; recommends election policy; manages by-laws
- Communication: Chaired by the vice chair, communication; manages all-staff meeting; manages communications to Staff Association
- Representation: Chaired by vice chair, membership and representation; representation on Council reflects University needs; manage training

All Council members will serve on a committee. New standing committees can be formed as needed with vote by the Staff Affairs Council. Ad hoc working groups can be formed as needed by a vote of the Executive Council .

## Resolutions and Recommendations

Resolutions or official recommendations of the Staff Affairs Council will be shared with the full Staff Affairs Council and must be available for comment and feedback for no less than five (5) business days prior to being presented to the President's Cabinet. A member of the SAC will follow up with Cabinet, if needed, to facilitate a timely response. Any recommendations or resolutions submitted to Cabinet should be reflected in the Annual Summary.

## Annual Summary

An annual summary will be published once a year to summarize the work of the Staff Affairs Council. It should be completed by the end of the academic year and posted online and announced to the full Staff Association before the start of the next academic year. The report should be approximately one page in length and list the accomplishments, recommendations, and resolutions from the previous academic year.

## Staff Affairs Council Meetings

### Regular Meetings

The council will hold twelve (12) regular meetings each year, typically monthly, at a time and place designated by the secretary, in collaboration with the co-chairs. Meeting invitations will be sent by the secretary a minimum of one (1) week prior to the meeting date. A meeting reminder should be sent on the day before the scheduled meeting.

With the chair's approval, any Staff Affairs Council member can call a special meeting with one week's notice of the scheduled date. Attendance at regular meetings is expected of council members, although it is not required that council members be in attendance at each and every meeting. Substitutes are not needed. If a council member cannot make a regular meeting, notification should be made to the co-chairs or secretary.

### Minutes

The secretary takes notes during each regular meeting. Minutes are posted in a timely manner to the council shared Google Drive. A condensed version of the minutes may be posted for public viewing within the Colgate community.

### Quorum

A quorum for a meeting of the council consists of at least 51% of the total council.

## Voting

The council will follow *Robert's Rules of Order*.

- Issues to be voted on by the SAC will be decided by a simple majority (51%) of the total council (not just those present during the voting).
- Absentee or proxy votes are permitted
- Emailed votes are allowed as well.
- Tie votes are considered defeated.
- All council members have the right to vote.

## Staff Affairs Council Meetings with University Leadership

The senior administrator responsible for overseeing human resources (or designated individual) will act as the primary liaison between the Staff Affairs Council and University leadership. The council may also liaise with other members of University leadership as appropriate.

The Staff Affairs Council will request to attend quarterly meetings with University leadership (i.e. standing cabinet meetings).

## Bylaws/Articles Amendment Process

No amendment to the bylaws may be introduced and voted upon in the same meeting. The committee member(s) proposing an amendment(s) to the bylaws must provide the council with advance notice at least seven (7) days prior to the next council meeting. Proposed bylaw or article amendments will be shared with the entire Staff Affairs Council and must be available for comment and feedback for no less than five (5) business days prior to being presented to a vote by the council.

A vote of at least 51% of the council is needed to adopt amendments to the bylaws.

It should be understood that the University may override council bylaws to ensure that they are in alignment with University policies and procedures.

## Business Items

Items not completed by the end of the academic year may be continued the next academic year.

Any member of the council can initiate new business for the council to consider and/or undertake.