

# **THE BYLAWS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN STAFF SENATE**

These Bylaws became effective, as approved by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Staff Senate, on January 13, 2023. Subsequent amendments and changes to these Bylaws were approved and ratified on the dates listed under each relevant section or subsection. These Bylaws can be accessed online at <https://staffsenate.unl.edu/documents/bylaws/>.

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**Jordan Gonzales**  
**Staff Senate President**

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**Joann Ross**  
**Staff Senate Coordinator & Executive Secretary**

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**Doug Pellatz**  
**Staff Senate Bylaws Committee Co-Chair**

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**Lisa Vonfeldt**  
**Staff Senate Bylaws Committee Co-Chair**

## **Chapter X**

### **X.1. Staff Government**

- X.1.1. Purpose.** The purpose of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Staff Senate is to be an advisory body on issues, institutional policies, and practices that relate to the staff, to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas, to promote common interests among the staff, to advocate for staff welfare and development, to suggest revisions and initiatives to improve staff policies, and to participate in the formulation of institutional policy and governance.
- X.1.2. Organization.** The powers of the staff shall be exercised by the Staff Senate and UNL Staff Assembly established by this chapter.
- X.1.3. Composition of the Staff Assembly.** The UNL Staff Assembly shall be comprised of any employee of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Nebraska Extension, and the University of Nebraska System not explicitly represented by the UNL Faculty Senate or other organized University of Nebraska entity, the graduate student assembly, or Association of Students of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (ASUN) whose role supports the activities and mission of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, has at least a 0.25 FTE, and does not have on-call status.

*History: X.1.3. Amended on January 11, 2024.*

*X.1.3. Amended on November 14, 2024.*

### **X.2. Duties of the Senators**

- X.2.1. Expectations.** Each member shall attend all meetings of the full Staff Senate and serve on at least one standing committee and attend all committee meetings to which they are assigned, unless excused by the committee chair.
- X.2.2. Attendance.** Elected members of the Staff Senate who miss more than three (3) meetings without prior notification in a Senate year may be removed from membership of the Senate by action of the Secretary, with the approval of the President. Service on behalf of the Staff Senate would be considered as being performed at the request of the Chancellor, and according to UNL Human Resources Compensable Work Time for Hourly Paid Employees Policy, would be considered time worked.

### **X.3. Elections, Removals, Vacancies**

- X.3.1. Eligibility and Terms.** A candidate for election to the Staff Senate must be a member of the UNL Staff Assembly and a member of the constituency they seek to represent at the time of election, have an appointment of 0.25 FTE or greater, have at least six (6) months of service at UNL at the time of nomination, and not have temporary employment status. Any individual with less than 0.5 FTE must have written approval from their supervisor in order to be nominated.

*History: X.3.1. Amended on September 14, 2023.*

- X.3.1.A. Sessions.** Sessions of the Staff Senate will start on July 1st and end on June 30th. Senators shall be elected for terms of three (3) sessions or until their successors are elected. No elected person may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

*History: X.3.1.A. Added on May 9, 2024.*

- X.3.2. Districts.** Districts are organized by organizational unit. The number of representatives per organizational unit will be reviewed and/or updated periodically by the Elections Committee. The Staff Senate shall have a maximum of 57 voting members. If a member of the Assembly changes employment to a different district during the nomination or election process, their status should reflect their most recent district. If a Senator changes employment to a different district during their term, the Senator will be removed from the Senate, their seat will be treated as vacant, and the vacancy will be filled according to section X.3.5.

*History: X.3.2. Amended on September 14, 2023.*

*X.3.2. Amended on January 16, 2025.*

- X.3.3. Conduct of Elections.** In the second week of January, the Staff Senate shall advertise that nominations will be accepted for any open seats in the Senate. Nominations for vacancies shall be sent to the Elections Committee no later than the first week of February. Ballots will be electronically distributed to all Assembly members immediately after the Staff Senate meeting in March and voting will be open until the end of March. Elected Senators will be announced in April. Nominations from a particular organizational unit must be made in writing by an Assembly member from that constituency with the consent of the nominee. All eligible job function nominees shall be placed on the ballot. The voting shall be online and anonymous, with the voters casting

votes for the people in their district equal to the number of open seats available in the district at the time of the election. The candidates with the most votes for the number of seats available will be elected. In the case of a tie, the winner will be determined by chance by the Executive Committee.

*History: X.3.3. Amended on September 14, 2023.  
X.3.3. Amended on January 11, 2024.*

**X.3.4. Removal of Senators.** Members with repetitive excused absences totaling four or more of the regular meetings during an academic year, may be subject to removal from the Staff Senate. The Secretary shall notify the President in writing of any member who is not meeting the attendance requirement. The Secretary shall notify the member of their status and the procedure for removal via email twice, each email being three business days apart. The member shall respond within 10 business days of the second email sent date. Based on the nature of the response or non-response from the member, the Executive Committee shall make a recommendation for appropriate remedial action to the Senate.

**X.3.5. Vacancies.** Senate vacancies due to early removal or resignation shall be filled by the alternate from the same district who received the next highest number of votes from the previous election. The alternate will serve for the remaining term of that seat. If less than six months remain in that term at the time of appointment, then that time is not considered a full term of office.

*History: X.3.5. Amended on November 14, 2024.*

**X.3.5.A.** If the alternate declines the seat or no alternate is available, the President shall appoint an assembly member from the district to serve until the next election. The elected assembly member as outlined in X.3.3. would fill the remainder of the open seat's term.

*History: X.3.5.A. Added on November 14, 2024.*

**X.3.5.B.** If a seat is vacant after the election outlined in X.3.3., the President shall appoint an assembly member from the district to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the open seat's term.

*History: X.3.5.B. Added on November 14, 2024.*

#### **X.4. Non-Voting Members**

- X.4.1. Ex-Officio Members.** Ex-officio members representing another University organization or unit will include the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Chief of Staff, an individual or representative from each of the Chancellor's Commissions, University of Nebraska Office Professionals Association (UNOPA), UNL Faculty Senate, and the ASUN. Ex-officio members are free to attend all open meetings of the Staff Senate, but do not have voting privileges and are ineligible to hold elected or committee chair positions.

*History: X.4.1. Amended on November 14, 2024.*

- X.4.2. Affiliate Members.** Affiliate members include a staff person recruited on an as-needed basis for Staff Senate endeavors requiring expertise outside of the current Senate membership. Affiliate members do not have voting privileges and are ineligible to hold elected or committee chair positions. Affiliate members are chosen as needed by the appropriate committee chair and approved by the Executive Committee. Length of affiliation is determined by the Executive Committee.

#### **X.5. Officers**

- X.5.1. Officers and Duties.** The officers of the Senate shall be President, Vice President of Internal Affairs, Vice President of External Affairs, Secretary, Executive Secretary, and Executive Advisor. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority adopted by the society.
- X.5.2. Nomination Procedure, Time of Elections.** The Executive Secretary will request nominations for officer positions for the following term from staff senators after election results are announced in April. Nominations will be accepted until voting for each officer's position commences at the July orientation meeting. Voting will take place in person at the July orientation meeting by current and newly elected senators and officers will be announced at that meeting. Senators whose terms are ending prior to August are ineligible to vote.

*History: X.5.2. Amended on January 11, 2024.*

- X.5.3. Election of Officers, Term of Office.** The candidate with the most votes will be chosen for office. The officers shall be elected by ballot to serve for one (1) session and their term will begin at the close of the orientation meeting. The President must have been an

elected member of the Executive Committee. Every officer must be a member of the Executive Committee or a chair/co-chair of a standing committee. The Executive Advisor is appointed by the President and is customarily the immediate Past President.

*History: X.5.2. Amended on January 11, 2024.*

**X.5.3.A. Officer Vacancies.** In the event that the President vacates their position, the Vice President of Internal Affairs shall assume the duties for the remainder of the President's term. Should any other elected executive officer vacate their position, including the scenario where the Vice President of Internal Affairs assumes the role of the vacated President, a special election shall be convened to appoint a replacement officer. The timing of this election shall be determined by the Executive Committee, ensuring the most efficient timeline possible.

*History: X.5.3.A. Added on May 9, 2024.*

**X.5.4. Office Holding Limitations.** No member shall hold more than one office at a time and no member shall be eligible to serve two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

**X.5.5. Duties of the President.**

- A. The President shall be the chief representative of the UNL Staff Assembly to the Campus and System Administrators, the Board of Regents, and the State.
- B. The duties of the President in addition to those specified above shall include:
  - 1. Serving as the chair of all meetings of the Staff Senate and the Executive Committee;
  - 2. Arranging the agendas for the Staff Senate in consultation with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, and the Executive Committee;
  - 3. Ensuring motions of the Staff Senate that require external response are brought promptly to the attention of the appropriate administrators or committees and that the responses are reported back to the Senate as expeditiously as possible;
  - 4. Dealing with any matter of importance to the staff, the President may delegate duties to the officers or other suitable staff members and may appoint special committees in consultation with the Executive Committee; and

5. Appointing a member of the Senate to every standing, campus-wide committee that lacks a representative from the Senate.

**X.5.6. Duties of the Vice President for Internal Affairs.**

- A. The Vice President for Internal Affairs shall serve as President in the absence of the President at any meeting of the UNL Assembly, Staff Senate, Executive Committee, or meetings with campus and system administrators or the Board of Regents and the State. This position will be the point of contact for all committees within the University of Nebraska–Lincoln requesting Staff Senate representation when the President is not available.

**X.5.7. Duties of the Vice President for External Affairs.**

- A. The Vice President for External Affairs shall serve as President in the absence of the President and the Vice President for Internal Affairs at any meeting of the UNL Assembly, Staff Senate, Executive Committee, or meetings with campus and system administrators or the Board of Regents and the State. This position will be the point of contact for all committees outside of UNL requesting Staff Senate representation when the President is not available.

**X.5.8. Duties of the Executive Advisor.**

- A. Assist the new President in transitioning to the role;
- B. Support the roles and duties of the Executive Committee officers as needed; and
- C. Serve as a resource for the President and the Executive Committee.

*History: X.5.8. Amended on May 9, 2024.*

**X.5.9. Duties of the Secretary.**

- A. Keep a record of all the proceedings of the organization;
- B. Keep on file all committee reports;
- C. Keep the organization’s official membership roll, including email addresses, and to call the roll when required;
- D. Make the minutes and records available to members on request; and
- E. Assist and complement the Executive Secretary.

**X.5.10. Duties of the Executive Secretary.**

- A. Keep a record of all the proceedings of the organization;
- B. Keep on file all committee reports;

- C. Keep the organization's official membership roll, including email addresses, and to call the roll when required;
- D. Make the minutes and records available to members on request;
- E. Send out to the Assembly or Senators any required notice of each meeting and to conduct the general correspondence of the Assembly or Senators;
- F. Prepare, prior to each meeting, an order of business for the use of the presiding officer;
- G. Maintain and update the Staff Senate website;
- H. Perform duties in tandem with the Secretary;
- I. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee; and
- J. Maintain a copy of the current Staff Senate Bylaws and keep a history of the changes.

*History: X.5.10. Amended on November 14, 2024.*

## **X.6. Meetings**

**X.6.1. Meetings.** The meetings of the Staff Senate shall be open to the public. Executive sessions may be initiated by majority vote of the Senate. In executive sessions, attendance is limited to members of the Staff Senate, the Chancellor of the University or a designee, and other persons approved by a majority vote of the Senate. Some portion of each regular meeting must be open. A report of each executive session must be made available at the next open meeting.

**X.6.2. Frequency.** During the Academic year, the Staff Senate shall meet every other month. The Staff Senate will have an orientation meeting for new senators and incoming/outgoing officers sometime during the summer.

*History: X.6.2. Amended on January 11, 2024.*

*X.6.2. Amended on May 9, 2024.*

**X.6.3. Participation by Non-Members.** Staff and administrators who are not members of the Staff Senate or UNL Staff Assembly shall have the right to request the President of the Senate to place matters on the agenda of the Staff Senate and to participate in the resulting discussion but cannot vote on the matter.

**X.6.4. Mode of Participation.** The meetings of the Staff Senate and Staff Assembly may be held in person, through electronic means, or a hybrid of both as deemed necessary or as preferred by each body.



**X.6.5. Voting.** Voting in the Staff Senate may be held in person, through electronic means, or a hybrid of both as deemed necessary or as preferred by each body. In the case of electronic voting taking place in-between scheduled meetings, the Senators must be given 7 days' notice before votes are tallied. Votes that are not cast are considered abstentions. A Senator cannot be considered absent for casting such an abstention.

**X.6.6. Meetings of the Staff Assembly.**

**X.6.6.1. Convening Meetings.** Meetings of the Staff Assembly can be convened on seven days' notice by the Chancellor, the President of the Staff Senate, a petition by one hundred members of the Staff Assembly, or a majority vote of the Staff Senate. A meeting may be convened with three days' notice, if called jointly by the Chancellor and the President of the Staff Senate. The President shall preside at all meetings. Notice of the Special Meeting shall specify the purpose of the meeting and no business other than the stated purpose or purposes may be transacted during such meeting.

**X.6.6.2. Procedures and Powers.** The discussion at meetings of the Staff Assembly shall be informational and deliberative. The Assembly's deliberations may refer matters for consideration to the Staff Senate, appropriate campus-wide committees, or administrators. The Assembly's deliberations may order a referendum by ballot of all members of the Assembly. The adoption of a position by referendum by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those members of the Assembly voting on that issue supersedes any action taken by the Staff Senate.

**X.7. Staff Senate Committees**

**X.7.1. Committees.** Committee members shall be appointed at the first meeting of the term. Committee members will be appointed by the President or presiding Chair. Committees are responsible for reporting to the Liaison Committee two weeks before each full Senate meeting. Standing Committees will meet on opposite months of the full Senate unless otherwise noted. Standing committees include the Executive Committee, the Bylaws Committee, the Liaison Committee, the Communications Committee, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, the Elections Committee, the Personnel Affairs Committee, the Recognition Committee, and the Legislation Committee.

**X.7.1.2. Executive Committee.**

**X.7.1.2.1. Composition.** The Executive Committee shall consist of six (6) members, including the President, the Vice President for Internal Affairs, the Vice President for External Affairs, the Executive Advisor, the Secretary, and the Executive Secretary.

**X.7.1.2.2. Duties of the Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall meet once per week or as necessary. The Executive Committee shall act for the staff between meetings of the Senate and the Assembly. The Executive Committee shall meet with the Chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at least once per semester, except when waived by mutual consent. The Executive Committee shall advise and otherwise assist the Chancellor in implementing all the duties and administrative functions specified in 2.8.2 of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The Executive Committee shall report to the Staff Senate about such meetings and receive instructions from the Staff Senate concerning the position of the staff relating to the operations of the University. The Executive Committee shall also meet with the Chief of Staff at least monthly, except when waived by mutual consent, and shall advise and otherwise assist the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff in carrying out the duties and functions specified in Section 1.2.2.3 of the Bylaws of UNL.

**X.7.1.3. Bylaws Committee.**

**X.7.1.3.1. Purpose.** Review of and make recommendations for amendments to the bylaws and the Staff Senate policies and procedures.

**X.7.1.3.2. Duties of the Bylaws Committee.**

- A. Serve as a resource for the Executive Committee and the Staff Senate regarding potential amendments to the bylaws;
- B. Review proposed amendments to ensure they are consistent with the current bylaws and bring proposed amendments to the Staff Senate at the next regular meeting for a vote of approval;
- C. Compile the approved amendments and present the amended bylaws to the Executive Committee at the last meeting of the year; and
- D. Act as a parliamentary advisor during Staff Senate meetings.

**X.7.1.4. Liaison Committee.**

**X.7.1.4.1. Purpose.** Oversee the appointment of Senate members to liaise with other campus committees and bring issues or important information to the attention of the full Senate.

**X.7.1.4.2. Duties of the Liaison Committee.**

- A. Coordinate representation of Staff Senate members with organizations and commissions both within and outside of campus;
- B. Recommend who will serve as representatives on organizations and commissions;
- C. Find and recommend replacements for liaisons as seats become available;
- D. Compile committee reports to present during Senate meetings; and
- E. Review and update annually a list of Senate and other campus-wide standing committees.

*History: X.7.1.4.2.B. Amended on September 14, 2023.*

**X.7.1.5. Communications Committee.**

**X.7.1.5.1. Purpose.** Create and maintain communications for the Staff Senate.

**X.7.1.5.2. Duties of the Communications Committee.**

- A. Promote the Staff Senate's work and opportunities for staff engagement on a consistent basis;
- B. Work to establish and increase awareness of the Staff Senate's role to advocate for and impact staff-related concerns and issues;
- C. Highlight applicable messaging from campus partners via Staff Senate's social media channels and its website;
- D. Supervise and suggest updates for the Staff Senate website; and
- E. Maintain an active list of University staff for communications purposes.

**X.7.1.6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.**

**X.7.1.6.1. Purpose.** Work toward an equitable, diverse, and fully inclusive Senate body and campus.

**X.7.1.6.2. Duties of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.**

- A. Address policies and long-standing practices that perpetuate racism and inequity on campus, particularly regarding staff affairs;

- B. Represent Staff Senate in campus and regional committees and workshops about diversity, inclusion, and equity;
- C. Solicit information from and interact with the various diversity groups on campus and in the community in support of their goals; and
- D. Sponsor events/programs with other diversity groups on campus.

**X.7.1.7. Elections Committee.**

**X.7.1.7.1. Purpose.** Oversee and help coordinate Staff Senate and officer elections along with the Executive Secretary.

**X.7.1.7.2. Duties of the Elections Committee.**

- A. Solicit candidates for open seats in the Senate, prioritizing candidates are representative of staff job categories and diversity;
- B. Organize elections in accordance with Section X.3.3.;
- C. Maintain records of election results and terms of office;
- D. Evaluate the composition of each electoral constituency to ensure proper representation and provide a report to the executive committee prior to each election; and
- E. Propose the apportionment of Senate seats according to established guidelines every other year at the October meeting.

**X.7.1.8. Personnel Affairs Committee.**

**X.7.1.8.1. Purpose.** Provide an avenue for the regular exchange of ideas on personnel policies, employee benefits, University policies and procedures, and other matters that relate to University staff.

**X.7.1.8.2. Duties of the Personnel Affairs Committee.**

- A. Review personnel-related grievances filed by staff members upon request;
- B. Review current benefits and personnel policies regarding compensation, hiring, hiring freezes, etc.;
- C. Make recommendations for changes that affect employees; and
- D. Propose new benefits and policies that would benefit employees.

**X.7.1.9. Recognition Committee.**

**X.7.1.9.1. Purpose.** Recognize and reward staff for exemplary service to the University or community

**X.7.1.9.2. Duties of the Recognition Committee.**

- A. Determine what campus-wide awards are available and propose new staff awards;
- B. Call for nominations for the awards each spring;
- C. Review submissions in terms of requirements;
- D. Notify nominees and recipients;
- E. Notify appropriate University offices and work with Communications Committee to publicize outcomes; and
- F. Plan and implement an annual Staff Celebration Day.

**X.7.1.10. Legislation Committee.**

**X.7.1.10.1. Purpose.** Monitor state and federal legislative activity and clarify legislative intent for the University staff.

**X.7.1.10.2. Duties of the Legislation Committee.**

- A. Monitor all bills and proposals within the state or federal government that may impact UNL staff; and
- B. Work with the University legislative liaisons to support University initiatives and clarify uncertainties about legislative intent or potential legislative impact.

**X.8. Amendments**

**X.8.1. Amendments.** The bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Senate by a two-thirds vote, provided that the final amendment language has been set in writing, and distributed to all Senators, at least 30 days prior to the vote. Amendments should be submitted to the chair of the Bylaws Committee in writing at least 45 days prior to the next regular meeting of the Senate. The Bylaws Committee shall work with the submitter to format the proposal and submit it to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall distribute the proposal to the entire body of the Staff Senate in preparation for a vote at the next full Senate meeting.

*History: X.8.1. Amended on May 11, 2023.*

**X.9. Resolutions**

**X.9.1. Resolutions.** Resolutions shall be considered non-binding advisory and consultative business to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The purpose is to provide the clear and tangible position of the Senate on relevant staff issues.

## **X.10. Parliamentary Authority**

- X.10.1. Parliamentary Procedure.** The body of rules governing the proceedings of meetings shall be as prescribed in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*. These rules shall apply to any regular or special meeting of the Staff Senate.