

**The College of New Jersey
Staff Senate
Constitution**

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization is the Staff Senate of The College of New Jersey.

ARTICLE II

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Staff Senate is the representative voice of the college staff for purposes of college governance. The staff is defined as permanent non-faculty employees of The College of New Jersey including all classified, administrative unit and administrative non-unit job categories with the exception of the Cabinet Officers of The College.

ARTICLE III

MISSION

- A. The Staff Senate of The College of New Jersey contributes to the advancement of the College's mission by serving as the official representative body of all non-faculty staff and by actively participating in campus governance. The Staff Senate does not purport to be a collective bargaining unit and will not negotiate terms and conditions of employment.
- B. In fulfilling this role, the Staff Senate shall:
 - 1. Administer a fair process for recommending or appointing staff representatives to serve on college-wide committees, planning councils and program councils within The College's governance structure other than those appointed by the College President.
 - 2. Consider and recommend action on existing and proposed policies and procedures, as well as any other matters related to the interests of The College, the campus community, and other stakeholders.
 - 3. Provide a forum for examination of common concerns and issues related to quality of life and employment for all non-faculty staff (excluding terms and conditions of employment subject to union negotiation).
 - 4. Maintain and promote effective channels of communication among staff, faculty, students, the administration, the Board of Trustees, and other stakeholders.
 - 5. Develop and implement other goals and activities as determined by the Staff Senate to be consistent with its overall purpose and the mission of The College.
 - 6. Be sensitive to a balanced representation across job categories when making staff appointments.
 - 7. Uphold and advance the College's commitment to equal opportunity and appreciation of diversity in all its policies, procedures, decisions, appointments, and other actions.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Staff Senate shall consist of forty-three Senators, the President and Vice President. Senators are recommended or appointed to serve designated terms on college-wide committees, planning councils and program councils of The College governance system and/or designated terms on internal Senate Councils.

- B. Associate Members – Any interested staff member of The College may serve as an Associate Member of the Staff Senate. Associate Members may participate in Staff Senate functions and attend general meetings. Associate Members may serve on internal Senate Councils and external governance committees and councils, with the exception of the five standing committees.
- C. All College staff is represented by the Staff Senate and may attend and participate in general Staff Senate meetings and functions.

ARTICLE V

VOTING REQUIREMENTS AT SENATE MEETINGS

- A. Eligibility - all Senators and executive officers, with the exception of the President, may vote on matters of official Senate business. Associate Members have no voting privileges within the Senate.
- B. Method - voting shall be conducted by a show of hands. A secret ballot shall be used in the following instances:
 - 1. The Constitution requires a secret ballot
 - 2. A Senator's request for secret ballot is approved by majority vote
 - 3. Election of the President, Vice President and Senators requires a secret ballot (see Bylaws, Article III)
 - 4. At the discretion of the President
- C. General Motions (except those noted in section D below) will be passed by a majority vote of the quorum (see Bylaws, Article V).
- D. The following motions require a two-thirds vote of the quorum for their adoption:
 - 1. Amend, annul, repeal, or rescind any part of the Constitution, Bylaws, or Rules of Order previously adopted. These actions require previous notice (see Constitution, Article XIII)
 - 2. Amend or rescind a standing rule, program, or order of business, or a resolution, previously adopted, without notice being given at a previous meeting or in the agenda of the meeting
 - 3. Move to executive session
 - 4. Removal or impeachment of a senator or executive officer of the Staff Senate (see Constitution, Article XII)

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS

- A. Executive Officers of the Staff Senate shall constitute the executive committee of the Senate and consist of:
 - 1. President
 - 2. Vice President
 - 3. Chairs of the Senate Councils
- B. The responsibilities of the President and Vice President shall be those as outlined in Article I of the Bylaws.

- C. The responsibilities of the Council Chairs shall be to lead the senate councils in accordance with Article IV of the Bylaws

ARTICLE VII

TERMS OF OFFICE

- A. The term of office for Staff Senators will be three years. Each term will begin June 1. Terms will be staggered to permit elections of approximately one-third of the senate each year.
- B. Terms of office for the President and Vice President will be for two years.
- C. The President and Vice President may be reelected for no more than two consecutive terms. Senators will be limited to no more than two consecutive terms on any one college-wide committee or internal Senate council. If circumstances arise where it is necessary for more than two consecutive terms to be served, the Election and Constitution Committee will review the case, make a recommendation and inform the Executive Council for final decision.

ARTICLE VIII

ELECTIONS

- A. Election of the President and Vice President shall be conducted (on each two-year cycle) before the election of Senators.
- B. Election of Senators shall be conducted in accordance with Article III of the Bylaws.
- C. Appointment of Senators shall be conducted every spring in accordance with Article III of the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX

GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Senators serving on a college-wide committee, planning council or program council shall:

- A. Represent the Staff Senate and staff in the discharge of their responsibilities.
- B. Inform the Staff Senate of pertinent matters and actions taken at governance committees or councils by:
 - 1. Informing the Senate of discussions and actions taken at meetings of each governance committee or council
 - 2. Forwarding copies of minutes to the President once they have been approved by the respective committee
- C. Bring matters from the Staff Senate before the respective governance committee or councils.

ARTICLE X

SENATE COUNCILS

- A. The Staff Senate councils shall consist of the following:
 - 1. Election & Constitution Council
 - 2. Communication & Public Relations Council
 - 3. Staff Development & Recognition Council
 - 4. Special Events & Community Building Council

- B. The Chair of each Council will serve on the Executive Committee of the Senate and shall be nominated by fellow Council members to the President (see Bylaws, Article IV)
- C. Membership and participation on Councils is encouraged and open to all College Staff.

ARTICLE XI

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL CONDUCT

- A. Any College staff member who serves as an officer of one of The College's bargaining units may not serve as an executive officer of the Staff Senate but is not precluded from serving as a Senator.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing and in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitution Council.
- B. Staff members from the Office of Human Resources may not serve as executive officers of the Senate but are not precluded from serving as Senators.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing and in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitution Council.
- C. Staff Senators are obligated to adhere to the TCNJ Policy - Code of Ethics for Employees of The College of New Jersey.

ARTICLE XII

REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

- A. Any Executive Officer or, Senator can be removed from office by the Staff Senate or nonperformance of duties. A petition requesting such removal can be brought to the Executive Committee by a simple majority of the quorum of the Senate. The Executive Committee will investigate the matter on a case-by-case basis and will recommend action to the Senate.
- B. The Senate will make the final decision by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote of the quorum will carry the vote. Possible causes of expulsion constituting grounds for removal from office shall include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. use of the powers of the Senate, real or implied, to further personal causes
 - 2. excessive absenteeism
 - 3. failure to consistently fulfill the responsibility of the Senate positions
 - 4. no more than two unexcused absences
- C. Resignation in good standing from the Senate shall require a formal, written letter of resignation to be submitted to the Executive Committee.
- D. Executive Officer replacement procedures:
 - 1. Once removal or resignation is confirmed, the Executive Committee will convene and, after consultation with current Council members, appoints a replacement.
 - 2. Notification for approval by the Senate will occur in accordance with Bylaws, Article IV.
- E. Senator replacement procedures:

1. Once removal or resignation is confirmed, the Election and Constitution Council convenes and determines replacement plan.
2. Notification of senator changes will be sent to the Executive Committee and Steering Chair who will contact the affected College-wide committee or council.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

The approval process of amendments to the Constitution shall be:

- A. A proposal for an amendment must be reviewed by the Election and Constitution Council and submitted to the Executive Committee.
- B. A notice of amendment must be presented by the Executive Committee to all members of the Staff Senate prior to the meeting where the proposal will be discussed. The notice shall explain the proposed amendment in context.
- C. Proposed amendments shall not be voted on until at least one regular meeting after the introduction of the amendment.
- D. Amendments to the Constitution shall be ratified by two-thirds vote of the quorum of the Staff Senate.

ARTICLE XIV

ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION

The Constitution shall be ratified by a majority vote of the ballots cast by current TCNJ staff employees in a general election process.

**The College of New Jersey
Staff Senate
Bylaws**

ARTICLE I

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

A. The President shall:

1. Be a non-voting member of the Senate
2. Prepare for, plan for, and preside over all meetings of the Staff Senate and Executive Committee
3. Serve on the Committee on Planning and Priorities as designated by The College governance structure
4. Represent the Staff Senate at major campus events, on committees, search committees and at various campus
5. Activities as requested by various stakeholders
6. Act as Staff Senate spokesperson in communications with the public
7. Be responsible for oversight of the annual budget
8. Prepare and present the annual report to the Senate and other constituencies
9. Supervise the work of any support staff working on behalf of the Staff Senate
10. Appoints Ad Hoc committees
11. Appoint Senators to serve as chairs of the Senate Councils
12. Invite the TCNJ President to one Senate meeting a year
13. Ensures that all policies, procedures, and required actions of the Staff Senate are conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws

B. The Vice President shall:

1. Be a voting member of the Senate only in case of a tie
2. Convene, or appoint a designee to convene, the Helen Shaw Award Committee
3. Succeed the President in the event that the office becomes vacant
4. Perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President
5. Prepare and distribute annual calendar of Staff Senate activities and procedures
6. Be responsible for the preparation and management of the annual budget
7. Assist in the preparation of the Annual Report
8. Serve as a reference for Rules of Order not otherwise addressed by Constitution and Bylaws utilizing most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order

C The Council Chairs shall:

1. Lead the Senate Councils (Bylaws Article IV)
2. Serve on the Executive Committee of the Senate

ARTICLE II

DUTIES OF STAFF SENATORS

A. Staff Senators shall:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of their respective appointment (i.e. college-wide committee, planning council, program council or internal Senate council).
2. Attend all Senate meetings

3. Make informed decisions
4. Senators shall serve a three year term on the Staff Senate, during which time they shall participate within the college governance or within one of the internal Senate councils.
5. Attend orientation programs related to governance

B. Associate Senators shall:

1. Serve on an internal Senate council (but may not be the chair)
2. Attend Senate meetings
3. Participate on external governance committees and councils, with the exception of the five standing committees.
4. Associate Senators do not have voting privileges and as such there is no term limit for the Associate Senator position (Associate Senators may not serve more than two consecutive years on any given committee or council – see Bylaws, Article III, H)

ARTICLE III

ELECTIONS/NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, SENATORS, AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- A. The Senate is constituted through two distinct yet related selection/election processes. First, the Staff Senate's President and Vice-President are elected through a campus-wide staff election. Second, Senatorial seats which are determined to be vacant by the Election and Constitution Council are filled through a second campus-wide staff election.
- B. All Elections and appointments to the Staff Senate shall be managed by the Election and Constitution Council according to the guidelines outlined in this article.
- C. The Election and Constitution Council is responsible for administering an inclusive election process, ensuring that information about the process, timelines, candidates, and election is readily available to all members of the TCNJ staff.
- D. The timeline for election of Staff Senate President and Vice President is as follows:
 1. By the first week of December, the Election and Constitution Council will send out a general announcement detailing both the anticipated Election and Appointment timeline, and the anticipated position openings for the upcoming cycle.
 2. Ballot applications for the President and Vice President will be sent to current Senators during the first week of February.
 3. Campus-wide staff election of President and Vice President will be conducted by the second week of March.
 4. Newly-elected Presidents and/or Vice Presidents will be formally recognized at the next-to-last Staff Senate meeting of the academic year. They will be included in all meetings of the Executive Committee from that point forward. They will be formally sworn in to their new position at the final Staff Senate meeting of the academic year.
- E. The timeline for election of Staff Senators is as follows:
 1. By the last week of January, the Election and Constitution Council will send out a general announcement detailing both the anticipated Election and Appointment timeline, and the anticipated position openings for the upcoming cycle.
 2. Nominations/applications for open Senatorial Positions due: Third week of March
 3. Ballot for open Senatorial positions due out no later than first week of April

4. Campus-wide staff election of Senators no later than second week of April
 5. The Election and Constitution Council will convene to determine placement plan for newly elected senators.
 6. Inauguration of newly elected Senators and executive officers will take place at the final Staff Senate meeting of the academic year.
- F. Election of Staff Senate President and Vice President is as follows:
1. Eligibility criteria for election of the President and Vice President
 - All candidates must be a current, permanent non-faculty employee of The College and must have at least ten months' experience as an employee of The College at the time of application.
 - Candidates must also have 10 months of active membership as a Senator in good standing (attended a minimum of 75% of scheduled Senate meetings).
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing and in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitution Council.
 2. Application - Applications for the position of Staff Senate President and Vice President will be designed and made available to all current staff Senators by the Election and Constitution Council. Completed ballot applications must be submitted for approval to the Election and Constitution Council. The Election and Constitution Council is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all applicants.
 3. Selection - The Election and Constitution Council, upon review of the Executive Officer ballot applications, shall compose and distribute to the TCNJ staff an official ballot containing names and information on all approved candidates at least nine days before a campus-wide election.
 4. Notification - Ballots will be counted under the supervision of the Election and Constitution Council, which will announce the results of the election to TCNJ staff within 48 hours of the ballot submission deadline. Ballots will be retained for 60 days following public notification of election results. Election results can only be contested within two working days of the period following announcement of election results, in accordance with a process as established by the Election and Constitution Council and approved by the Senate. In case of a tie for either the President or Vice President, the Senate shall hold a meeting and shall elect by majority vote of the quorum the next President or Vice President.
 5. Vacancies
 - President - Upon the resignation or removal of the President, the Vice-President will assume the presidency for the duration of the previous President's term of office. The Vice President will be officially sworn in as President at the Staff Senate meeting immediately following confirmation of the vacancy. If the Vice President declines to serve, the Staff Senate will solicit nominations/applications from the Staff Senate and elect the President by two-thirds vote of the quorum of the Staff Senate. The Election and Constitution Council shall administer the election in a fair and timely manner. Candidates for President must meet the eligibility criteria as established in the Bylaws (Article III.B.1).
 - Vice President - Upon the resignation or removal of the Vice President, the President shall solicit nominations/applications from the Staff Senate and appoint an interim Vice President to serve for the duration of the previous Vice President's term of office. This appointment must be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Staff Senate. The appointed interim Vice President must meet the eligibility criteria as established in the Bylaws, (Article III.B.1).
- G. Election of Senators is as follows:

1. Eligibility criteria for election of Senators are as follows:
 - All candidates must be a current, permanent non-faculty employee of The College.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitution Council.
2. Nomination/Application - The Election and Constitution Council shall solicit nominations each spring for vacant Senatorial positions. Candidates may be nominated by a colleague or may opt to nominate themselves. No staff member's name shall be listed as a possible nominee without that person's approval. The Election and Constitution Council must receive nominations for open Senatorial positions no later than 3rd week of March. The Election and Constitution Council is responsible for verifying the eligibility of all nominees.
3. Election Process - The Election and Constitution Council, upon review of the nominations, shall compose and distribute to the staff an official ballot containing names and information on all approved candidates at least 9 days before campus-wide election ballot submission deadline.
4. Notification - The Election and Constitution Council will announce the results of the election process to TCNJ staff within two working days of the ballot submission deadline. Newly elected Senators shall be asked to indicate their committee or council preferences.
5. Appointment Process – The Elections and Constitution Council will conduct appointments to college-wide governance committees, program councils and internal Senate councils, whenever possible Senator preferences will be solicited and honored. When necessary the Elections and Constitution Council, in conjunction with the Staff Senate Executive Committee, will solicit nominations for recommendation to planning councils. Nominations for recommendation to planning councils will be brought to the Senate for feedback and discussion.
6. Vacancies Due to Transfer or Promotion - Should a Senator be promoted or transferred to a different employment classification (e.g. unit to non-unit) during his or her term, he or she shall remain a Senator for the remainder of that academic year and then relinquish the position. The Election and Constitutional Council shall monitor all such anticipated vacancies (by notification by said senator) and include this vacancy in the annual election process.
7. Vacancies of Senators Due to Resignation or Removal - Upon the resignation or removal of a Senator outside the normal appointment cycle, the Election and Constitution Council shall contact Associate Senators. All interested Associate Senators will be placed on a ballot for vote at next Senate meeting. The elected Senator would serve for the duration of the previous Senator's term. Should none of these individuals be interested in the open position, the position will remain vacant until the next Senatorial election process.

H. Election of Associate Members is as follows:

1. The eligibility criteria for election of Associate Members are as follows:
 - All candidates must be a current, permanent non-faculty employee of The College.
 - Any person not elected as a senator through the normal election process is eligible to become an Associate Member.
 - Appeals of the eligibility requirements noted above shall be brought to the Executive Committee in writing in accordance with guidelines established by the Election and Constitution Council.
2. Election Procedure

- Any staff member interested in serving as an Associate Member may do so by filing an Associate Member Application with the Election and Constitution Council.
 - Associate Member Applications (once eligibility requirements are confirmed) are brought before the membership at the next general meeting. A 2/3 vote of the quorum of the Staff Senate is needed to vote approval of an Associate Member.
 - The Associate Member chooses what non-governance committee or council he/she wishes to serve until the next election of available Senate seats.
3. Service Term – Associate Members cannot serve more than 2 consecutive years on any given council.

ARTICLE IV

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND SENATE COUNCILS

A. Executive Committee Responsibilities

This committee will consist of the President, Vice President and the Chairs of the Senate Councils. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall include but not be limited to: Provide leadership direction for the Staff Senate and Senate councils; delegate appropriate tasks to the Senate councils; coordinate overall senate operations inclusive of monitoring expenditures; prepare annual budget; monitor the committee and council work of the Senators; and prepare an annual Staff Senate report.

B. Senate Council Responsibilities

1. Every April, the members of each Senate Council will nominate to the Staff Senate President a Council Chair from current Council members for the following academic year. The President shall present nominations to the full Senate for confirmation by majority vote at the final meeting of the academic year. If the Council fails to make a recommendation, the President shall appoint a chair and seek confirmation by majority vote of the full Senate.
2. Senators who have not been appointed to a college-wide committee, planning council or program council are required to serve as a member of at least one internal Senate Council.
3. The general responsibilities of Senate Councils shall consist of the following:
 - Each Council shall be responsible for addressing issues delegated by the Executive Committee or Senate.
 - Councils shall establish annual goals and objectives subject to Senate approval.
 - Council functions shall adhere to the guidelines of the Senate Constitution.
 - Councils shall not act independently of the Senate
 - The Chair of each Council shall submit an annual report to the Executive Committee.
 - The Chair of each Council shall submit minutes to the President within seven working days.
 - Each Council shall assess campus events within the scope of their charge to determine impact on staff and provide suggestions to the Executive Committee.

C. The respective responsibilities of each of the Councils shall include but not be limited to:

1. **COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Foster and enhance communication between the Staff Senate, the staff and campus community; be responsible for coordination of publications through newsletters, Web Page, brochures and presentations; keep official attendance records and record minutes of Senate meetings; develop an educational campaign that promotes/markets the Staff Senate to the campus community and, in particular, to the college staff.

2. **STAFF DEVELOPMENT & RECOGNITION:** Provide an orientation on The College's Governance Structure for all new Senators; provide a formal orientation and training program for all new Senators to prepare them to fulfill their assigned responsibilities, provide in-service staff development workshops and seminars open to all staff; coordinate and develop an annual staff recognition program; explore opportunities for staff to build strong and productive relationships with the campus community.
3. **SPECIAL EVENTS & COMMUNITY BUILDING:** Organize events that will build a sense of community among the TCNJ staff; create opportunities for staff volunteers to engage in community service; host forums and activities that will provide staff an opportunity to discuss issues of concern with the Staff Senate.
4. **ELECTION & CONSTITUTION:** Develop election and nomination procedures for approval by the Senate; manage the election and appointment process for the positions of Senate President, Vice President, Senators; monitor all staff senate vacancies; review the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws on an annual basis and recommend revisions and/or amendments. The chair of this Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all business conducted at Staff Senate meetings complies with the Constitution and Bylaws and the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

- A. The Staff Senate shall meet every third Wednesday of the month in accordance with the College's official academic calendar year.
- B. The Quorum for all Senate meeting shall be 50% plus one of all Senate seats.
- C. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- D. A majority of the Senate may compel the President in writing to convene a special meeting of the Senate. Members of the Senate must receive official notification of the meeting at least three working days prior to said meetings.
- E. All meetings of the Senate shall be open to any member of the campus community.
- F. The Senate may go into closed session at the discretion of the President or by approval of two-thirds of the members present.

ARTICLE VI

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

All business conducted by the Staff Senate that is not specifically addressed by the Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of Roberts's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

Bylaws will be amended in the same manner as amendments to the Constitution.