



VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

Staff Employee Advocacy Council

The Staff Employee Advocacy Council (SEAC) serves as an advocate dedicated to the enhancement of the work environment and professional development of its constituents — hourly and salaried staff employees — to enable, motivate, and support the pursuit of individual growth and goals of excellence in their efforts to advance the mission of the University. We serve as an advisory council for our constituents' concerns to the University administration.

Article I. Name of the Council

The official name of this council shall be the Staff Employee Advocacy Council (SEAC).

Article II. Mission

The Staff Employee Advocacy Council (SEAC) serves as an advocate dedicated to the enhancement of the work environment and professional development of its constituents — hourly and salaried staff employees — to enable, motivate, and support the pursuit of individual growth and goals of excellence in their efforts to advance the mission of the University. We serve as an advisory council for our constituents' concerns to the University administration.

Article III. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this council is to provide a forum for discussing matters of importance to staff employees. This council identifies and discusses issues affecting employment, operations, and the University community as a whole, and where appropriate makes recommendations to University leadership on these subjects. This council facilitates informational sessions to educate staff employees on a variety of topics relative to policies, procedures, and available resources. This council also holds events to enrich the University community experience.

In accordance with procedures outlined in the Staff Employee Handbook, members of this council are to serve as representatives in the Human Resource Services grievances process as needed.

Article IV. Membership Eligibility

Any regular full-time, limited full-time, or regular part-time employee of Valparaiso University is eligible to serve as a voting representative on the council.

Article V. Council Membership

- A. Elected Membership
 - a. The committee is composed of 21 elected salaried staff employees and 9 hourly staff employees. Four alternate members will also be

appointed from the election pool. Each member will serve as an “at-large” representative for all staff members on campus.

- i. The representation subcommittee will strive to ensure representation of both salaried and hourly staff employees in a manner that reflects the current composition of the overall University employee breakdown. This will be reevaluated on a regular basis.
- ii. The designation (hourly or salary) of a member at the time they are elected into SEAC will remain that member’s designation for representation and composition purposes until the end of that member’s three year term.

B. Ex-Officio

- a. The Chief of Staff will serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member to participate in the regular scheduled meetings of the Staff Employee Advocacy Council.

C. Alternate Membership

- a. Two hourly and two salaried alternate members will be determined annually from the SEAC election pool according to highest total vote counts. Alternate members may be appointed to serve the remainder of an elected member term should one become available. Alternates are encouraged to attend SEAC annual orientation and maintain ‘readiness’ to serve when called. Once an alternate member is appointed to the council, they are to serve in full capacity as a member-elect.
 - i. Allow either designation (salary or hourly) to fill an open position if an alternate of the same designation as the outgoing member is not available.

Article VI. Membership Expectations

Staff Employees who choose to run for election to SEAC should be committed to the mission and statement of purpose of the council as well as the mission of Valparaiso University. Expectations include monthly council meetings, communication with University staff, and participation on subcommittees, task forces, or as a representative on other standing or ad-hoc University committees.

Members of this council participate in the internal governance of the University through the University Council and other committees as appointed.

This council succeeds through the commitment, passion, and dedication of its members in enhancing the work environment. Each individual member is expected to coordinate with his or her department and/or supervisor to balance the commitment to SEAC with his or her normal work responsibilities according to the procedures outlined in the Staff Employee Handbook.

Any member who misses three meetings in one academic year may be asked to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss continued membership.

Article VII. Membership Terms

The membership term is three years, with one third (three hourly, seven salary) being elected each election cycle. Alternate membership terms vary. See VIII.

Article VIII. Nominations and Elections

Any staff member of the Valparaiso University community may nominate a staff employee to be a candidate for election to the Staff Employee Advocacy Council. Employees may also self-nominate.

An election will be held annually. If either the hourly or salaried group is unable to recruit enough nominees to cover open positions, staff from the other group may be recruited to fill the vacancies.

Uncontested nominations may be approved by vote of the council.

Elections will be conducted during the month of April each year. Elections will be conducted electronically. The official means of communication to staff employees is via the provided @valpo.edu Gmail address. The council will make a best-effort attempt to communicate through other channels such as the Campus Chronicle, printed materials, and word of mouth. All staff are encouraged to vote in both the hourly and salaried elections.

If a position is vacated after the normal election cycle, an alternate member will be proposed by the representation subcommittee to the council and approved by majority vote of the council to complete the vacant term.

In absence of alternate member availability, the Staff Employee Advocacy Council Representation Subcommittee is charged with seeking additional alternate candidates to fill vacancies. These candidates will be approved by vote of the council.

Article IX. Council Officers

There shall be four elected officers for each term: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The Executive Committee for the ensuing year will be elected using the following timeline:

- A. May: Nominations for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are collected throughout the month and must be accepted or declined prior to the June council meeting.
- B. June: Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson is held.
- C. July: Newly elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson coordinate the first council meeting of new year, during which nominations and elections of the Secretary and Treasurer are held.
- D. Prior to the August general council meeting, the Executive Team will determine subcommittee chairs.

To ensure a balance of interests, the chair and vice chair may not both be salaried nor may both be hourly staff. In the event there is no interest from one designation, it will be allowed that two hourly or two salaried members fill these positions.

If the vice chair, secretary, or treasurer positions are vacated for any reason, elections for those officers will be determined by the majority of voting members at the next scheduled meeting.

Section IX.01 Executive Committee

An executive committee for the council will consist of the four officers. The immediate previous chairperson shall serve in an advisory capacity at the pleasure of the executive committee.

The executive committee shall set the meeting dates, times, and locations for monthly meetings and approve agenda items. The executive committee will establish SEAC action items, seeking input from the entire council to foster collaboration. The overarching action items will be approved by vote to provide a record, ensuring continuity year to year.

In consultation with the director of Human Resource Services and the chief operating officer, the executive committee shall have the authority to remove an individual from the Staff Employee Advocacy Council for failure to meet the membership expectations.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Executive Committee may take any steps necessary to ensure the continuity of SEAC business, upon approval of the general council at the following meeting.

Section IX.02 Chair

The chair shall officiate and conduct regular meetings of the Staff Employee Advocacy Council and of its executive committee. He or she is entitled to vote on all issues.

The chair shall serve as representative for staff employees to the University Council and in the Human Resource Services grievances process. The chair will also serve as representative for staff employees to the Strategic Planning Committee or may delegate representation to another SEAC member of the same staff designation.

In consultation with the executive committee, the chair will appoint members to serve on University Council, the Campus Community Policy Committee (CCPC), the Health and Safety Committee, and any other University committees as necessary.

The chair shall meet regularly with the director of Human Resource Services to share and discuss information on relevant issues before the council.

Section IX.03 Vice Chair

The vice chair shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the chair should he or she be unable to fulfill them due to temporary or extended leave of absence, termination from the University, resignation from the council, or resignation from the position of chair.

In consultation with the executive committee, the vice chair will appoint the chairs and members to serve on the Staff Recognition Subcommittee, Representation Subcommittee, Staff Events Subcommittee, and Staff Development Subcommittee.

The vice chair shall serve as an ex-officio member of all SEAC subcommittees and serve as representative for staff employees to the Strategic Planning Committee or may delegate representation to another SEAC member of the same staff designation. The vice chair will also be part of the Human Resource Services grievances process.

Section IX.04 Secretary

The secretary will be responsible for the official meeting minutes of the council, their distribution to committee members, and distribution of approved minutes to the staff employees of Valparaiso University. At each regular and special meeting of the council, the recording secretary shall take roll of all members and guests present.

The secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the print and electronic records of the SEAC.

Section IX.05 Treasurer

The treasurer will be responsible for conducting an annual review of the preceding fiscal year expenditures and provide this report to the council no later than the August meeting. A monthly report will be provided to the council on recent expenditures, expected expenditures, and any changes to the annual budget.

The council shall approve the annual budget no later than the August meeting. After the approval of the annual budget, the treasurer can make budget allocation changes as needed with approval of the Executive Committee.

Discretionary authority to allocate funds, up to an aggregate maximum of 5 percent of the annual budget, shall be reserved for the joint approval of the chair and vice chair.

Article X. Meetings and Voting

A quorum shall be one half plus one of the current SEAC membership. Action may be taken upon a majority vote of quorum. Issues decided without a quorum will be considered as a recommendation to the committee to be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

Only members present (in person or via an interactive media) may vote. Absentee or proxy voting is not permitted. Council members who may be traveling or otherwise unable to attend the meeting in-person may make arrangements with the recording secretary to setup a teleconference option for that meeting.

Meeting may move to a virtual/telephonic, interactive format when deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

Section X.01 Electronic Voting

The executive committee may authorize an online vote through electronic means to be conducted outside of a normal meeting. The window for electronic voting shall be no fewer than five business days.

Except for amendments to the bylaws as noted in Article XII., electronic voting may take place when the issue to be voted on is emailed to each member's last known email address. Each member then has five days to reply in support or against the issue. Failure to reply is deemed an abstention.

Section X.02 Rules of Order

SEAC business shall be conducted in accordance with most recent version of Robert's Rules of Order, as articulated at www.rulesonline.com.

Article XI. Subcommittees

The Staff Employee Advocacy Council shall operate with four standing subcommittees: Staff Recognition, Representation, Staff Events, and Staff

Development. Participation in the Events and Staff Development Subcommittees is extended to all limited part-time, temporary, or seasonal employees.

Additional ad-hoc committees, task forces, or research groups may be established to address specific issues at the discretion of the chair. The addition of a subcommittee or revisions to a subcommittee description shall not require comprehensive bylaw review and approval, to maintain operational functionality of the council.

Section XI.01 Staff Recognition Subcommittee

The Staff Recognition Subcommittee oversees the nomination and voting process for selecting the Staff Employee Advocacy Council's Employee of the Month.

- A. Nominations must be for a regular full-time, limited full-time, or regular part-time staff employee who has worked at the university for at least 90 days. Faculty, administrators, and students are not eligible.
- B. Any Valparaiso University staff member, faculty member, student, or alumni may submit a nomination.
- C. The subcommittee will select the winning nominee each month at their regularly scheduled meeting.

Section XI.02 Representation Subcommittee

The Representation Subcommittee manages and executes the nomination and election process, coordinates the new member orientation, and recommends changes to the membership distribution as necessary to best reflect the changing demographics of the University over time.

Section XI.03 Staff Events Subcommittee

The Staff Events Subcommittee plans and executes events that advance the mission of the Staff Employee Advocacy Council and enrich the University community experience.

There shall be a minimum of three staff appreciation events per fiscal year; at least one of these events must be family oriented.

Section XI.04 Staff Development Subcommittee

The Staff Development Subcommittee plans and executes events that advance the mission of the Staff Employee Advocacy Council, with particular focus on offering programs and workshops to promote professional and personal development designed to maximize professional growth.

Article XII. Bylaw Amendments and Review

Amendments to these bylaws may originate in the Executive Committee or SEAC new business and presented to the council for vote. If the amendment is approved

by a two-thirds vote at any regular meeting, the amendment having been advertised in writing by the chair at least 10 days prior to that meeting, it will be adopted.

An ad-hoc bylaw committee will be initiated once every three years to conduct a comprehensive review. Any proposed updates will be presented to the council for adoption, which must receive a two-thirds vote.