



# THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF **KURDISTAN**

## **Staff Senate Constitution and Bylaws**

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## **CONSTITUTION**

### **ARTICLE I. NAME AND OBJECT**

#### Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the American University of Kurdistan StaffSenate.

#### Section 2. Object

The object of this organization is to serve and function as the representative, deliberative, and legislative body of the American University of Kurdistan Staff members.

### **ARTICLE II. SENATE REPRESENTATION**

#### Section 1. Eligibility

- i. The Staff Senate is composed of the full-time staff members of the various administrative units.
- ii. All full-time staff members holding continuous appointments within administrative units and with ranks below the rank of directors are eligible to serve and vote.

#### Section 2. Composition

- i. Staff Senators shall be elected from among the eligible staff, with representation from each department following the method of apportionment described in the Bylaws. The apportionment of Senate seats will be checked on an annual basis, with seats added or removed as necessary due to changes in administrative units.
- ii. Senators shall serve a term of one year. Senators may be immediately re-nominated for a second term. At the end of two consecutive full terms, a Senator shall wait at least one year before becoming eligible for inclusion again to the Senate.
- iii. The Chair shall be an ex officio voting member of the Senate.

#### Section 3. Elections

- i. Elections shall be held annually following procedures defined in the Bylaws.
- ii. Vacancies due to resignations shall be filled as soon as possible according to procedures defined in the Bylaws, with any replacement Senator serving the remainder of the unfinished term. Filling an unfinished term shall not count against a Senator's limit of two consecutive full terms.
- iii. A Senator who will be absent from a regularly scheduled meeting is expected to send a substitute from the same administrative unit in his or her stead. In case a Senator anticipates an extended absence due to a University-related leave, (e.g., sabbatical), he/she may nominate a substitute from the same administrative unit to serve during the Senator's absence. A Senatorial vacancy shall exist when a Senator has missed four

regularly scheduled Senate meetings in a given academic year for reasons other than University-related leaves.

### **ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATION**

#### Section 1. Meetings

The Senate shall meet at least twice a semester, except for the months: June, July, and August. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of the Senate, request from staff members, or upon request of the President. A two-thirds majority of voting members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum. The Chair may from time to time invite nonmembers to attend meetings.

#### Section 2. Officers

The Staff Senators shall elect annually from among its members a Chair. The elected Senate will choose a Secretary from within its ranks for the purpose of keeping minutes for each meeting which will be made public to all staff members. In the event of a permanent vacancy of the Chair, an election shall be held at a full Staff meeting to fill the vacancy as expeditiously as possible.

#### Section 3. Committees

The Staff Senate may establish such Senate Committees as it deems appropriate, and may determine procedures for appointing chairpersons and committee members.

### **ARTICLE IV. JURISDICTION, DUTIES, AND POWERS**

The Staff Senate shall provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all matter affecting American University of Kurdistan, and it shall have the power to consult with any individual Staff member about such matters whether or not they are members of the Senate. The Senate shall seek to express collective staff judgment, as appropriate, on such matters as it deems significant. In all deliberation and action, the Senate shall seek effective staff participation in the formation of University policy, especially as that policy bears on administrative governance of the University.

#### Section 2. Policies

The Senate shall have the power to review and evaluate all policies and practices of the University and may make recommendations concerning them to any individual, staff, or group within the University. It may provide for appropriate staff discussion of any policy or practice. It may advise and consult with the chief administrative officers and inform them of staff opinions about such matters. It shall facilitate and encourage communication within the University.

### Section 3. Matters Referred to the Senate

The Senate shall review and act on matters referred to it by the University President or any individual administrative units. Further, any staff member may bring before the Staff Senate in an appropriate manner any matter of concern, including individual grievances. The Senate shall have the power to establish guidelines and procedures for dealing with such submissions and grievances.

### Section 4. Committees of the University

- i. The Senate shall aid in selecting University Committees from staff members both within and without the Staff Senate, and make recommendations to and advise with the University President regarding appointments to the various University committees.
- ii. The Senate shall develop and maintain a working relationship with the various committees of the University.

### Section 5. University Administration

The Staff Senate will meet from time to time with the University President and other appropriate officers to develop guidelines for the exercise of its stated functions or to develop procedures for identifying and establishing additional functions.

## **ARTICLE V. ADOPTION, RATIFICATION, AND MODIFICATION**

### Section 1. Adoption

This constitution will come into effect when adopted by a majority of the membership of the Staff then present and voting at a regular or called meeting of the Senate.

### Section 2. Modification

Modifications to the Constitution may be proposed by staff members by a passing motion at a regular meeting of the Staff Senate, but may not be acted on until the next regular meeting of the Senate. To be approved, such proposed changes shall be made public to the University Staff at least two weeks prior to the next meeting of the Senate. Modifications shall require a two-thirds majority of the Senators present at the meeting.

Any proposed changes to the Constitution by non-staff offices, boards or persons must be approved by 100% of the Staff Senate. If any change is proposed and not adopted by the Senate unanimously, it will automatically cause a vote of no-confidence and the Senate will be immediately dissolved.

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I. ELECTIONS, OFFICERS, AND DUTIES**

#### Section 1. Senate Elections

- i. Allocation of Senate Seats to administrative units will be based on each department being entitled one seat. As the university expands, this will be amended to reflect the future growth of the university.
- ii. Selections of departmental representatives shall be completed shortly after the Nowruz Break in the Academic Calendar.
- iii. At the beginning of the week before Nowruz Break, an email shall be sent to all Directors requesting that each department select from among its members a Staff Senate representative.
- iv. If a Senatorial vacancy occurs, the Chair will contact the Director of the appropriate administrative unit and request a replacement be selected.

#### Section 2. Election of Officers

- i. The officers of the Staff Senate shall be the Chair and Secretary.
- ii. Shortly after the Nowruz Break, a meeting of the full Staff will be called to nominate and select the Chair for the following academic year.
- iii. If no candidate receives a majority vote, the top two candidates shall be placed in a runoff. When a tie exists for the runoff positions, the tie shall be promptly resolved by the President. Voting in all cases shall be by secret ballot.
- iv. The Secretary shall be nominated and selected from among the serving Staff Senate members.
- v. Incoming officers shall take office on August 1 and serve until July 31 of the following year.

#### Section 3. Duties of Officers

- i. The Chair shall preside at meetings of the Senate and shall be responsible for preparing an agenda for each meeting and distributing it to each Senator one week before the meeting. Except as otherwise provided, the Chair shall recommend the members, and chairs of committees as and when required. The Chair shall communicate the Senate's advice and recommendations to appropriate University officials.
- ii. The Chair-Elect shall assume the position of Chair on August 1 following election.
- iii. The Secretary shall keep minutes and records of all proceedings of the Senate and shall receive and keep all reports and correspondence from committees of the Senate, University committees, University officials, and others. The Secretary shall regularly prepare minutes of each meeting of the Senate and shall convey such minutes to the

Chair for distribution to members of the Senate. The meeting minutes shall include a roll of those Senators who are absent.

#### Section 4: Removing a Senator

If the actions of a Senator are seen as disruptive, unprofessional, or disrespectful by other Senators, a vote of non-confidence can be requested. If 2/3 of Senators vote for a Senator to be removed from Senate, the decision will be official, the Senator will effectively be removed, and a search for replacement will begin.

### **ARTICLE II. COMMITTEES**

#### Section 1. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

The Senate may establish such Standing and Ad Hoc Committees as it deems appropriate. Except as may be otherwise provided, the Chair shall appoint the members and chair of any such committees; and such members and chair shall serve during the Senate Chair's term of office unless the committee is earlier dissolved or the Chair acts to replace a member or a committee chair.

#### Section 2. Other University Committees

The Senate may form committees related to the university's interests and concerns as needed (e.g., accreditation committees). The members of these committees do not have to be Staff Senate members and may report to the Staff Senate or directly to other University offices.

### **ARTICLE III. SENATE MEETINGS**

#### Section 1. Meetings

- i. The Senate shall meet at least twice a semester. The Chair may call a special meeting of the Senate when the Chair deems it necessary, and a special meeting of the Senate may also be called by Senators and the President.

#### Section 2. Agenda

- i. The Chair shall prepare an agenda for each meeting and shall distribute it to each Senator one week preceding the meeting. The Chair may allot a time period for agenda items and, if so, the duration of discussion of such items at the meeting shall be restricted unless altered by a majority vote of the Senate.
- ii. Any student, faculty member, or staff member of the University may bring a matter of University concern to the attention of the Senate by communicating with the Chair of the Senate, either directly or through a member of the Senate. The Chair shall make

an appropriate announcement of the matter either in writing attached to the agenda or by placing the matter on the agenda. However, only a Senator can introduce a proposition to be voted upon by the Senate.

### Section 3. Procedure

A procedural proposition may be introduced by a Senator at a meeting. A substantive proposition may be introduced by filing the proposition with the Chair in time for it to be attached to the agenda for the next meeting. A matter of significant academic import or a policy recommendation can be introduced without previous inclusion on the agenda only by a two-thirds majority vote of the full Senate.

### Section 4. Voting

Senators will vote on Propositions, Recommendations, and Policies during Senate meetings based on a simple majority rule. The votes will be public (show of hands), unless special circumstances require otherwise (e.g. secret ballot or online vote).

## **ARTICLE IV. MODIFICATIONS OF BYLAWS**

Modifications to the Bylaws may be proposed by staff members by a passing motion at a regular meeting of the full Staff, but may not be acted on until the next regular meeting of the Senate. Modifications shall require a two-thirds majority of the staff members present at said meeting.

Any proposed changes to the bylaws by non-staff offices, boards or persons must be approved by 100% of the Staff Senate. If any change is proposed and not adopted by the Senate unanimously, it will automatically cause a vote of no-confidence and the Senate will be immediately dissolved

## **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS HISTORY**

- a. **Approved by:** University Cabinet
- b. **Adapted:** September 7, 2023