

UMCES Staff Council By-Laws

Approved June 12, 2024

I. Introduction

The staff of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) is integral in achieving UMCES' vision of excellence in its academics, research, and community service by functioning in a support role to its faculty and students. The President of UMCES and the President's Executive Council have found it appropriate that the staff exercise an advisory role in areas of policies and procedures that affect the quality of their work life and their level of contribution on the strategic goals of the campus. The opportunity to be heard on these matters through a recognized Staff Council is indicative of UMCES' goal to develop a more responsive environment distinguished by consistently high levels of commitment and productivity from its staff.

II. Purpose and Functions of the Council

1. The Council has plenary jurisdiction to investigate, discuss, and make recommendations to the President concerning any matters submitted to it by the President or by any member of the UMCES community.
2. There shall be a Staff Council representing all regular and contractual employees of UMCES (hereinafter referred to as "eligible employees"), non-exempt employees, Faculty, and academic administrators are already represented by the collective bargaining unit, Faculty Senate and Administrative Council, respectively.
3. The functions of the Council shall include the following:
 - A. Represent the interest and concerns of all levels of the Regular and Contractual Staff at UMCES in accordance with current regulations;
 - B. To support the Administration and Academic Community with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the Regular and Contractual Staff;
 - C. To provide a forum for discussion and recommendations on matters involving Regular and Contractual Staff and the welfare of UMCES;
 - D. To participate, in an advisory capacity, in the review and implementation of University policies affecting the Regular and Contractual Staff;
 - E. To participate, in the interest of the Regular and Contractual Staff, in the development of policies, procedures, and/or rules concerning the general operation of UMCES;
 - F. To establish its own committees;
 - G. To conduct elections for representatives of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS);

- a. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve as the two voting/primary members to CUSS and will serve the duration of their terms on the Executive Council.
 - b. 2 alternate representatives will be elected from the remaining voting members of the council.
- H. To serve as a channel of communication between;
 - a. UMCES staff and the President; and
 - b. UMCES staff and the Council of University System Staff.
- 4. Carrying out its purpose and functions, the Council will observe all established University administrative policies and procedures, including but not limited to USM Board of Regents Policy I.6.00 on shared governance.

III. Membership and Election

1. Membership of the Staff Council should consist of a minimum of ten (10) eligible employees. The Council will have a two to three (2-3) member representation per category. (Ex. IT, Communications/Advancement, Business Office, Development, Maintenance).
 - A. The council will need a quorum of its membership present if there is voting involved in a meeting. If the new membership consists of ten (10) people this means six (6) members would need to be present at minimum to constitute a quorum.
2. Three (3) non-executive committee Council seats will stand for re-election during the first regular election. The Executive Committee Council seats will stand for re-election during the second regular elections. This will establish staggered terms for the Staff Council.
 - A. All terms of elections after the initial term shall be for one (1) year.
 - B. Alternates will serve 1 year.
 - C. Members will be allowed to remain on the council for no more than 3 years in a row (each term), but can return as many times as they would like as long as it's 2 years off between terms.
3. Regular elections shall be held during the months of May and June for the upcoming year term (July 1 through June 30).
 - A. Candidates shall be self-nominated or nominated by other eligible staff members.
 - B. Each nominee shall confirm that he or she is willing to serve before his or her name is formally submitted as a candidate.
 - C. The results shall be reported to the President and Director of the Office of Human Resources Management no later than the first week of July of that year.
4. The Council, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, may remove any of its members.

- A. A seat vacated by resignation, removal or for any other reason shall be filled by the Alternate from the affected unit.
 - B. The unit/lab shall appoint a new alternate based on the eligible employees from that unit to be voted upon by Staff Council.
5. In the event that an outgoing Chairperson is not able or willing to fulfill the duties of Past Chair, any member of the Executive Committee can serve as Past Chair.

IV. Meetings

1. There shall be at least two (2) Open Forum meetings of the Council each year.
 - A. Meetings will be held subject to availability and scheduling on Zoom.
 - B. Four working full-Council and/or committee meetings may be held as necessary.
 - C. As schedules become available, the Council will establish its calendar of Open Forum and working meetings and forward it to the UMCES President who will notify each member's laboratory or unit Director of that schedule.
 - D. The Communications Committee is required to send regular updates to all staff regarding discussions and actions from Staff Council meetings. These communications should be sent no later than one (1) week after the meeting adjourned.
2. UMCES Staff Council Executives will reach out to any member who misses more than two (2) consecutive meetings. The correspondence will gauge the current member's continued willingness/ableness to be an active member of the Council. If the member is no longer willing/able to be active, the Council should then seek a replacement for that member.
3. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of the Council, by the Executive Committee, by resolution of the Staff council or by petition signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the Staff Council membership.
4. Special meetings may be open with or without voice, or closed to all eligible employees at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
5. All eligible employees may attend Open Forum meetings of the Council, without voice or vote, subject to requirements of space and good order.
6. A quorum shall consist of one more than half of the elected members. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting shall be necessary to adopt any motion or resolution.
7. Notices to members are sent by e-mail.
8. Any three (3) Council members may require that an item be placed on the agenda of an Open Forum or special meeting.
9. Council members shall be released from their normal work responsibilities, if necessary, each term year in order to attend the following meetings:

- A. Every other Staff Council meeting should allow for twenty (20) minutes of open forum discussion. Any eligible staff member should be granted the opportunity to join the meeting and voice a concern or request to the council for consideration.;
 - B. Members may require additional time to fulfill their Council responsibilities, e.g. attendance at committee or special meetings and other activities.
 - C. Members and their supervisors shall work together in coordinating these activities so as to not interfere with the members normal work responsibilities as employees of UMCES.
10. All procedures not otherwise set forth in these Bylaws or by rules adopted by the Staff Council shall be in accordance with the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order

V. Officers

1. There shall be four (4) officers of the Staff Council elected from its membership who will form the Executive Committee. The officers shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Past Chair.
 - A. The Past Chair position will be filled by the individual who served as Chair during the previous Council term. During the initial term of the Council, there will be only three (3) officers with no Past Chair.
 - B. The duties of the officers will be as follows;
 - (a) CHAIR
 - (1) Presides at all meetings of the Council,
 - (2) Finalize the agenda of each Council meeting,
 - (3) Serve as chief liaison with the UMCES President,
 - (4) Serve as Staff representative to UMCES Administrative Council
 - (5) Serve as a primary/voting member to the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), and
 - (6) Perform other duties as assigned by the Council.
 - (b) VICE-CHAIR
 - (1) Serve in the absence of the Chair,
 - (2) Serve as Council parliamentarian,
 - (3) Serve as a primary/voting member to the Council of University System Staff (CUSS) and
 - (4) Perform other duties as assigned by the Council.
 - (c) SECRETARY
 - (1) Responsible for recording and distributing minutes,
 - (2) Maintain all records of the Council, and
 - (3) Perform other duties as assigned by the Council.
 - (d) PAST CHAIR

- (1) Serve as an advisor to the Executive Committee in order to provide continuity and guidance concerning on-going initiatives,
 - (2) Perform other duties as assigned by the Council, and
 - (3) Does not hold voting privileges unless a vote is dead-locked or unless is a current, voting member of the Staff Council. In that case, the Past Chair will cast tie-breaking vote as needed.
2. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary will be elected for a term of one year from the floor of the Council or by written nomination during the first regular scheduled meeting of the year.
3. The Executive Committee shall meet a minimum of five (5) times during each term year.
 - A. The Executive Committee shall fulfill the following functions:
 - (a) Set the agenda for Council meetings;
 - (b) Distribute the agenda at least three (3) days prior to each regular meeting to all members of the council;
 - (c) Accepts proposals for Council considerations from eligible member(s) of the UMCES community (These proposals are normally submitted through his/her local representative who must respond in writing to the person submitting, stating he/she has submitted the proposal to the Executive Committee, who will give it full consideration in preparing the agenda.);
 - (d) Referral or automatic postponement of non-agenda proposal except in an emergency, as determined by a two thirds vote of the members present, any proposal introduced under new business which does not appear on the agenda shall either be referred to an appropriate committee or automatically postponed until the following meeting.
 - B. At the request of any four (4) members of the Council, the Chair will be required to call a Special Meeting provided all members have been notified at least 24 hours in advance of the date and time of the special meeting.
 - C. Prepare and submit reports on the work of the Council to the UMCES President, and the UMCES campus community;
 - D. Be a point of contact with the UMCES President;
 - E. Recommend to the Council the establishment, composition and responsibilities of standing and/or special committees, fill irregular vacancies on committees, and recommend participation in joint campus committees;
 - F. Perform such functions as given by the Council.

VI. Committees

1. The Council will establish standing committees, with membership by selections as needed.

2. The Council also will establish committees as assigned by the President of UMCES.
 - A. The Council will send representation to intra and inter-campus committees, as requested.
3. The Council may elect as needed a chair to each committee.
 - A. The Council may request, within a thirty day time period, any reports it deems necessary from any committee.
4. To serve on special committees does not especially require Council membership.

VII. Administrative Resources.

1. UMCES resource staff (i.e.: Human Resources Management, Information Services, Facilities Management) is available to assist the Staff Council in its functions.
 - A. Resource staff may be included as non-voting participants in Council, Executive, or committee meetings in order to provide information and other support activities.
 - B. The Director of Human Resources Management and his/her designee(s) shall function as the primary resource for the Staff Council.
 - C. Travel expenses in support of CUSS related meetings shall be funded by University Administration while travel expenses in support of Staff Council meetings shall be funded by the laboratories.
 - D. Staff Council shall review by-laws every two years at a minimum and updated as needed.