

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ELECTIONS AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

EP-002-212

Re-Evaluate Process for Selecting Staff Senator

Elections and Procedures Committee

Date: 11/30/2022

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: XX/XX/2022

Academic Senate

**Date: XX/XX/2022
First Reading**

BACKGROUND:

The current Academic Senate constitution states that "...voting membership shall be granted to a representative of the staff for a term of three years. The staff representative must be a full-time permanent employee. The staff representative shall be selected by an ad hoc committee made up of individuals from bargaining units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The individual representing unit 4 must be in a job classification other than SSPIII, SSPIV, SSP AR, or SSSP. Each of these 8 groups will be invited to have one representative on the committee but participation may be declined. The committee will adopt its own selection procedure. A member of the Elections and Procedures Committee will be assigned to the ad hoc committee in a non-voting status to provide assistance and administrative support. The Elections and Procedures Committee is responsible for contacting the bargaining units and forming the ad hoc committee."

The main difficulty associated with the current practice is that the process for getting this ad hoc committee together has been proved to be unsuccessful most of the times as the bargaining unit stewards do not respond to calls for meetings in a timely manner. Due to this difficulty, in this referral Election and Procedures Committee has been asked to look at the possibility of treating a staff senator position similar to a faculty senator position where all eligible candidates (all permanent and full-time staff) are allowed to nominate themselves or others for the senate seat and then elect their representative to the Academic Senate.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:**1) Individuals**

- a) Valerie Otto (senate administrative analyst)
- b) Diane Gonzalez (current staff senator)
- c) Stephanie Pastro (president of Staff Council)
- d) Staff Council eboard
- e) Executive Committee, Cal Poly Pomona Academic Senate

2) Universities

- a) The Bylaws of the Academic Senate of Cal Poly Pomona, 2020
- b) The Constitution of the Academic Senate of Cal Poly Pomona, 2020
- c) The Bylaws and Constitutions of the Academic Senate of other universities (CSU, SLO; CSU, Northridge; CSU, LA; CSU, Fullerton; CSU, Fresno; CSU, Dominguez Hills; CSU, Bakersfield; CSU, San Diego; CSU, Chico; CSU, Long Beach; CSU, Bakersfield; CSU, Sacramento; CSU, San Bernardino; CSU, Monterey Bay; CSU, SF; CSU, San Jose)

DISCUSSION:

To get a better understanding of the responsibilities associated with staff senate seat and the roles it plays for the staff at Cal Poly Pomona, we (1) had a comprehensive search on the bylaws and constitutions of other CSUs; and (2) talked with several staff relevant to this position, including the current staff senator, Diane Gonzalez, both in that capacity and also as a provost office staff, Valerie Otto, senate administrative analyst, as well as the president of staff council, Stephanie Pastor. Some important insights obtained from those conversations are as below:

1. A large percentage, if not all, of the policies discussed and passed in senate are related to the faculty and students. Thus, there is not much motivation for staff to be present in such conversation and/or approval processes. This affects the incentives of staff to nominate themselves or other staff to serve as senator, given the extensive time commitment needed by this position.
2. Serving as staff senator does not have much benefit for staff when it comes to their periodic evaluation and promotion. This is the opposite of situation faced by faculty where serving in senate is considered as an important service activity in their evaluation package.
3. There have not been many nominees for staff senate seat in the past couple of terms, mainly due to the reasons mentioned in insights 1 and 2, above.
4. Those staff who may benefit, due to the nature of their job, from knowing the ongoing conversation and the policies approved in senate are mainly the staff who

work in the office of president and/or provost or, in general, from the Academic Affairs division. This is mainly because those policies need to go to the office of president and provost for approval and then, a large part of them, need to go to the Academic Affairs division for implementation.

Considering these insights, the EP committee discussed various solutions and came up with a couple of proposals listed below after consultation with the Staff Council president and Staff Council eboard. In doing so, we made sure in all proposals the nomination for staff senate seat is open to all eligible staff in Cal Poly Pomona, as opposed to the staff in specific offices or divisions

Proposal 1: The staff representative shall be elected by staff electorate (those who are eligible to vote). The staff representative shall be made up of individuals from bargaining units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The individual representing unit 4 must be in a job classification other than SSPIII, SSPIV, SSP AR, or SSSP. To this end, all eligible staff can nominate themselves or other staff for the available senate seat by sending an email to senate@cpp.edu. For the nomination to get accepted, five other staff should send emails to senate supporting that nomination, and in addition, this nomination must have the approval of the staff member's HEERA manager in consultation with the staff immediate supervisor as applicable.

The Elections and Procedures Committee will hold an election among all staff eligible to vote to elect a staff representative.

- **EP Committee Discussion Results:** Given the lack of incentives for staff to serve in this position, we expect a low participation rate in the related election process, if there was going to be such an election among staff. However, the main advantage of this approach is that the process is streamlined, and we do not need to wait for members of ad hoc committee to find the time to meet. Although managing the logistics of such an election may be a bit time consuming, but it all is under the control of senate admin office and IT department. **Consequently, this proposal was considered as a viable option.**

Proposal 2: The staff representative shall be selected by staff council executive board members. To this end, all eligible staff can nominate themselves or other staff for the available senate seat by sending an email to senate@cpp.edu. At the time of nomination, candidates shall also email their biographical information and a statement of motivation to serve as senate staff representative to senate@cpp.edu. For the nomination to get accepted, five other staff should send emails to senate supporting that nomination. The list of nominees is then provided to staff council executive board to select one of the nominees to serve as staff representative to senate. A member of the Elections and Procedures Committee will be assigned, in a non-voting status, to provide assistance and administrative support.

- **EP Committee Discussion Results:** This proposal was discussed with president of staff council, Stephanie Pastor, to evaluate if staff council executive board can and is willing to perform this responsibility. After extensive conversation, it was cleared that staff council is currently busy regrouping and possibly making some fundamental changes in their work, thus they cannot take over this responsibility for the next year or two. **Consequently, this proposal was rejected.**

Proposal 3: The staff representative shall be selected by an ad hoc committee of the VPs (Vice-Presidents) who meet once every three years (senate staff representative seat is for 3 years) to evaluate the nominations for staff senate seat and select the staff representative. Given the organizational structure of the university, each staff falls under supervision of one of the vice-presidents. Thus, we can say the committee of VPs represent all the staff at university. All eligible staff can nominate themselves or other staff for the available senate seat by sending an email to senate@cpp.edu. At the time of nomination, candidates shall also email their biographical information and a statement of motivation to serve as senate staff representative to senate@cpp.edu. For the nomination to get accepted, five other staff should send emails to senate supporting that nomination. The Elections and Procedures Committee is responsible for contacting the VPs' offices and forming the ad hoc committee. The list of nominees is then provided to the ad hoc committee of VPs to select one of the nominees to serve as senate staff representative. A

member of the Elections and Procedures Committee will be assigned, in a non-voting status, to provide assistance and administrative support.

- **EP Committee Discussion Results:** The two main challenges of this proposal are that (1) putting together this ad hoc committee can be challenging given the busy schedule of the VPs; (2) it does not let the staff to choose their representative.

Consequently, this proposal was rejected.

Proposal 4: Keeping the systems as is, which means, according to the Academic Senate constitution, “The staff representative shall be selected by an ad hoc committee made up of individuals from bargaining units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Each of these 8 groups will be invited to have one representative on the committee but participation may be declined. The committee will adopt its own selection procedure. A member of the Elections and Procedures Committee will be assigned to the ad hoc committee in a non-voting status to provide assistance and administrative support. The Elections and Procedures Committee is responsible for contacting the bargaining units and forming the ad hoc committee.”

- **EP Committee Discussion Results:** This proposal can be a viable option. However, we need to look at the current process with a critical eye and apply the changes needed to make sure forming the ad hoc committee once every three years is not going to be a challenging process and happens in a timely manner. One important aspect is making sure bargaining units’ representatives are aware of such responsibility. Ideally, the following statement can be added to the list of their responsibilities: “*Participation in ad hoc committee of bargaining units’ representatives, arranged by Academic Senate office, to evaluate the list of nominees for staff senate seat and select the staff representative in senate*”. This way as new staff take the responsibility for representing bargaining units over time, they can see this item as one of the responsibilities listed for them and respond in a timely manner when contacted by Academic Senate office. Although this proposal could be a viable option, since the prerequisite changes are significant and keeping track of the eligible members to serve on the ad hoc committee is challenging, the EP committee considers proposal 4 less preferable than proposal 1.

After further conversation, the EP committee finally selected proposal 1 to be adopted and implemented in response to the issues raised in this referral.

RECOMMENDATION:

The elections and procedures committee recommend to:

Adopt and implement the procedure described in Proposal 1, meaning

“The staff representative shall be elected by staff electorate (those who are eligible to vote).

The staff representative shall be made up of individuals from bargaining units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The individual representing unit 4 must be in a job classification other than SSPIII, SSPIV, SSP AR, or SSSP. To this end, all eligible staff can nominate themselves or other staff for the available senate seat by sending an email to senate@cpp.edu. For the nomination to get accepted, five other staff should send emails to senate supporting that nomination, and in addition, this nomination must have the approval of the staff member’s HEERA manager in consultation with the staff immediate supervisor as applicable.

1. The Elections and Procedures Committee will hold an election among all staff eligible to vote to elect a staff representative”.
2. To incentivize the staff to run for and serve as the staff senator, Academic Senate office can provide those who serve as staff senator with a letter of recognition and acknowledgement for serving on the Senate. Such letter can be added to the staff’s PAF (Personnel Action Files) and be used in their periodic evaluation.
3. According to this proposal, **Article III, Section 6 of the Constitution** should be changed as below:

“Voting membership shall be granted to a representative of the staff for a term of three years. The staff representative must be a full-time permanent employee. Any individual representing unit 4 must be in a job classification other than SSPIII, SSPIV, SSP AR, or SSSP. The staff representative shall be elected by staff electorate. To this end, all eligible staff can nominate themselves or other staff for the available

senate seat. For the nomination to get accepted, five other staff should also support that nomination, and in addition, this nomination must have the approval of the staff member's HEERA manager in consultation with the staff's immediate supervisor as applicable. The Elections and Procedures Committee will hold an election among all staff eligible to vote to elect a staff representative."