# **Wentworth Institute of Technology**

**Staff Council Bylaws**

## **Introduction**

In November 2020, Wentworth President Mark A. Thompson announced the establishment of a working group of representative staff members from across the University to develop Wentworth’s first-ever Staff Council as an important first step in supporting staff engagement and collaboration.

Wentworth’s Staff Council serves as an advisory body to Wentworth’s president. These bylaws outline the Staff Council’s role in representing the perspectives of staff to the administration, sharing ideas on best practices in their respective areas that support the University’s mission and strategic initiatives, and facilitating communication between the administration and staff at all organizational levels.

## **Article I. Authorization and Purpose/Objectives**

Reporting to Wentworth’s president, the Staff Council (the “Council”) is authorized by the president of the University to function and serve as an advisory body to the administration. The Council is comprised of staff members who participate meaningfully in shared governance with the University community. The Council’s purpose and objectives include:

* Supporting the strategic initiatives of the University
* Providing comment on changes or additions to University policies, practices, and programs for addressing issues of common concern
* Communicating with staff at all organizational levels about the work of the Council
* Actively supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University
* Endorsing and promoting community‐building programs and activities to support closer working relationships and collaborations between and among organizational areas and employees at Wentworth
* Advocating for and modeling an environment of respect and fairness and building community through effective communication

While the Council is not a decision‐making body, members of the Council provide valuable input, advice, and recommendations on behalf of staff colleagues to the University’s administration.

## **Article II. Membership**

***Section 1. Representation***

Members of the Council shall include Wentworth staff, hourly or salaried, who work at least 20 hours or greater per week. One staff member shall be selected from organizational areas throughout the University with a representative from each of the nine (9) areas listed below:

1. Academic Affairs
2. Business
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
4. Enrollment Management
5. Finance, Human Resources, and President’s Office
6. Institutional Advancement and Marketing & Communications
7. Public Safety
8. Student Affairs
9. Technology Services

***Section 2. Criteria for Membership***

The Council shall be comprised of nine (9) staff members who have been employed as staff members at Wentworth for at least one (1) year and work at least 20 hours per week.

There shall be no criteria of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, disability, place of residence, or veteran status as qualification for membership on the Council.

***Section 3. Nominations***

The Council will send a call for nominations to all staff members to fill interim vacant seats and open Council positions during the annual election cycle in the spring each year. Candidates for election to an open seat on the Council may self-nominate or be nominated by another staff member.

A nominated staff member must accept their nomination before their name is added to the ballot. All nominees shall be notified of Council member expectations, responsibilities, and anticipated time commitment for service in confirming their acceptance to be placed on a ballot for election. A staff member’s supervisor will be notified of the staff member’s nomination to the Council as well prior to the election process.

Council members whose terms are expiring and who are eligible for re-election shall automatically be nominated for the position, unless they notify the Chair that they decline the re-nomination. The Council will not seek other nominations for the position if the Council member confirms they will stand for re-election.

***Section 4. Election of Council Members***

The Council will conduct an election to fill an interim vacant seat or any open Council seats during the annual election cycle. For Council members who are up for re-election, their election will be uncontested. Elections for interim vacant seats and new open seats may include a contested election with multiple candidates running for the same open seat. The candidate receiving the highest number of eligible staff votes for a particular open seat will win the election to become a member of the Council.

The Council will determine the best means and timing for conducting fair elections. Eligible voting members of the staff shall consist of all staff members who work at least 20 hours per week and do not hold academic appointments with the University. Divisional vice presidents and other direct reports to the president are also not eligible to vote.

***Section 5. Term of Service***  
Council members are elected for two-year (2-year) terms, up to a maximum of two (2) terms for a term limit of four (4) consecutive years on the Council. Past serving members may be nominated for re-election after a one-year (1-year) absence from the Council. Terms of service generally begin in May of each year. The Council may extend an elected Council member’s term for a maximum of up to one (1) year due to extenuating circumstances by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

When the Council is first launched in Spring 2021, four members will be elected to a renewable one-year term and will be up for re-election in May 2022 to a second two-year term. Five members will be elected to a renewable two-year term and will be up for re-election in May 2023 for a second two-year term. This process will provide for necessary staggered terms. For the initial launch of the Council, representatives from the following four areas will be appointed to a renewable one-year term up for re-election in May 2022: (1) Business; (2) Enrollment Management; (3) Institutional Advancement/Marketing & Communications; and (4) Student Affairs. For the initial launch of the Council, representatives from the following five areas will be appointed to a renewable two-year term up for re-election in May 2023: (1) Academic Affairs; (2) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; (3) Finance/Human Resources/President’s Office; (4) Public Safety; and (5) Technology Services.

***Section 6. Duties of Council Members***

It shall be the responsibility of the members to attend monthly Council meetings and to distribute Council meeting minutes and other Council updates to a member’s respective department or divisional area. The Council members shall also bring recommendations and issues of concern from staff within their respective areas to the Council. Council members shall abide by all University rules, policies, and procedures.

***Section 7. Unexpired Term***

In the event of the resignation, inability to serve, or removal of a member, the Council will seek to fill the vacancy with a new member from the divisional area within a reasonable time frame of one to two months. If there are circumstances impacting a member’s ability to serve in the position, the member shall discuss their ability to continue serving on the Council with the Chair.

## **Article III. Officers**

***Section 1. Officers, Terms, and Elections***

The officers of the Staff Council shall be: Chair and Vice Chair. Officers are elected by the Council for a one-year (1-year) term, up to a maximum of two (2) terms in a particular officer position.

Members may nominate or self-nominate themselves for the ballot for this annual officer election. A simple majority vote of Council members present is required for election of officers. In the event of a tie vote, the Chair shall cast the deciding vote. Officers are generally elected by the Council in May of each year.

***Section 2. Duties of the Chair***

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall serve as a member of Wentworth’s Leadership Council. The Chair shall charge and appoint committees of the Council as needed. The Chair shall be responsible for reviewing and maintaining the bylaws. The Chair will manage any operational budget of the Council and submit a proposed operating budget for the succeeding fiscal year to Wentworth’s president for review.

***Section 3. Duties of the Vice Chair***

The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair in performing the Chair’s responsibilities as appropriate and shall serve as a member of Wentworth’s Leadership Council. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair, including presiding over Council meetings. The Vice Chair or a Council designee shall keep the minutes of Council meetings and shall maintain records of meetings.

***Section 4. Vacancies***

In the event of a vacancy in an officer position before the expiration of a term, a special election shall be held at the next regular meeting to fill the vacancy for the balance of the term. Members may nominate or self-nominate themselves for the ballot for this special election.

## **Article IV. Meetings**

***Section 1. Regular Meetings***

Regular meetings of the Council shall be held monthly and at a time and place to be determined by the Chair to be most convenient for the majority of members. Meeting times may vary at the discretion of the Chair. Meetings in summer months may be scheduled as needed.

***Section 2. Special Meetings***

Special meetings of the Council may be called at any time by the Chair or by a majority of the membership of the Council providing at least a five-day notice of the meeting to all Council members.

***Section 3. Quorum***

A majority of Council members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting. A simple majority vote of those members present is required for passage of motions brought before the Council, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws.

***Section 4. Procedure***

The order of business in any meeting shall be determined by the Chair, or the Vice Chair in the Chair’s absence.

***Section 5. Visitors***

Regular Council meetings are open to all staff employees of the University and to others, such as guest speakers, when invited by the Council to attend a meeting. Council members may vote to close a meeting in whole or in part to non-Council members. A guest speaker may request that attendance during their presentation be limited to Council members. A person may request time to address the Council directly during a regular meeting by contacting the Chair or area representative to request being added to the business of a meeting agenda.

***Section 6. Meeting Minutes and Their Distribution***

Minutes of all Council meetings, including any committee meetings, shall be kept by the Vice Chair or designee, and distributed to each Council member. Once approved by the Council, meeting minutes will be disseminated to a representative's constituency.

## **Article V. Committees**

The Council may establish standing or ad-hoc committees of the Council as it determines it may need to form to conduct the charge and responsibilities set out for this Council in these bylaws.

## **Article VI. Amendments to the Bylaws**

The Council’s bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Council by two-thirds vote of those present, provided that notice of any proposed amendment has been given at a preceding meeting and/or circulated in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which the proposed amendments are to be considered. These bylaws will be reviewed by the Council annually to ensure the bylaws reflect best practices at the time.