

STAFF COUNCIL CHARTER

Purpose Statement

Staff Council's purpose is to represent and advocate for the staff of Cornish College of the Arts in line with the mission and values of our community. We aim to foster a positive, productive, and healthy work environment for all Cornish Staff, supporting a culture of inclusion, transparency, collaboration, and recognition.

Operating Structure

Staff Council directly advises the President of Cornish College of the Arts on Cornish staff perspectives, issues, concerns, and initiatives.

Work Plan

Each year (June 1st- May 31st), Staff Council will convene as a group to determine what tasks and goals to include in their annual work plan. This work plan will be shared with the Staff and the governing bodies of Cornish and will provide a framework for projects that will build upon the regular duties of the Staff Council and further its purpose. Staff Council Representatives should draw upon directly solicited feedback from their constituents to inform each year's work plan.

Subcommittees

Staff Council has many ongoing projects which require subcommittees. For example, coordinating Staff Council elections requires a subcommittee. Annual work plan projects may also require subcommittees. Volunteers outside of the staff council with specific knowledge about certain topics who have offered their services may also work closely with subcommittees.

Representation

In its capacity as an advisory council, providing feedback and recommendations directly to the President on behalf of all staff, and because Staff Council does not negotiate contracts, pay scale, benefits, or other position-specific details on behalf of staff, Staff Council represents and is a mouthpiece for all Cornish Staff. Vendors and contractors affiliated with Cornish are welcome to participate in Staff Council events and provide feedback to Staff Council, but may not be elected to serve on Staff Council and are not directly represented by Staff Council, as they are not Cornish employees.

The bodies not represented by Staff Council are those that have their own mechanisms for feedback to the Administration-- including the President's Cabinet, faculty, and students.

Staff Council will make every effort to ensure representation is equitable and inclusive of all departments within each of the college's divisions and campus locations, in addition to adhering to Cornish's institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Every effort shall be made to avoid conflicts of interest between Staff Council Representatives whose job classification requires them to directly supervise the work of a Staff member who is also a Staff Council Representative. If it is determined in such a case that an insurmountable conflict of interest exists between Staff Council Representatives, the Staff Council will determine which Staff Council Representative will serve with a 2/3 vote. Preference should be given to the junior Staff Council Representative.

The number of representatives per division is based on the number of staff members within each division.

Staff Council representation is divided into four divisions. Staff division numbers and reorganizations will be evaluated prior to each election cycle, and division representation adjusted accordingly, to ensure parity of representation across divisions:

Academic

- Academic Department Coordinators, Administrators, and Managers
- Academic Chairs
- Library Staff
- Academic Departmental Production Staff

Administration

- Office of the President
- Office of the Provost
- Office of Institutional Advancement
- Office of Marketing & Communications

Enrollment

- Admissions Office
- Registration & Records Office
- Financial Aid Office
- Student Life Office
- Student Accounts Office

Fiscal and Operations

- Finance Office
- Human Resources Office
- Information Technology Office
- Operations and Facilities
- Creative Spaces and Event Services

Staff Council will seek to appoint its Representatives to serve on college or departmental advisory groups, task forces and committees that are deemed relevant to staff interests and concerns. Staff

Council may deputize staff members outside of the Council if they feel that no current representatives have sufficient expertise in the matter at hand.

Staff Council Structure

Staff Council is composed of Cornish Staff who are nominated and elected by the Staff at large and one ex-officio, non-voting member (Director of Human Resources).

Staff Council will internally elect four officers to serve terms of one year each (June 1st- May 31st), and are up for election or reelection annually. A midterm election will be held in the case of an interim retirement of a Staff Council Officer. The newly-elected officer will then serve the remainder of the year they are elected.

Elected Officer positions:

Chair

- Presides over meetings
- Coordinates elections (for Staff Council Representatives and for internal elected positions)
- Oversees Staff Council votes
- Prepares meeting agendas
- Oversees annual work plan
- Oversees external communications

Vice Chair:

- Assists the Chair
- Oversees committee assignments
- Oversees ongoing projects & subcommittee work
- Presides over meetings in the absence of the Chair
- Other duties as determined by the Staff Council
- Chair Newsletter & Staff council site committee

Budget Secretary:

- Creates annual proposal budget & submits to CFO for approval.
- Oversees and reports on Staff Council budget
- Retains all records of budget activity

Secretary:

- Manages Staff Council meeting minutes
- Reviews and copy-edits external communications
- Manages Staff Council calendar & meeting room reservations
- Assists the Chair with preparing the meeting agendas

Non-Elected Positions:

Administration Representative: The Director Human Resources is an ex-officio, non-voting member of Staff Council, who will attend Staff Council meetings every other meeting (working sessions excluded), or by invitation, and will act as a liaison to the Ext. President's Cabinet.

Communications Liaison: An appointed position by the elected- officers wherein a Staff Council member works closely with the Marketing & Communications Department to ensure staff council messaging consistently & effectively reaches all staff (including vendors and contractors where appropriate).

Election Process for Officers

Once the Staff Council election is complete, an internal election will be held to nominate and elect Staff Council officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Budget Secretary, and Secretary). Outgoing Staff Council members will not vote in this election.. This election will be coordinated by the outgoing Chair or another outgoing member, and will be administered electronically. It is possible to nominate oneself or another representative for an officer role, and secret ballots are recommended. A 2/3 majority vote is required for elected officers. In the instance that a 2/3 majority is not attained in the officer election, a run-off election will be held for that office. If a 2/3 majority is not attained after two run-off elections, if a 2/3 majority is still not attained a coin toss will decide the fate.

Staff Council Elections

Election Process for Staff Council Representatives:

1. During the Spring Semester, current Staff Council members will put out a call for nominations from the staff, collecting nominations over a period of two weeks.
 - a. There is no limit to the number of nominations a staff member may make.
 - b. It is possible to nominate oneself.
2. Once the staff nominations have been made, current Staff Council members will make additional nominations, being mindful to ensure that multiple departments are represented from each division.
3. Staff Council will verify nominees' availability and willingness to participate prior to adding their name to the ballot.
4. An official ballot will be sent out to all staff, and a two-week window will be given for voting to be completed.
5. In the case of a tie, equal representation of departments and campus locations should be taken into account when determining the new Staff Council member. Current members of Staff Council will vote to break ties; a 2/3 majority is required to elect the new member.

6. Newly-elected Staff Council members will join current members for a transitional meeting (or meetings) leading up to Staff Day, when the new members will be announced to the college.

7. Outgoing Staff Council members will be available for consultation to support ongoing projects from June through August.

Mid-Term Appointments

If a Staff Council member leaves Cornish or is unable to fulfill their Staff Council duties, remaining Staff Council members may nominate a candidate from that representative's division, and, with their acceptance and a 2/3 majority vote by Staff Council members, that candidate can be appointed to serve the remainder of the outgoing representative's term.

Staff Council Meetings

Meeting Period

The Staff Council has a goal of meeting once or twice monthly, during work hours, for a period of approximately 1-2 hours. Members may perform additional work on Staff Council committee service or other activities if their regular workload allows; committees may have one or more additional meetings per month. Those who hold elected positions within Staff Council should prioritize meetings.

Staff Council members will receive paid release time from their job responsibilities to participate in Staff Council.

Quorum

An attendance of 50% of elected Staff Council representatives constitutes an official quorum, which is required for voting.

Expectations of Service

- Staff Council representatives are elected for a two-year term.
- Communication outside of meetings is vital to the productivity of Staff Council. Representatives will be expected to respond to Staff Council communications in a timely manner.
- Staff Council representatives are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis.
 - If a Staff Council member misses several meetings and is non-communicative via email, so as to inhibit their participation in Staff Council duties, a vote may be held to determine whether that representative should be asked to step down.
 - A 2/3 majority is required to move forward with asking a current member to step down.

Minutes

Staff Council Secretary drafts minutes for each meeting; these draft minutes will be immediately available in the "Draft Minutes" folder in the shared "Staff Council" folder on Google Drive. The Secretary will email the Staff Council group with the meeting's action items and a direct link to the

draft minutes following each meeting. Action Items should be charted in the Meeting Minute until completion.

Staff Council members will be able to make additional comments or corrections on the draft minutes for up to one week following the meeting, at which point the Secretary will post the final minutes in the "Staff Council Minutes" folder which feeds to the Staff Council site on Compass.

Divisional Meetings & Communications

Each Staff Council member should plan to meet with his/her/their constituents at least once per semester. These meetings are an opportunity to share current Staff Council projects, receive feedback from constituents, and gather items that may be integrated into the Staff Council Work Plan.

Each Staff Council member will report back to the Staff Council on these meetings; these reports & related discussions will be minuted and shared via the usual process.

Amendment and Voting Procedures

General Voting

Unless otherwise noted in this document (for example, amending the Operating Procedures, officer elections, or midterm appointments, all of which require a 2/3 majority vote), a simple majority vote will suffice to move forward with a proposal (of the entire Staff Council or subcommittee). If a simple majority can't be reached within a quorum, the vote will be extended to the entire group.

Proxy Votes

Votes by proxy are permitted in instances where members are not able to be at council meetings due to other work requirements and when issues up for vote have been put forward prior to the scheduled monthly meeting. Proxy voting may be used to preserve quorum.

- A voting member of the council must submit, in writing, a notification of their absence and intention to vote by proxy to either the Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary 24 hours prior to the meeting. The leadership member receiving the notice will then act on behalf of the absent member (an officer should not act as proxy for more than one vote).
- If a Staff Council member is unable to attend a vote due to last-minute circumstances, they should make every effort to give their proxy to another Staff Council member prior to the meeting. If in the course of a regularly scheduled meeting a voting member must leave prior to any held vote, another member present identified by the member leaving can vote on their behalf.
- Voting privilege returns to the absent council member as of the close of the meeting where the proxy vote was granted.

Amendment of Operating Procedures

The Staff Council reserves the right to amend these procedures or any section thereof by the process of:

- Proposal to the Council by a member of Staff Council
- The Council agrees with a 2/3 majority to the proposed revision(s)
- 2/3 of Staff Council must approve the final document in order to ratify it
- The revised document will be shared with the Staff, the President, and the other governing bodies of the college for their records.

This charter was last updated June 2020.