

Bylaws for the Trinity College Exempt Staff Council

As amended June 21, 2012; June 2018; May 2025; July 2026

I. Purpose

The Exempt Staff Council is established to promote the welfare of the staff and the College, by giving voice to the Exempt Staff as a single entity which fosters a positive and respectful working environment by advocating for the interests, welfare, and professional development of all staff members, and contributes to the well-being of the College.

The Exempt Staff Council will work to:

- Enhance communications and maintain working relationships with all constituencies of Trinity College, including senior administration, NESC and its members, the Trinity Faculty, and other staff including members of the collective bargaining units.
- Offer, when deemed appropriate and necessary, advice to senior administration.
- Ensure the administration includes members of the staff on committees that help determine college policies, particularly but not exclusively those policies which directly affect the exempt staff.
- Provide a forum for discussing/resolving issues and concerns of the exempt staff, and advocate on behalf of the rights and needs of the exempt staff.

While the Exempt Staff Council is not a labor organization and will not negotiate specific grievances, labor disputes, compensation, hours of employment, or work conditions on behalf of any individual employee, it will work to foster an environment in which such issues can be openly discussed and problems constructively resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

II. Definition of Exempt Staff Council Membership

In order to vote in elections, run for election to the Exempt Staff Council and attend regular ESC meetings, a staff member must be a member of the Trinity College exempt staff, as defined by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, with certain exceptions. Given that the purpose of this Exempt Staff Council is to give voice to staff members, those who are currently defined by the administration as members of the senior staff group, who have greater access to the President and thus have more direct input into defining College policy and strategic direction, will be excluded from membership. Also excluded are faculty serving as temporary administrators and staff who have successfully petitioned for faculty voting rights.

III. Elections

Election of the Exempt Staff Council

The exempt staff shall elect from among its members at least ten members to serve as the Exempt Staff Council. Council members shall serve two-year terms with terms staggered so that approximately half of the members are elected each year. Terms shall coincide with the college's fiscal year calendar. Members of the council may serve no more than three consecutive full terms (i.e. six consecutive years). If a member is appointed during the year due to a vacancy, that partial term shall not be counted in calculations of term limits.

It is the responsibility of the council to determine the proper number of members as long as it remains at least ten. If the council determines the number of members should be reduced, they will determine how to reduce the number prior to the next election to accomplish the reduction, making efforts to maintain staggered terms as much as possible.

The election of the council shall be conducted by secret electronic ballot in the spring using an approval voting system whereby members of the exempt staff may cast one vote for as many candidates as they choose. Results shall be announced to the membership following the vote tally. Voting shall be conducted as follows:

1. All members of the exempt staff as defined above may vote.
2. Members of exempt staff who vote shall constitute a quorum.
3. Any exempt staff member may be nominated or self-nominate, with no seconding required as long as they meet the requirements defined above.
4. The candidates who receive the most votes shall be elected to fill the existing vacancies.
5. Since the council is intended to be a representative body, the current council members (continuing and newly elected members) should determine if the newly constituted council is adequately representative. If one or more significant areas of the campus community are not represented the candidate(s) from the appropriate area(s) who received the most votes, though not among the top candidates, shall also serve on the council.
6. The two candidates with the next highest number of votes shall be elected to serve as alternates serving a one-year term. Alternates are expected to attend meetings but will only have voting privileges when it is necessary to reach a quorum. There are no term limits for alternates.

Vacancies

In the event that a member leaves the council for any reason and will either bring membership below ten or eliminate representation from a significant area of the campus community, one of the alternate members shall assume the vacancy. If that is not possible, the appropriate candidate from the most recent election with the next highest vote tally may be asked to serve out the balance of the term. If this is not possible, a replacement may be appointed by the council.

Transitions

For the purposes of ensuring a smooth transition after each election, the past chair shall call a meeting of past and newly elected members. This meeting shall focus on dissemination of any information related to ongoing projects and ensuring a smooth election of officers for the next academic year. The member who has been employed at Trinity College the longest will run the meeting and coordinate the election of officers.

Selection and Responsibilities of Officers

The council shall select from among its members three to serve as officers for a one-year term as defined below.

Officers of the council may serve no more than two consecutive full terms (i.e. two consecutive years). If an officer assumes responsibilities during the year due to a vacancy that partial term shall not be counted in calculation of term limits. To be considered eligible to serve as Chair, a Council member must have been employed at the college for at least one year by the beginning of their term as Chair.

Chair, who shall:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Exempt Staff Council.
2. Prepare and distribute an agenda prior to each meeting.
3. Act as the unifying voice for staff and the central point of contact for the college administration.

Vice-Chair, who shall:

1. Perform duties of the chair in the event the chair is absent or cannot serve.
2. Consult with the chair on meeting agenda.
3. Organize elections.
4. Serve as treasurer.

Recording Secretary, who shall:

1. Record accurate minutes of each meeting.
2. Prepare and distribute minutes in a timely fashion.

3. Maintain the minutes for their term of office and pass them on to the successor, along with the historic records.
4. Coordinate communications with the exempt staff membership and other constituencies as necessary.
5. Regularly monitor communications from exempt staff members via email, online forms or other channels and forward items to the chair as appropriate.
6. Each year a digital copy of the approved minutes will be submitted to the College Archives for permanent retention.

IV. Responsibilities of Exempt Staff Council Members

The duties of Exempt Staff Council members shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attend all meetings of the council. Members may be asked to step down at the discretion of the council if chronically absent.
2. Report to the exempt staff on important information and issues as they arise. At least once a year and with at least two weeks' notice, the council will convene the entire exempt staff at which time the council shall report on its activities for the preceding year.
3. Conduct the annual election for members of the council.
4. Conduct the annual election for officers and other elected committee representatives.
5. The council shall work with college committees to ensure that
 1. As deemed necessary, the exempt staff is represented on these committees,
 2. Issues under discussion by and decisions of these college committees are communicated in a timely manner to the exempt staff.
6. The ESC shall strive to conduct all business in a sustainable manner, especially in regards to its dissemination of meeting minutes, agendas and other supporting documents.
7. Establish and serve on ESC subcommittees.

V. Meetings

The Exempt Staff Council shall meet at least monthly during the year. Other meetings may be called as the council deems necessary. A quorum of the council must be present to officially take up business and shall consist of 2/3 of its membership. All council meetings are open to the general membership of the exempt staff as defined in section II above.

The Exempt Staff Council may enter an executive session using the following protocol:

1. The reason for the executive session must be stated.
2. A majority vote of the council is required to enter an executive session.
3. Any votes or decisions made during the executive session must be made public after the session has concluded.

Voting

A vote of the council is required for any official business or actions including but not limited to:

- Election of officers and committee representatives
- Approval of minutes
- Official statements of the ESC
- Sponsorship of campus activities, events or programs
- Approval of expenditures

Voting may take place by any means deemed appropriate by the council including but not limited to, voice vote, paper ballots, email or other electronic means.

VI. Senior Staff Liaison

The council shall arrange for a member of the senior staff to act as a liaison between that group and the council. The Senior Staff Liaison may attend all regular meetings without voting privileges, though the council reserves the right to meet without the liaison present. The liaison shall offer advice and perspective and serve as a direct means of communication between the Exempt Staff Council and the senior staff. It is expected that the liaison will report back on a regular basis to the senior staff and provide feedback from that group to the council as necessary.

VII. Non-Exempt Staff Council Liaison

The Exempt Staff Council shall arrange for a liaison with the Non-Exempt Staff Council (NESC) for purposes of coordination and communication. This individual will attend NESC meetings and report to the ESC regularly about the actions and initiatives of the NESC. Similarly, a representative of the NESC is welcome to attend ESC meetings for the purposes of sharing information and coordinating activities.

VIII. Subcommittees

The Exempt Staff Council will establish and disband subcommittees to focus on particular issues of interest to exempt staff. Each subcommittee will select a chair who is responsible for maintaining the agenda and reporting activities back to the council on a regular basis. The chair shall be a member of the exempt staff. Membership may be

composed of anyone from the college campus community as deemed appropriate by the council.

IX. Adoption of and Revisions to the Bylaws

Bylaws of the Exempt Staff Council and all amendments or revisions thereto must conform with all official policies of the college. These bylaws shall be adopted by a vote conducted in the manner used to elect the council. Exempt staff who vote shall constitute a quorum, approval by a 2/3 majority of the quorum shall be necessary for adoption.

Revisions to the bylaws may be proposed by any member of the exempt staff and must conform with all established college policies. Suggestions for revisions to the bylaws should be brought to the attention of the chair for consideration by the Exempt Staff Council. Revisions shall be voted upon by the entire exempt staff in the same manner that the council members are elected. Exempt staff who vote shall constitute a quorum, approval by a 2/3 majority of the quorum shall be required to revise the bylaws. The exempt staff shall have at least two weeks to consider any changes to the bylaws.

At least once every five years, the council will appoint a committee to review the bylaws of the Exempt Staff Council and to recommend any changes it deems necessary.