

Occidental College

Staff Council Bylaws

Mission

Staff Council recognizes and supports the vital contributions of staff to Occidental College, including their role in campus operations, the [College mission](#), and campus culture. We are committed to empowering staff, providing opportunities to support personal and professional growth, and ensuring that their voices are represented in all decision-making spaces on campus. Acting as a bridge between staff and campus leadership, we provide direct staff participation in shared governance, working in partnership with the [Faculty Council](#) and the [Associated Students of Occidental College](#) to advance Occidental College's [mission](#), vision, and values.

Goals and Priorities

Our work is grounded in the following four priorities:

Advocacy & Equity

Elevating staff voices campuswide, advocating for staff interests and well-being to campus leadership, supporting staff in their roles, and ensuring equitable representation of staff across all divisions in campus decision-making.

Community & Culture

Fostering an inclusive and supportive culture within the campus community for diverse staff of all backgrounds and across all divisions of the College, and providing avenues for staff to build personal and professional relationships.

Engagement & Collaboration

Striving to enhance campus life by providing opportunities for broad staff engagement in campus initiatives, facilitating meaningful connections between staff of all levels, encouraging participation in staff events and programs, and fostering a collaborative environment that benefits both staff and the broader campus community.

Transparency

Advocating that decisions are communicated to affected staff in a timely manner, providing opportunities for staff to connect directly with leadership on topics of concern, and sharing information consistently with staff at every level and across all divisions and subdivisions.

Membership

Membership includes all staff and excludes assistant vice presidents and the equivalent and above, faculty, and students. To be eligible to vote staff must work a minimum of 9 months a year and 20 hours per week. Full-time staff members in good standing who have passed their probationary period or worked at the college for at least 6 months may serve on the Staff Council.

The staff council consists of 7 elected staff—3 [officers](#) and 4 at-large members. Staff council should aim for proportional representation across every division of the College with a requirement of a minimum of 1 member elected from operational staff (viz. facilities, grounds, cleaning services, or campus dining). Staff Council members are completely voluntary, unpaid positions. Staff Council responsibilities do not replace any member's regular work responsibilities.

To support and empower members of our campus community to serve on the Staff Council, all elected representatives will be permitted to attend regularly scheduled Staff Council meetings, other committee meetings, and events without it counting against their regularly scheduled paid work hours. Staff Council duties will average approximately five (5) hours per month. The president of the Staff Council will send a formal letter of committee service to the staff member's supervisor. Supervisors must approve staff members' service on the Staff Council. The College reserves the right to ask a staff member to step back from Staff Council duties if they are unable to also complete their regular responsibilities.

Elections

The 2026 election will be held according to the following schedule:

- July 27 : announce call for nominees
- August 9: close nominations
- Aug 10-14: confirm/gather info on nominees
- Aug 17-28: announce nominees
- August 31: voting opens
- Sep 11: voting closes
- Sep 18: announce Staff Council Membership

In 2026 four (4) Staff Council members will be elected for a two (2) year term ending in Spring 2028 and three (3) Staff Council members will be elected for a one (1) year term ending in Spring 2027.

Starting in 2027 all Staff Council members elected will serve a two (2) year term. Elections will be held every year according to the following schedule:

- 1st week of April- announce call for nominations after spring break
- Early April All Staff Meeting- call for nominees
- Meet & Greet event to meet nominees 1st week of May
- 19-23 April confirm/gather info on nominees
- Last week of April- announce nominees
- 1st week of May- Voting opens
- 2nd week of May- Close voting
- Last Friday of May- announce Staff Council membership

Voting and Ballot Guidelines

- Provide online and paper ballots in English and Spanish;
- Host Election Day voting at a central, on-campus location, providing laptops and paper ballot collection;
- Utilize Ranked Choice Voting to ensure that the elected candidate has broad, majority support while reducing vote splitting and allowing staff to express more nuanced preferences in a single, efficient election.
 - See [Ballot Template](#) and [Vote Tally Guidelines](#)
- The Staff Council will participate in the vote count

Nominations

Staff members are invited to submit nominations for colleagues or themselves. Nominated staff will be invited to stand for election. All nominees will be required to submit a headshot, brief biography and paragraph outlining their qualifications for the position.

Terms of Office

Representatives shall be elected to the Staff Council for terms of two (2) years unless a staff member is elected or appointed to fulfill the remaining term of an elected member who cannot complete their term on the Staff Council. Members may serve a maximum of two (2) terms. The term of service shall begin on the first day of the fiscal year, July 1 and end on the final day of the fiscal year, June 30.

The Council shall appoint replacements for representatives who vacate their seats more than one month prior to the nomination deadline for the next election cycle. Otherwise, vacancies will

be filled through the subsequent regular election. Appointed representatives may self-nominate or be nominated by any eligible staff member and must be elected to retain their seats. All appointed terms expire on June 30 of the fiscal year in which the appointment is made.

Officers

From the Staff Council representatives, the following officers will be elected by a simple majority of its members: president, historian and treasurer. These other officers shall be elected by the Staff Council at its first regular meeting and serve for one (1) year and may succeed themselves in office.

The duties of the officers are:

President

The president presides over Staff Council meetings and represents the Staff Council to the College community at large; serves as the primary point of contact with the executive staff, Faculty Council and student leadership; prepares and distributes meeting agendas. Distributes meeting notices and other correspondence to all Staff Council members. Coordinates room reservations for meetings.

Historian

The historian takes notes at Staff Council meetings; supports Staff Council through subcommittees and other events hosted by Staff Council; manages electronic file storage; works with the communications subcommittee to prepare monthly Staff Council update emails to be distributed to the staff and other campus groups.

Treasurer

The treasurer oversees budget and expenses for Staff Council; prepares and distributes a report of accounts and budgets at each meeting; serves as liaison with the budget office for processing expense reimbursements, invoices, etc. The treasurer coordinates room reservations for meetings.

Responsibilities and Functions

Consistent with the Council's commitment to engagement, collaboration and advocacy the Staff Council shall identify, research, and propose to appropriate members of the college administration new programs and/or modifications of existing programs as needed. The Staff Council shall provide an advisory group on proposed policies and/or programs referred by the college administration; a communication channel to the college administration regarding

proposals and recommendations; and a communication channel to disseminate information to the college staff.

A quorum is established with a minimum of three (3) at large members and two (2) officers.

The Staff Council shall provide a forum, both online and in-person, for matters of concern brought before it by any staff member and hold semi-annual town hall meetings.

The Staff Council will designate staff members to serve on various committees including Budget and Strategic Advisory Committee, search committees for executive-level personnel and strategically significant/impactful positions (e.g. Chief Human Resources Officer, College Librarian, and department heads), campuswide task forces, and other committees as needed.

The Staff Council will not engage in issues governed by the unions' collective bargaining agreements.

The Staff Council is not a labor organization. Nothing contained in this document shall be construed as authorizing the Staff Council to deal with the administration with respect to grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, benefits, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

In alignment with the Staff Council's priority of equity for all staff, Staff Council meetings will be held both online and in person; minutes will be taken but audio and video will not be recorded.

Subcommittees

Engagement

The engagement subcommittee will focus on outreach designed to create a welcoming campus environment for staff. They will also develop, plan and implement initiatives, events and activities that promote staff interests and opportunities for connection and collaboration.

Communications

The communications subcommittee will maintain the Staff Council website, Google drive and email address, as well as physical bulletin boards/correspondence for Operational departments. They will also facilitate communication between the council, staff, and the greater campus community.

Bylaws

The bylaws subcommittee will review and make recommendations regarding bylaws and associated policies and procedures and serve as a resource for the Staff Council and constituent groups regarding potential changes to the bylaws.

Evaluation and Assessment

A comprehensive reassessment of the Staff Council must be completed every year and must include assessing and evaluating the bylaws, community engagement, communications, initiatives, activities and programs.

Revisions and Amendments

Proposed revisions, amendments and repeals shall be circulated in writing to the entire Staff Council at a regularly scheduled Staff Council meeting and shall be voted on at the next regularly scheduled Staff Council meeting. Any revision, amendment, or repeal must have a 50% plus 1 simple majority vote to pass.

These Bylaws do not supersede any laws, regulations, College policies, or provisions of the Employee Handbook.

Key Terms and Definitions

Full Time Staff Member - employee working 30 hours/week or more

Quorum - the minimum number of council members required to be present for an official vote: three (3) at large members -and- two (2) officers.

Ranked Choice Voting - method of voting where voters rank candidates in order of preference and votes are counted and redistributed until one candidate receives a majority of votes.

Staff Council - representative body of employees elected to serve as liaisons between staff and College leadership

Staff grade - a classification level assigned to staff positions that reflect their respective responsibilities, required qualifications, and relative pay range.

Simple majority - 50% of the votes cast plus 1

Subcommittee - a group composed of some members of the Staff Council, which is dedicated to performing specific, more focused duties, as part of the Staff Council's overall work



Oxy Staff Council Election Ballot (TEMPLATE)

Ranked Choice Voting

Position: _____

Election Date: _____

Instructions for Voters

- Rank candidates in order of preference:
 - “1” = your first choice
 - “2” = your second choice
 - “3” = your third choice, and so on
- You may rank as many or as few candidates as you wish.
- Do not assign the same rank to more than one candidate.

Candidate Rankings

Rank	Candidate Name
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____

(Add or remove rows as needed depending on number of candidates.)

Optional Write-In Candidate

Rank	Name
_____	_____

Voter Verification

Signature: _____

Department: _____



Vote Tally Guidelines

Overview

Ranked Choice Voting ensures that the winning candidate has majority support (more than 50%) by simulating a series of runoff elections using voter preferences.

Step-by-Step Counting Process

1. First Round Count

- Count all **first-choice (“1”) votes**.
- If a candidate receives **more than 50%**, they are declared the winner.
- If not, proceed to elimination rounds.

2. Eliminate Lowest Candidate

- Identify the candidate with the **fewest first-choice votes**.
- Eliminate that candidate from the race.

3. Redistribute Votes

- For ballots that selected the eliminated candidate as their highest-ranked choice:
 - Transfer each ballot to the **next highest-ranked candidate still in the race**.
- Ballots with no remaining ranked candidates become “**exhausted ballots**” and are no longer counted.

4. Recalculate Totals

- Recount votes with redistributed ballots.
- Determine if any candidate now has **more than 50% of active votes**.

5. Repeat as Needed

- Continue eliminating the lowest candidate and redistributing votes until:
 - One candidate achieves a majority, or
 - Only two candidates remain (the one with more votes wins).

Tie-Breaking Rules

Establish these in advance. Recommended options:

1. Candidate with more first-round votes prevails
2. Candidate with more second-choice rankings prevails
3. Random selection (coin toss or drawing lots), if still tied

Ballot Validity Rules

- **Valid ballots:**
 - Clearly ranked in sequential order (1, 2, 3...)
 - Skipped rankings are accepted (e.g., 1, 3, 4)
- **Invalid rankings:**
 - Duplicate rankings (e.g., two “1”s)
 - Only count rankings that are not duplicated
- **Exhausted ballots:**
 - Ballots that do not rank any remaining candidates during counting rounds

Reporting Results

Include:

- Total ballots cast
- Number of valid vs. exhausted ballots
- Round-by-round vote totals
- Final winner and margin