7.2 Bylaws

7.2.1 Scope
This policy authorizes the University Staff of UW-River Falls to structure themselves in a manner they determine and to select representatives to participate in institutional governance.

“University Staff” are members of the university workforce who contribute in a broad array of positions in support of the University’s mission and are not exempt (hourly1) from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

[1Note: All FLSA exempt employees holding positions in the State of Wisconsin “classified” service as of July 1, 2015 are given the choice to remain in the University Staff for as long as they retain their existing positions, or to voluntarily be reassigned to a position that the institution has designated as either an Academic Staff or Limited Appointment position]

7.2.2 Purpose

Students, faculty and academic staff have governance rights granted by Wis. Stat. Chapter 36. On December 12, 2012, the Board of Regents adopted Regent Policy Document 20-20, under which, effective July 1, 2013, university staff may participate in institutional governance. This policy enables active participation in the immediate decision-making and policy development of the institution. Active participation in governance for University Staff under this policy is not collective bargaining and will not result in a labor agreement or contract. University Staff may make recommendations, consider proposals, and raise concerns to institutional leadership.

The Board of Regents is vested with the primary responsibility for governance of the University of Wisconsin System [sec. 36.09(1), Wis. Stats.]. In discharging this responsibility, the Board has an interest in providing University Staff the opportunity to participate in institutional decision-making. According to Regent Policy Document 20-20 each UW System institution shall:

1. Provide its University Staff members, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, and the chancellor and faculty of the institution, the opportunity to be active participants in the immediate governance of and policy development for the institution;

2. Provide its University Staff members the primary responsibility for the formulation and review, and representation in the development, of all policies and procedures concerning University Staff members, including University Staff personnel matters; and

3. Provide its University Staff members the right to structure themselves in a manner University Staff members determine, and to select their representatives to participate in institutional governance.

7.2.3 Mission Statement
The UW-River Falls University Staff Senate (USS) promotes ongoing education, professional development activities and communication between University Staff and the broader University community. The Senate members will serve as advisors to the Chancellor and other University administrators. The USS will provide a forum for all University Staff employees (represented, non-represented, temporary, and project appointment) and for interactions with members of the University community, including faculty, academic staff, and students.

7.2.4 Name

The name of the organization is the UW-River Falls University Staff Senate (Senate or USS).

7.2.5 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the University Staff Senate to:

a. Participate in the development of future plans for the University while also promoting and sustaining a positive professional environment for all University Staff employees (represented, non-represented, temporary and project);

b. Promote programs and services that support professional development activities;

c. Encourage informed communication among University Staff and with the broader University community, including the recognized governance groups;

d. Participate actively in the immediate decision-making and policy development of the institution, in accordance with Regent’s Policy 20-20;

e. Solicit nominees and make recommendations as requested by the Chancellor for University Search and Screen Committees and other designated committees;

f. Perform such other duties and functions as befits a voluntary organization committed to creating and sustaining an affirming and supportive operational environment that supports, promotes and encourages excellence in teaching, working, leading, and serving the community.

7.2.6 Membership

The USS serves on behalf of all permanent University Staff, University Staff-Temporary and University Staff-Project employees at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. All members of the University Staff are eligible for membership on the University Staff Senate.

The Senate shall consist of a nine (9) senators who are proportionately representative of all constituency groups at UW-River Falls. Each senator will serve a three-year term. Membership will be allocated as follows: Administrative Support (2), Blue Collar (2), Crafts/Technical/ Law Enforcement/Security (1), Fiscal & Staff Services (1), Supervisory/Human Resources (1), and Member-at-Large (2). Membership allocations will be reviewed and adjusted as needed annually by recommendation of the Bylaws Committee. All USS senators have equal voting rights.
If no one from a unit is willing to serve, an alternate senator who received the next highest votes from that unit at the last election will be appointed to Senate to fulfill the balance of the term.

7.2.7 Non-Voting Appointments

An Administrative Liaison appointed by the Chancellor shall serve as an ex officio and non-voting member of USS and the Executive Board.

Liaison members shall be appointed by Faculty Senate and Academic Staff Council to attend USS meetings to facilitate communication among shared governance groups.

7.2.8 Elections

The procedure for electing senators shall be initiated annually by April 1 under the direction of the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will notify eligible staff of upcoming elections and provide nomination ballots. All eligible employees may be nominated by their colleagues or may self-nominate to serve on USS. If nominated by another, the Vice Chair will verify the nominee's willingness to participate. If there are no nominees for a specific unit, and in order to maintain enough members to have a quorum, members of that unit will be represented by an alternate appointee from any unit who received the highest number of votes at the most recent election.

When a vacancy occurs in the Member-at-large category, all university staff are eligible to be nominated.

Elections are to be completed annually by the end of May. Candidates receiving the most votes will be elected. Ties in the division elections shall be broken by lot, supervised by the Senate Chair. Upon request, the vote totals shall be made available through the Vice Chair.

If no one from a unit is willing to serve, an alternate member who received the next highest votes from any unit at the last election will be appointed to Senate to fulfill the balance of the term.

7.2.9 Terms of Service

The term or service for each senator will be three years. USS members are elected by vote of all participating, interested, and eligible members of the University Staff at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. For purposes of continuity, terms of service on USS are staggered, leaving three seats open for election each year. The term for new appointees will begin in the first week of June overlapping with outgoing members whose term ends the last week of June.

7.2.9.1 Vacancies

If an elected senator leaves before the term is completed the Vice Chair, in consultation with the Elections Committee, will ask the next highest vote getter in the same unit from the most recent election to complete the term. If no one from the same unit is willing to complete the term, the next-highest vote-getter in any unit in the most recent election will be asked to fill the position until the next election, at which time the vacancy will be listed for the number of years remaining in the term and for the same unit.
A “resignation” form listing the senator’s name, represented unit, years of USS service remaining, and reason for resignation, is required before a senator may resign. This form must be submitted to the Vice Chair as soon as possible.

The Vice Chair, in consultation with the Elections Committee, will ask the University Staff member who received the next highest votes from the most recent election in any unit to complete the remainder of the term.

If there are no nominees for a specific unit, and in order to maintain enough members to have a quorum, members of that unit will be represented by an alternate appointee from any unit who received the highest number of votes at the most recent election to complete the remainder of the term. If none of these conditions are met, the Senate may fill the vacancy by recruiting and appointing any university staff member.

7.2.10 Executive Board

The Executive Board of the Senate will consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary - to be elected by the nine voting senate members annually. The Chancellor's Administrative Liaison will be a non-voting member of the Executive Board.

7.2.10.1 Election of Executive Board Members

The nine USS senators who have been elected or appointed to serve shall elect officers at the June meeting from among the nine USS senators who have been elected or appointed to serve in the upcoming term. Secret ballots may be used if needed. Outgoing senators cannot nominate candidates for the position and will not vote in this process. A newly elected senator must be present during this process, in order to be nominated for an office. In the event of a Board vacancy, the USS will elect a new representative from current Senate members.

7.2.10.2.1 Responsibilities and Duties of Executive Board

The Executive Board will meet at least once per month, no less than 10 working days prior to regularly scheduled USS monthly meetings.

7.2.10.2.2 Responsibilities of the Executive Board:

- Attend meetings with campus Administration;
- Set meeting times and approve agenda items;
- Discuss pertinent matters and establish direction for committee activities;
- Review committee reports;
- Take necessary action between general meetings;
- Review member nominations and attendance;
- Fill membership vacancies as appropriate;
- Perform other business as appropriate;
7.2.10.2.3 Duties of the Executive Board:

Chair:
- Calls meetings of USS and Executive Board and presides over the meetings,
- Coordinates activities,
- Attends meetings with campus Administration.
- Prepares the agenda for meetings;

Vice Chair:
- Serves as acting Chair (and performs all requisite duties) when the Chair is absent or unable to perform the duties of the position;
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Chairs the committee on committees;
- Maintains an archival list of all Senate members;
- Maintains a roster of all sub-committees, which is posted on the USS web page;
- Acts in an advisory capacity to USS subcommittees;
- Chairs the election committee and is responsible for notifying elected Senators of their appointments to USS.

Secretary:
- Takes minutes of USS meetings and posts minutes to the USS webpage no later than two weeks following any meeting;
- Retains a copy of the minutes within the USS files on the shared directory
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;
- Submits meeting notices to Falcon Daily a minimum of 48 hours before meetings.

Treasurer:
- Manages, reconciles and reports on the budget to USS at all monthly meetings.
- Is responsible for the payment of all USS bills or obligations.
- Attends meetings with campus Administration;

7.2.11 Other Appointments

Web Master: An appointed webmaster will receive training to maintain the content of the website.

7.2.12 Meetings

Scheduling: USS will hold regular meetings monthly. In June of each year, the initial meeting time for the new committee will be established. After the initial fall meeting, the committee will determine the schedule for the rest of the year. The July meeting will not be held unless there is some pressing business that requires a change in the meeting schedule.

USS meetings are open to all University employees and are held during normal business hours; typically between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Members of USS will be allowed to attend meetings in paid status. Any employee serving as an elected senator of USS who is assigned to work the
second or third shift will be allowed to use flex work hours to attend these meetings. Arrangement to flex work schedule must be discussed with the appropriate supervisor.

The Administrative Liaison shall actively help to resolve any issues or problems that may arise relating to these scheduling and workload conditions. If a special unscheduled meeting is needed, the secretary or designee will send an email notification to all University Staff.

Quorum: A quorum for any meeting of USS shall be six (6) senators.

Attendance: A USS senator must attend at least eight of the regularly scheduled meetings in a given year (June-June) to retain his/her seat. If a senator is unable to fulfill the monthly meeting attendance obligation, he or she will be asked by the USS Vice Chair, in consultation with University Staff Senate, to submit a resignation.

If a senator is unable to attend a meeting, the senator may ask a substitute to attend in his/her place. The senator must send email notification of the substitute’s name to the USS Chair prior to the meeting the substitute attends. The Senate, by majority vote, must approve seating the substitute at the beginning of the meeting. The substitute is authorized to vote on issues before the Senate.

7.2.12.1 Meeting Absences

If a senator misses two (2) consecutive meetings, the Chair will send a letter to the senator inquiring whether the senator intends to resign, and if so, to submit a resignation form that will be attached to the letter. The “resignation” form will include: senator’s name, represented unit, years of USS service remaining, and reason for resignation. This form must be submitted to the Senate to complete the resignation process.

After a senator misses three (3) meetings, the Chair will submit to the Senate a recommendation to remove a senator and the USS must vote to approve, by a two-thirds margin, by secret ballot.

If an elected senator is removed from office before the term is completed, a “resignation” form listing member name, represented unit, years of service remaining, and reason for removal is required. This form must be submitted by the Vice Chair to the full Senate at the time of removal. If an elected member resigns before the term is completed, a completed “resignation” form is required at the time of resignation. Upon acceptance of the removal or resignation, the completed form will be kept in the permanent USS records by the Secretary.

The Vice Chair, in consultation with the Elections Committee, will ask the University Staff member who received the next highest votes from the most recent election in the unit to complete the remainder of the term.

If there are no nominees for a specific unit, and in order to maintain enough members to have a quorum, members of that unit will be represented by a member-at-large appointee from any other unit who received the highest number of votes at the most recent election. The new senator will complete the remainder of the term. See Article VI (Terms of Service) for complete process on filling vacancy.
If any of these apply to an officer, the Senate will elect a replacement from the current membership to fulfill the balance of the officer’s term.

7.2.13 Committees

USS committees may be established by a majority vote of the USS membership, and each will include at least one senator who will serve as liaison to USS. All committees select their own chair (or co-chairs) from among themselves. Committee meetings may be held during paid work hours. Any employee serving as an elected member of the Senate and working second or third shift will be allowed to flex work hours to attend committee meetings, and the Administrative Liaison shall provide support and assistance toward this end, if needed. Arrangement to flex work schedule must be discussed with the appropriate supervisor.

Committees are reviewed annually and those that are no longer necessary will be eliminated by majority vote of USS. The USS liaison for each committee will report to the USS with updates on the activities of the committee.

USS Committees - (each committee is responsible to maintain a roster of duties and responsibilities):

Bylaws Committee: Annually reviews USS bylaws and proposes changes to USS as necessary. At least one member from the past year’s committee will serve the following year.

Elections Committee: This committee is charged by the Senate Chair each February. It is composed of three University Staff members: USS Vice Chair, one past Elections Committee member and one current USS member not seeking re-election. The Vice Chair will lead the committee. They will report directly to USS Chair. The Vice Chair will submit election results at the May USS meeting. The Senate will approve the election results at their May meeting. New members will be required to attend the June meeting.

Sally Margis University Staff Development Award Committee: Committee formed annually in September with the following minimum membership: one current University Staff Senator, one member from the previous year’s committee, and any other University Staff person who is interested and not an applicant for the current year’s award. Committee is responsible for posting announcements for award applications, reviewing the applications, selecting the recipient(s), making recommendations to the Chancellor, and confidentially notifying each applicant in writing of the outcome. The award must be used within the fiscal year that it is awarded (by June 30). The Sally Margis University Staff Development Award winners will be publicly announced by the Chancellor.

Committee on Committees: The Committee on Committees will find nominees for openings on the USS committees. The nominees will be announced at the next USS meeting. A confirmation letter will be sent to the appointee, USS Chair, employee’s supervisor, webpage manager and the chair of the appropriate committee.

7.2.14 Amending Bylaws
USS Bylaws may be changed by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of USS membership. This vote will be done at a USS meeting.

- Proposed changes must be presented for public review and discussion at least one meeting prior to the vote.
- Proposed changes will be posted on the USS web page. UWRF University Staff will be notified via the University Staff list-serve and Falcon Daily of the open meeting where review of the bylaws changes will take place.
- The notice of any vote to change the bylaws will be posted not less than seven days prior to the meeting.

The Bylaws Committee will meet as often as necessary to review the bylaws. Recommendations for changes will be presented annually during the February meeting, and voted on in the March meeting.