Preamble
The mission of the Staff Senate is to facilitate the exchange of information between staff members and GPC administration, to provide a voice for staff ideas and concerns, and to further develop the GPC staff in alignment with the GPC Strategic Plan. Representatives elected to the Staff Senate will be the collective, comprehensive voice of GPC staff employees.

Article I: Powers and Jurisdiction
Section 1. Identity and Purpose
A. The name of the organization shall be the Staff Senate. The Staff Senate is part of the Georgia Perimeter College Shared Governance and Policy Review process. It is composed of elected representatives from among the benefits-eligible staff members employed by Georgia Perimeter College. These staff-elected representatives will advise the president and other administrators on matters that have a major impact on staff. The Staff Senate is dedicated to promoting the interest and welfare of Georgia Perimeter College staff employees.

B. The Staff Senate will not serve as a substitute for the College’s Employment Grievance procedure.

C. The purpose of the Staff Senate at Georgia Perimeter College is to represent staff employees by enhancing communication and involvement of the staff in the decision-making process of the College, and by engaging in efforts towards promoting a positive and collaborative work environment. Responsibilities of the Staff Senate shall be as follows:

- Advise and make recommendations on existing and proposed policies to the administration of the College to promote fair and impartial treatment of staff employees
- Serve as a resource for inquiries by, and requests from, staff in order to address general staff concerns
- Participate in the process of informing staff of issues and activities that may affect them
- Suggest and promote activities that provide employees the opportunity to build informal relationships, thus aiding improved communication among staff employees and faculty
- Integrate GPC staff into the GPC Shared Governance and Policy Review process
- Create a stronger bond among the staff employees through promoting and supporting appropriate College initiatives, such as employee recognition, customer service, health and wellness, green initiatives, diversity or other applicable initiatives that may arise
- Facilitate training and staff development opportunities including, but not limited to, coordinating Staff Development Day, welcoming new staff employees, developing a mentoring system for new and existing staff and serving as a resource for information on the College’s procedures and processes and serving as a liaison with the College’s Executive Team
- Participate in the activities of the University System of Georgia Staff Council (USGSC)

Section 2. Definition
A. “Staff” is defined as all full- and part-time support, and professional and administrative (P&A) employees of the College not represented by the Faculty Senate.

B. “Benefits-eligible staff” is defined as any staff member who is eligible to receive benefits.
C. “Election Cycle” is the cycle that describes the timeframe in which annual nominations are gathered and elections are held.

D. “Fiscal Year” is defined as the period between July 1 and June 30.

Section 3. Budget
The Staff Senate may request funds from Human Resources and the GPC Foundation as appropriate to support events coordinated by the Staff Senate.

Article II: Membership
Section 1. Membership
A. Staff Senate representative eligibility shall be limited to benefits-eligible staff members with at least one year of service at the College by July 1 of the election year.

B. The Staff Senate shall be composed of an equitable representation of all benefits-eligible staff members. The Senate shall consist of 26 representatives with no more and no fewer than the designated number elected from each of the following units:

- Five representatives from Academic Affairs (includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the Vice President of Academic Affairs)
- Five representatives from Student Affairs (includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the Vice President of Student Affairs)
- Seven representatives from Financial and Administrative Affairs (includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administrative Affairs)
  - This is to include at least two representatives employed by Plant Operations and one employed by Public Safety
- One representative from Institutional Advancement (includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the Vice President of Institutional Advancement)
- One representative from the President’s staff “(includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the office of the President, including the Contact Center)
- One representative from OIT (includes all benefits-eligible staff members that ultimately report to the Assistant Vice President of Information Technology)
- Six representatives from GPC campuses/locations, which shall include one representative from each permanent campus or location

Section 2. Election of Representatives
A. The staff shall elect the requisite number of representatives each year for two-year terms. However, for the first year, half of the Staff Senate representatives will be appointed for one year by the Vice Presidents, Assistant Vice Presidents and Campus Administrative team. The other half will be elected by benefits-eligible staff members. This initial one-year term will not count against term limits for those appointed.
B. The nomination and election of Staff Senate representatives will occur as follows: nominations shall open January 15, with ballots distributed by March 15; the vote shall be closed by March 31 and results announced by April 15.

C. Human Resources shall provide the Staff Senate with a current list of benefits-eligible staff members in each representative unit of the College.

D. The Election Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Staff Senate. The Election Committee shall coordinate, through the Vice-Chair, the nominations and the election process. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) shall produce, collect and initially tally the ballots. All original ballots shall then be provided to the Election Committee for verification of the results. Ballots shall be kept for one year, until they are replaced by the next set of results.

E. Only benefits-eligible staff members qualify to participate in the nomination and election process for choosing Staff Senate Representatives. Eligible employees also may nominate themselves.

- Representatives are elected by majority vote of benefits-eligible staff members
- Benefits-eligible staff members may vote for one (1) candidate, per their designated functional area and/or campus location
- In the case of a tie, the names of the finalists will be placed in a random drawing. The Parliamentarian shall along with, at least two (2) representatives (who are not officers), oversee the drawing.

F. Ballots shall be distributed to all benefits-eligible staff members. Both electronic and paper versions of the ballots are to be made available. Efforts to ensure the integrity of the election process shall be in place. OIRP shall distribute and receive the ballots and complete the tally. The ballots and results shall be forwarded to the Chair of the Staff Senate Election Committee.

G. The Election Committee shall verify the votes immediately after the ballots are received from OIRP and shall record the total number of both valid and invalid votes. Any nominees who receive a simple majority of valid votes shall be declared elected. The Executive Director of Human Resources, ex-officio, non-voting member of the Senate, shall audit the Staff Senate votes and formally validate the election results.

Section 3. Duties of Members
A. Staff Senate representatives will seek feedback from and communicate the interests of all staff in the functional area and or campus that elected them in order to fully represent the interests and concerns of their constituents.

B. The Executive Director of Human Resources or his/her designee shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Staff Senate and shall not be eligible for election to the Staff Senate as a voting member in his/her own right.
C. Staff Senate representatives shall receive sufficient time from their regular College positions to fulfill their responsibilities to the Staff Senate. The President of the College shall send an official letter to the supervisor of each Staff Senate representative, following his or her acceptance of the appointment/election, to acknowledge the participation of the employee.

D. The Staff Senate, in conjunction with Human Resources, shall review the College’s organizational structure at least once every three years. Proposed changes to the Staff Senate’s composition due to changes in the College’s structure must be accepted by the Staff Senate at least two meetings prior to the beginning of the nomination process to ensure all functional areas and campuses of the College receive adequate representation.

 adopted changes in the composition of the Staff Senate shall be communicated to all Staff members and the approving body for the Staff Senate prior to the first set of elections under the new setup.

Section 4. Term of Office
Members will be elected for two-year terms, each term lasting from July 1, following the election, to June 30, two years hence. Members may serve no more than two consecutive, two-year terms.

For the first year, half of the Staff Senate representatives will be appointed for one year, by the Vice President, Assistant Vice President and Campus Administrative team. The other half will be elected by qualifying benefits-eligible staff members. This initial one-year term will not count against term limits for those appointed.

Section 5. Vacancy of Representative Positions

A. A vacancy is created when an representative no longer is a benefits-eligible staff members or he/she requests to be, or, is relieved of duties as a representative. Consequently, a mid-term nomination and election shall be held to fill the unexpired term of the representative. The benefits-eligible staff members of the College shall then elect by simple majority the replacement who shall be seated immediately upon verification of the results. This initial period of service will not count against term limits for the new representative.

B. Staff Senate representatives accept the responsibilities of performing the duties assigned them and also accept that regular attendance at Staff Senate meetings and events is expected. Representatives shall attend all meetings unless extenuating circumstances prevent attendance. Representatives may be excused by notifying the Chair prior to the meeting. In the absence of the Chair, the following designees shall be notified in this order: Vice-Chair, Secretary or Assistant Secretary.

If a representative misses a meeting with an unexcused absence, the Senate Chair will inquire as to the representative's intentions and may suggest that the representative resign from the Staff Senate. A representative who has two consecutive unexcused absences automatically will have
his/her name listed on the Staff Senate agenda for the next meeting for discussion of removal by the Senate. If a third unexcused absence occurs within a twelve-month period, it will be assumed that the incumbent has vacated the seat, and the election of a new representative will be in order at the next election period.

C. If a representative transfers to a position outside of his/her functional area and or campus, he/she shall continue to serve the functional area/campus originally elected to serve until the next election cycle.

Article III. Officers

Section 1. Officers

Officers of the Staff Senate will include the following:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary

Section 2. Officer Election Process and Rules

Officers are nominated and elected from among and by the sitting senate representatives. Officers of the Staff Senate for the upcoming year shall be elected for one-year terms at the last meeting of the current fiscal year. The newly elected Staff Senate representatives for the upcoming year shall be invited to attend the current year’s last meeting in order to participate in the elections and to observe the processes of the Senate.

No representative shall hold more than one officer position at a time. Representatives are ineligible to succeed themselves consecutively in any one office. Officers shall not serve as chair for any committee formed by the Senate during their tenure as an officer.

Prior to adjournment of the last meeting held before July 1, the current Senate Chair shall conduct the election for a succeeding Senate Chair. The Vice-Chair shall have first right of refusal for the position of Senate Chair. If the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary (in that order of consideration) do not wish to succeed the Senate Chair, any other Staff Senate representative may be considered for the position of Chair. If no current officer wishes to be considered, any Staff Senate member (who is at the end of the first year of a two-year term) may be considered for the position of Chair.

The current Senate Chair also shall conduct the election process for the next year’s Vice-Chair, Secretary and Assistant Secretary, respectively. Any representative of the Staff Senate (who will be serving the next year) is eligible for these positions.

Each representative may vote for one candidate only for each office. Candidates receiving a simple majority vote shall be elected to office. If no candidate receives a majority vote, a run-off election will be held between the two candidates receiving the most votes. Newly elected officers shall immediately take office and serve until the next annual election.
Section 3. Duties

A. Duties of the Chair

- Preside at all Staff Senate meetings and enforce the Staff Senate Bylaws
- Prepare, in consultation with the Vice-Chair and Secretary, an agenda for each regular and any special meetings of the Staff Senate and distribute the agenda to appropriate parties at least five working days prior to the meetings
- Appoint ad hoc committees as appropriate
- Present to the Staff Senate all staff matters and concerns
- Represent the Staff Senate and consult with College administration regarding staff matters as appropriate
- Refer staff matters and recommendations to the appropriate committee chair or administrator
- Participate as a member of the Election Committee
- Participate in the President’s Cabinet meetings
- Participate on the President’s Policy Advisory Board
- Prepare a written annual report of the Staff Senate’s activities and progress and distribute this report to the College President and all staff employees through the Staff Senate’s website
- Appoint a Parliamentarian from among the benefits-eligible staff members of the College

B. Duties of the Vice-Chair

- Perform duties and exercise powers of the Chair in his/her absence or resignation
- Act on behalf of the Chair upon request
- Act as recording secretary in the absence of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- Participate as a member of the Election Committee
- Work with OIRP in the preparation and distribution of annual election ballots
- Represent the Staff Senate at various College functions as requested by the Chair
- Assist the Chair in determining agenda for Staff Senate meetings
- Assist the Chair with other matters as requested

C. Duties of the Secretary

- Keep minutes of regular and special meetings of the Staff Senate and post official minutes on the Shared Governance website within ten working days of each meeting
- Ensure that past Senate records are maintained according to GPC Policy on Record Management and Retention
- Assist the Chair in determining agenda items for Staff Senate meetings
- Reserve meeting places for the Staff Senate meetings and notify the College of the details of the planned meeting.
- Participate as a member of the Election Committee
- Preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Represent the Staff Senate at various College functions as requested by the Chair
- Assist the Chair with other matters as requested

D. Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Assistant the Chair in determining agenda items for Staff Senate meetings
- Participate as a member of the Election Committee
- Keep minutes of regular and special meetings of the Staff Senate in the absence of the Secretary
- Preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary and appoint a secretary pro-tem to record the minutes of such meetings
- Represent the Staff Senate at various College functions as requested by the Chair
- Assist the Chair and the Secretary with other matters as requested

Section 4. Duties of Other Non-Officer Positions

A. Committee Chairmen
- Secure the purpose of the committee from the Staff Senate and coordinate the meetings of the committee.
- Report to the Officers of the Staff Senate the actions and decision of the committee prior to the Staff Senate meeting when the report is to be given
- Complete a written report of committee actions when requested by the Senate Chair.

B. University System of Georgia Staff Council (USGSC) representative (and alternate, if appointed)
- Maintain communication with the USGSC through the list-serv, website and blog
- Facilitate communication between the USGSC, the Staff Senate, and the staff of the College

C. Duties of the Parliamentarian
- Maintain order at meetings according to the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order.

Section 5. Vacancy of Officer Positions

A. A vacancy is created when an Officer is no longer a benefits-eligible staff members or he/she requests to be, or, is relieved of duties of his/her position as an Officer. A special nomination and an internal Senate election shall be held to fill any vacancy of an unexpired term of an Officer. The Senate shall solicit eligible nominations from within the Senate Representatives consistent with Article III, Section 2. The Senate shall then elect by simple majority the replacement(s) who shall be seated immediately upon verification of the results.

B. Staff Senate officers accept the responsibilities of performing the duties assigned them and also accept that regular attendance at Staff Senate meetings and events is expected. Officers shall attend all meetings unless extenuating circumstances prevent attendance. Officers may be excused by notifying the Chair prior to the meeting. In the absence of the Chair, the following designees shall be notified in the following order: Vice Chair, Secretary and Assistant Secretary.

If an Officer is absent from a meeting without providing an explanation (excused absence), the Senate Chair, or designee, will inquire as to the Officer’s intentions and may suggest that the officer resign from the Staff Senate. An officer who has two consecutive unexcused absences
will automatically have his/her name listed on the Staff Senate agenda for the next meeting for discussion of removal by the Senate. If a third unexcused absence occurs within a twelve-month period, it will be assumed that the officer has vacated the seat, and the election of a new officer will be in order.

C. An officer relieved of duties due to non-performance - shall not be considered in good standing and therefore, will not maintain their primary functional area/campus representative position. An election will be held in accordance to Article II, Section 5 to fill the vacancy of a representative. An internal Senate election will be held to fill the vacant position of officer.

D. If an officer requests to step down from his/her position, he/she must officially inform the Chair or designees. An officer in good standing may resign from the position and retain his/her primary role as functional area/campus representative. An internal Senate election will be held to fill the vacant officer position.

E. If an officer transfers to a position outside of his/her functional area and or campus, he/she will be allowed to remain in the capacity of officer until the expiration of the current term. The officer will continue to serve the functional area and or campus originally elected or appointed to serve until the next election cycle. At the expiration of the term, the officer shall step down from both the position of officer and functional area/campus representative in accordance with Article II, Section 5C. A new election shall be held to replace the vacated seat in order to maintain an “equitable representation of eligible staff”. In accordance with Article II, Section 4, the representative in this scenario may be re-elected to the Senate as long as he/she has not yet served two consecutive two-year terms.

**Article IV. Meetings**

**Section 1. Meeting Schedule and Format**

Meetings of the Staff Senate shall be held at least four times a year, with special meetings called as conditions or projects warrant, but meetings shall not be held more frequently than once a month. Meetings shall rotate among the primary locations of the College and shall be open to all staff. Meetings held in various formats (online, teleconference, etc.) are allowable when appropriate.

**Section 2. Agenda**

The agenda for Senate meetings shall be prepared by the Chair and distributed to representatives currently serving on the Staff Senate.

**Section 3. Voting**

Voting is limited to Staff Senate representatives, exclusive of any ex-officio members. Voting on all matters shall be by voice vote unless a secret ballot is requested or the Staff Senate Chair rules otherwise. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed. For voting purposes, a simple majority will be required for a motion to pass.

**Section 4. Quorum**
The presence of two-thirds of the Staff Senate representatives at any given meeting shall constitute a quorum, and business may be conducted. Any meeting held without a quorum shall be informational only.

**Section 5. Executive Committee meetings**
When needed, the Staff Senate Chair may call a meeting of the Officers of the Senate, consisting of the Officers, any current Committee Chairs, and the USGSC representative. Minutes of all Executive Committee meetings shall be presented to the membership of the Staff Senate at the next meeting following the date of the Executive Committee meeting and shall be archived on the website.

**Section 6. Visitors**
All regular meetings of the Staff Senate shall be open to interested parties. All non-representative attendees shall sit in a separate area at the meeting.

**Section 7. Minutes**
The minutes of the Staff Senate meetings will be prepared by the Secretary and posted on the Shared Governance website within ten (10) business days of each meeting.

**Section 8. Order of Business**
The meetings shall proceed according to the agenda prepared by the Chair. Any representative or interested party may submit items for possible inclusion on the agenda to the Chair. This must be done at least seven (7) business days before the meeting date.

**Section 9. Parliamentary Procedure**
All meetings shall be conducted under the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

**Article V: Committees**
Ad hoc committees shall be formed to fulfill the responsibilities and carry out the initiatives of the Staff Senate.

**Article VI: Amendments to the Bylaws**
The Senate Chair shall arrange for a Bylaws Amendment committee to be established. The Chair of the Bylaws Amendment Committee shall solicit from the full Senate, suggestions on proposals for change or repeal of any amendment(s). The proposal shall be submitted in writing to Staff Senate representatives at least five (5) days before the Senate meeting at which the proposed amendments will be discussed. The proposal shall contain the exact wording of the amendment and an indication of its location in the Bylaws.

The amendments must be communicated to all staff for review. Following the presentation of the proposed amendments, a vote shall be taken by the Staff Senate and must be approved by a two-thirds majority. All amendments that pass the Senate must be approved by the College Executive Team before becoming effective.