



# **Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Constitution of the College Congress Amended April 15, 2025**

## **Preamble**

The Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Congress provides the organizational structure for college employees and students to have a voice in the evolution of the College's policies and related documentation and to provide guidance to the College President on non-policy items. The formation and maintenance of the College Congress will be consistent with the bylaws of the College's Board of Trustees and with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

## **Article I: Overview**

The College Congress is composed of the College, Faculty, Staff, Administrative, and Student Senates and various standing and ad hoc committees (Appendix 1).

President's Cabinet and the President, or any employee or enrolled student, may recommend to College Senate to delete a current Board policy, create a new Board policy or revise current Board policy. These policy recommendations must first be sent to College Senate as new business which will then forward the policy recommendations to each individual Senate (i.e., Administrative, Faculty, Staff, and Student Senates) for discussion and debate. At the next College Senate meeting, representatives for each Senate will offer their feedback on the policy recommendations. This feedback is forwarded to the President and President's Cabinet for consideration. Once the feedback has been considered, the President will provide a one-week comment period for any employee or student to review the proposed policy recommendations before the proposed policy is sent to the Board of Trustees for final adoption. If the policy is formally adopted by the Board, a copy will be placed on the College intranet (myPEAK) on the Governance Tab inside the Board Policies page. It is understood that the President may at times need to expedite policy review and bypass the Senates' normal review process. In such cases, the policy will be sent back to College Senate for post Board of Trustee approval review.

All Senates are empowered to create individual bylaws to govern their operation, to establish internal committee structure, and to elect officers. While amending the College's Constitution requires Board of Trustees approval, the process for amending the bylaws of any of the Senates is outlined in the respective Senate bylaws, however, the individual Senate bylaws cannot conflict with the College's Constitution.

All Senates and standing College committees must post approved minutes of their meetings, using the authorized template, on the intranet for all employees and students to review.

## **Article II: Governance Membership and Responsibilities**

2.1: College Senate – This body consists of 16 members, four members each of the Faculty, Administrative, Staff and Student Senates. To foster accountability and transparency, all employees and enrolled students are invited to attend College Senate.

The College President will appoint one, non-voting, ex-officio employee to each of the Faculty, Staff, Administrative, and Student Senates.

### 2.2. Administrative Senate

Administrative Senate consists of full-time or part-time non-faculty employees who have supervisory and/or budgetary responsibility.

The Administrative Senate will make recommendations concerning the administration of the College, including, but not limited to, the development and refinement of processes to implement the policies of the Board of Trustees. The Administrative Senate may receive charges from the College President, and/or a designee of the College President (e.g., Chief Human Resources Officer), and College Senate.

### 2.3. Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate consists of full-time faculty, appointed adjunct faculty, and any non-faculty employees (e.g., the Chief Academic Officer) who maintain a position that has a clear connection to for-credit programming, academic policy or to instruction.

The Faculty Senate will have primary oversight of matters related to for-credit programming including curriculum, academic standards, and educational policies of the College. Although the Faculty Senate holds primary oversight for such matters, this does not preclude the other Senates from having a consultative voice to recognize the possible impact of the Faculty Senate recommendations on the operations of the College. The Faculty Senate may receive additional charges from the College President, a designee of the College President (e.g., the Chief Academic Officer), and/or the College Senate.

### 2.4. Staff Senate

Staff Senate consists of full-time or part-time non-faculty employees who provide a supportive role in their respective offices and who do not have supervisory or budgetary responsibilities.

The Staff Senate will make recommendations concerning the basic support for the administrative processes of the College, including, but not limited to, the development and refinement of processes to implement the policies of the

Board of Trustees. The Staff Senate will work to ensure that recommendations moving to the College Senate and the President will be feasible and viable processes for college-wide implementation. The Staff Senate may receive additional charges from the College President, a designee of the College President (e.g., Chief Student Services Officer), or College Senate.

## 2.5. Student Senate

The Student Senate consists of enrolled Pennsylvania Highlands Community College Students. The Student Senate will provide recommendations on matters of student life and welfare. The Student Senate may receive additional charges from the College President, designee of the College President (e.g., Director of Student Activities), or College Senate.

## **Article III: Code of Ethics**

3.1: The College Congress operates under the following Code of Ethics:

3.1.1. That all discussions and any recommendations coming from such discussions evolve from a deep commitment to and best interest of the students of the College;

3.1.2. That all discussions and any recommendations coming from such discussions evolve from a deep commitment to the College's mission;

3.1.3. That all discussions and any recommendations coming from such discussions recognize that commitment must come from everyone, at all levels and that we are mutually dependent upon one another to succeed;

3.1.4. That all discussions and any recommendations coming from such discussions affirm the value of all participants, and value the perspectives of others;

3.1.5. That all discussions and any recommendations coming from such discussions be honest, open, candid, and tolerant;

3.1.6. That the members of the College Congress refrain from authoritarian behavior;

3.1.7. That the members of the College Congress guard against tendencies toward organizational or personal self-interest;

3.1.8. That the members of the College Congress attempt to resolve conflict within the shared governance framework;

3.1.9. That the members of the College Congress affirm a commitment to build trust and communication.

3.2. To oversee the ethical conduct of members of the College Congress, the College Senate will populate an ad hoc Ethics Committee on an as needed basis which will consist of nine (9) members with one appointee from Cabinet, and two (2) representatives each from the Student Senate, the Faculty Senate, the Administrative Senate, and the Staff Senate.

3.3. If an ethical violation has been alleged, it should be reported to the College Senate Chair. A violation should be reported to the College Senate Vice Chair, should the College Senate Chair be the violator, or an individual Senate Chair/President, should the College Senate Chair and Vice Chair be the violators. Within three business days of the violation being reported, the College Senate Secretary will be tasked with forming the committee and scheduling a meeting.

3.4. The ad hoc Ethics Committee is empowered to review evidence of misconduct involving the Code of Ethics and to recommend penalties for such misconduct, including the removal from office any office holder serving on a Committee or Senate and/or the suspension of voting privileges of a member of a Committee or Senate. Ad hoc Ethics Committee recommendations are presented to the College Senate, which will, in turn, seek resolution from the appropriate Senate.

#### **Article IV: Amendments to the Constitution**

4.1: Any member of the Senates may propose an amendment to this Constitution by submitting the proposed amendment in writing to the College Senate Chair.

4.2. The Chair of the College Senate will present the proposed amendment to the College Senate, who will, in turn, present the proposed amendment to the Senates. The proposed amendment will receive preliminary discussion at the Senate meetings at which it is first introduced and will receive additional discussion and a vote by the members during the subsequent meeting.

4.3. For an amendment to be approved by the Senates, it must receive two-thirds of the vote from eligible voting members of each of the bodies. Once the amendment has been passed by the Senates, the College President will take it before the Board of Trustees. Upon approval by the Board of Trustees, the amendment will be added to the Constitution.

4.4. If an amendment is not passed by a two-thirds majority in each of the Senates, the body/bodies in opposition to the amendment must present, in writing, its objections to the amendment at the next College Senate meeting. The objections will be discussed, and the amendment changed, if necessary, and the process will revert to 4.2.

4.5 Minor editorial changes to the Constitution, that do not change the scope or intent of the original language, may be made by approval of 2/3 College

Senate voting members and the College President. These editorial changes do not require Board of Trustee approval.

# Appendix 1

## Pennsylvania Highlands Community College College Congress

