

Constitution of the Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers

As revised by the Executive Committee on May 18, 2022; ratification by membership announced December 7, 2022

Article I. Name

Section 1 *Name*

The name of this organization shall be the Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers.

Section 2 *Affiliation*

This organization is chartered by American Federation of Teachers (AFT) as Local #2431 and shall be affiliated with the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliates.

Article II. Objectives

Section 1 *Rights and Working Conditions*

To represent the faculty, full time and adjunct, in collective bargaining with the college and the county, to achieve and maintain optimal terms and conditions of employment and a safe, healthy work environment in accordance with the Taylor Law of New York State, including (but not limited to): academic freedom; due process; protection against discriminatory, arbitrary, or capricious treatment; workload, hours, preparations and class sizes; compensation; benefits; leave; participation in shared governance; professional development opportunities; access to facilities, supplies, technology, and equipment; faculty input on appointments to faculty or administrative positions; recruitment of new Union members; and member involvement with local, state and national unions.

Section 2 *Development of the College*

To further the development of Westchester Community College as a comprehensive institution of higher learning in service of the community.

Article III. Membership

Section 1 *Definition*

The Union welcomes into membership all faculty, adjunct and full-time, as defined by the recognition clause of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). All members shall be dues-paying members in good standing. Any faculty member who is inactive at the College for two years will be removed from Union membership.

Section 2 *Dues*

Union dues shall include any current state and national affiliate dues as well as local WCCFT dues. The local dues shall be determined by a majority vote of the members at a general membership meeting. Notice of the intention to vote on dues changes will be included in the agenda for an upcoming membership meeting.

Section 3 *Membership Rights*

The membership shall be responsible for establishing the direction of the Union, implementation of all union goals, in accordance with this Constitution and properly mandated policies and procedures of the state and national organizations with which the Union is affiliated. Members shall be encouraged in every way to participate in the discussions, activities and policy decisions of the Union. However, members must have been active at the College during the academic year in which an election or ratification vote is held in order to participate.

College administrators who hold adjunct faculty membership may not belong to the Executive Committee of the Union, or participate directly in collective bargaining as members of the bargaining team. Such members shall also be excluded from Union meetings dealing with grievance issues or where their presence will interfere with free and open discussion. Notice of such issues, and the exclusion of members who are administrators, will be included when the agenda for that meeting is distributed. If items arise in the course of a meeting that warrant exclusion, those items will be reserved for the end of that meeting.

Article IV. Structure

Section 1 *Officers*

- A. The officers of the Union shall include President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall be elected to serve two-year terms of office.
- B. The order of succession in the event of the inability of the President to perform the duties of the office shall be as follows: Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer.
- C. The President shall preside at meetings of the Union and the Executive Committee and share material and information from local, state, and national unions with the membership. The President is responsible for implementing the goals of the Union and for representing the Union on governance and policy-making bodies of Westchester Community College and in its dealings with College, state and local officials. The President will also serve as an *ex officio* member of all Union committees.
- D. The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the President, and shall perform such other duties as the President or the Union may delegate.
- E. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping a record of the proceedings of all Union meetings and shall make minutes and agenda items available to the membership. The Secretary shall be responsible for Union correspondence with members and for updating the membership lists.
- F. The Treasurer shall collect dues from all members, remit "per capita" dues to the affiliated bodies, disburse sums approved by the Executive Committee, and keep proper financial records. The Treasurer will be responsible for preparing a draft of the annual budget for review by the Budget Committee, presenting to the Executive Committee for approval, and reporting to the general membership.
- G. The Executive Committee has sole fiduciary responsibility for the administration of the Union, as reflected in the annual budget approval process (including any stipends). The Executive Committee shall reimburse its members for any legitimate expenses incurred in the execution of their normal duties on behalf of the Union. Such reimbursements shall be subject to the approval of the President if previously budgeted, or the approval of the Committee as a whole if not budgeted.

Section 2 *Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee shall consist of the four Officers, an Adjunct Representative (excluding retired full-time faculty working as adjuncts), a full-time teaching faculty representative, a full-time non-teaching faculty representative, and up to five at-large members (either full-time or part-time). The expectation is that the Executive Committee will meet approximately eight times during the academic year, but no fewer than five times, as well as at least once during the summer. Such meetings may be held in person or virtually, and notice of the format shall be provided in advance.

The term of office for Executive Committee members shall be two years. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for implementing policy, coordinating activities of the individual committees of the Union, and communicating with constituent members. The Executive Committee may propose policy to the Union.

Section 3 *Committees*

Committees may be created by the Executive Committee or by the general membership. They may be designated "Standing" or "Special." Each Standing Committee shall consist of a chair who shall be a member of the Executive Committee. The following Standing Committees are hereby created:

Adjunct Committee

The Mission of the WCCFT Adjunct Committee is to promote unity within the body of adjunct faculty professors at WCC and to improve the conditions of employment. The adjunct committee will assist the membership committee in its recruitment efforts. In order to accomplish this mission, the adjunct committee will meet once per month during the academic year. Meetings may be in the form of presentations by WCC's adjunct faculty, workshops that inform adjunct

faculty about WCCFT issues and benefits, and/or sessions dedicated to seeking ways to improve the lives and work environment of adjunct faculty.

Budget Committee

This Committee is chaired by the Treasurer of the WCCFT Executive Committee, and its membership includes the other three WCCFT officers (President, Vice President, and Secretary). The Committee is responsible for assisting the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget for the Executive Committee's approval. The Committee also assists the Treasurer in examining the Executive Committee's financial review.

Communication Committee

This committee facilitates timely communication of information from WCCFT leadership to the membership in written and digital formats, including the following: a union website which is regularly updated (both software and content); a union newsletter published twice a semester and disseminated to all WCC faculty via email; a presence on social media (such as a WCCFT Facebook page), with periodical content updates.

Grievance Committee

The primary purpose of the Grievance Committee is to uphold the contract. This includes: investigating, writing, and submitting grievances, and working with the faculty member and the administration to resolve them; evaluating, in conjunction with the NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, whether the grievance should move forward to arbitration, and assisting the LRS if it does. The Grievance Committee should also: work to educate members about the contract; track and document past practices, past grievances and resolutions; and use current and historical information to bring negotiation points forward. A Grievance Committee member shall recuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interests; an alternate for that grievance will be selected by the President.

Health & Safety Committee

The Health and Safety Committee serves as a liaison between the faculty and the WCCFT E-board, gathering complaints and concerns from faculty members and bringing them to the attention of the E-board. The Committee investigates faculty complaints and attempts to address them with the appropriate campus parties in order to achieve resolution.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee works to increase the WCCFT membership; ensures that membership lists and records are accurate; provides new members with orienting information about Union benefits and key documents; conducts research into membership trends; and provides the WCCFT E-Board with data on WCCFT members. This Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the WCCFT Executive Committee.

Political Action Committee

The purpose of the Political Action Committee is to oversee the research, endorsement, and financial support of local candidates who support the WCCFT mission and issues. Funds are provided through member VoteCope voluntary contributions. The Committee invites candidates to one-on-one discussions with the PAC, as well as to WCCFT general monthly meetings.

Professional Development Fund Committee

The purpose of the Professional Development Fund Committee is to administer the professional development fund established in the collective bargaining agreement with the College. The committee shall recommend procedures to the Executive Committee for partially or fully covering expenses related to professional activities (i.e., conferences, workshops, classes, research, etc.) in which a faculty member has participated during a specified period of time, and administer such procedures.

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee coordinates scholarships for WCC students founded on the principles of unionism. The scholarships are designed to reflect a belief in the value and contribution of unions to workers' rights, health and safety in the workplace, the struggle for equality of labor and social justice.

Special Committees may be created for specific, limited functions. Special Committee chairs shall be designated by the Executive Committee and shall report to the Executive Committee. Reports of committee activities must be made regularly or at least once a semester at the full membership meetings by committee chairs after reporting to the Executive Committee.

Negotiating Team Composition and Election:

A WCCFT negotiating team will be comprised of select members of the Executive Committee: the officers (President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer), Adjunct Representative, and two at-large full-time members of the Executive Committee (one teaching and one non-teaching), all of whom will serve on the negotiating team during the time they are in office. There will also be an opportunity for a Union member (not necessarily on the Executive Committee) to serve as an alternate on the negotiating team. The alternate would be elected by the membership for a two-year term as part of the regular biannual election of Executive Committee members (along with sick bank trustees and NYSUT Representative Assembly delegates). The alternate will attend negotiation team meetings and bargaining sessions as needed, and will assume voting rights if a regular member of the team is no longer able to fulfill their duties. (As with the election of RA delegates, if a vacant seat for the alternate has no candidates, it shall remain unfilled.)

Article V. Meetings

Section 1 *Monthly Meetings*

The full membership of the Union shall meet once a month unless otherwise notified. Such meetings may be held in person or virtually, and notice of the format shall be provided in advance. The secretary shall provide proper notice of meetings to the membership.

Section 2 *Procedures*

Policy questions shall be resolved by majority vote of the membership in attendance unless otherwise specified. Five percent (5%) of the membership in good standing or twenty members, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business. Such voting at in-person meetings may be done via show of hands, with advance notice and a quorum being reached; such voting at virtual meetings may be conducted via electronic polling, with advance notice and a quorum being reached.

Article VI. Elections

Section 1 *Election Procedures for Officers and Executive Committee*

During the first week of March, the Executive Committee shall mail to the entire membership a call for nominations. Nominations will be accepted at the March general membership meeting of the Union or submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Union. The last day for nominations shall be the last Wednesday of March. Nominations shall be announced at the April membership meeting. Nominees may express their views at the April meeting.

The Executive Committee shall prepare and mail out an official ballot within two (2) days of the April meeting. The ballot may be in digital form and access to the ballot by the members may be online rather than by mail. An Election Committee of three members shall be appointed to count the ballots and ensure that online voting is secure and accurate. No one seeking election shall serve on the Elections Committee.

Ballots shall be returned to the Election Committee by the last Wednesday of April. In the case of online voting, that day shall be the deadline for voting. The Committee shall arrange for a count before the May general membership meeting. All candidates may be present for the count. In the case of online voting, all candidates will be able to observe the electronic tally of the votes. Elections shall be determined by a majority vote of returned ballots. For offices held by

more than one individual, such as Executive Committee member or Representative Assembly delegate, the highest vote-getters will be elected, even if not a majority. Announcement of the election results shall be made at the May membership meeting.

New Officers and members of the Executive Committee shall assume office on June 1 of the same year.

Section 2 Vacancies

In the event of the inability of any officer to perform the duties of office, succession will follow as designated above. In the event of the inability of any member of the Executive Committee, Sick Bank Trustee or delegate to the NYSUT Representative Assembly to perform the duties of office, the Executive Committee will appoint a replacement to serve until an interim election by a majority of members at the next general membership can be held if the general election for that office is more than ninety (90) days from the day of resignation.

Section 3 Representative Assembly of NYSUT

Delegates to the NYSUT Representative Assembly (RA), the number of which shall be calculated to conform to NYSUT rules, will be elected by the general membership for the term of office defined in the NYSUT Constitution. One delegate shall be the President of the Union. The election of RA delegates shall follow the procedures for elections outlined in Article VI, section 2 above.

Article VII. Recall

Section 1 Subject to Recall

Any Officer or member of the Executive Committee shall be subject to recall.

Section 2 Recall Procedures

A motion in the Executive Committee receiving two-thirds (2/3) of the votes of the Committee or in a regular membership meeting receiving two-thirds (2/3) of the members present for recall of any or all members of the Executive Committee shall initiate recall procedures. Members shall then be notified by mail of a recall meeting where makers of the recall motion and those threatened with recall shall be given equal time to present their cases. A motion for recall receiving two-thirds (2/3) of members present shall be considered successful.

Article VIII. Amendments and Ratification

Section 1 Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by one of two methods:

- 1) A petition of fifty (50) members in good standing
- 2) A majority of the members of the Executive Committee

Amendments to the Constitution shall be presented to the members at a general membership meeting and shall take effect upon ratification by a majority of members at the following general member meeting.

Section 2 Ratification of Constitution

The Constitution must be ratified by a majority of returned mail ballots or via electronic voting.