



Guidelines: UW Health and Safety Committees And the Election Process

October 2009

I. Introduction

University Health and Safety Committees (HSCs) are structured along organizational lines and referred to by number, as well as by name. There are currently twelve. A University-Wide Health and Safety Committee (U-Wide) is composed of two representatives from each organizational HSC.

The UW Administrative Policy Statement 10.11, "UW Health and Safety Committees," defines the scope, organization, and compliance responsibility of HSCs at the University. All UW employees are represented by this system. Each University employee is given a chance to nominate and to vote during these elections.

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) coordinates with Committee Heads (e.g. Provost, vice provosts, chancellors, vice presidents, deans, and executive directors) to whom organizational HSCs report and advise. The University-Wide Committee reports to and advises the EH&S Director. The EH&S Director determines the number of organizational health and safety committees.

II. Size of an Organizational Health and Safety Committee

The number of members on an organizational HSC is determined by the Committee Head to whom the Committee reports, with advice from the Committee and EH&S. The minimum membership is five.

III. Term Length

All HSC members serve for two-year terms. Committee structure is covered in agreement with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. The two year term length is covered in an Amended Permanent Variance, FN10200, dated 1/9/08.

IV. Committee Membership and "Balance"

Committee members consist of elected representatives, management appointees, and Union representatives. The total number of elected representatives must always be equal to or more than the total number of management appointees – never less. This rule is referred to as "balance." Ex-Officio Committee members do not vote and do not affect balance.

A. Elected Representatives

Individuals are nominated and elected in a process that includes all University staff, faculty, temporary, hourly, and student employees. It must be documented that all employees in a work group were able to nominate and vote for candidates. The only qualification requirement to be eligible for election other than the ability to serve is that the candidates not have a managerial role. A

managerial role is a position that (1) has manager in its title, (2) can both hire and terminate employment, (3) manages resources, (4) has responsibility for planning and directing the work group, or (5) monitors group work. There is no other disqualifier from nomination. There is no provision for proxy or delegate-type elections. Organizational HSCs may generate nominations for their election through an internal process or rely on a general call for nominations.

B. Management Appointments

Along with appointments by the Committee Head, organizational units can request the Committee Head to appoint representatives as voting members of the Organizational Health & Safety Committee. In order to coordinate with elections, the organizational unit should identify these appointees by December 1st to the Election Coordinator and to Michael Merrill, EH&S. Any appointment changes made during a term should be communicated immediately to the Committee Head, Committee Chair and to EH&S. Committee Heads can make appointments such as: a representative from Human Resources, a representative from Facilities Services, and any safety coordinators within the group. These appointees can be voting appointed members or non-voting Ex-Officio members. The number of appointed voting members cannot exceed the number of elected members.

If the Committee Head cannot attend each meeting they should appoint a representative that will attend regularly, report to the Committee Head monthly on the committee, and speak for the Committee Head at the meetings.

C. Faculty Senate Representative

The Faculty Senate may choose one person to represent that body as a voting member of the University-Wide Health & Safety Committee. The U-Wide considers this representative as "elected."

D. Associated Students of University of Washington Representative

The President of The associates Students of University of Washington (ASUW) may arrange for one person to represent that body as a voting member of the University-Wide Health & Safety Committee. The U-Wide considers this representative as "elected."

E. Union Representatives

- *Authorization:* A union may be represented on an organizational Health & Safety Committee, if:
 - The union's bargaining agreement/contract with the University specifically provides for representation on an HSC.
 - The union has members either employed by or performing services for units within the same HSC.

- *Coordination with Biennial Elections:*
Before the elections, EH&S will ask the UW Labor Relations Office to send letters to Unions inviting them to participate in the new term by sending representatives.

- Unions are responsible for choosing their representatives.
- Whether elected or appointed by their Unions, representatives are always considered “elected” and participate fully in Committee functioning.
- *Notification:* If a Union chooses to send a representative to an Organizational Health & Safety Committee, by December 1st it must inform in writing the:
 - Labor Relations Office
 - EH&S Occupational Health & Safety Office
- *University-wide Health and Safety Committee:*
A maximum of one representative from each Union may sit on the University-Wide Health and Safety Committee. These representatives must be serving on an Organizational Health & Safety Committee, as well.

V. Election Responsibilities

A. Organizational Safety Committees will:

- Choose an Election Coordinator who accepts responsibility for the Committee’s timely completion of the election and who will communicate with EH&S and the Committee Head. Send the contact information for the Coordinator to EH&S by October 1.
- Develop methods and distribution lists to reach everyone in every department. (Hints for how to accomplish this are included in VI. Election Process, below.)
- Request current Letters of Appointment from department heads.
- Send out a call for nominations in early October (with return deadline).
- Verify that each nominee is willing and able to serve and does not hold a managerial position.
- Send out ballots to vote in early November (with return deadline).
- Tally votes electronically or by hand.
- Notifications:
 - Provide election results to all candidates and departments and thank them for their participation.
 - Welcome all Committee members for the new term and provide them with member contact information.
 - Send a copy of election results and contact information to the EH&S Occupational Health and Safety Office, Box 354400, by December 16th.
- Select Chair(s) and U-Wide representatives in January of first year. Inform EH&S immediately.
- Provide the Committee Head a complete roster of Committee members for the new term, including contact information. The roster should identify the new Chair, and U-Wide representatives, elected, appointed, and Union representatives.

B. Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) will:

- The Director of EH&S will send a pre-election letter to Committee Heads to whom organizational HSCs report to remind them that a new election must be held.
- Publish the list of election coordinators on its website and distribute a list of coordinators to the U Wide.
- Ask the UW Labor Relations Office to invite authorized unions to choose representatives for the new term.
- Generally promote the election process through timely announcements for nominations and elections in media such as the University Week and The Daily. These announcements alert employees to look for specific election information from their own Committee and/or department
- Announce election results in the University Week in January following the elections.
- Provide guidance to election coordinators.
- Train Committee members from late December to the end of January.

C. Committee Heads will:

- Assure that an Election Coordinator has been identified in September and that EH&S has been notified giving complete contact information.
- Assure that all staff, faculty, temporary, hourly, and student employees had the opportunity to participate in the nomination and election by helping the Election Coordinator to identify all departments and employees within the Committee's area of responsibility.
- Assure that all aspects of the election are completed by the end of December.
- Provide letters to appointed members and to elected representatives approving and commending their participation on the organizational Health and Safety Committee. Committee Chair or Election Coordinator can prepare letters for the Committee Head.

VI. Election Process

A. Tips:

- Choose an Election Coordinator as soon as possible. Notify EH&S as soon as the election coordinator is named giving complete contact information.
- Distribution lists take time to develop from scratch – get started early. You might be able to use lists from the office of your Committee Head.
- Consider “lessons learned” from previous elections and Election Coordinators.

B. Timing:

- EH&S informs Committee Heads, Health & Safety Committees and Labor Relations of pending elections during September.
- Appoint the Election Coordinator during September.
- The election process runs October – December 15.
- Allow time to reach employees that work in other locations.
- Nominations and voting should both be open for at least two weeks.

- EH&S assistance and promotional announcements can keep you on track.
- Allow enough time – members must be in place for training and the January meetings.

C. Contacting UW Employees

- Any method may be used (e-mail, paper ballots, etc.) but keep in mind that employees may not have easy access to computers. To ensure everyone is reached, most organizations rely on written notification to announce nomination and balloting details.
- A notice must be posted on the required Safety Bulletin Board. If the Health & Safety Committee has a Group website the notice(s) should be posted in both locations.
- Catalyst's WebQ is an effective way to create a call for nominations form, an election ballot and tallying results.

D. Election Ballots

- List all departments, divisions, or combination of departments that are included in the Organizational Safety Committee - even units that have no candidates. (After the election, the Committee will decide how those employees will be represented by existing members.)
- List all candidate names with their home department, i.e., John Smythe (Financial Services).
- Provide voter instructions at the top of the ballot. For example:
 - "Vote only for the candidate representing your department"
 - "Vote for a candidate in each category"
 - "Vote for x number of candidates."
 - "The deadline for submitting your ballot is"
- An election method may be reviewed and changed by Committee vote before an election.
- Election can be online but precautions must be taken to allow only eligible voters and voters to only vote once. Paper ballots must be provided where computers are not regularly available to covered employees.

E. General Rules

- Individuals may nominate themselves and vote for themselves.
- Any UW employee may nominate a potential candidate. Nominators should contact potential candidates to determine if they are willing to run for election and serve on the committee.
- Nominees cannot have a managerial role at the University. No other criteria may be used to disqualify an employee.
- A candidate may run unopposed but must be voted on to win.
- An individual may serve multiple terms.
- Appointees who run for election and win must choose the status they prefer.
- To be listed on a ballot, candidates should notify the Election Coordinator in writing/e-mail that they are willing to run in the election and serve on the Committee. (Save this verification with election documentation.)

VII. Documentation

- The State Department of Labor and Industries can inspect for proper election processes.
- Because the University has a variance allowing two-year terms on Health and Safety Committees, its nomination and ballot documentation should be kept from election to election for at least 2 years rather than the usual 1 year.
- Documentation includes announcements about nominations, nominations, sample ballots, voting/balloting instructions, ballots, and election result postings.
- The location for election records should be approved by the Committee Head, to whom the organizational Committee reports.