

**El Camino College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1388
Committee on Political Education (COPE)**

Constitution and By-Laws

Adopted May 2021 by the AFT 1388 Executive Board

Preamble

Whereas, the working conditions of faculty at El Camino College are influenced by the Board of Trustees, the California state legislature, the Governor, the United States Congress, and the President of the United States;

And, whereas these bodies and individuals are democratically elected, and thus accountable and responsive to the needs of the interest groups and voters who help get them elected;

Be it resolved that the El Camino College Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1388, establish a Committee on Political Education (COPE) so as to educate faculty on political matters that affect them, and to organize the faculty for political action on these matters.

Article I: Name of the Organization

This organization shall be known as the AFT 1388 Committee on Political Education, or AFT 1388 COPE.

Article II: Purpose of the Organization

The purposes of the Committee on Political Education are:

1. To support and strengthen the commitment of the citizens and the government to excellence in education at all levels.
2. To promote and strive for the improvement of public community colleges by encouraging and stimulating educators to take a more active part in governmental affairs pertaining to public education.
3. To encourage educators to know and understand the nature and action of their government and the important political issues as they pertain to public education.

Article III: Membership of the Organization

Section 1 - Any El Camino College faculty member making a regular contribution shall be eligible for a membership in the AFT 1388 Committee on Political Education.

Section 2 - Any retired member of AFT 1388 can be a member of the AFT 1388 Committee on Political Education. Dues can be paid quarterly, bi-annually, and yearly.

Section 3 – All COPE members in good standing may participate in COPE meetings and vote on COPE officers, amendments to the COPE constitution, and COPE political endorsements.

Section 4 - No discrimination shall ever be shown toward individual COPE members or applicants for the COPE because of sex, gender identity, race, color, creed, age, religion, sexual orientation, social status, or national origin.

Article IV: Cabinet Officers

Section 1 – In order to achieve the purposes of the organization set out in Article II, this COPE shall have a Cabinet consisting of three elected officers (Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary) to collectively manage the Committee’s business. This Cabinet shall have the authority to appoint Chairs to committees, on an as needed basis, in order to advance the stated goals of the COPE. The following officers shall be elected by the membership to fill the COPE Cabinet and will serve for a two-year term in elections held in the spring term during odd or even years as specified:

1. Chair (even)
2. Treasurer (odd)
3. Secretary (even)

Section 2 – COPE members in good standing as members of the COPE for at least six months prior to the election shall be eligible as candidates for Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Section 3 – The election of COPE officers shall be held during the spring semester of each year, at which time the COPE Cabinet shall seek candidates to fill open Cabinet offices. Any member in good standing may run for election. Contested elections shall be conducted by secret ballot, either by campus mail, online voting platform, or at a general membership meeting called for that purpose, and members will be notified at least twenty-one (21) days prior of the date, time, and place of the election. The method of election shall be determined by the COPE Cabinet, unless one-fourth of the total membership petitions for a general membership meeting for the

purpose of electing officers at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled election, in which case the election shall be conducted at such a meeting.

Section 4 – An officer of the COPE, whether elected or appointed, may be removed from office prior to the expiration of their term for act(s) detrimental to the interests of the COPE or the ECCFT upon presentation to the COPE Cabinet of a written petition containing specific documented charges signed by at least one-fourth of the total membership, or upon a motion supported in the affirmative by the COPE Cabinet. A general membership meeting shall be called within fourteen (14) days of either action, at which time the members present shall determine by a majority of those voting whether the officer shall be removed. If the vote is in the affirmative, the office shall immediately be filled on an interim basis by the COPE Cabinet, or by the 1388 Executive Board if necessary, until such time as an election is held pursuant to this Article.

Section 5 – An officer of the COPE, and Chairs of Committees, whether elected or appointed, shall declare any conflicts of interest.

Article V: Duties of Officers

Section 1 - The duties of the COPE Chair shall include:

- a. Acting as the Chair of the political action arm of the ECCFT on those matters of professional interest and concern that are being impacted by actions at the national, state and local levels of government.
- b. Interacting with COPE counterparts within the AFT, CFT and Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.
- c. Disseminating political information to ECCFT constituents as provided by subsection a of this section.
- d. Recommending positions concerning candidates and issues, including ballot propositions, as these may relate to protecting and promoting ECCFT and constituent professional interests.
- e. Engaging in fundraising activities in order to further the interests of the ECCFT and its constituents.
- f. Presiding over meetings of the COPE.
- g. Signing all necessary paperwork related to COPE and ensuring all paperwork gets turned in on time.
- h. Organizing the membership for various political activities related to the purposes of the COPE laid out in Article II.

Section 2 - The duties of the *Treasurer* shall include:

- a. Maintaining the complete financial records of the COPE.
- b. Depositing all COPE income and paying all expenditures as authorized by the adopted COPE budget or the COPE Cabinet.
- c. Maintaining the membership rolls of the COPE.
- d. Preparing all reports in a timely manner as required by government agencies as well as the AFT Local 1388, CFT and AFT.
- e. Preparing appropriate quarterly financial updates for the COPE Cabinet, 1388 Executive Board, and annually for the membership following the close of the COPE fiscal year.
- f. Preparing proposed operating budget at least one month prior to the close of the current COPE fiscal year for consideration and adoption by the COPE Cabinet.
- g. The COPE Treasurer will align the COPE budget and fiscal year with the AFT 1388 budget and fiscal year.
- h. Assisting the COPE chair as needed.

Section 3 - The duties of the *Secretary* shall include:

- a. Recording the minutes of all COPE membership and Cabinet meetings.
- b. Issuing all notices and answering all correspondence at the direction of the Chair.
- c. Working with the COPE communications Committee.
- d. Assisting the COPE Chair and COPE Communications Committee as needed
- e. Scheduling meetings and sending out the agenda.

Article VI: The Cabinet

Section 1 – The COPE Cabinet shall consist of the Chair, the Treasurer, and the Secretary.

Section 2 – The COPE Cabinet shall administer the COPE policies and it shall have the authority to act on behalf of the COPE membership under those conditions where policy cannot be formulated by the full membership. The COPE Cabinet shall have the authority to establish special Committees in addition to those specified in Article VII.

Section 3 - The COPE Chair shall serve as the Chairperson of the Cabinet.

Section 4 – The COPE Cabinet shall determine the time and location of Cabinet meetings and invite COPE members to attend.

Section 5 – The COPE Cabinet shall have the authority to employ and evaluate all personnel and contractors based on the needs and finances of the COPE. The Chair shall coordinate all employee matters and evaluations through a committee made up of COPE members.

Section 6 – The COPE Cabinet shall report its activities on a regular basis at membership meetings and through its website(s), digital and paper publications, and social media platforms.

Section 7 – A quorum, consisting of a majority of the voting members of the COPE Cabinet, must be present at the Cabinet meeting in order to conduct the COPE business.

Article VII: Standing and Special Committees

Section 1 – In order to achieve the purposes of the organization set out in Article II, this COPE shall have Standing and Special Committees. Standing Committees are those which are intended to be in continuous operation. Special Committees are those formed to carry out short-term, specialized tasks.

Section 2 – The Chair, with the consent of the COPE Cabinet, shall appoint the Chairs and members of standing and special Committees.

Section 3 – Except as may otherwise be specified in the COPE Constitution, all appointments made by the COPE Chair are subject to the approval of and shall serve at the pleasure of the COPE Cabinet, and may be removed at the discretion of the COPE Cabinet by a majority vote.

Section 4 – Standing Committees of the COPE shall include the following:

- a. The Communications Committee
- b. The Organizing Committee
- c. The Constitution Review Committee
- d. The Financial Audit Committee

Article VIII: Duties of Standing and Special Committees

Section 1 – The Communications Committee shall be responsible for consistent communications with members through the COPE websites, digital and paper publications, social media platforms and for communicating with the campus community and the communities we serve. The Communications Committee shall also be responsible for doing research.

Section 2 – The Organizing Committee shall act as the political organizing arm of the COPE. It will be in charge of outreach to members, non-members, residents, and community organizations. The Organizing Committee shall also be responsible for coordinating the training and work of volunteers.

Section 3 – The Constitutional Revision Committee shall review the COPE Constitution as necessary in order to ensure that the governing procedures of the COPE remain current and functional.

Section 4 – The Audit Committee shall review the COPE finances and produce a report with recommendations at least every other year. Any officer who prepares financial records will be a consultant to this Committee, but may not serve on the Committee.

Article IX: Meetings

Section 1 - There shall be at least one general membership meeting each fall and spring semester. The COPE Cabinet may call additional meetings at its discretion, or if a petition, signed by one-fourth of the total membership, requests such as a meeting.

Section 2 - A quorum at a general membership meeting shall consist of ten percent of the total COPE membership.

Article X: Finances

Section 1 - All COPE funds will come from voluntary dues and donations, including fundraising activities.

Section 2 - The COPE Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining accurate and current financial information.

Section 3 - An audit may be called for at any time by a majority of the COPE Cabinet or by a majority vote at a general membership meeting or by a petition signed by one-fourth of the COPE membership.

Section 4 - The COPE Cabinet shall align the COPE fiscal year and budget with AFT 1388's fiscal year and budget.

Article XI: Endorsements

Section 1 - Any COPE endorsement for individual candidates, political slates, legislative measures, or legislation will require a majority vote at the COPE meetings. The COPE Cabinet can also hold an electronic discussion to vote and approve COPE endorsements and any such COPE e-endorsement must be communicated to the COPE membership.

Section 2 - Any COPE donations to individual candidates, political slates, and legislative measures will require a majority vote at the COPE meetings.

Section 3 - The AFT 1388 Executive Board and the COPE will work towards consensus and agreement on both political endorsements and contributions.

- a. To facilitate consensus between the two bodies, AFT 1388 Executive Board members will engage in regular and substantive participation in COPE meetings and activities during El Camino College BOT election years.
- b. The COPE chair and AFT 1388 President will provide each other monthly updates about their respective organizations.

Article XII: Procedural Rules

Section 1 - Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) shall govern in those areas not covered by the Federation Constitution or By-Laws.

Section 2 - The COPE Constitution and By-Laws will supersede all COPE policies and procedures in cases of dispute.

Article XIII: Constitutional Amendment

Section 1 - All Constitutional amendments must also be approved by the AFT 1388 Executive Board.

Section 2 - A proposed amendment to the Constitution may be submitted by the COPE Cabinet at least ten (10) days prior to a general membership meeting. A two-thirds vote of those present at the meeting shall be sufficient to adopt the amendment.

Section 3 - A proposed amendment may be submitted to the membership by campus mail or email by the COPE Cabinet. COPE members shall vote by secret mail or online ballot supplied by the COPE. A two-thirds vote of those voting shall be required to adopt said amendment.

Article XIV: Availability of the Constitution

Section 1 - A copy of this Constitution shall be available on the COPE website. Electronic copies of this Constitution shall be available upon request.

AFT Local 1388 COPE By-Laws

Article I: Dues and Donations

Section 1 - COPE dues are voluntary and distinct and separate from AFT 1388 union dues.

Section 2 - The dues shall be automatically deducted from each paycheck paid based on El Camino College payroll cycles.

Section 3 - Dues may be paid directly to the COPE Treasurer or by payroll deduction.

Section 4 - Retiree members may pay dues quarterly, bi-annually, or yearly.

Section 5 - Moneys raised through donations will be deposited into the COPE bank account.

Article II: Meeting Decorum and Code of Conduct Policy

Section 1 – To ensure a safe and productive environment for conducting COPE meetings and events, the COPE expects attendees to be civil and respect Robert Rules of Order in meetings.

Section 2 – In order to foster a respectful environment free of incivility, discrimination, and harassment, regardless of an individual’s race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, ancestry, pregnancy, or any other characteristic prohibited by law, the COPE also expects its members to respect one another and to recognize and value individual differences, and as an organization the COPE will not tolerate discriminatory, harassing, including sexual and gender-based harassment, bullying, or otherwise unacceptable behavior at any of its activities, events, or meetings.

Section 3 – Use of video recorders, audio recorders, photography, electronic amplifying or recording device, or any other real time sharing with unauthorized party, is prohibited during COPE meetings and events unless approved in advance by a majority vote of the Cabinet.

Section 4 – If a member is subject to what they believe is unacceptable behavior under this Article, or if a member witnesses a violation of this Article, the member should inform the COPE Chair, who will bring the complaint to the Cabinet for review. If the Chair is the subject of the complaint, the member shall inform the Federation’s Executive board which will then appoint a Federation’s Executive board member to strike a committee to hear and review the complaint. Either way, the complainant shall provide a description of the alleged unacceptable behavior in as much detail as possible, including a description of what occurred and the date(s), time(s), and place(s) of the incident(s).

Section 5 – Details of the complaint shall be treated as confidential and there will be no retaliation against anyone who brings a complaint to the Cabinet or Federation Executive Board.

Section 6 – The Cabinet or investigative Committee will conduct an investigation to determine whether the complaint is supported by substantial direct evidence that would establish a violation of this Article. At the conclusion of the investigation, the findings of the investigation and any recommendation from the Committee will be communicated to the COPE Cabinet. The complainant will be provided with conclusions and any recommendations by the Committee within 90 calendar days of receiving the complaint. The timeline will be tolled during recognized District breaks (i.e. Winter, Spring).

Section 7 – Recommendations can include the exclusion of members from attending COPE meetings and COPE sponsored functions for a period of up to and including the next regularly scheduled general membership meeting in the event the member’s current or past attendance has (1) caused a disruption to the orderly function of COPE business, (2) has demeaned, intimidated, or threatened other COPE members, or (3) whose behavior has generally been regarded as not meeting general standards of civility. In extreme cases, recommendations can include expulsion from the COPE.

Article III: Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose

Section 1 - In order to protect the interests and organizational objectives of the COPE, all COPE decision makers must disclose any and all conflicts of interests when the COPE is contemplating an action, transaction, or arrangement. At all times, the COPE’s interests must take precedence over any private interest of a COPE decision maker.

Section 2 – A conflict of interest includes any transaction, decision, or policy that might directly or indirectly benefit a COPE decision maker, including monetary, material and nonmaterial favors and benefits.

Section 3 – To determine whether a conflict of interest exists, the COPE Cabinet and attendees at the COPE meetings will hear and discuss disclosures of conflicts of interests by COPE decision makers. If a COPE member has reasonable cause to believe an individual has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the individual of the basis for this belief and afford them the opportunity to respond and explain the alleged failure to disclose. The disinterested COPE Cabinet members shall then decide if a conflict of interest exists and make a decision for moving forward based on the available information and ensuring that the COPE’s interests and goals are maintained.

Article IV: Amendment Procedure

Section 1 - The COPE By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members voting at any general membership meeting provided that the proposed amendment shall be in writing and accompany the announcement of the membership meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting being held.