

**Bylaws of Faculty Senate  
Amended and Approved – January 2022**

**CHAPTER I. Elections**

**A. General Considerations**

1. All elections, nominations, and reapportionments associated with the Faculty Senate shall be conducted by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee, a standing committee of the Senate.
2. Candidates for Senate seats may only be nominated by eligible electors from their own electoral units. Senators are elected by eligible electors within their own electoral units, and not at large.

**B. Eligibility of Electors and Senators**

1. Persons eligible to vote in elections for the Faculty Senate are identified in Part II, Section B.1 of the Senate Constitution.
2. The status of any elector challenged under these guidelines shall be determined by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee of the Faculty Senate, subject to appeal to the full Senate.
3. Persons eligible for election to the office of Senator are identified in Part II, Section B.2 of the Senate Constitution.

**C. Nomination of Senate Candidates**

1. Unless restricted by a procedure created through bylaw I.C.5, persons eligible for election to the office of Senator may place their own name in nomination, or they may consent to their nomination by any other eligible elector.
2. All nominations shall be submitted to the Faculty Senate office in writing or electronically.
3. The nomination period for election of Senators shall be determined by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee, which will have the option of ending the nomination period two days before the voting period begins.
4. Members of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall be responsible for verifying the eligibility of nominees within their respective electoral units, subject to an appeal to the full committee.
5. Electoral units may establish additional procedures to insure that the Senators represent the diversity of disciplines within their units. These procedures must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the unit's faculty members voting on the proposed change.

**D. Elections**

1. Members of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall conduct regular Senate elections. If a member of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee is a candidate for reelection, another Senator will be appointed by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee to assist in conducting the election.

2. Regular election of Senators shall take place within two weeks after the end of Spring Break each year. The voting period shall be established by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee and reported to the Senate no later than the regular February Senate meeting. The voting period shall last for no fewer than 4 business days.
3. Votes shall be submitted electronically before the end of the voting period.
4. Each elector may cast a vote for each vacancy in his/her electoral unit at stake in the election.
5. In general, Senate vacancies in each electoral unit are filled in order of the number of votes each candidate receives from their electoral unit: the candidate with the largest number of votes is elected to fill the first vacancy; the candidate with the second largest number of votes would be elected to fill a second vacancy; and so forth. However, candidates must receive votes from a majority of the participating voters to be elected.

Runoff elections can be triggered in two ways: (1) not enough candidates receive such a majority to fill all vacancies, or (2) more than enough candidates receive a majority of votes and an exact ordering of the winner cannot be determined because of tie votes.

- a. In the case of a runoff, unelected candidates will be included in the runoff in the order of the number of votes received until there are more candidates included than there are vacancies remaining undecided. If two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, and at least one would need to be included in the runoff, all such candidates will be included.
  - b. The runoff election for the initial elections shall be held from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on one day and shall be conducted within one week of the regular election. Voting may be submitted electronically.
  - c. The results of the runoff shall be used to fill remaining vacancies using the same procedure as the initial election. However, should there still be seats undecided after the runoff election, all remaining vacancies will be filled by lot from the persons who were candidates in the runoff election.
6. All ballots in all elections will be counted by members of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee in a publicly announced, open meeting.

#### **E. Vacancies**

1. Should a Senate seat become vacant between the regular election and the following October 1, the seat shall be filled by a special election conducted by the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee. The elected person shall serve the remainder of the term of that seat.
2. Should a Senate seat become vacant on or after October 1 and before the next regularly scheduled election, the Speaker, in consultation with the other Senators of that electoral unit, may appoint a replacement who shall serve until the next regularly scheduled election.

3. Should a Senator anticipate being absent from the campus, or otherwise be unable to perform his or her duties for a period of time encompassing three or more regularly scheduled consecutive meetings of the Senate, then:
  - a. If a Senator taking a leave of absence from campus anticipates missing no more than one long-term semester of regularly scheduled consecutive meetings, the absent Senator will be replaced temporarily with a faculty member from her/his electoral unit, as detailed in E.2 above. Upon return the elected Senator will be reinstated.
  - b. If the time from the anticipated date of return to the expiration of the term will encompass no more than three regularly scheduled meetings of the Faculty Senate, then a temporary replacement shall be elected or appointed, at the discretion of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee, in accordance with the spirit of E.1 and E.2 above.
  - c. If the time remaining in the term after the anticipated return will encompass more than three regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate, then the Senator shall resign and the vacant seat shall be filled in accordance with E.1 and E.2 above.
4. If, when a vacant seat is filled, 50% or less of that senator's term is remaining, the person elected or appointed to that seat shall be considered to be completing the previous member's term, and thus that term will not count against the two-term limit when determining eligibility for senate elections. If more than 50% of the term remains, then that term shall be considered the new senator's first term and that senator is only eligible to serve on Faculty Senate for one additional term.

## **CHAPTER II. Officers of the Senate**

**A. Elected Officers.** The elected officers of the Faculty Senate shall be Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Secretary, each elected annually. These officers will be elected from the Senate membership.

1. In addition to the duties specified in the Constitution, the Speaker shall administer the budget and present an annual budget report to the Senate.
2. The Deputy Speaker shall act in the absence of the Speaker. This officer shall also be a member of the Executive Committee and be expected to be nominated for Speaker the following year.
3. The Secretary shall provide for minutes of the Senate and of the Executive Committee. This officer shall be a member of the Executive Committee.

### **B. Election of Officers**

1. The nomination and election of officers will be managed by members of the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee.

Nominations for officers shall be submitted in writing or electronically by Senators to the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee during the week prior to the final meeting of the spring semester, at which the election of officers shall be held.

2. Nominations from the floor are in order, but require the prior consent of the nominees.

3. The order of election shall be Speaker, Deputy Speaker, and Secretary. No more than two officers shall be elected from any one electoral unit.
4. Election of officers shall be by secret ballot.
5. Candidates receiving a majority of the votes from those Senators present and voting shall be elected to the office.
6. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, the top two candidates shall be placed in a runoff election.

### **C. Appointed Officers**

1. The Speaker shall annually appoint a Parliamentarian from among members of the Senate.
2. The Speaker, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall appoint additional Senate or faculty members to represent the Faculty Senate in state, system, and national faculty organizations.

## **CHAPTER III. Committees of the Senate**

The Faculty Senate recognizes two kinds of committees organized by and for the Faculty Senate: standing and ad hoc.

- A. Two standing committees of the Senate mandated by Part II.C.2 of the Senate Constitution are the Executive Committee and the Committee on Committees.
  1. The Executive Committee
    - a. The Executive Committee shall have no less than eight members, consisting of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Secretary, and the chairs of the standing committees of the Senate of their representatives, so as to include at least one member of each electoral unit. The Speaker shall chair the Executive Committee and shall vote only in the event of a tie vote.
    - b. The Executive Committee shall advise the Speaker of the Senate, assist in the administration and planning of Senate meetings, propose meeting agenda, implement the decisions and programs of the Senate, and act as directed by the Senate.
    - c. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act for the Senate in the event of an emergency. All such actions shall be reported to the Senate at its next meeting.
    - d. More than fifty percent of the voting members of the Executive Committee shall be required to constitute a quorum.
  2. The Committee on Committees
    - a. The Committee on Committees shall conduct a survey of all faculty members concerning their willingness to serve on committees, their areas of expertise/interest, and committees of interest. In consultation with the colleges, the Committee on

Committees shall nominate appropriate individuals from the faculty to fill expired terms and vacant positions reserved for faculty on any non-elected University Committee. These nominations shall be made in accordance with the provisions and time line of the document entitled "University Councils and Committees," available in the Faculty Senate Office.

- b. The Committee on Committees shall maintain in the Senate Office a copy of the annual "University Councils and Committees" document. Included in this record shall be the original charge to the committee and current membership lists that indicate the term of service for each individual.
- B. Other standing committees of the Faculty Senate shall be the Academic Affairs Committee, the Faculty Affairs Committee, the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee, and the Budget Analysis Committee. These standing committees shall be organized according to the following general rules:
1. Standing committee members
    - a. Each delegation of Senators shall decide amongst themselves which committees they will join. Each Senator must serve on at least one committee.
  2. General rules of organization for standing committees of the Faculty Senate
    - a. Except as otherwise provided in the Constitution, members of the Senate standing committees be members of the Senate.
    - b. Except as otherwise specifically provided, each standing committee shall elect its own chairperson.
    - c. Each standing committee may form subcommittees whose membership may include persons who are not members of the Senate. A standing committee shall appoint from among its own membership the chairperson of any such committee.
    - d. Members of all Senate standing committees, including the Executive Committee and the Committee on Committees, shall be elected or appointed annually.
  3. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee
    - a. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall be composed of at least three members all representing different electoral units.
    - b. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall conduct elections of Senators and Senate officers. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall develop election procedures consistent with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws for the consideration of the Senate. These procedures shall provide for a secret ballot.
    - c. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall formulate and present the Bylaws to the Senate. This committee shall also consider and make recommendations to the Senate pertaining to all amendments or changes referred to the committee by the

Senate or proposed to the committee by other Senate committees or by individual Senators.

- d. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall be responsible for a periodic review of the Bylaws.
- e. The Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee shall be responsible for administering all Senate Awards. The committee is responsible for informing the university community of upcoming awards and for the collection of applications; the committee may involve other university offices in completing these two tasks. The committee shall review applications for all awards and recommend award recipients to the appropriate administrator's office.

#### 4. The Academic Affairs Committee

- a. The Academic Affairs Committee shall be composed of one representative from each electoral unit.
- b. The Academic Affairs Committee shall study policies, procedures, and regulations, and shall make recommendations to the Senate pertaining to the following areas:
  - (1) Curriculum and instruction
  - (2) Academic standards, including:
    - (a) Admissions
    - (b) Graduation
    - (c) Retention
    - (d) Grade Appeals
    - (e) Honors
  - (3) Other matters affecting the academic affairs of the University.

#### 5. The Faculty Affairs Committee

- a. The Faculty Affairs Committee shall be composed of at least one representative from each electoral unit.
- b. The Faculty Affairs Committee shall study policies, procedures, and regulations, and shall make recommendations to the Senate pertaining to the following areas:
  - (1) Employment, retention, tenure, promotion, and evaluation of academic personnel
  - (2) Employment, retention, promotion, and evaluation of support personnel and graduate assistants

- (3) Benefits for academic and support personnel
- (4) Faculty development
- (5) Other matters relating to University academic personnel and their welfare

6. The Budget Analysis Committee

- a. The Budget Analysis Committee shall be composed of at least three members all representing different electoral units.
- b. The Budget Analysis Committee shall study the University budget and become thoroughly familiar with its structure, provisions, and development.
- c. The Budget Analysis Committee shall advise and recommend action on any issue pertaining to the development and content of the University budget to the Executive Committee of the Senate and to the Faculty Senate as a whole.
- d. Non-Senate members may be appointed by the Speaker, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the consent of the Senate.

C. The Speaker may appoint ad hoc Senate committees, with the consent of the Senate.

**CHAPTER IV. Adoption and Amendment of the Bylaws**

A. Amendments may be proposed by either of the following methods:

- 1. Standing committees of the Senate, or individuals supported by ten percent of the Senators, may propose amendments to the Bylaws. The proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted in writing or electronically to the Awards/Bylaws/Election Committee for debate. Then the proposal shall be referred to the Executive Committee for study and a recommendation to the full Senate. The Senate shall consider the report and recommendations of the Executive Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- 2. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to the Bylaws by written or electronic notice to all Senators at least one week prior to the meeting of the Senate at which those amendments will be considered.

B. Adoption

- 1. Upon final adoption, the amended Bylaws shall become effective immediately.
- 2. All amendments to the Bylaws shall require approval of two-thirds of the Senators present and voting to be adopted.

**CHAPTER V. Procedures**

A. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty Senate and with any special rules of order the Senate may adopt.

B. Meeting Agenda

1. Any Senator or any University-level committee may submit Senate meeting agenda items in writing to the Executive Committee through the Speaker at least ten working days prior to the date of the Senate meeting. The written agenda item shall include any motions for which Senate action at the meeting is desired. Such agenda items shall either be placed on the meeting agenda or shall be referred to an appropriate committee for consideration and recommendation.
2. The Executive Committee shall set the agenda for all meetings of the Senate and shall report to the Senate on the status of unscheduled items.
3. The Speaker shall submit the agenda to all Senators at least five working days prior to the meeting.
4. The Speaker may add emergency items to the agenda.
5. At the meeting, Senators may move to include an item on the agenda of the next meeting.
6. All proposals recommended by individuals or by groups not affiliated with the Senate shall be delivered to the Executive Committee, who shall either place the item on the agenda or refer it to the appropriate Senate committee for consideration and recommendation.
7. The preferred process shall be for the Senate to consider issues, first, as Discussion Items. Then, at the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting, an issue that has been discussed may be considered as an Action Item.

C. Actions on Motions

1. The Senate may take final action on published agenda items by a simple majority of those Senators present and voting.
2. The Senate may declare any new item an emergency agenda item for immediate deliberation by a two-thirds majority of those Senators present and voting.
3. Emergency agenda items placed on the agenda shall require the approval of three-fourths of the Senators present and voting in order to achieve passage.
4. A roll call vote may be demanded by twenty-five percent of the Senators present. This shall prevail unless two-thirds of the Senators present and voting approve a secret ballot.

D. Interpretation of Constitutionality and Related Questions

The Speaker of the Senate shall make all rulings pertaining to conformity with the Constitution and Bylaws, subject to appeal. Appeals will be referred to the Awards/ Bylaws/Election Committee for consideration and recommendations, with the decision of the full Senate to be final and binding.



## **CHAPTER VI. Meetings**

### **A. Regular Meetings**

1. The Senate shall meet at least monthly during the academic year at such times and dates as are deemed appropriate.
2. Regular Senate meetings shall last no longer than two hours, unless a majority of those present vote to extend the meeting for a specific purpose.
3. At any regular Senate meetings, the time and/or date of the next regular meeting may be changed by two-thirds of the Senators present.

### **B. Special Meetings**

1. Special meetings of the Senate may be called by:
  - a. The speaker
  - b. The Executive Committee, or
  - c. Petition to the Secretary from twenty percent of the Senators
2. Calls for a special meeting shall be communicated to all members of the Senate at least five working days before the date of the special meeting.
3. The call for a special meeting shall specify the agenda as well as the time, date, place, and duration of the meeting.
4. Only those items on the agenda shall be considered at a special meeting.

C. The Senate session extends for a period of approximately one year, from the regular meeting at which new Senators are seated through the meeting prior to the next seating of new Senators.

D. All meetings of the Senate shall be open, in compliance with the provisions of the Texas Open Meeting Statute. A majority of the Senators present may vote to close a meeting or a portion thereof, providing that the purpose of the closure is consistent with the spirit of the open meeting statute.

## **CHAPTER VII. Participation of Visitors and Ex Officio Representatives**

A. Ex Officio Representatives: The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs or their designated assistant, a designated representative from Staff Council and Information Technology, the Ombuds, and the Academic and Administrative Compliance Manager shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of the Senate. All ex officio representatives may address the Senate from the floor.

B. Visitors may attend Senate meetings unless closure is invoked, but they may not address the Senate unless invited to do so by the Speaker. Visitors shall be seated in a designated area.