

# Faculty Senate Constitution

Adopted by the Board of Regents - March 11, 2005

## I. PURPOSE AND DUTIES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

A. The Faculty Senate, as the agent of the General Faculty of Washburn University, speaks on behalf of that body to the University community.

B. The Faculty Senate shall consider policies on University matters including academic issues and matters which affect more than one of the Major Academic Units.

C. As the agent of the General Faculty, the duties of the Faculty Senate thus include, but are not limited to:

1. providing a forum for the expression of faculty opinion.
2. exercising primary responsibility in curricular matters, academic programs and standards, changes in graduation requirements, new degrees, new majors or academic programs, elimination of existing degrees or major programs, creation of new academic departments, and recommending changes to the faculty handbook, subject to the oversight of the University President and the Board of Regents.
3. advising the University President on matters of university policy, including budgetary policies, faculty retention, matters which affect more than one of the Major Academic Units, and standards for student admission and retention.
4. advising academic deans regarding standards and procedures for faculty evaluation.
5. working to promote and maintain academic freedom.
6. overseeing the membership and function of all committees of the Faculty Senate and receiving, reviewing, remanding, approving or disapproving recommendations from the standing committees of the Faculty Senate.

D. To these ends, the Faculty Senate, as agent of the General Faculty, is empowered to act on behalf of the General Faculty of Washburn University in matters described in I.C. The actions of the Faculty Senate may be reviewed, revised, recalled, or endorsed by the General Faculty. Any action by the Faculty Senate concerning changes in graduation requirements, new degrees, academic majors, or programs; elimination of existing degrees or major programs; or creation of new academic departments will be brought before the General Faculty for a vote. In addition, the Faculty Senate can choose by majority vote to bring any action of the body before the General Faculty for a vote. Any action of the Faculty Senate may be challenged by the petition of not less than twenty members of the General Faculty or 10% of the students currently enrolled. Such challenge must be presented as a signed written petition and presented to the Secretary of the General Faculty who will place it on the General Faculty agenda for action.

## II. ELIGIBILITY AND MEMBERSHIP

A. Only faculty on an annual contract are eligible to vote for and to serve on the Faculty Senate, excluding those serving more than half time in administrative capacities; provided, however, faculty on authorized leave of absence or sabbatical shall not be eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate during such period of leave or sabbatical. Any eligible faculty member may put his or her name forward for election.

B. The School of Law, School of Business, School of Applied Studies, School of Nursing, and each division within the College of Arts and Sciences shall elect representatives to the Faculty Senate in proportion to the number of eligible faculty in each unit, with one senator selected to represent each ten faculty members (numbers with 0-4 as the ones digit shall be rounded down, numbers with 5-9 as the ones digit shall be rounded up) in each voting unit. Representation will be based on the number of faculty in each unit at the start of the spring semester.

C. In addition, five at-large members of the Faculty Senate will be elected by all eligible faculty. No more than two of these may come from any one School or the College.

D. The Librarians of Mabee Library/CRC shall elect one member of the Faculty Senate for every ten of their number. The Librarians of the Law Library shall also elect one member of the Faculty Senate for every ten of their number.

E. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or his or her designee shall serve as a non-voting member of the Faculty Senate.

### **III. ELECTIONS**

A. The Senate will establish a standing Electoral Committee to supervise elections, including any necessary modifications of designated voting units to reflect changing faculty numbers.

B. Elections to the Faculty Senate will be held annually in April, with half of the membership selected in each election. Members shall serve for a term of two years.

C. The Electoral Committee will oversee elections of at-large members to the Faculty Senate. Nominations for the at-large members of the Faculty Senate will be submitted to the Electoral Committee at least three weeks in advance of the election and will be publicized two weeks before the election.

D. Each electoral unit will decide on its own mechanism of voting for the Faculty Senate, subject to the oversight of the Electoral Committee.

E. Members of the Faculty Senate are eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms, but may be re-elected after an absence of at least one year from the Faculty Senate.

F. Should any member of the Faculty Senate prove unable to serve out a full term for any reason, a special election will be held in that member's electoral unit to select a replacement for the remainder of the term.

#### **IV. ORGANIZATION**

A. The Faculty Senate will meet each year within two weeks of elections, and at that meeting will elect from among its members the officers of the Senate: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Parliamentarian.

B. The President of the Faculty Senate shall ordinarily receive one-quarter reassigned time and clerical support from the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall ordinarily receive one-eighth reassigned time.

C. The President and Vice President of the Faculty Senate shall serve as the faculty representatives to the Board of Regents, and shall be prepared to report to the Board on issues before the Faculty Senate.

D. The Vice President of the Faculty Senate will serve as President in the case of absence or incapacity of the President of the Faculty Senate.

E. An Executive Committee shall be established, consisting of the President, Vice President, and Secretary of the Faculty Senate, and enough additional members elected by that body from among its members to ensure that every Major Academic Unit is represented. That Executive Committee will be charged with arranging meeting times and establishing agendas for each meeting. The Executive Committee shall also serve as a Committee on Committees for the Faculty Senate.

F. Agenda items can originate with the Executive Committee or any other member of the Faculty Senate or can be proposed to the Executive Committee by any member of the faculty or University community.

#### **V. MEETINGS**

A. Meetings of the Faculty Senate will be held at least once a month throughout the course of the academic year. Special meetings can be called by the Executive Committee should the need arise. Agendas for each Faculty Senate meeting will be distributed to all members of the Faculty Senate six days in advance of any scheduled meeting time and made available to the University community. Academic Affairs Committee agendas, Faculty Affairs Committee agendas and Graduate Council agendas which contain items which constitute first reading for Faculty Senate will be distributed to all members of the applicable committee six calendar days in advance of any scheduled meeting time.

B. During the course of the summer, the Executive Committee shall be empowered to act provisionally on an emergency basis on behalf of the full body, subject to the approval of the full Faculty Senate when it reconvenes.

C. Meetings of the Faculty Senate are open meetings. Speaking privileges before the Faculty Senate shall be granted to anyone recognized by the President of the body, or whose right to speak is supported

by a majority vote of the body. The University President and the President of the Washburn Student Government Association (W.S.G.A.) shall have the right to speak before the Faculty Senate.

D. Actions of the Faculty Senate will be taken by majority vote of members present, with the exception of amendments to the Senate Constitution. All actions of the Faculty Senate, however, require the presence of a quorum, defined as at least half the elected representatives.

E. Each matter considered as new business shall be presented to the Faculty Senate as an agenda item in the form of two readings and may not occur on the same date. The first presentation of the matter shall be considered its first reading. Items coming to the Faculty Senate from the Graduate, Faculty Affairs, Academic Affairs, Electoral, or All-University Committees will be taken up as second reading.

F. Minutes of all meetings of the Faculty Senate will be distributed to all members, to the University President, to the Secretary of the Board of Regents, the Secretary of the General Faculty, and to the President of W.S.G.A. by the Faculty Senate Secretary. Minutes will also be posted on the University web site by the Faculty Senate Secretary.

G. The President of the University shall have the right to non-concur with any action of the Faculty Senate, but in exercising this right, shall state the reasons for nonconcurrency in a letter to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. The Board of Regents shall then be notified of the action of the Faculty Senate and the nonconcurrency of the University President, along with the stated reasons for nonconcurrency. A final determination of the matter shall be in the hands of the Board of Regents, and until such time the status quo shall prevail.

## **VI. COMMITTEES**

A. In addition to the Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate will establish from its own membership the following committees: an Electoral Committee, to oversee elections of the Faculty Senate; an Academic Affairs Committee, to review and make recommendations on matters of curricula and programs; and a Faculty Affairs Committee, to review and make recommendations on faculty issues.

B. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, in its capacity as Committee on Committees, will be empowered to create, as deemed necessary, ad-hoc committees, and to oversee faculty representation on faculty committees.

C. Faculty representatives on faculty committees, other than the Electoral, Faculty Affairs, and Academic Affairs Committees, need not be members of the Faculty Senate. At least one faculty representative on each faculty committee must be a member of the Faculty Senate, by special appointment of the Executive Committee, if necessary.

D. The Faculty Affairs Committee is charged with promoting the general welfare of faculty members. While the scope of the committee is general in nature, the more prominent interests are:

1. Teaching loads and extracurricular duties
2. Retirement, tenure, and sabbatical leaves
3. Faculty grievances
4. Dismissal criteria
5. Salary and faculty benefits
6. The academic sabbatical program

Membership of the committee consists of one Faculty Senate member from each Division within the College of Arts and Sciences, one from the School of Business, one from the School of Law, one from the School of Nursing, one from the School of Applied Studies, and one member from the University libraries, each elected for a one-year term by the Faculty Senate from its ranks. The committee selects its own chairperson. If possible, all faculty members of the Faculty Affairs Committee should be senators. However, if a Major Academic Unit has three or fewer senators, or Mabee Library/CRC has only one senator, the Faculty Senate President may request the relevant unit(s) elect a non-senator to the Academic Affairs Committee or Faculty Affairs Committee to ensure adequate representation from this (these) unit(s). If appointments of non-senators must be made, the minimum proportion of the faculty members of the Faculty Affairs Committee that will be senators is 2/3.

E. The Academic Affairs Committee is charged with evaluating carefully and making recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding: (1) all new undergraduate programs (majors, degrees, certificates and the like) proposed by any Major Academic unit of the University; (2) major revisions in such programs; (3) and new undergraduate academic programs or revisions to such programs that originate from units other than Major Academic Units. The primary concern of the committee shall be consistency of the proposed program with applicable University-wide guidelines and regulations, potential impact of the program on other established programs in the University, and financial implications of such new or revised programs. The Executive Committee may also delegate other matters to this committee.

The Academic Affairs Committee shall consist of two (2) Faculty Senate members from each Major Academic Unit other than the School of Law, and a Senate representative of Mabee Library/CRC. Each member will be elected to a one-year term by the Faculty Senate from its ranks. The committee selects its own chairperson. Decisions of the Academic Affairs Committee require the affirmative vote of six of the nine members; six members shall constitute a quorum to conduct business. The VPAA or his/her designee will serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member. If possible, all faculty members of the Academic Affairs Committee should be senators. However, if a Major Academic Unit has three or fewer senators, or

Mabee Library/CRC has only one senator, the Faculty Senate President may ask the relevant unit(s) to elect a non-senator to the Academic Affairs Committee or Faculty Affairs Committee to ensure adequate representation from this (these) unit(s). If appointments of non-senators must be made, the minimum proportion of the faculty members of the Academic Affairs Committee that will be senators is 2/3.

F. Faculty, Presidential, and Advisory Committees will be organized as follows:

1. Faculty committees - including, but not limited to, the Research Committee, Interdisciplinary Studies Committee, Promotion and Tenure Standards Committee, Honors Advisory Board, Graduate Committee, and General Education Committee - will be structured as standing committees of the Faculty Senate, with membership consisting of faculty elected by the academic units. Students or staff might also be added to these committees at the discretion of the Faculty Senate. Faculty committees will report their actions to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate has the right to receive, review, remand, approve, or disapprove recommendations from these committees. Changes to the charge or membership structure of these committees will be made by action of the Faculty Senate.
2. Other University Committees are Presidential Committees and Advisory Committees

a. Presidential Committees - including, but not limited to, the Athletic Committee, Honorary Degree Committee, Institutional Review Board, and University Facilities Planning Committee - will be selected by the President of the University, though the President may choose to consult with the Faculty Senate when selecting faculty members to serve on Presidential Committees. These committees report their actions to the University President. Changes to the charge or membership structure of these committees are made at the discretion of the University President.

b. Advisory Committees - including, but not limited to, with administrative offices advised by each committees parenthetically noted, the Electronic Technology Committee (VPAA/VPAT), Assessment Committee (VPAA/VPSL), Board of Student Publications (VPAA/VPSL), Student Financial Aid Committee (Dean of Enrollment Management), International Education Committee (Director of International Programs), Committee on Undergraduate Retention (VPAA/VPSL/Dean of Enrollment Management), Committee on Undergraduate Probation and Reinstatement (VPAA/VPSL/Dean of Enrollment Management), and the Library Committee (Dean of Mabee Library) will typically include at least one member of the Faculty Senate. Advisory Committees will report their actions by minutes both to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate and to the appropriate administrative official. Changes to the charge or membership structure of these committees would be made by the President of the University in consultation with the Faculty Senate.

G. Each Faculty Committee shall elect a chair from among its own members

## **VII. AMENDMENTS**

A. Amendments to the Constitution of the Faculty Senate can be proposed by any eligible faculty member as defined by Article II, A.

B. Amendments to the Constitution of the Faculty Senate require a two-thirds vote of Faculty Senate members present and voting and ratification by a majority vote of the General Faculty present and voting for passage.

**Changes to Faculty Senate Constitution:**

24 January 2008

VI. E. Second paragraph alters the make up of the Academic Affairs Committee, establishes a quorum and specifies the number of votes required to approve items brought before the committee. (Amendment approved by vote of the General Faculty)

29 January 2015

II. B. Specifies rounding method for determining the number of faculty in a unit or area.

11 June 2015

VI. D. Second paragraph now allows for representatives who are not senators to be elected from an area or unit to Faculty Affairs when there are not enough senators from that unit or area to serve on both the Academic Affairs and Faculty Affairs Committees.

VI. E. Second paragraph now allows for representatives who are not senators to be elected from an area or unit to Academic Affairs when there are not enough senators from that unit or area to serve on both the Academic Affairs and Faculty Affairs Committees.

26 January 2017

IV. B. (with the proposed new language underlined and identical language also added to the Faculty Handbook in Section 1, VI, D, 2. "The President of the Faculty Senate shall ordinarily receive one-quarter reassigned time and clerical support from the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall ordinarily receive one-eighth reassigned time."

April 2017

V. A. Agendas for each Faculty Senate meeting will be distributed to all members of the Faculty Senate six days in advance of any scheduled meeting time and made available to the University community. Academic Affairs Committee agendas, Faculty Affairs Committee agendas and Graduate Council agendas which contain items which constitute first reading for Faculty Senate will be distributed to all members of the applicable committee six calendar days in advance of any scheduled meeting time.