

Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws  
Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Adopted on March 7, 2014

Amended on:

December 4, 2015

May 6, 2016

February 3, 2017

April 7, 2017

May 5, 2017

May 4, 2018

February 1, 2019

May 3, 2019

May 1, 2020

## 1.0 Mission of the Faculty Senate

1.1 The mission of the Faculty Senate of Texas A&M University-San Antonio is to foster a community of mutual respect and cooperation within the University by facilitating effective faculty participation in academic governance by providing a means by which faculty may communicate their views in matters of concern to the university.

1.2 The Faculty Senate works to ensure that faculty is provided with the resources and academic freedom necessary to provide innovative and challenging programs of high economic and social value for our students, community, and region.

1.3 The Faculty Senate is an advisory body, not a governing body, to the University administration and makes recommendations to the President and the Provost.

## 2.0 Operations

2.1 Faculty Senate Structure - The Faculty Senate shall be unicameral.

2.2 Electoral units - The electoral units of the Faculty Senate shall be the departments and the University Library.

2.3 Number of Senators - Each department shall elect two Senators, and the library shall elect two Senators to the Faculty Senate. The President of the Faculty Senate shall serve in addition to this number.

## 3.0 Membership of the Faculty Senate

### 3.1 Eligible Persons

3.1.1 The Faculty Senate shall be composed of individuals who are employed by Texas A&M University-San Antonio whose appointment to employment

status was approved by the Provost of Texas A&M University-San Antonio and who is tenured or on the tenure-track, holds the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor, visiting or professional track professors, lecturers, or holds the title of Librarian, Associate Librarian, or Assistant Librarian on any Texas A&M University-San Antonio campus.

### 3.2 Ineligible Persons

3.2.1 Persons shall not be eligible for election or to serve upon the Faculty Senate during any period in which they have administrative or supervisory duty over other faculty members.

### 3.3 *Ex Officio*

3.3.1 The Provost and the Immediate Past President shall be ex officio, nonvoting members of the Senate.

### 3.4 Terms of Office

3.4.1 A Senator shall serve for three years.

3.4.2 A Senator may serve additional time as President if elected as President Elect in the last year of their elected term.

3.4.3 No person shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

3.4.4 The immediate Past President shall not serve two consecutive terms.

3.4.5 A term will begin on the last meeting of the spring semester in which a Senator is elected and shall terminate in the last meeting of the spring semester in which he/she is replaced.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Senators

4.1 Senators are expected to prepare for and regularly attend Senate meetings, participate in deliberations, and vote on reports and proposals as presented by Senate committees and other entities at each Senate meeting.

4.2 Any Senator missing three consecutive meetings or four total meetings in an academic year may be considered unduly absent and removed from office. The Faculty Senate Secretary will notify the President of any unduly absent Senators.

The Executive Committee shall meet to determine the continued eligibility of that Senator. See Section 5.6 for replacement procedures.

4.2.1 For purposes of this section, any Senator can be absent due to extenuating circumstances provided that written notice of the absence is given to the Faculty Senate President and Secretary at least 7 days prior to the designated meeting date and not later than 7 days after the scheduled meeting. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, medical reasons, family and personal emergency, research obligations/conferences, scheduled teaching assignments, and other similar events during the day and time of the meeting. If a satisfactory explanation for excessive absences is not given within the time provided, the Executive Committee shall have authority to declare the member's position vacated.

4.2.2. Alternate Representation. By written notice to the Faculty Senate President and Secretary within 7 days before the scheduled meeting, a Senator may designate another faculty member representing the same college or division as a replacement at that Senate meeting where the Senator anticipates being absent. Such alternate representative must be eligible for election to the Senate. The alternate and/or replacement representative shall be announced by the President at the start of the meeting and shall have full voting and membership rights as the absent Senator.

4.3 Senators are expected to represent the general faculty of their respective electoral unit.

4.3.1 Senators are expected to bring to the floor of the Senate any concerns of one or more of their constituents.

4.3.2 Senators are expected to report Senate business to their respective general faculty.

4.4 Senators are expected to serve on or chair a standing or *ad hoc* Senate committee when called upon.

4.5 Senators may be asked to serve on University committee as representatives of the Faculty Senate.

5.0 Electors and Elections

- 5.1 One Senator from each department shall be elected each year, and one Senator from the library shall be elected each year. One additional Senator will be elected from the electoral unit of the current President Elect.
- 5.2 Faculty members seeking election to the Faculty Senate shall be nominated by the faculty of their electoral units according to guidelines established in this document.
- 5.3 All full-time, non-adjunct faculty members are eligible to vote, but shall vote in only one electoral unit. In the case of a questioned status under this provision, or of any provision following, the decision of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall be final. The candidate(s) who receive the most votes by secret ballot within their respective electoral units shall be elected Senators.
- 5.4 Elections of Senators shall be held annually in April.
- 5.5 The Election Committee shall determine if a runoff election is necessary and, if so, shall conduct it. Runoff elections can be triggered in two ways: (a) not enough candidates receive enough votes to fill all vacancies, or (b) more than enough candidates receive a majority of votes and an exact ordering of the winner cannot be determined because of tie votes.
  - 5.5.1 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.
  - 5.5.2 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 either in person at the Senate office, or by electronic mail.
  - 5.5.3 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.
- 5.6 Vacancies during the year shall be filled by a temporary Senator appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate in consultation with the Dean from the college in which the vacancy occurred.

5.6.1 The temporary Faculty Senator will serve until the next scheduled election.

5.6.2 If the vacancy is due to the removal of a Faculty Senator, the Faculty Senator who is removed from office will be ineligible for the next scheduled Senate election.

## 6.0 The Officers of the Faculty Senate

6.1 The officers of the Faculty Senate shall comprise the following and will serve as the executive committee of the Faculty Senate:

President

Vice President/President Elect

Parliamentarian

Secretary

Immediate Past President

Other offices the Senate shall create.

## 6.2 Elections and Terms of office for Executive Officers

6.2.1 The President-Elect shall be elected by the Senate at the last meeting of the spring semester during an election year. The President-Elect shall take the Office of President at the end of the last meeting of the spring semester at the end of the previous President's term. The President shall serve a two-year term.

6.2.2 The Secretary, and the Parliamentarian shall be members of the Senate and shall be elected by the Senate at the last meeting of the spring semester in which they are elected. Officers shall take office following the end of the last meeting of the spring semester and shall serve in that capacity for one calendar year. All senators who have not completed their term are eligible to serve as officers.

6.2.3 Officers to fill newly created offices shall be appointed by the President of the Senate or elected by the Senate. If a new office is to be continued beyond one year, the Constitution shall be amended to include the office and to specify the qualifications and method of election or appointment.

## 6.3 Duties of Officers

The officers of the Faculty Senate will constitute the Executive Committee, with power to act for the Faculty Senate between meetings on matters that must be

dealt with immediately. All other items shall be reported to the Senate for consideration. The actions of the Executive Committee shall be subject to review by the full Faculty Senate. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the agenda of meetings of the Faculty Senate. The Executive Committee shall respond to matters presented to it by individual faculty members and may place such matters on the agenda as it deems necessary. The Executive Committee shall create *ad hoc* committees as necessary and shall be responsible for scheduling and assigning project completion dates for those agenda items sent to committees.

6.3.1 President: The Faculty Senate President shall preside at meetings and vote only in the case of a tie, represent the Senate to the University administration and the public, and be responsible for transmitting to the President and the Provost of the University all proposals and resolutions enacted by the Senate. The Faculty Senate President or his/her representative and any members of the Executive Committee who so choose shall meet on a regular monthly basis with the Provost for informational purposes. The President shall prepare an end-of-year summary report of Faculty Senate proceedings as well as assist the Secretary in archiving documents. The Faculty Senate President shall be granted one course reassigned time per semester for each academic year of his or her tenure as President.

6.3.2 Vice President/President-Elect: The Vice President/President-Elect fulfills Presidential duties if the Faculty Senate President is absent, resigns, or is removed from office. If the President resigns or is removed, the Vice President/President Elect will serve the remainder of the current term as President. The Vice President/President-Elect shall also agree to serve the following term as Faculty Senate President.

6.3.3 Parliamentarian: The Parliamentarian of the Faculty Senate advises the Senate on parliamentary procedures, which shall follow *Democratic Rules of Order*, and oversees all elections, polls, and evaluations sponsored by the Faculty Senate. The Parliamentarian manages conduct during all meetings, ensuring the orderly conduct of meetings according to *Democratic Rules of Order*.

6.3.4 Secretary: The Secretary of the Faculty Senate announces meetings, prepares and distributes minutes of Senate meetings, and corresponds with others as required by Senate decisions. The Secretary manages official

records of the Faculty Senate, ensuring copies of all minutes, agendas, and other Senate documents are submitted to the University Library for inclusion in the Faculty Senate Archives.

6.3.5 Immediate Past President: The Immediate Past President serves in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee. This position is *ex officio* and non-voting in capacity. The Immediate Past President shall give an annual report to the General Faculty at Convocation in the fall semester of each year based on the report he/she prepared the year of his/her presidency.

#### 6.4 Replacement of Inactive Executive Committee Members

If a member of the Executive Committee misses two consecutive scheduled meetings, he/she may be removed from the Executive Committee. The Faculty Senate Secretary will notify the President of any unduly absent Executive Committee member. He or she may be removed from the Executive Committee by consultation of the entire Senate. In such a case of removal, or if a member of the Executive Committee resigns, the Senators will elect a replacement from current Faculty Senate members to serve the remainder of the current term.

### 7.0 Faculty Senate Meetings

7.1 The Faculty Senate shall meet monthly from September through December and February through May.

7.2 Special meetings of the Faculty Senate may be called at other times by either the President of the University, by a Faculty Senate Executive Committee member, or by a signed request of fifteen or more voting members of the Faculty.

7.3 The presence of a majority of the total membership of the Faculty Senate shall constitute a quorum.

7.4 Parliamentary procedure will be followed in meetings of the Faculty Senate.

7.5 Faculty Senate Meeting Agendas



7.5.1 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall submit a call for agenda items to all faculty members at least two weeks prior to each Faculty Senate meeting.

7.5.2 Submission of agenda items by the general faculty and/or Faculty Senate members must be submitted, along with supporting documentation, to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. The due date for submission items will be set by the Secretary.

7.5.3 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall prepare a draft agenda for each meeting of the Faculty Senate for review by Executive Committee at least five business days prior to the meeting date.

7.5.4 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall distribute a copy of the agenda to all Senators that includes the minutes of the previous meeting and any documents for discussion at least five business days prior to the meeting date.

7.5.5 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall distribute a copy of the agenda to all faculty members, the Provost, and the President at least two business days prior to the meeting date.

## 7.6 Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty Senate

7.6.1 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall prepare minutes of all actions taken by the faculty during Faculty Senate meetings and distribute to Executive Committee within ten business days of the meeting.

7.6.2 The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall distribute the minutes to all faculty members and post to the Faculty Senate website within five business days following the meeting in which the minutes are approved.

## 8.0 Functions of the Faculty Senate

## 8.1 Proposals, Resolutions and Policy Recommendations

The Faculty Senate may initiate proposals and resolutions. The establishment of new University policies and changes to existing University policies may be reviewed by the Faculty Senate. The Senate will submit any recommendations to the University Provost and President.

## 8.2 Advising

8.2.1 The Faculty Senate shall serve as an advisory body to the Provost and the President of the University in matters concerning the University.

8.2.2 The President of the Faculty Senate shall be responsible for all communications between the Faculty Senate and the Provost and the President of the University. Other Senators should direct comments regarding Senate business to the Faculty Senate President.

8.2.3 The President of the Faculty Senate, with concurrence of the Executive Committee, may delegate the responsibility of communication to other Faculty Senate members as is appropriate.

## 8.3 Curricula

The Faculty Senate collaborates with University administration in establishing curricula, setting standards of instruction, determining requirements for degrees, and in general determining the educational policies of the University.

## 8.4 Faculty Welfare

The Faculty Senate collaborates with University administration in the establishment of principles governing tenure, promotions, appointments, dismissals of faculty members, leaves, workloads, retirement, and other matters affecting the welfare of the faculty.

## 8.5 Instructional Resources

The Faculty Senate collaborates with University administration in the establishment of policies affecting instruction, including, but not limited to, use of University resources provided to faculty, instructional design, classroom design and furnishings, and technologies adopted for instructional and research purposes.

## 9.0 Committees

Texas A&M University-San Antonio places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. The Faculty Senate discharges these and other responsibilities through the use of standing and ad hoc committees. All standing and ad hoc Faculty Senate committees report to the Faculty Senate.

Standing committees on which Faculty Senators may serve consist of Faculty Senate level standing committees and University-level standing committees. Senators shall be elected to serve on these committees (unless represented by the President only) at the first meeting of the Senate each fall and shall serve until the last day of the following second summer semester. If committees are established at a later date, Senators will be elected to serve at that time. All Faculty Senate-level standing committees shall be chaired by Faculty Senators.

### 9.1 Standing University Committees

9.1.1 Space and Use Committee (1 Senator)

9.1.2 University Resource Commission (Faculty Senate President only)

9.1.3 President's Leadership Council (Faculty Senate President & Vice President only)

9.1.4 University Library Committee (1 Senator)

## 9.2 Standing Faculty Senate Committees

9.2.1 The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee shall consist of the following members: one Faculty Senate representative elected by the Faculty Senate to serve as chair of the committee voting only in the case of a tie, the chair of each college curriculum committee, and one elected at-large member from each college. The Chair of the committee will serve for two years as long as the Senator has two years left in the term or is re-elected. In some cases, the Chair may serve for one year if the Senator's term ends before the chair term ends.

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate considers, and makes recommendations to the Provost and President regarding, all academic matters of the University involving policy and procedure including but not limited to:

- (a) Undergraduate admissions requirements
- (b) Undergraduate graduation requirements
- (c) Undergraduate academic standards
- (d) Undergraduate curriculum
- (e) New undergraduate course creation
- (f) New undergraduate degrees
- (g) New undergraduate programs

9.2.3 The Core Curriculum Committee will consist of one representative from each of the departments that teach the bulk of classes in the Core: Communications, History, and Philosophy; Literature, Language, and the Arts; Science and Mathematics; and Social Sciences. In addition, the Core Curriculum Committee will include the Director of First-Year Composition, one representative from the College of Education and Human Development and one representative from the College of Business, one representative from the Provost's Office, one University Librarian, and two representatives from the Faculty Senate elected by the Faculty Senate. The Committee will be chaired by a Faculty Senator.

The Committee's duties will include vetting applications for new Core courses; coordinating among programs that offer core courses; interpreting best practices in general education for our institutional context; assessing the Core; and implementing changes recommended by

assessments. In addition, the Committee will identify areas in which the faculty would benefit from institutional support related to the teaching of Core courses. The Committee will make recommendations to the Provost regarding the administration of the Core Curriculum.

9.2.4 The Graduate Council consists of six representatives appointed from all Graduate Faculty (with two representatives from each College) and two representatives of the Faculty Senate elected by the Faculty Senate for two year terms as long as the Senators have two years left in their term or are re-elected. The Director of Graduate Studies shall serve as a voting member, and the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies will serve in an ex officio member. The Graduate Council considers, and makes recommendations to the Provost and President regarding, all academic matters of the University involving policy and procedure of all graduate programs including but not limited to:

- (a) Graduate admissions requirements
- (b) Graduate graduation requirements
- (c) Graduate academic standards
- (d) Graduate curriculum
- (e) New graduate course creation
- (f) New graduate degrees
- (g) New graduate programs
- (h) Graduate core requirements

9.2.5 Faculty Development and Research Committee - The Faculty Development and Research Committee will consist of three members elected from the Faculty Senate by the members of the Senate. The Faculty Development and Research Committee considers issues that affect the welfare of the faculty. Such concerns include, but are not limited to, issues relating to faculty: ethics, responsibilities, salaries, workloads, research support, and retirement.

9.2.6 The Compliance and Grievance Committee – The Compliance and Grievance Committee shall consist of four members of the Faculty Senate (one from each Academic Unit) elected by the Faculty Senate.

9.2.6.1 The Compliance Officer of the University shall serve as a nonvoting member.

9.2.6.2 The Compliance and Grievance Committee of the Faculty Senate shall investigate and draft suggestions and resolutions for the Faculty Senate regarding matters brought forward by the faculty, staff, and students of the University for consideration by the Provost.

9.2.7 Election Committee - The Election Committee shall be composed of one Senator from each Academic Unit. The duties of the Election Committee include establishment of a timetable and guidelines for Senate elections, maintaining a list of faculty eligible to be Senators, maintaining a list of faculty eligible to vote in Senatorial elections, and ensuring that ballots are prepared in advance of the election.

9.2.8 Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Committee- The WAC Committee will consist of three representatives (one from Arts & Sciences, Education & Human Development, and Business) elected by their respective Academic Units, two representatives of the Faculty Senate elected by the Faculty Senate to serve for two years as long as two years are left in the Senators' terms, and the Writing Across the Curriculum Director. The Committee will be chaired by a Faculty Senator. College representatives will be elected in the spring semester of odd numbered years to begin the following fall. Faculty senate representatives will be elected during the first faculty senate meeting of the fall of odd numbered years to begin their terms that fall. The WAC Committee's duties will include defining criteria for Writing Intensive (WI) courses, interpreting best practices for our institutional context, and determining a process for designating, assessing, and supporting WI courses. In addition, the WAC Committee will promote writing at the university and will identify areas in which the faculty would benefit from institutional support related to the teaching of writing. The WAC Committee will make recommendations to the Provost and the President.

9.2.9 The Executive Committee may form *ad hoc* committees whenever necessary for the discharge of its functions. The Faculty Senate will prepare a charge for each *ad hoc* committee.

## 10.0 Amendments to this Constitution

### 10.1 Amendments to this Constitution

10.1.1 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by the Faculty Senate by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting at two successive meetings.

10.1.2 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by petition of fifteen members of the General Faculty to the Faculty Senate subject to a favorable vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting at two successive meetings.

10.1.3 Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by petition by twenty percent of the General Faculty submitted to the Faculty Senate to place the initiative on a ballot for a vote by the General Faculty.

10.1.4 No amendment or petition for an amendment to this Constitution or the By-laws can be considered between the regular April meeting and the following regular September meeting of the Faculty Senate.

### 10.2 Ratification of Constitutional Amendments

10.2.1 The General Faculty shall be sent a copy of the amendment(s) by electronic means and a hard copy shall be sent to each Academic Unit

10.2.2 Within thirty days of receipt of the electronic copy, each Academic Unit will call a meeting to vote upon the ratification of the amendment(s) by a special ballot prepared by the Faculty Senate.

10.2.3 All ballots will be returned to the Chair of the Election Committee by the date specified.

10.2.4 The ballots shall be tallied in the presence of a quorum of the Election Committee and at least three independent witnesses.

10.2.5 The time and place of the vote count shall be publicized at least twenty-four hours in advance so that any member of the General Faculty who wishes may witness this process.

10.2.6 If a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the eligible General Faculty voting approves the amendment, it shall be ratified.

10.2.7 Blank or unmarked ballots will be declared invalid and will not be included in the tally of votes.

#### 11.0 Standing Rules

The Faculty Senate may establish such rules and procedures as are required for it to achieve its purpose.