



United States University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws

Preamble

United States University (USU) believes that shared governance is a fundamental ingredient of a healthy academic institution– and an essential right and responsibility of a scholarly community. The USU faculty provides a structure that includes an elected faculty governance body – the Faculty Senate – through which faculty and administrators work together to implement USU's mission.

Faculty Senate Overview

The USU Faculty Senate (FS) is a deliberative body composed of elected faculty representatives who provide the voice of the collective faculty in matters of concern to them and serve as an effective means by which the faculty can contribute to the governance of the University. The faculty senate has the following responsibilities:

- Members meet with their respective school Deans monthly to discuss relevant school and university issues.
- The Senate Chair represents faculty at regular institutional meetings as assigned by the Provost.
- The Faculty Senate meets at least quarterly to advance the concerns of the faculty and to discuss any items needing review from institutional stakeholders.

Faculty Role in the University and School Governance

Faculty are provided various opportunities to participate in the formal governance of the institution. University governance involves full-time and part-time faculty working collaboratively with the administration and engaging meaningfully and substantively in the life of the University beyond teaching and research.

Through participation in University governance structures, faculty provide leadership in academic matters, are involved in setting academic requirements, and support establishing policies and processes. Accomplishing the Mission of USU requires authentic collaboration among institutional stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, Administration, and Faculty. Governance structures at the University help ensure faculty participate in shared governance across the institution.

The Faculty Senate shall reflect the discussions and perspectives of the instructional faculty members in keeping with the preamble, Constitution, and Mission of United States University. The Faculty Senate is the elected and representative body of the faculty. As such, it shall consider all matters of general university interest, including educational and research endeavors, hiring policies, systems of promotion, and campus life. The Faculty Senate will strive to protect academic freedom, promote intellectual excellence, safeguard equity and diversity within the faculty and student body, and advance the general welfare of the University. On its initiative, the Faculty Senate may

submit recommendations and resolutions to the Board of Trustees, transmitted through the University President and Provost (Chief Academic Officer), on any matter affecting the interests of the University.

Membership

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is composed as follows:

- Two elected faculty representatives
- The Deans of all three colleges:
 - College of Nursing and Health Science
 - College of Business and Technology
 - College of Education
- The University Provost

The Faculty Senate consists of two elected full-time or part-time representatives from each school. Senators are elected annually in the summer, and each member serves a two-year term. Half of the senators rotate off the Senate in July of each year, while the remaining members overlap their terms. This two-year cycle allows for consistency, effective transitions, and succession planning. Each July, the elected members of the Faculty Senate elect a Chair of the Senate and a Co-Chair annually. The Faculty Senate shall consist of the Provost, Associate Provost, the Deans, the Librarian, and elected faculty members employed by United States University. The Provost, Associate Provost, and Deans are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Senate. This group of Faculty Senate members shall constitute the "Faculty Senate Executive Committee."

The Composition of the Faculty Senate is designed to ensure that University faculty members play an active role in affairs affecting faculty procedures. Two members will be selected from each College to serve overlapping two-year terms. In July of each year, a call for nominations will be made to each College to elect members to serve in the Senate. The faculty from each College will vote to select its representative members. The Faculty Senate Chair will be responsible for coordinating the Faculty Senate election process. The process is as follows:

- Each College will conduct a voting process to select two representatives to serve on the Faculty Senate
- Each College will determine its voting process.
- The results will then be reported to the Faculty Senate Chair
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Once Faculty Senate Representative(s) are appointed, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate Chair to notify Faculty Services accordingly. Also, in July of each year, the voting members of the Senate will elect a Chair to serve a one-year term. The rules for Senate Composition are as follows:

- The Faculty Senate shall include two full or part-time faculty members from each College.
- The Faculty Senate representatives from each College shall conduct Faculty Senate business.
- The Faculty Senate shall conduct business consistently and according to the established Bylaws.

- The Faculty Senate shall create a "workspace" and a process so that new business is brought forward in a manner that allows for collaboration in advance of the public meeting.
- Proposals that affect all colleges shall require a "first reading." The purpose of the first reading shall be to provide all faculty the opportunity to become informed on the proposal being brought forth and to allow for discussion and feedback.
- The Executive Committee shall decide how meetings should be scheduled by the Executive Committee and/or by the General Faculty.
- The Executive Committee shall decide the number of annual meetings it will hold.
- The Faculty Senate may remove a duly elected member or an alternate for nonperformance of duties, misconduct, ineligible status, or other just cause. Removal shall require a majority vote of the Faculty Senate present at the meeting on the issues regarding removal.
- Members may resign from the Senate by submitting a resignation letter to the Chair.
- The Chair may appoint non-voting members.
- The term for a Faculty Senator shall be two years, and terms of service will be staggered to maintain continuity in decision-making.
- A member may serve consecutive terms. There is no limit on the number of terms a member may serve.
- Additional *ad hoc* members may be appointed by university stakeholders. These members may include faculty and external experts to review and revise specific guidelines and processes related to faculty. They will serve for a limited period or until the completion of a limited objective.

The elected members of the Faculty Senate receive a monthly stipend for their service (see Appendix A).

Faculty Senate Member Roles

The role and responsibility of the Faculty Senate is to review and approve policies and procedures affecting faculty operations. Specific responsibilities of the Senate are to:

- Know and understand the mission and strategic goals of the institution as it relates to instructional excellence, academic operations, and academic affairs.
- Review faculty grievances when required by the Faculty Grievance Policy.
- Review and recommend actions and policies related to diversity within academic affairs.
- Evaluate any proposals, policies, recommendations, or procedures as the institutional stakeholders require.
- Recommend and review initiatives related to faculty.
- Review issues submitted by the Student Governance Committee.
- Review and approve meeting minutes.
- Refer issues to the appropriate University or Senate standing or ad hoc committee for consideration regarding final action.

- Review and vote on new academic degree programs (college-level curriculum committees approve individual courses, course learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes).

The Senate Chair shall:

- Set agendas for, coordinate, and facilitate meetings.
- Solicit agenda items from subcommittees and designated University leadership.
- Maintain and distribute documentation, including agendas, meeting minutes, proposed policies, and other materials.
- Facilitate and coordinate voting and electronically-mediated communications and actions.
- Coordinate activities related to the development of policies and procedures as needed.
- Assist Board of Trustees members and others in matters related to process, policy, and guidelines.
- Sit as a member of committees as designated by the Provost.

The Co-Chair shall:

- At the direction of the Chair, prepare and distribute the agenda for the meeting.
- Receive and prepare for distribution of all proposals and other documents.
- Prepare and coordinate voting and other electronically-mediated communications and actions.
- Maintain attendance records of committee members at all meetings to declare and maintain a quorum.
- Attend all meetings and record the proceedings; maintain the official records of the committee's minutes and agenda.

Members shall:

- Inform constituent faculty regarding changes and other procedural issues.
- Assist faculty in matters related to process, policy, and guidelines.
- Participate in meetings and review submission documents.
- Vote and participate in decision-making regarding other requested actions promptly and accurately.
- Serve on at least one sub-committee of the Senate or their College as necessary to maintain the quality of the operation of the University.
- Elect a Chair and Co-Chair of the Senate each summer.

Non-voting Members and Guests shall:

- Attend all meetings as needed or required.
- Provide supporting documentation or explanation to facilitate review.
- Answer questions about resources, technology, and other special topics.

Meetings

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall meet monthly. The full faculty shall participate in general meetings at least four (4) times per fiscal year and as requested

by the Provost, the Senate Chair, or by more than fifty percent of the Senate members. Meetings may be held via electronic media or in an asynchronous format. Approvals may be granted via electronic media or in an asynchronous format. When approval or action items are requested, voting members shall have at least five business days to take action. If face-to-face meetings are required, compensation for travel expenses will be provided in accordance with the University's current travel compensation schedule.

Reports

All reports and recommendations from United States University committees and Faculty Senate standing or ad hoc committees concerning the University's academic operations of teaching, research, extension, and outreach shall be submitted simultaneously to the Faculty Senate and the appropriate University administrator. The Faculty Senate may approve or disapprove a report or recommendation, either in whole or in part, or may withhold action while requesting additional study by the reporting committee or the Senate. The Faculty Senate may take no more than two meetings to determine its course of action. The Senate Chair will inform the appropriate University administrator of the status of Senate actions on committee reports and recommendations.

The Faculty Senate automatically receives committee reports placed on the Senate agenda, and no further action is necessary (i.e., for information only). If the Senate wishes to adopt a committee report, a motion must be made and, if passed, indicates that the Senate adopts the entire report. The Faculty Senate may adopt, amend, or fail to adopt any recommendation made by a committee in its report.

Definition of Quorum

A quorum will be one member more than fifty percent of the Faculty Senate. Once a quorum is established, it shall continue in effect throughout the meeting or until the adjournment thereof.

Rules and Operating Procedures

Amended Robert's Rules of Order shall constitute the Senate's rules of order in all cases where they are not inconsistent with any special rules in this policy. Amendments to rules and operating procedures may be proposed at any regular or special meeting of the Senate, provided they are added to the agenda two days before the meeting.

Process for Setting an Agenda

- The Senate Chair develops the agenda for each meeting.
- The Chair shall include all items submitted in writing by a Senate member no later than three business days before a meeting.
- The Chair shall supervise the preparation of an agenda for each meeting and is responsible for submitting it to all members at least three business days before the meeting.
- Agenda items shall list the meeting date, topic, and the primary or reporting member responsible for each topic.

Documentation of Meeting Minutes

- The Senate Co-Chair will record the minutes and other activities as necessary.

- The Co-Chair will distribute the minutes of the Senate to the membership within three days following the meeting.
- Faculty Senate meeting minutes will be housed in the USU Governance Meeting folder under "Faculty Senate Executive Committee." The folder will include agendas by month, and meeting minutes will be included.

The Place of Business

The office of the transaction of business of the Faculty Senate shall be located at United States University. Meetings will be held via electronic media or in an asynchronous format.

Powers

The Faculty Senate has the authority and responsibility vested in it by the governing Board of United States University, the University President, the Provost, and the participating faculty members. These powers are in accord with the University mission statement and the Faculty Senate Constitution.

Attendance

Members of the Faculty Senate are encouraged to attend all meetings. A rough calendar outline for general meetings in any given year will be established no later than January 31 of the year in question. The Senate Chair shall announce and publish committee meeting times/dates roughly one month prior to the proposed meeting date. Special meeting dates will be published in a manner reasonable to ensure maximum faculty representative attendance.

Bylaws

The bylaws adopted by the Faculty Senate shall be its governing rules as long as they are consistent with the Constitution.

Amendments

The Constitution may be amended by a majority vote of the faculty members employed by United States University.

Standing Committees

The Faculty Senate may have standing or ad-hoc sub-committees to which the Senate Chair will commonly refer matters for study and a report before these matters come to the floor of the Faculty Senate for action. Upon a majority of those voting members present and voting, the Faculty Senate may take up matters without referral to a committee or may set aside a committee report. Committees may take no action on behalf of the Faculty Senate except as provided by the Constitution of the Faculty Senate.

Ratification

Ratification of this Constitution requires approval by a majority of those members of the Faculty Senate present. Ratification of this Constitution requires approval by the University President and the University's Board of Trustees. Once ratified, the Constitution shall become a part of the University's Statutes and appear in an appendix of the Faculty Handbook or appropriate managing document.