

Faculty Senate FAQs

1. How often does Faculty Senate meet?

Meetings are usually scheduled every two weeks. The Senate meeting time is 3:00-5:00 p.m. Although meetings are usually held in the University Center, there may be other meeting places announced.

2. Do Faculty Senators have other duties besides attending regularly scheduled meetings?

Each Senator is expected to serve on one legislative committee. Committee assignments are arranged by the Membership Committee at the beginning of each Senate Term.

3. Are all committees appointed?

Representation on committees is arranged by the Membership Committee. They are the only Faculty Senate committee which is elected by the Senate.

4. What are my responsibilities to my department?

Senators represent their department members in several ways. Normally, Senators report activities of the Senate to their departments. Some departments may schedule a report as part of the agenda for department meetings; others may prefer the Senator to email a report of Senate meetings to department members.

Votes on issues contained in bills and resolutions are usually made after Senators have consulted their department colleagues. New bills and resolutions are not voted on at the meeting at which they are introduced (except under extraordinary circumstances which require the suspension of rules). Senators have time to consult their constituents about these issues.

5. What is the difference between a bill and a resolution?

A bill passed by the Senate alters University policy and requires the agreement of the President of the University. The President may approve a bill, which is then presented to the Board of Regents and becomes University policy; the President may also either veto a bill or send it back to Senate for further consideration and amendment.

A resolution represents a "sense of the Senate" on matters not related to changes in university policy. Resolutions do not require approval of the President, although they are sent to the President as a matter of information.

6. Who may introduce a bill or resolution to the Senate?

Any Senator may introduce a bill or resolution to the Senate. Bills and resolutions may also be initiated by Senate committees. Depending on the nature of the bill or resolution, it may be referred to an appropriate committee for recommendations or it may be voted on by the Senate as such.

7. What are the offices of the Senate and what is the Executive Committee?

The Senate Chair is the leader of the Senate. The Chair conducts meetings and handles all other business of the Senate, as well as representing the Senate to other parts of the University.

The Senate Chair-Elect serves as the “Vice-Chair” and assumes the Chair in the subsequent Senate term.

Committee Chairs conduct the business of committees and report to the Senate and its officers.

The Senate Parliamentarian advises on issues of procedure and governance in the Senate.

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, the Chair-Elect, and the Chair of the Membership Committee. The executive Committee is authorized to represent the interests of the Senate in certain circumstances outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

8. What do I do if I cannot attend a meeting?

Each department elects a Senate Alternate who should be present when Senators are unable to attend meetings. Alternates represent the departments in the same way as Senators.

9. Are meetings of the Faculty Senate public?

Regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate are open to the public. The Senate may, however, go into executive session to consider matters privately; these sessions are not open to the public.