

University of Florida

# Faculty Senate

## Guide to Conducting Committee Business

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## **OVERVIEW OF THE FACULTY SENATE**

### **Shared Governance**

Shared governance in the academic mission of the University is collaborative participation of administrators and faculty in the decision and policy making process. The purpose of shared governance is to provide avenues for University improvement and productivity through the creation of a partnership based on mutual respect and collaboration.

### **Organization of the Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate is the legislative body of the University thereby providing a forum for mutual exchange of ideas between senior officers and faculty. In this capacity, the Senate takes cognizance of, and may legislate with respect to matters of Academic Affairs which concern more than one college, school, or other major academic unit, or which are otherwise of general university interest. In exercising its legislative function, the Senate makes such rules, regulations, and Bylaws as it may deem advisable for the fulfillment of its duties.

### **Board of Trustees**

The University of Florida (the "University") Board of Trustees is vested by law with all the powers and authority to effectively govern and set policy for the University of Florida in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida and with rules or policies of the Board of Governors. The Board serves as the governing body of the University of Florida. It selects the President of the University of Florida to serve at the pleasure of the Board and holds the President responsible for the University's operation and management, performance, its fiscal accountability, and its compliance with federal and state laws and rules of the Board of Governors. The Board has the authority to carry out all lawful functions permitted by the Bylaws, its Operating Procedures, or by law. The specific statutory powers and duties of the Board are enumerated in Section 1001.74, Florida Statutes. The Board may adopt rules and policies consistent with the University mission, with law, and with the rules of the Board of Governors, in order to effectively fulfill its obligations under the law. The Chair of the Faculty Senate shall be a member of the Board of Trustees. (<http://www.trustees.ufl.edu/bylaws/#1>)

### **Steering Committee of the Faculty Senate**

The Steering Committee is the executive committee of the Faculty Senate. It advises the Chair of the Faculty Senate on all matters, including issues brought to its attention from outside the Senate's or administration's formal structures.

The Steering Committee determines the agenda for each meeting of the Senate. It provides for reporting to the Senate by administrative officers, by the chairperson(s) of councils and committees, and by individuals. It coordinates, reviews, and refers actions and proposals from Senate and Joint Committees and from the Administration.

The Steering Committee also refers matters to the Senate Policy Councils and accepts reports and recommendations from the Senate Policy Councils and committees for Senate action.

Where appropriate, the Steering Committee can direct a matter to the combined attention of two or more Senate Policy Councils.

## **ROLE OF OFFICERS**

### **Chair**

The duties and functions of the Chair are:

- a. to preside at Faculty Senate meetings;
- b. to serve as Chair of the Senate Steering Committee;
- c. to represent the Faculty Senate on any matter within the Senate's jurisdiction or as requested by the Board of Trustees or President;
- d. to serve as a full voting member of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates;
- e. to serve as an ex-officio voting member of the Board of Trustees; and
- f. to perform such other duties as may be directed by the Senate.

### **Past Chair**

to act as Chair in the event both the Chair and Chair Elect are absent or otherwise unable to act;

- b. to serve on the Senate Steering Committee;
- c. to serve as an alternate member of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates; and
- d. to perform such other duties as may be directed by the Senate.

### **Chair Elect**

to act as Chair in the event the Chair is absent or otherwise unable to act;

- b. to serve on the Senate Steering Committee;
- c. to serve as a full voting member of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates; and
- d. to perform such other duties as may be directed by the Senate.

### **Parliamentarian**

- a. To attend all Faculty Senate meetings as a non-voting member
- b. To advise the Chair on application and interpretation of rules of procedure for the Faculty Senate
- c. To offer advice, when requested, to any member desiring help on motions or other parliamentary procedures

### **Senate Secretary**

- a. To keep the minutes of the meetings of the Faculty Senate and transmit all notices required under the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Senate including the senate agenda and materials
- b. Maintain all records of the Senate
- c. Perform such other duties as may be directed by the Senate.

## ROLE OF THE SENATE OFFICE STAFF

### Administrative Assistant

- a. Each year prior to the Senate elections, notify the Academic Units of the number of faculty eligible for election and the number of seats to be filled.
- b. Facilitates senator elections if needed
- c. Facilitates committee and council elections
- d. Assists the Senate Chair, Steering Committee, Senate Councils, Senate Committees and Joint committee liaisons as necessary

## SENATE POLICY COUNCILS

**Responsibilities of Policy Councils.** *The councils make recommendations to the Senate, facilitate the implementation of policy, and serve as liaisons between the Senate and the administration within their areas. Each policy council oversees, coordinates and facilitates the work of committees which are assigned to that respective council. However, the councils have no authority to review the decisions of any committee except insofar as such decisions may be the bases of policy recommendations. The Senate Steering Committee coordinates the referring of matters to, and the receipt of recommendations from, the Senate Policy Councils.*

The Committee on Committees may assign Senate committees and joint committees to Senate policy councils as “contributing committees” or “related committees.” Contributing committees have charges of central importance to the work of that council. Related committees have charges of peripheral concern to the council or operate in areas over which faculty governance responsibility is highly limited. Presidential (P) committees, as well as Senate (S) and joint (J) committees, may also be assigned to councils as related committees. A committee may be assigned to one council as a contributing committee and to one or more as a related committee.

*Each Senate policy council may refer business to its contributing and related committees; direct two or more Committees to work together when appropriate; create, if necessary, ad hoc committees or task forces to deal with matters within its purview; act as a council on business within its purview for which a committee is neither available nor necessary; and initiate and participate in cooperative action with other councils.*

**Membership of Councils:** Voting members of each council consist of six (6) members elected by the Senate from the Senate membership *and the chairperson of each contributing committee. If the chairperson of a contributing committee is not an elected faculty member, then a faculty member will be elected to serve on the council by the faculty members of the Committee. The chairs of related committees to a council serves as non-voting members of those councils with the right to propose inquiries and other actions. The five Senate Policy Councils are charged with making policy recommendations and facilitating faculty participation in shared governance in their assigned areas.*

**Academic Policy Council:** This council’s area encompasses educational policy, including the creation, modification, or deletion of academic programs and units; curriculum; academic standing; relationship of academic units to each other; general policies concerning student instruction; and academic merits of candidates for administrative positions of academic significance.

**Contributing Committees**

University Curriculum Committee (J)  
General Education Council (J)  
Student Petitions Committee (J)

**Related Committees**

Graduate Council (J)

**Faculty Welfare Council:** This council’s area encompasses matters that support, encourage, define, and evaluate the quality of the faculty and retention of faculty members, including faculty rights and academic freedom; faculty support programs, such as fringe benefit packages; faculty diversity; and programs that improve the quality of faculty life.

**Contributing Committees**

Faculty Compensation Committee (S)  
Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards Com. (S)

**Budget Council:** This council’s area encompasses budget and fiscal matters as they involve the academic mission of the University, including the recommendation of budget priorities involving academics and research, the fiscal implications of the creation, modification or deletion of academic programs, the collection and dissemination of information about University budgeting and planning; and monitoring whether the allocation of resources is consistent with Faculty Senate actions and the University’s long-term and short-term strategic plans.

- Collect and disseminate information about University budgeting and planning, keeping track of how budget is shaping up each year,
- Monitor decisions about planning and budgeting and ensure that allocation of resources conforms to expectations of Faculty, Faculty Senate, and University in long-term and short-term strategic plans.
- Advocate with Administration (through Provost’s office) for faculty concerns about academic priorities, budgeting and resource allocation,

**Research and Scholarship Council:** This council’s area encompasses University policies and procedures relating to research and scholarship, including university-wide research and scholarship initiatives and strategies; research grants and contracts; research infrastructure; and other matters relating to funding or producing scholarship. Establish policies and procedures for research and scholarship in cooperation with UF Faculty Senate and the President of the University.

**Contributing Committees**

Research Policy Council (J)  
Graduate Council (J)  
University Libraries Committee (S)

**Infrastructure Council:** This council's area encompasses the University's infrastructure supporting the University's academic mission, including the provision of physical facilities and other physical resources; libraries; information technology; the campus master plan; and the availability of adequate computer, classroom, laboratory and other resources. Achieve standards of excellence for interdependent network of facilities and services essential to a top-tier University.

**Contributing Committees**

Land Use and Facilities Planning Committee (J)  
Lakes, Vegetation and Land Use Committee (J)  
Parking and Transportation Committee (J)  
Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites Committee (J)  
Sustainability Committee (J)  
University Information Technology Committee (S)

**Information for Council Chairs**

Each policy council elects its own chair from its membership, for a one year, repeatable term beginning May 15. The Chair also serves on the Senate Steering Committee.

As a Senate council chair you are a member of the Senate Steering Committee. (one year term begins and ends on May 15) The steering committee meets monthly, typically on the first Thursday of each month. These meetings are generally held from 3-5 P.M. in the President's conference room unless otherwise noted. Each council chair will present the steering committee with a brief report of the council's activities.

If your term as senator has expired, you will be considered an ex officio member of the senate for the duration of your term on the steering committee.

Meeting agendas must be posted by the Senate office one week prior to council meetings. The Senate Office will send a reminder to submit your agenda in advance of the meeting.

Minutes will be sent to each chair after the council meeting and posted after approval of the council.

The Senate Office will post and distribute all meeting materials including minutes and agendas. The Senate office will also bring a sign in sheet to each meeting, keep attendance records. Council members are responsible for bringing meeting materials to the meeting.

**Information for Council Members**

Please note that the attendance policy for council members is the same as for Senators. If you miss three unexcused meetings in a row you are no longer considered a member of the council. We understand that in certain situations the Senate office will be unable to schedule every meeting so that each council member can attend. In these circumstances the absence will not be held against you.

The Senate Office will post and distribute all meeting materials including minutes and agendas. Council members are responsible for bringing meeting materials to the meeting. (unless materials are not distributed in a timely manner).

### **Role of Senate Office Staff**

The Senate office staff can research and advise on issues before the council; suggest agenda items; draft agendas; recommend, contact and schedule guests; draft minutes of the meetings; follow up on action items; draft or edit the council's recommendations and policy statements; and advise on the proper vetting of proposals put forward by the council. The Senate office staff can work with the council chair and members to ensure that the council's reports and comment letters are submitted to the Senate chair by the date requested, and that the Senate chair is kept informed about the council's major activities. Senate Office Staff will also be responsible for the website and other duties as assigned by the Senate Chair.

## **COMMITTEES**

Operational committees support the conduct of the business of the Faculty Senate. They assist the Senate to organize, to select its own officers, committees and councils, and to adopt rules for the conduct of its business. In addition to Senate Operations Committees, several other Committees are elected from the faculty wholly by the Senate or, where specifically indicated, by other means.

Service on University councils and committees is the primary means of direct participation in University governance by faculty. There are five classes of University councils and committees: Senate Operations Committees, Senate Policy Councils, Senate Committees, Joint Committees, and Presidential Committees. *Councils and committees are the vehicles for providing, directly or through the Faculty Senate, faculty determinations, recommendations, or consultations as appropriate.* The creation or dissolution of any Senate Policy Council, Senate Operations Committee, or other Senate Standing Committee, must be approved by the Senate using the procedure set forth in Article VIII of the Constitution. Presidential Committees are established or dissolved by the President. Joint Committees are established or dissolved jointly by the President and the Senate as prescribed in Article VIII of the Constitution. Senate and Joint Committee purviews, structures and procedures may be more fully set forth in the Senate Bylaws. *Ad hoc* Senate committees may be established by the Senate, by a Senate Council, or by the Steering Committee. Any committee, council, or task force denominated as "joint" shall report to both the Senate and the President.

## **SENATE COMMITTEES**

### **Senate Operations Committees**

- Steering Committee
- Committee on Committees
- University Constitution and Regulations Committee
- Senate Nominating Committee



## **Senate Standing Committees**

Academic Freedom, Tenure, Professional Relations and Standards Committee  
Compensation Committee  
Honorary Degrees, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials Committee  
University Information Technology Committee  
University Libraries Committee

### **Role of the Committee Chair**

The committee chair's primary responsibility is to fulfill the charge of his/her committee, as defined in the Senate's Bylaws. With the assistance of Senate staff, the chair is responsible for the committee's timely responses to the requests of the Senate chair for review and comment on proposals and reports that originate both from campus administration and from the Faculty Senate.

The committee chair identifies issues that fall within the committee's charge; initiates discussions; formulates proposals or recommendations; and provides reports and recommendations to the council to which it reports. The committee chair is also responsible for ensuring the integrity of the committee process by addressing and resolving potential conflicts of interest. He/she should discuss expectations for recusal at the first committee meeting.

### **Role of Committee members**

Committee members support the committee chair in fulfilling the committee's charge by taking active part in meetings; carrying out routine and special tasks as assigned by the Chair; and offering advice and information based on one's experience and expertise. The role of *ex-officio* members as voting or non-voting members is defined in the committee's bylaw.

It is also the committee member's responsibility to come to each meeting prepared with a copy of any relevant materials that were distributed prior to the meeting. The Senate office, or its designee, will send meeting agendas and copies of the previous meeting's minutes at least one week prior to each meeting. The Senate office will work with the chairs to provide copies of any supplemental materials that were not sent out one week prior to the meeting.

### **Role of Senate Office Staff**

The Senate office staff can research and advise on issues before the committee; suggest agenda items; draft agendas; recommend, contact and schedule guests; draft minutes of the meetings; follow up on action items; draft or edit the committee's recommendations and policy statements; and advise on the proper vetting of proposals put forward by the committee. The Senate office staff can work with the committee chair and members to ensure that the committee's reports and comment letters are submitted to the Senate chair by the date requested, and that the Senate chair is kept informed about the committee's major activities. Senate Office Staff will also be responsible for the website and other duties as assigned by the Senate Chair.

## **JOINT COMMITTEES**

Faculty involvement is important for the disposition of certain key University issues with academic and administrative implications. In the spirit of shared governance, these issues are dealt with by Joint Committees. These committees are established and dissolved jointly by the President and the Senate and include members appointed by the President and members elected by the Senate to represent the faculty. Typically one half of each Committee's membership is comprised of elected faculty members and one half of appointed faculty members, except as specified otherwise in the Senate Bylaws. Joint Committees report to the President and, to the extent allowed, provide information on committee activities and meeting minutes to the Senate.

At any time the President or Senate may evaluate the effectiveness of Joint Committees in conjunction with the Committee on Committees.

- Academic Personnel Board
- Curriculum Committee
- General Education Committee
- Graduate Council
- Lakes, Vegetation and Landscape Committee
- Land Use and Facilities Planning
- Parking and Transportation
- Preservation of Historic Buildings and Sites
- Research Policy Committee
- Student Petitions Committee
- Sustainability Committee

### **Role of the Committee Chair**

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### **Role of Committee members**

Committee members support the committee chair in fulfilling the committee's charge by taking active part in meetings; carrying out routine and special tasks as assigned by the Chair; and offering advice and information based on one's experience and expertise. The role of *ex-officio* members as voting or non-voting members is defined in the committee's bylaw.

Committee members are responsible for coming to each meeting prepared with a copy of any relevant materials that were distributed prior to the meeting.

### **Role of Senate office staff**

The Senate office staff coordinates the activities of the Faculty Senate and the Senate councils and committees. The Senate office staff will help to ensure that the Web sites for the Joint committees are updated. However, the Senate office staff cannot record minutes or arrange joint committee meetings. Please contact the Senate office for information about assistance to your committee.

## **CONDUCTING BUSINESS FOR SENATE, JOINT COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS**

### **Role of Invited Guests**

A chair may invite individuals to sit on the committee by invitation. These guests do not have voting privileges, or count toward quorum. They may not make motions or second them.

### **Preparing to Serve as Committee or Council Chair**

The following are recommended steps to prepare for chairing a Senate committee or council:

- review the committee or council's charge and bylaws;
- familiarize yourself with the finished and unfinished business of the previous year's committee; and
- acquaint yourself with the committee members: review the roster and familiarize yourself with individual members' disciplinary fields and areas of interest.

### **Ensuring Continuity through Transitions**

In order for shared governance to be effective, the administration and the Senate should work as partners. The Senate should strive to be a reliable partner, changing a previous position only rarely, and only for good cause. The following are suggested guidelines for changing a position reached by the previous committee:

- New information comes to light that was not available to the committee previously;
- There were substantial procedural errors in earlier deliberations; or
- A strong majority of committee members believe that the previous committee reached an untenable position

### **Scheduling Meetings**

The appropriate staff person (Senate office for Senate committees and councils) will work with the chair to schedule meetings. Some committees have a set meeting time that does not vary. Other committees schedule a time each academic year or semester. It is wise to schedule all meetings for the academic year or semester early, and revise the schedule as needed.

## **Sunshine Laws**

Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law provides a right of access to governmental proceedings at both the state and local levels. It applies to any gathering of two or more members of the same board to discuss some matter which will foreseeably come before that board for action. There is also a constitutionally guaranteed right of access. Virtually all state and local collegial public bodies are covered by the open meetings requirements with the exception of the judiciary and the state Legislature which has its own constitutional provision relating to access.

The Sunshine law requires that 1) meetings of boards or commissions must be open to the public; 2) reasonable notice of such meetings must be given, and 3) minutes of the meeting must be taken.

The Sunshine law applies to all discussions or deliberations as well as the formal action taken by a board or commission. The law, in essence, is applicable to any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the public board or commission. There is no requirement that a quorum be present for a meeting to be covered under the law.

### **Setting Meeting Agendas**

The committee chair, in consultation with the staff person sets the agenda for each meeting. The committee chair, in consultation with the staff person, should prioritize agenda items in order to meet deadlines for committee comments and reviews. Invitations must be extended to guests and speakers. Agendas must be posted 7 days prior to meetings.

### **Distribution of Meeting Agendas and Other Meeting materials**

The staff person will then distribute the agenda along with any necessary enclosures electronically. It is important that committee chairs submit agendas in a timely manner so that the Senate office can meet the timeline.

### **Meeting minutes**

Following a meeting, the Senate office is expected to complete and submit to the committee chair a list of action items and a set of draft minutes. The draft minutes must accurately reflect the committee's deliberations and actions. Draft minutes are included in the agenda packets for approval by the committee in its next meeting. Chairs should review and forward comments on minutes to the Senate office in a timely manner so that they can be distributed. Draft minutes are considered confidential. Once the committee has approved the minutes, they become public documents and will be made available upon request. Minutes must contain:

- Identification of the meeting
- Name of body
- Type of meeting (regular, special, etc.)
- Date, time and place of meeting
- Time meeting was called to order

Approval of minutes  
All main motions and their disposition (also applies to amendments to the motion) including wording of motion and person making the motion  
Time of adjournment

### **Adding or Canceling Meetings**

Meetings may be added or canceled as necessary. Meetings may not be added unless there is one week lead time for noticing the meeting. Meeting additions and cancellations will be noticed on the Senate Web site and via the appropriate distribution list.

### **Committee and Council Web pages**

Each committee and council has a page on the Senate web site. The committee page template includes:

- The committee or council charge, in brief
- The current year's roster
- Contact information
- Agendas and minutes
- Current annual report
- Future meeting dates

The Senate office is responsible for reviewing the committee and council pages annually in the summer, and updating information as needed. Please notify the Senate office if information needs to be updated.

### **Annual Reports**

At the end of each academic year, councils and committees are asked to compile an annual report on their activities. A recommended format for the report includes a summary of:

- issues considered: this might be presented as a list of issues appearing on the committee's agenda, or brought to the attention of the committee or council;
- actions taken: this might be presented as an explanatory note after each item on the list of issues considered;
- projects undertaken by the committee, if any; and
- continuing/unfinished business: this might be presented as a list of issues to be carried forward to the next academic year.

In addition, it should report on the actions of any subcommittees. Copies of committee annual reports are archived in the Senate Office.

## **MAXIMIZING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS**

The following are tips for maximizing the effectiveness of Senate committees:

Prior to or at the first meeting of the year, develop and distribute an orientation packet to committee members, including:

- a roster of committee members with contact information;
- schedule of meetings
- previous year's annual report or summary of actions
- and expectations about confidentiality and recusal

Focus the committee discussion and deliberations to achieve consensus or resolution of issues before the committee; prioritize agenda items in order to meet deadlines; utilize subcommittees, as appropriate, and delegate assignments to committee members; both serve to involve committee members as active participants; and rely on Senate staff.

**Faculty Senate College Council Chairs**

Each college and the UF library system will have a college council elected from within the college faculty membership. Each college will have a constitution and/or bylaws developed within the college that ensures shared governance. The chair of the college council will be elected by faculty as designated by their constitution.

The responsibility of the college council is to serve as the governance unit within an individual college and to be the legislative body in areas that apply to faculty within the single college. The college councils will also provide feedback, guidance, and representatives to the Faculty Senate when requested. College Councils will serve as an important means for the UF faculty chair to communicate with all faculty within a specific college.