

Proposal for Faculty Senate Bylaws:

Reasons for this proposal “On Election of Senators”

- Current practices do not conform to the letter of the FS Constitution
- Currently electoral processes are unclear to faculty, faculty senate leadership and members, and administrators alike
- Currently electoral processes are not standardized across units, despite the fact that the Faculty Senate is a university body and each member ought to be elected by university wide standards to protect the representational value and legitimacy of each senator
- To ensure all relevant criteria for an election of a senator are fulfilled prior to an election being conducted
- To enhance transparency, democratic and equal participation
- To decrease the the likelihood of errors and their fallout consequences
- To increase efficiency in the allocation of time and other resources during election cycles and summer months
- To consolidate practices and expectations regarding faculty governance and shared governance vis a vis the Faculty Senate.

FS ByLaws:

I. On Election of Senators

Purpose:

Establishes a standard process for the election of senators that complies with our Faculty Senate Constitution (ADM 05-100). There is currently no standard process.

Process:

FS Constitution places the responsibility for the administration of “all elections for Senator positions” on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (section III.1.). Guided by principles of equity and democratic participation in faculty governance, the election process consists of the following steps to be conducted electronically:

1. FSEC initiates the process by informing units that qualify for a new term with outlined description and instruction of the process.
 - a. Those units should be contacted no later than February 15th, in order to facilitate the workload planning process of individual faculty who may be interested in serving as senator.
2. Individual members of the faculty or library have a period of seven business days (starting on a Monday) submit nominations or self-nominations to the FSEC.

- b. On the second Monday, the unit's faculty will receive a reminder of the deadline and an update on the status of nominations, that shall include the number and names of confirmed nominees).
3. The FSEC announces the candidates and schedules the election dates to begin no earlier than one week after candidates are announced.
4. The FSEC facilitates a secret electronic vote.
5. Once elections polls are opened, qualified faculty or librarian voters will have 72 business hours to submit their vote. The FSEC has the discretion to extend the voting period for reasons that are in keeping with the principles guiding this document.

A senator is elected to serve when a candidate receives a majority of the votes cast. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, then the two candidates with the highest number of votes are selected for a second election round. The FSEC committee facilitates all election rounds until the election of a senator is concluded.

Implementation:

Goes into effect immediately after approval by the Faculty Senate.

Reaffirmation

These ByLaws will be reviewed and subjected to a vote again by FS within three years of its first enactment or expected changes the Faculty Senate Constitution are completed, whichever comes first.

Reasons for this proposal “On Faculty Senate Terms”:

- To ensure continuity of shared governance and faculty senate leadership over summer months, and with this:
 - In cases of unexpected events or crises (e.g., pandemic, implementation of legislation), the FS can rely on the leadership of seasoned senators, officers and FSEC members
 - Ensure that every college is represented in the FSEC and the Committee on Committees and Councils during the summer, when several responsibilities must be fulfilled in advance of the next AY
 - To allow each a period of time for the senators serving during the new AY to elect their FSEC representative in advance of the new AY
 - To allow an orderly period of transition of leadership, with clarity of tasks and increased transparency and accountability internal and external to FS
 - Increase efficiency in the allocation of time and other resources during election cycles and summer months
 - To consolidate practices and expectations regarding faculty governance and shared governance vis a vis the Faculty Senate

- The calendar better correlates with how faculty are evaluated and allows - especially for those in leadership position - to have better control over their work for each calendar year.

II: On Faculty Senate Terms

1. Senate Term

- a. A senator elected to a full three-year term begins service on the first day of the following academic year.
- b. A senator elected to complete an unfinished term begins serving immediately after the seat is vacant or, if already vacated, immediately after the election.

Expectations

Collaboration during the month of August should be expected among senators stepping down as senators or any other Faculty Senate role and those beginning an appointment as senator or any other role (e.g., committee chair). Fulfilling this expectation is indeed necessary for the successful transition from year to year, to ensure the stability of continued shared governance responsibilities. Senators are responsible for making this successful transition possible. The start date of an appointment term should be understood as the faculty being ready and fully prepared to take over in their respective membership role.

Implementation:

When and how does this go into effect? Discuss proposals.

Reaffirmation

These ByLaws will be reviewed and subjected to a vote again by FS within three years of its first enactment or expected changes the Faculty Senate Constitution are completed, whichever comes first.

Appendix A

Sample E-mail Text to Inform Units of Election Process

Dear [*Unit Faculty/Members of the University Library*],

Your department/The Library has [# of vacancies]. One vacancy is for an unfinished term, which expires [*Date*]/The vacancy is for a new term that will begin [*Term Dates*] and end in [*Term Dates*].

In order to ensure all faculty have legitimate representation in the Faculty Senate (FS) and on behalf of the FSEC, I ask that you please begin considering your or your peer's nomination to this office. As you do, please:

1. Know that the call for nominations for [unit] will go out on [Monday date] and be open for seven business days.
2. And update and reminder of the open call for nominations will go out on [Monday date].
3. The secret voting process will begin the first Monday after the nomination process is complete.
4. Polls will be open to qualified faculty to vote during a 72 hours period ending [date and time]

For a better understanding of the role of faculty senators and this election process, please review:

1. Bylaws (relevant sections)
2. Constitution (relevant sections)
3. Faculty Senate website

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FS Secretary [name], or the FSEC at faculty.senate@utrgv.edu

Appendix B

Sample E-mail Text to Open Call for Nominations

Dear [Unit Faculty/Members of the University Library],

Your department/The Library has [# of vacancies]. One vacancy is for an unfinished term, which expires [Date]/The vacancy is for a new term that will begin [Term Dates].

WRITE DRAFT

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FS Secretary [name], or the FSEC at faculty.senate@utrgv.edu

Appendix C

Sample E-mail Text to Remind and Update Faculty on Open Call for Nominations

Dear [*Unit Faculty/Members of the University Library*],

Your department/The Library has [# of vacancies]. One vacancy is for an unfinished term, which expires [*Date*]/The vacancy is for a new term that will begin [*Term Dates*].

WRITE DRAFT

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FS Secretary [*name*], or the FSEC at faculty.senate@utrgv.edu

Appendix D

Sample E-mail Text to Open Polls

Dear [*Unit Faculty/Members of the University Library*],

Your department/The Library has [# of vacancies]. One vacancy is for an unfinished term, which expires [*Date*]/The vacancy is for a new term that will begin [*Term Dates*].

WRITE DRAFT

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, FS Secretary [*name*], or the FSEC at faculty.senate@utrgv.edu

References

Selection of the Most Relevant Policies

On the administration of elections Administration of Elections (FS Constitution, Article III. 3. 1).

SECTION 3: ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

Election and terms of office shall be as follows:

1. All elections for Senator positions will be administered by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
2. Senators are elected to three-year renewable terms of office, not to exceed two consecutive terms. If a Senator is elected to fill an unexpired term in a special election with two years or less remaining in the unexpired term, said service will not count towards the term limit for the Senator.
3. Terms will be staggered so that at every election approximately one-third of the elected positions will be open for election.

SECTION 4: VACANCY

In the event that an elected position is vacant, there shall be a special election to fill the vacant position when more than one semester is remaining in the term. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall nominate a member from the College/Unit or Library involved to fill the unexpired term if less than one semester of the term remains. The nomination of the Executive Committee shall be subject to approval by a vote of the Faculty Senate.

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On the eligibility to occupy a senate seat (FS Constitution, Article III. 1.).

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY FOR SENATE SEAT

Those faculty and professional librarians (henceforth "librarians") eligible for election to a Senator shall be:

1. All full-time faculty (including department chairs and school directors with a 50% or less administrative appointment) with a minimum of three years of experience as a member of the faculty at the institution.
2. Full-time librarians (with a 50% or less administrative appointment) with a minimum of three years of experience as a librarian at the institution.

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On senators' duties and responsibilities (FS Constitution, Article III. 6.).

SECTION 6: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Duties and responsibilities of all members of the Faculty Senate are as follows:

1. Members are expected to attend and participate in all formally called Faculty Senate meetings and to represent their department/unit or library as informed and responsible members of the Faculty Senate.
2. Members shall report the business of the Faculty Senate back to their constituencies.
3. Members shall notify the Senate Secretary or President of the Faculty Senate if university business precludes them from attending a meeting of the Senate.

On the election and term of office and vacancies (FS Constitution, Article III, Sections 3-4).

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