

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY  
FACULTY SENATE CONSTITUTION**

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**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The Organization shall be known as the Faculty Senate of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

**SECTION 1: ADDRESS**

The mailing address of the Organization shall be: Faculty Senate, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley: Brownsville (One West University Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78520); Edinburg (1201 W. University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539); and Harlingen (2102 Treasure Hills Blvd., Harlingen, TX 78550).

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS**

**SECTION 1: PURPOSE**

The Faculty Senate shall be an agency for promoting the general wellbeing of the University and for representing the views of the faculty and librarians.

**SECTION 2: FUNCTIONS**

The functions of the Faculty Senate shall include:

1. To review and make recommendations on educational policies per Regents Rule 40101 – *Faculty Role in Educational Policy Formulation*.
2. To develop and propose educational policies that will promote the mission of the University.
3. To establish committees to undertake business that comes before the Faculty Senate.
4. To provide a means for Senators and other stakeholders to introduce and make recommendations or comments regarding matters of concern.

**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.

## SECTION 2: COMPOSITION

The Faculty Senate shall have the following composition:

1. Faculty Senate Executive Committee: Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected from the current Senators. The Executive Committee shall be made up of the President of the Senate, President-Elect of the Senate, Immediate Past President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Parliamentarian and additional members from each of the Colleges/Units at the same level (including the University College and the School of Medicine) and the Library not already represented on the Executive Committee.
2. Academic Department or School Representation: Each academic department and school/comparable unit (including the School of Medicine) offering undergraduate or graduate academic degrees (hereafter "department") shall have at least one representative in the Faculty Senate. If a department has 25-49 full-time faculty (with at least 50% appointment in said unit) in the department, they shall have two representatives in the Faculty Senate. If a department has 50 or more full-time faculty (with at least 50% appointment) in the department (or school), they shall have three representatives in the Faculty Senate. The department representatives will be elected by a vote of the department faculty. Geographic diversity of representatives from all campuses is encouraged.
3. Library Representation: Librarians shall have one elected representative.
4. University College Representation: The University College shall have one elected representative.

## 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.

## SECTION 5: REMOVAL

Procedures for removal or replacement of Senators shall be as follows:

1. Any Senator may be recalled by the constituency that he or she represents or by the recommendation of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for failure to perform his/her duties satisfactorily.
2. Removal may begin by petition for removal by the constituency that he/she represents or the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
3. When initiated by the constituency represented by the Senator, the petition requires the signatures of one-third of the faculty or professional staff represented.
4. When initiated by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the petition requires the signatures of two-thirds of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
5. Petitions for removal must be presented to the President of the Faculty Senate a minimum of seven (7) working days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
6. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall certify the eligibility of the signatures on the petition.
7. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall then contact the Senator in question within seven (7) working days of the receipt of the petition notifying the Senator of the pending action.
8. Removal by petition of the constituency or by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee culminates in a vote of the faculty or librarians represented by the Senator.
9. The recall election shall be held in a timely fashion by secret ballot administered by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
10. The Senator shall be removed if two-thirds of those faculty or librarians determined eligible to vote have voted for removal.

## 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.

## ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

### SECTION 1: REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. The Faculty Senate is a part of the formal faculty governance structure of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. As such, official actions of the Faculty Senate are to be taken at

formally called meetings of the body where all representatives have the opportunity to participate in discussion and vote as appropriate.

2. During the academic year, regular monthly meetings of the Faculty Senate will be held. During the summer months, at least one meeting of the Faculty Senate may be held. Meetings of the Faculty Senate, including committee meetings, are open to all faculty, librarians, and the general public.
3. The Executive Committee shall announce the meeting schedule and will post it on the Faculty Senate webpage.
4. Regular meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be held at the Brownsville, Edinburg and Harlingen campuses on a rotating basis.

## SECTION 2: EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

The Faculty Senate may conduct its official business during a regular meeting or a special meeting in a closed executive session that includes only Senators, faculty, librarians, and guests invited by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. An executive session shall be initiated via a motion by a voting member of the Faculty Senate and supported by two-thirds of the Senators present. The Faculty Senate shall conform to all applicable state laws regarding open meetings as outlined in the Texas Open Meetings Act.

## SECTION 3: QUORUM

A quorum of the Faculty Senate is said to exist if at least half of the Senators and at least five members of the Executive Committee are present to conduct business.

## SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

During a general discussion, the Faculty Senate will operate as a committee of the whole with discussion directed by the President of the Faculty Senate. When discussion leads to the need for a vote on the item being discussed, the Faculty Senate shall automatically follow the voting procedures prescribed by Robert's Rules of Order.

## SECTION 5: VOTING

1. Senators must be present to vote on any matters during a regularly scheduled or special meeting.
2. The President of the Faculty Senate will reserve the right to vote on all matters in the case of a tie vote.
3. Voting by email is permissible in special circumstances in which a formal meeting cannot be called within a reasonable time frame. Electronic voting may be permissible through the approval of the majority of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In such cases, electronic voting will be open for a period of five working days, closing at 5:00 p.m. local time on the final day.

## SECTION 6: MINUTES

A formal written record of the meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be maintained on the Faculty Senate website.

## ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

### SECTION 1: COMPOSITION OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall have one representative from each of the academic Colleges, the School of Medicine, the Library, and the University College. Geographic diversity is encouraged.
2. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall have a President of the Senate, President-Elect of the Senate, Immediate Past President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Senate Parliamentarian and additional members selected to represent the remaining Colleges/units with no representation on the Executive Committee.
3. Each College, the Library, and the School of Medicine shall have a maximum of one member on the Executive Committee.

### SECTION 2: ELECTION AND TERM

Officers of the Faculty Senate are elected as follows:

1. The President-Elect of the Faculty Senate shall be elected by the Senate from the eligible members of the Senate for a one-year term. At the completion of the one-year term, the President-Elect shall assume the position of the President of the Faculty Senate. Candidates for President-Elect shall have served at least one three-year term as a Faculty Senator to be considered eligible for office.
2. The President of the Faculty Senate shall serve for a one-year term. At the completion of the one-year term, the President shall assume the position of the Immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate.
3. The Secretary of the Senate shall be elected by the Senate from the eligible members of the Senate for a one-year term and may not serve more than three consecutive terms. Candidates for Secretary shall have served at least one three-year term as a Faculty Senator to be considered eligible for office.
4. The Parliamentarian of the Senate shall be elected by the Senate from the eligible members of the Senate for a one-year term and may not serve more than three consecutive terms. Candidates for Parliamentarian shall have served at least one three-year term as a Faculty Senator to be considered eligible for office.
5. Four additional members of the Executive Committee shall be elected from each of the units not represented by the President of the Faculty Senate, President-Elect of the Faculty Senate, Immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate, Secretary of the Faculty Senate or

Parliamentarian of the Senate for a one-year term. These candidates shall have served at least one three-year term as a Faculty Senator to be considered eligible for office.

### SECTION 3: VACANCY

The procedures for filling a vacancy on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee are as follows:

1. In the case of a vacancy for the position of President of the Faculty Senate, the President-Elect immediately assumes the position and will continue in the position for the following academic year. A special election may be held to fill the unexpired term of the position of President-Elect of the Faculty Senate.
2. In the case of a vacancy for the position of Immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate, the position will remain vacant until the next scheduled election.
3. In the case of a vacancy for a position besides the President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President of the Faculty Senate, a special election to fill the vacant position is warranted when more than one semester is remaining in the term. If less than one semester of the term remains, the Executive Committee may recommend an eligible Senator to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. All nominations to the Executive Committee shall be subject to approval by the Faculty Senate.

### SECTION 4: REMOVAL

1. The procedures for removal of a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall be substantively similar to those governing the removal of a Senator.
2. In the event of a petition to recall a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, a special committee of four members (two Senators and two other persons from among the faculty and librarians) shall be established in consultation with the affected unit to administer the recall election.

### SECTION 5: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. President
  - a. The President serves as the primary representative of the Faculty Senate.
  - b. The President of the Faculty Senate presides over the general meetings of the Faculty Senate, the Executive Committee, and the meetings of the faculty as a whole.
  - c. The President of the Faculty Senate represents the Senate at The University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council, at other statewide meetings, and all other appropriate meetings.
  - d. The President represents the Faculty Senate at all official university functions.
  - e. The President represents the Faculty Senate at all university-related community functions.
  - f. The President of the Faculty Senate shall receive one (1) graduate course reduction or one (1) undergraduate course reduction per regular semester that will count towards his or her workload each academic year.
2. President-Elect

- a. The President-Elect of the Faculty Senate presides in the absence of the President, is the executive officer responsible for conducting elections, and represents the Senate at The University of Texas System Faculty Advisory Council and at other statewide meetings as appropriate.
- b. The President-Elect also assists any faculty member or librarian who wishes to bring an issue before the Faculty Senate.
3. Secretary  
The Secretary of the Faculty Senate is responsible for all minutes and records of the meetings of the Faculty Senate.
4. Parliamentarian  
The Parliamentarian is the final authority on the interpretation of Robert's Rules of Order that govern the proceedings. The most recently revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.
5. Other Members
  - a. Other members of the Executive Committee serve as full voting members with the exception of the Immediate Past Chair, in cases where his/her Senate term has expired.
  - b. One member shall be assigned the responsibility of ensuring the website is maintained.
  - c. Two members shall be tasked by the President-Elect with the duties of administering all elections. These duties shall include: (1) Reviewing the representation of the Senate to ensure all departments/schools, the library, and the University College are represented accordingly; (2) Distributing a call for nominations and positions available during normal and special election cycles; (3) Verifying that nominees are willing and eligible to serve; and (4) Administering the election.

## SECTION 6: ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall serve as the Committee on Committees & Councils. This Committee shall be the body that recommends, in consultation with the Faculty Senate, faculty and librarians to university committees in which faculty and/or library representation is warranted. The Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs shall make the official committee appointments. See ADM 2-201 (*Academic Committees and Councils*) for the policy on academic committees and councils.

## ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

### SECTION 1: Amendments

1. Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution may be proposed by:
  - a. The Faculty Senate, or
  - b. A petition from 25 or more faculty members and/or librarians to the Faculty Senate.

2. A two-thirds favorable vote of the Faculty Senate is required to move the proposed amendment forward for a ratification vote.

#### SECTION 2: Ratification

The ratification procedure is as follows:

1. Within ten (10) working days of the Senate approval, the proposed amendments must be distributed to all full-time eligible faculty and librarians for electronic voting.
2. Electronic voting should be open for at least ten (10) working days.
3. If the majority of those voting approve the amendments, they shall be ratified.
4. Such amendments shall take effect when approved by the President of the University and the UT System Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.



## **PROVISOS GOVERNING THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE UTRGV FACULTY SENATE**

### **SECTION 1 – EXPIRATION OF PROVISOS**

The Provisos contained herein shall expire September 1, 2018.

### **SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE**

1. Years of service at a legacy institution shall count towards eligibility to serve on the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in AY 2015-16.
2. After AY 2015-16, cumulative years of service at a legacy institution and UTRGV shall count towards eligibility to serve in the Senate.

### **SECTION 3 – ELECTION OF THE AY 2015-16 FACULTY SENATE**

1. Election of the Faculty Senate shall occur in September of 2015.
2. A call for nominations of eligible faculty and librarians will be sent.
3. To initiate the staggering of terms, one-third of the Senate seats shall be randomly selected to be 1-year appointments; one-third of the Senate seats shall be randomly selected to be 2-year appointments; and one-third of the Senate seats shall be randomly selected to be 3-year appointments.
4. The election committee shall determine the eligibility of each nominee.
5. There will be a vote for all Faculty Senators by their respective departments/schools, library, or University College.

### **SECTION 4 – ELECTION OF THE AY 2015-16 FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Upon completion of the initial election of the Faculty Senate, the newly elected Faculty Senate will elect the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in a two-stage process.

1. Stage 1 shall consist of an election of the President, President-Elect, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. The position of the Immediate Past President shall be filled in a shared capacity by the final President of the Faculty Senate at The University of Texas at Brownsville and the final Chair of the Faculty Senate at The University of Texas – Pan American; each co-Immediate Past President shall be an ex-officio non-voting member on the Executive Committee if he/she is not elected as a UTRGV Faculty Senator.
2. Stage 2 shall consist of an election of the other members of the Executive Committee.