Policy Statement

I. Preamble

The Academic Senate is a representative body, formed from the General Faculty of The University of Texas at Dallas, in which faculty develop their concerns and proposals in exercising their major roles in faculty governance. The Academic Senate is aided in its work by the Academic Council, a smaller body formed from the Academic Senate which meets regularly with the President and Chief Academic Officer and by the Faculty Committees. As the regular primary faculty governance body, the Academic Senate is expected to coordinate faculty exercise of faculty governance responsibilities in the interests of academic excellence at The University of Texas at Dallas.

II. Authority

These Bylaws supplement UTDPP1088 - Faculty Governance of the Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Dallas. Nothing in these Bylaws shall be construed to conflict with the Handbook of Operating Procedures, the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, or state law.

III. Organization

1. Membership in the Academic Senate
   1. Only members of the Voting Faculty are eligible for membership in the Academic Senate. Members of the Voting faculty are limited to the following, as defined in UTDPP1088, Section I.B.1.a:
      1. Faculty appointed half-time or more to The University of Texas at Dallas who hold the rank of Regental Professor, Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor.
      2. Faculty appointed half-time or more to The University of Texas at Dallas who hold the rank of Instructor, Senior Lecturer 1, Senior Lecturer 2, Senior Lecturer 3, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, Clinical Full Professor (Clinical Professor), Assistant Professor of Instruction, Associate Professor of Instruction, Professor of Instruction, Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice, Professor of Practice, Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor.
   2. As specified in UTDPP1088, Sec. II.B.1, "The elected members of the Academic Senate shall consist of no fewer than twenty-three and no more than fifty-one voting members of the General Faculty, with intermediate numbers computed so as to be as close to 10% of the voting membership of the General Faculty as possible."
   3. Each School in the University shall be represented in the Senate.
   4. A minimum of 50% of Senate positions shall be held by tenure-system faculty and a minimum of 10% of Senate positions shall be held by non-tenure-system faculty.
   5. All members elected or appointed to the Academic Senate according to these Bylaws, and only those members, shall be voting members of the Academic Senate.
   6. Non-voting participants
      1. The President and Vice President of the Student Government Association, or their assignees, shall be invited to attend meetings of the Academic Senate as non-voting participants, except when the Academic Senate is in executive session.
      2. The Chair of the Staff Council shall be invited to attend the Academic Senate meetings as a non-voting participant, except when the Academic Senate is in executive session.
2. Elections for Academic Senate

1. The Secretary of the Faculty shall be in charge of the election, although he or she may designate other faculty and staff members to assist.

2. The nomination and election procedures, including a calendar, shall be distributed no later than February 1. Nomination and election procedures may be online or may utilize paper petitions and ballots. The election procedures, beginning with the nomination process and ending with election of a Speaker of the Faculty-Elect and Secretary of the Faculty-Elect, shall begin no later than March 15 and end no later than April 14. At least two weeks shall be allowed for submission of Academic Senate nominating petitions, and one week for ballots in the Academic Senate election.

3. Nominating petitions are collected by the Office of Academic Governance. For an individual to be placed on the election ballot, two nominating petitions must be submitted on his or her behalf. Any member of the Voting Faculty may submit a nominating petition for any other member of the Voting Faculty, or for himself or herself. No one may submit more than two nominating petitions, and no one may submit more than one nominating petition for any one individual.

4. The Secretary of the Faculty shall ascertain the willingness of each nominee to serve if elected. The names of those who do not wish to serve will not be placed on the ballot.

5. If the number of nominees is below 23 (the minimum number of Senate positions as specified in UTDPP1088, Sec. II.B.1), the nominating period shall be extended, and the Secretary of the Faculty shall make additional efforts to encourage nominations.

6. If the number of nominees exceeds the minimum of 23, but does not exceed the maximum of 51, all nominees shall be deemed elected, and there shall be no formal election.

7. The Secretary of the Faculty shall make ballots available by the date designated in the election calendar.

8. Ballots shall be secret and must be submitted in accordance with the election procedures to be valid.

9. Each member of the Voting Faculty may vote for as many five nominees and will indicate his or her first choice, second choice, and so on to a maximum of five. All such votes shall be counted, and the order of choice will only be used for tie-breaking.

10. As explained in III.A.2 above, based on the current size of the General Faculty and projected growth, the number of Senators will be 51. To ensure that 1) all schools are represented (III.A.3 above), 2) at least 50% of Senate positions are allocated to tenure-system faculty (III.A.4 above), and 3) at least 10% of Senate positions are allocated to non-tenure system faculty (III.A.4 above), the following procedures shall be used to determine the results of the election.

   1. The number of Senate positions will be multiplied by 50%, rounded upward if necessary. That number of positions will be allocated to the top tenure-system vote recipients. Thus, based on 51 Senate positions, the top 26 tenure system vote recipients will be deemed elected. Ties will be broken by counting the number of "first choices" received. If there is still a tie, the number of "second choices" will be counted, and so on.

   2. The number of Senate positions will be multiplied by 10%, rounded upward if necessary. That number of positions will be allocated to the top non-tenure-system vote recipients. Based on 51 Senate positions, the top 6 non-tenure-system vote recipients will be deemed elected. Ties will be broken by counting the number of "first choices" received. If there is still a tie, the number of "second choices" will be counted, and so on.

   3. If any School within the University is not represented in 1 and 2 above, the top vote recipient from that school will be deemed elected.

   4. To fill the remaining positions, all remaining nominees, whether tenure-system or non-tenure system, will be pooled and ranked by number of votes received. Ties will be broken by counting the number of "first choices" received. If there is still a tie, the number of "second choices" will be counted, and so on.

   5. If there are fewer nominees in either of the two faculty categories (tenure system and non-tenure system) than the number of Senate positions calculated by the 50% or 10% factor, respectively, all nominees in that category will be deemed elected and the minimum percentage will not apply.
11. The Secretary of the Faculty shall notify successful candidates of their election and of the date of the Senate-Elect Caucus, and shall notify the General Faculty of the election results.

3. Vacancies and Appointments
   1. If a member of the Academic Senate resigns his or her seat or leaves The University of Texas at Dallas for a period expected to exceed four months, that seat shall be filled by the unelected candidate who received the most votes in the prior election, bearing in mind the minimum number of required tenure-system, non-tenure-system, and school faculty for Academic Senate.
   2. If enough seats are vacated such that the original nomination list is exhausted, the Academic Senate shall fill vacancies by majority vote of all members of the Academic Senate.
   3. In the event a sitting member of the Academic Senate is appointed to the position of Dean, that individual is no longer eligible for Academic Senate membership. That seat will be vacated, and the Academic Senate shall fill the vacancy in accordance with III.C.1 and III.C.2 above.
   4. If a member of the Academic Senate misses two consecutive Senate meetings, the Senator will be contacted by the Secretary of the Faculty to ascertain whether he or she still wishes to serve. If not, the Senator will be immediately replaced by the procedures of Sections III.C.1 and III.C.2 above.
   5. If a member of the Academic Senate misses three meetings during September-May, the Academic Senate may, by a majority vote of those present, declare the seat vacant. The seat will then be filled by the procedures of Section III.C.1 and III.C.2 above.

4. Officers
   1. Roster and Duties
      1. Speaker of the Faculty: The Speaker of the Faculty is the principal elected officer of the General Faculty, of the Academic Senate, and the Academic Council. The Speaker shall:
         1. preside as described in the Handbook of Operating Procedures, UTDPP1088;
         2. chair the Executive Committee, if any, of the Academic Senate in its coordination of the work of the General Faculty, Academic Senate, Academic Council, and Concurrent Committees in order to improve the academic welfare and standing of The University of Texas at Dallas;
         3. assist in formulating faculty views as motions to be placed before the Academic Council or Senate for discussion and resolution; and
         4. together with the Secretary of the Faculty, review drafts of the minutes and authorize their circulation for formal approval.
         5. Sign the official copy of the approved minutes of the Academic Council and the Academic Senate.
      2. Secretary of the Faculty: The Secretary of the Faculty shall:
         1. serve as Secretary for meetings of the General Faculty, the Academic Senate, and the Academic Council;
         2. see that minutes are kept, made available to any faculty member, and filed in the Office of the President and, through that office, with the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of The University of Texas System, and with the Library of The University of Texas at Dallas;
         3. together with the Speaker of the Faculty, review drafts of the minutes and authorize their circulation for formal approval;
         4. provide a report on Academic Senate and Academic Council activities to the General Faculty at least once a year;
         5. in case of the absence of the Speaker from a meeting of Academic Council or Academic Senate, sign the official copy of the approved minutes of the Academic Council and Academic Senate for transmittal to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of The University of Texas System; and
         6. maintain a list of all recommendations that the Academic Senate and/or Academic Council has made to the administration so that the President may be requested to comment on these items at the beginning of each meeting.
      3. Vice Speaker: The Speaker may appoint one or two members of the Senate to serve as
Vice Speaker(s) and assist in carrying out the Speaker's official and unofficial duties. Vice Speaker(s) will serve for a term of one year, and will become ex officio voting members of the Academic Council if not already elected to the Council by the Senate.

4. Other Offices: The Academic Senate may, through its Resolution of Operating Procedures, create, provide for election or appointment, and provide duties for other offices of the Academic Senate and the Academic Council.

2. Election of Officers

1. The Academic Senate-Elect shall, in a caucus announced to and open to the voting members of the General Faculty and presided over by the Speaker of the Faculty, and under Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) elect its Speaker by a majority vote. The individual elected shall be known as the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty until June 1. The term of the Speaker of the Faculty shall be for two years.

2. The Academic Senate-Elect shall, in a caucus announced to and open to the voting members of the General Faculty and presided over by the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty, and under Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) elect its Secretary of the Faculty, who shall be known as the Secretary-Elect of the Faculty until June 1.

3. Until the election of the Secretary-Elect of the Faculty, the Secretary of the Faculty shall perform the routine functions of Secretary for the Academic Senate-Elect.

5. Academic Council

1. Relation to Academic Senate: The Academic Senate should, through its Resolution of Operating Procedures, specify at least the following:

   1. the powers delegated to the Academic Council;
   2. the extent to which the Academic Council is to function as an executive committee for the Academic Senate;
   3. the extent to which the Academic Council is to function as an agenda committee for the Academic Senate; and
   4. the communications required between the Academic Council and the Academic Senate, and between the Academic Council, Academic Senate and the Voting Faculty, including the appropriate form for the Minutes of the Academic Council and the Academic Senate.

2. Election, Removal, and Vacancies

1. After the election of the Speaker-Elect and Secretary-Elect of the Faculty, the Academic Senate-Elect shall, in a caucus announced to and open to the voting members of the General Faculty and presided over by the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty, and under Robert's Rules of Order (current edition), elect the remaining members of the Academic Council. Members in addition to six may be appointed by the Speaker with approval of the Council. Election shall be by simple plurality vote, with each member of the Senate voting for a number of candidates up to the number of positions to be filled.

2. These members, along with the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty and the Secretary-Elect of the Faculty, shall be known as the Academic Council-Elect until June 1.

3. The Academic Senate, in a caucus session, may accept resignations of members of the Academic Council, remove any members of the Academic Council except the Speaker of the Faculty or the Secretary of the Faculty, and vote on replacements to the Academic Council.

4. When a member of the Academic Council must be absent from a meeting, the member may designate, through the Secretary of the Faculty, a Senator to represent him or her at that meeting as a member of the Academic Council.

5. The President of the Student Government Association or designee shall be a non-voting participant in the Academic Council during the Council's non-executive sessions.

6. If appointed by the Speaker to serve as Vice Speaker, Senators will serve as ex officio voting members of the Academic Council for the duration of their term.
IV. Procedures

1. The Academic Senate shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) unless procedures described in the Handbook of Operating Procedures, UTDPP1088 - Faculty Governance or these Bylaws make exception to Robert's Rules of Order.

2. Actions of the Academic Senate
   1. Actions During the Spring and Summer
      1. At the first meeting of the Academic Council, which shall be called by the Speaker-Elect of the Faculty to take place as soon after May 31 as practical, the Council shall prepare a calendar of regular meetings for the Academic Council and for the Academic Senate. The calendar shall be published as early in the academic year as possible.
      2. As soon as possible after the new Academic Council is elected, it shall appoint the Committee on Committees so that it may begin composing slates of nominees for the University, Concurrent, and Academic Senate committees for which it is charged. The membership of the Committee on Committees shall be approved by a majority vote.
   2. Submissions of Items for Debate
      1. The Agenda Packet for the Academic Senate normally will be sent to the Senate one week prior to a meeting of the Academic Senate.
      2. The Agenda Committee for the Academic Senate, consisting of the President, the Secretary, and the Speaker normally will confer five days prior to the submission of the Agenda Packet to the Academic Senate.
      3. Items for debate that are not on the Academic Senate Agenda normally will be deferred to a later Academic Senate meeting.
      4. The Agenda Committee for the Academic Senate will attempt to bring all items submitted to it to the Academic Senate, although it may recommend that particular items be sent to committee and/or to the Academic Council prior to Academic Senate debate. Any memorandum submitted by any General Faculty member of the University to the Academic Senate or to the Speaker of the Faculty that requests action by the Academic Senate or Academic Council must be reported to the Academic Senate by the Agenda Committee of the Academic Senate.
   3. Debate and Passage
      1. If the President and Provost are not available to chair meetings of the Senate at which legislation is enacted, the Speaker shall chair. In the absence of the Speaker, a Vice Speaker shall chair. In the absence of a Vice Speaker, the Secretary shall chair. In the absence of the Secretary, the meeting may be chaired by any member of the Senate designated by the Speaker.
      2. The chair of a meeting of the Academic Senate may participate in the debate but shall exercise particular care to preside in a manner which is fair to all points of view in the debate.
      3. The President and/or the Speaker of the Faculty may invite to meetings of the Academic Senate those persons believed to be necessary to assist the Academic Senate in the conduct of its business.
      4. Except when the Academic Senate is in executive session, meetings of the Academic Senate are open to the General Faculty, who may request the privilege of participation in the debate.
      5. A simple majority of the voting membership of the Senate constitutes a quorum. If a quorum is not present, business that would otherwise have been conducted may be discussed, but votes shall not be taken.
      6. Members of the Academic Senate who anticipate making lengthy or complicated amendments to legislation should bring sufficient written copies to distribute to the entire Academic Senate.
      7. Passage of legislation or resolutions shall require a simple majority of those voting members present. Votes shall be recorded by hand count: ayes, nays, abstain. Role call
votes shall be taken if three or more members request.

8. The Secretary of the Faculty is responsible for sending copies of motions passed to the parties addressed.

3. Actions of the Academic Council
   1. Submission of Items for Debate and Passage

   If the President and Provost are not available to chair meetings of the Council at which Senate agenda items are discussed, the Speaker shall chair. In the absence of the Speaker, a Vice Speaker shall chair.

   1. The Agenda Committee for the Academic Council, consisting of the President, the Secretary, and the Speaker, normally will confer by email at least five days before each Academic Council meeting. Items to be included on an agenda must be submitted prior to that time.

   2. Items for the Agenda of the Academic Council will normally originate with the President and with the Academic Senate, its Executive Committee, or the Speaker of the Faculty.

   2. Transmissions from Academic Council to Academic Senate

   The Academic Council shall formulate its recommendations to the Academic Senate and transmit them to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Senate. It shall generally transmit all items submitted to it to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Senate.

4. Records and Communications

   1. Actions required by motions of the Academic Senate or Academic Council, as described in the minutes, will be conveyed to those concerned, or will be taken by the Academic Governance Secretary only after approval of the minutes for circulation, but without waiting for the formal approval of the minutes at the subsequent meeting of the Academic Senate or Academic Council.

   2. The general policy on composition and contents of records including minutes is the same for both the Academic Council and Academic Senate, and is as follows:

      1. Consistent with Robert's Rules of Order, the approved minutes constitute the only official record of the actions of the Academic Council and Academic Senate;

      2. The minutes are intended to allow members of the General Faculty to follow the debates and actions within their representative bodies, the Academic Senate, and within the Academic Council;

      3. The Secretary of the Faculty or the Academic Governance Secretary may make recordings of the Academic Council and Academic Senate meetings. Tapes of meetings shall not, however, be considered official documents, and will be kept only until the minutes of the meeting recorded are officially approved, after which the recordings may be destroyed in accordance with the University's Records Management Retention Policy and records retention schedule;

      4. Unapproved minutes of Academic Council and Academic Senate meetings shall be distributed to the Academic Senate expeditiously, if possible within two weeks after the meeting;

      5. Minutes are numbered serially each year, including special meetings;

      6. Attendance for minutes includes both those present and absent of the voting membership, ex officio members, and student observers. Invited guests are also listed;

      7. Minutes of the Academic Council and Academic Senate are distributed to all members of the Academic Senate, and made available at the authorized locations for Regents' Rules and Regulations, and are also sent to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of The University of Texas System; and

      8. The minutes of the last meetings of the Academic Senate and Academic Council will be approved by the incoming Academic Senate or Academic Council, respectively.

   3. The Academic Senate shall establish procedures, in its Resolution of Operating Procedures, to disseminate information about its debates and actions to the General Faculty effectively and expeditiously.

   5. Resolution of Operating Procedures: The Academic Senate may, by adoption or revision of its Resolution
of Operating Procedures, modify the following portions of its procedures without having to amend these Bylaws:

1. delegation of duties and powers to the Academic Council;
2. designation and powers of the Agenda Committee;
3. designation and powers of the Executive Committee, if any; and
4. instructions to the Secretary of the Faculty regarding the character of action or discussion minutes to be taken.

6. Amendment of Bylaws

1. These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Senate members, provided that the proposed amendment passes, at two consecutive meetings of the Academic Senate separated by at least two weeks.
2. The Secretary of the Faculty shall transmit a copy of the amended Bylaws to the President for review. All amendments must be approved by the President and by the institution's chief legal officer or the Vice Chancellor and General Counsel for inclusion in the UT Dallas Handbook of Operating Procedures pursuant to Rule 20201, section 4.9.
3. The amended Bylaws shall become effective immediately.

Policy History

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Policy Links

- Permalink for this policy: https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdpp1007
- Link to PDF version: https://policy.utdallas.edu/pdf/utdpp1007
- Link to printable version: https://policy.utdallas.edu/print/utdpp1007

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