

# Constitution of the Faculty Senate

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The members of the faculty at the University of Houston established this constitution to provide an instrument for cooperative action in attaining such ends as the members may select.

## Preamble

**Principles.** Shared governance is the collective commitment of the faculty and administration at the University of Houston to work cooperatively, together with other University constituencies, to achieve a common vision of excellence for the University. Successful shared governance requires an active partnership at all levels of the enterprise, from individual programs to the overall University, to provide a basis for joint participation in setting priorities and formulating policy. Effective implementation of shared governance depends on mutual trust, shared confidence, and on-going communication between faculty and administrators, informed by an appreciation of their interdependent roles and responsibilities.

**Faculty Role in Shared Governance.** The faculty provides the excellence in teaching and research that determines the quality and reputation of the University. The faculty has a major role in devising academic policies, establishing performance standards, and in protecting academic freedom. Therefore, the faculty has the primary responsibility for curricular matters and degree programs. Recommendations about appointments, retention, and post-tenure review are a central faculty responsibility. The faculty has significant input in the formulation of budget priorities, including compensation policies. The faculty has a major role in the selection and review of administrators at all levels of the University. The faculty assists in setting goals to improve the quality of campus life, the surrounding community and the national academic standing of the institution.

## Article One--Membership

*Section One*--The Faculty Senate membership shall total the number of senators elected to direct-elect committees plus at-large senators. Faculty eligible are the full-time tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty, who shall be elected by the faculty in the manner provided below.

*Section Two*--University of Houston faculty members who meet the eligibility criteria described in the bylaws may serve as members of the Faculty Senate, except those with the administrative rank of Dean or above.

*Section Three*--The unit by which representation shall be determined is the college, and not subdivisions thereof. Allocation of Senate seats by college is based generally upon proportion of the total full-time eligible faculty across all colleges.

Membership of Undergraduate, Research and Scholarship, and Graduate and Professional Studies Standing Committees are described below in the bylaws.

Members of a college who are eligible for Faculty Senate membership are eligible to vote in elections for senatorial positions. Elections must be by secret ballot.

*Section Four*--The Senate shall reapportion itself immediately before the 2011 unification, and each fourth year thereafter. Reapportionment of at-large seats shall be made in the proportion to the number of eligible faculty in each college. Each college, including the Libraries, Hobby School, and Honors College, shall be entitled to at least one member. Librarians are counted in the same manner as other faculty. The number of at-large seats shall be determined by the Faculty Governance Committee and based upon the workload of the committee and in consultation with the Executive Committee. The method of apportionment of Senate seats across the colleges for the direct-elect committees shall be governed by the committees' respective by-laws.

If a new college is established, the Senate shall make provision for its representation at the next following election by one senator. If a college is discontinued, it shall cease to be represented. If a college is divided, its representatives shall be divided among the newly created colleges. If two colleges are merged, the successor

college shall have the same representation as was previously held by the two separate entities. The apportionment of senators shall not be affected by the creation, division, merger, or termination of colleges until the next apportionment provided for in this article.

*Section Five*--Elections to the Senate shall be for a term of three years. Each Senator shall serve only on one Senate standing committee at a time, including the Undergraduate, Research and Scholarship, Graduate and Professional Studies, Budget and Facilities, Community and Government Relations, and Faculty Affairs, excluding the Executive Committee, Faculty Governance Committee, and other special committees or newly created committees.

*Section Six*--Regular elections for a Senate seat shall be held a minimum of three months prior to the start of the new term. The Faculty Governance Committee will run each college election and shall certify the results of such elections to the secretary of the Faculty Senate.

Special elections to fill unexpired Senate terms shall be held within 60 days after a senator has resigned or has been elected to the role of president-elect. The months of June, July, and August shall not be used in computing the 60-day period. Unexpired terms exceeding three months may be filled only by election. Unexpired terms of less than three months may be filled temporarily by an individual appointed by either the dean of the college or a college governance organization, at the end of which time a successor will be elected.

So as to avoid prolonged lapses in representation, a senator who goes on leave and is absent from academic duties, or is for any other reason away from the university, for a period exceeding the summer plus one long (i.e. Fall or Spring) semester shall relinquish his/her senatorial position and a special election shall be held to select a replacement. When the absence does not exceed the summer plus one long semester, the senatorial position may, and for periods of more than two months should, be filled temporarily by an individual appointed by either the dean of the college or a college governance organization.

If a senator-elect declines service, the Faculty Governance Committee may, at its discretion, select the candidate with the next highest number of votes to fill the seat.

*Section Seven*--Members of the Senate shall be eligible for reelection unless currently serving as president or president-elect.

*Section Eight*--If a college loses a seat due to reapportionment, seated Senators may complete their terms, but the seat will not be filled at the end of the said term. In order that one-third of the Senate seats, or the nearest fraction thereto, are subject to election each year, terms of less than three years may be utilized as part of a reapportionment.

*Section Nine* -- In order to promote effective representation for all colleges, members shall be regular in their attendance at meetings of the Faculty Senate. Members who are not actively participating in the business of the Senate or its committees during their term may be removed from the Senate at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The exception is noted in Section Six of Article One.

## **Article Two--Officers**

*Section One*--The Senate shall have a president, a president-elect, and a secretary. The duties of these officers may be provided for in the bylaws. The bylaws may provide for other officers. The president or president-elect shall not serve while holding the position of associate/assistant dean.

*Section Two*--One or more deputies may be appointed by the secretary of the Faculty Senate to assist in the discharge of the duties as secretary of the Senate. Such deputies need not be members of the Senate or the faculty.

*Section Three*--If the Office of the President becomes vacant, the president-elect shall become president. If the office of president-elect or secretary becomes vacant, a new election shall be held to determine the successor.

## **Article Three--Executive Committee**

*Section One*--The Executive Committee shall consist of the president-elect, the president, the immediate past-president, and the secretary of the Faculty Senate, two members elected by the Senate, the chair of the Faculty Governance Committee, and the chairs of Senate standing committees. The president of the Faculty Senate shall act as presiding officer of the Executive Committee, and the secretary of the Faculty Senate shall act as the secretary of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee shall serve one-year terms. All members of the executive committee including the president and president-elect will serve in their roles from August 1 of the year of election through July 31 of the following year.

To coordinate the efforts of the shared governance structure and increase its effectiveness, the Executive Committee may invite the heads of other governance organizations to serve on it as non-voting ex-officio members.

*Section Two*--The Executive Committee shall direct the activities of the Faculty Senate. The president of the Senate shall appoint committees with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall prepare the agenda for the meeting of the Senate and shall propose to the Senate appropriate committee structure and other devices to carry out the business of the Senate.

*Section Three*--The Faculty Senate may at its discretion, by a majority of those present and voting, empower the Executive Committee or any other committee of the Senate, to act for it in any particular matter, or any well-defined class of matters. Such power may be rescinded at any time.

*Section Four*--The president of the Faculty Senate shall be responsible for communicating the actions of the Senate to the appropriate administrative authorities of the university. Prior to such communication, however, the Executive Committee shall be empowered to refer back to the Senate any action for further consideration at the next or subsequent meeting as the Senate may determine provided the same matter shall not be referred back hereunder a second time.

The president of the Faculty Senate shall be responsible for making a report on the activities of the Executive Committee at Faculty Senate meetings.

*Section Five*--If an at-large member of the Senate Executive Committee resigns, the Executive Committee may fill the vacancy by the appointment of a member of the Faculty Senate.

*Section Six*—In the spirit of shared governance and to increase its effectiveness, the Executive Committee shall meet with the Chancellor/President, the Senior Vice Chancellor/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the Executive Vice Chancellor/Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, and other senior administrators on a regular basis. The Executive Committee shall prepare the agenda for these meetings.

## **Article Four--Faculty Governance Committee**

*Section One*--The Faculty Governance Committee shall consist of the president of the Senate, the president-elect of the Senate, the immediate past-president of the Senate, and twelve members elected by the Senate. No more than two members of the committee, excluding the ex officio members, shall come from any one college. The immediate past-president will serve as chair of the committee. If the immediate past-president is unwilling or unable to serve, the Senate shall elect an additional member to the committee, and the committee members will select their own chair from among the elected members of the committee. If a member of the committee resigns, the Senate Executive Committee may fill the vacancy by appointment of a member of the Faculty Senate.

*Section Two*—The committee is charged with the responsibility of regularly reviewing faculty governance within the University and making recommendations on improvements when needed. The committee will also oversee the updating of the *Faculty Handbook*.

*Section Three*—No later than June 1 of each year, the Senate shall have completed the appointment of faculty members to the University standing committees and shall forward the names of appointees to the appropriate administrators.

*Section Four*--The committee shall notify the Senate of nominations of faculty members to serve on committees or similar groups other than University standing committees. The committee shall nominate to the spring Assembly of the Faculty names for positions to be filled on the Faculty Grievance Committee. (For composition of membership, see Bylaw Seven.) Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the spring assembly. The committee shall promptly proceed to conduct a campus-wide election, and then to publicize the results. If a vacancy occurs on the Grievance Committee, the Faculty Governance Committee shall appoint a replacement for the portion of the term remaining until the next scheduled election.

*Section Five*--Except as provided elsewhere, the Faculty Governance Committee shall oversee the election of all Faculty Senate members and its officers. By the April meeting of the Senate, the committee shall present two nominations for the positions of president-elect and secretary, and four nominations for the two at-large positions on the executive committee. The committee shall also present fourteen nominees to fill the twelve elective positions on the Faculty Governance Committee. Following the presentation of the slate, the chair of the committee shall call for additional nominations to be made from the floor. Senators whose term of office is about to expire and who have not been re-elected to an additional term by May 31<sup>st</sup> are eligible for election to the Faculty Governance Committee and as president-elect, but not the other positions. The election shall take place via electronic balloting after completion of the slate and prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Senate.

## **Article Five--Assembly of the Faculty**

*Section One*--All faculty members at the University of Houston shall be encouraged to attend the Assembly of the Faculty.

*Section Two*--Assemblies of the Faculty shall be held at least once each fall and spring semester at the call of the president of the Faculty Senate. Additional assemblies shall be called by the president of the Senate upon petition by twenty members of the Senate or 25 faculty members, or by action of the Executive Committee.

*Section Three*--One of the purposes of the Assemblies of the Faculty shall be to report to the faculty the actions of the Senate since the last Assembly of the Faculty. The Executive Committee of the Senate shall prepare the agenda for the Assembly of the Faculty. The agenda shall provide for the introduction of business at the meeting by any faculty member. The president of the Faculty Senate or the person discharging the duties of the president shall act as the chair of the Assembly of the Faculty. The secretary of the Faculty Senate shall act as secretary of the Assembly of the Faculty.

*Section Four*--The quorum for meetings of the Assembly of the Faculty shall consist of forty percent of voting eligible faculty.

## **Article Six--Meetings and Voting**

*Section One*--The Senate shall meet at least once a month during the regular nine-month school year.

*Section Two*--The first regular meeting will be held in September, after the beginning of the fall semester.

*Section Three*--Prior to the October meeting, the Executive Committee shall present a calendar of regular meetings for the remainder of the academic year. The Executive Committee, with due notice, may either alter the calendar of regular meetings or call special meetings. Upon the written petition of at least 20 senators, a special meeting must be called.

*Section Four*-- Forty percent of the members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

*Section Five*--All meetings shall be conducted according to parliamentary laws as set forth in the latest edition of Roberts' Rules of Order, except where a contrary rule is provided by this constitution, or by the bylaws, or by any standing rules.

*Section Six*--Any faculty member may petition the Executive Committee to be permitted to address the Faculty Senate in regard to any matter within the Senate's competence. Such appearance shall be subject to limitations of time as provided by the Senate, but permission hereunder shall be granted as freely as the due conduct of the Senate's business shall permit.

*Section Seven*--Except where the constitution or bylaws provide otherwise, all elections and matters voted upon shall be determined by a majority of those voting.

*Section Eight*--Written or electronic ballots shall be used for elections. Other matters will be determined by a show of hands unless written ballots are requested by at least 10 members of the Senate.

*Section Nine*--Voting privileges for president, president-elect and immediate past-president are different from other senators and follow certain principles.

- The president, president-elect, and immediate past-president may not vote on any general senate matters; however, by virtue of being chair of the senate, the president may vote to break a tied vote in the faculty senate meetings, and the immediate past-president may vote to break a tied vote in the Faculty Governance Committee.
- The president-elect and immediate past-president retain their voting privileges on matters within the executive committee; however, by virtue of being chair of the executive committee, the president may vote in the executive committee to break a tied vote.

## **Article Seven—Adopting or Amending Bylaws**

*Section One*--The Senate may adopt or amend bylaws as follows:

(1) At a regular meeting of the Faculty Senate by a majority vote provided, however, that notice of such bylaw or amendment to a bylaw must have been given a reading in the exact form in which it is finally adopted at the previous regular meeting,

(2) If the proposed bylaw, having been read at the previous meeting, is amended by a majority vote of the Senate subsequent to its reading, it may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of those present, or

(3) By a written or electronic two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Senate.

## **Article Eight--Amending Process for the Constitution**

*Section One*--This constitution may be amended only as follows:

(1) At a regular meeting of the Faculty Senate by a two-thirds vote of the members present provided, however, that notice of such amendment must have been given by a reading of the amendment, in the exact form in which it is finally adopted, at the previous regular meetings,

(2) By a written or electronic two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Senate, or

(3) By a three-fourths vote of those members present at an Assembly of the Faculty provided, however, that notice of such amendment must have been given by a reading of the amendment, in the exact form in which it is finally adopted, at a meeting of the Assembly of the Faculty at least 30 days previously.

## Bylaws

**ONE** -- An eligible faculty member is a full-time, tenured, tenure-track or non-tenure track faculty member at the University of Houston.

**TWO** -- Duties of officers shall be as follows:

### Duties of President:

- Preside over all meetings of the Faculty Senate and the Assembly of the Faculty.
- Be a non-voting ex officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Faculty Senate.
- Call special meetings when appropriate.
- Transmit to the appropriate administrative authorities of the University of Houston the recommendations and resolutions passed by the Faculty Senate.
- Advise the president and the senior vice president for academic affairs of the University of Houston on matters of general interest to the faculty.
- Transmit from the president and senior vice president information on matters of general interest to the faculty.
- Appoint the chairs of the following senate standing committees: Budget and Facilities; Community and Government Relations; and Faculty Affairs.
- Determine the portfolio of each Member-at-large of the Executive Committee.
- Be a voting ex officio member of the University Coordinating Commission.
- Be the representative of the faculty on the University President's Cabinet.
- Report on faculty interests to the University of Houston System Board of Regents at regular Board meetings.

### Duties of President-Elect:

- Preside over all meetings of the Faculty Senate and the Assembly of the Faculty in the absence of the president.
- Be a non-voting ex officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Faculty Senate, and act as liaison between these committees and the president.
- Further assist the president as the president may deem advisable.
- Coordinate with the secretary the communications of the Senate.
- Be a voting ex officio member of the University Coordinating Commission.

### Duties of the Secretary:

- In consultation with the President, be responsible for all forms of communication emanating from the Faculty Senate.
- Keep a complete set of minutes for each meeting and prepare summary minutes of each regular or special meeting.
- Act as treasurer when necessary.
- Keep a roll of members present.

### Duties of Immediate Past President:

- Serve as chair of the Faculty Governance Committee.
- Work with the new president in transferring effectively the responsibilities of the office.
- Further assist the president as the president may deem advisable.
- Be a voting ex officio member of the University Coordinating Commission.

**THREE** -- The Faculty Governance Committee shall determine the eligibility and qualifications of all nominees and members of the Senate.

**FOUR** – At-large Senators shall be appointed to the membership of the Budget and Facilities Committee, Community and Government Relations Committee, and Faculty Affairs Committee. The committees in consultation with the Executive Committee may appoint additional voting and non-voting members as needed based on required expertise.

The Budget and Facilities Committee shall conduct a continuing review of the University's financial resources, including the ways in which such resources are actually spent.

The Faculty Affairs Committee shall review and recommend policy concerning the conditions of faculty employment, review the operations of the appropriate administrative officials with respect to the implementation of existing policy and the promulgation of policy changes.

The Community and Government Relations Committee shall serve as the Faculty Senate liaison to the university community, external communities, and governmental entities.

The chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee or designee shall be a member of the UH Faculty Advisory Committee on Human Resources-Fringe Benefits Committee.

**FIVE** -- Members of the Research and Scholarship Committee, the Undergraduate Committee, and the Graduate and Professional Studies Committee shall be elected to their respective committees as senators by the eligible faculty within their college. The committees in consultation with the Executive Committee may appoint additional voting and non-voting members as needed based on required expertise. The chairs of these committees shall be senators and shall be elected by the Senate members of the respective committee.

In order to be eligible for nomination for election to the Research and Scholarship Committee, the faculty member must satisfy the following criteria:

- A) the faculty member must have an ongoing, focused research agenda as evidenced by refereed scholarly articles, grant writing, research presentations or other scholarly research output deemed in their discipline as appropriate to a faculty member actively engaged in the research endeavor of a nationally recognized research university. Such scholarly output must satisfy the expectations of the individual college from which the faculty member is nominated.
- B) the faculty member must be actively involved in either graduate or undergraduate research programs administered within their own academic unit.

One position on the Research and Scholarship Committee must be reserved for an eligible faculty member who holds the formal rank of research faculty. Nominations for this position should be directed to the Faculty Governance Committee from individual colleges. This member will be elected by all eligible research faculty.

The Research and Scholarship Committee shall work to advise and make recommendations to the Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer on the matters pertaining to research development, policies relating to the conduct of research and related research activities at the University. The Research and Scholarship Committee administers the Internal Grants Program, including restructuring the program each year in light of available resources, preparing and issuing the call for proposals, coordinating review of proposals, and making recommendations on the allocation of the funds. The Committee also administers the Research Excellence Award, including establishing guidelines, issuing request for nominations, and overseeing the activity of the selection committee that makes recommendations of awards.

In order to be eligible for nomination for election to the Undergraduate Committee, the faculty member must satisfy the following criteria:

- A) must have taught at least one undergraduate class in two of the three years preceding nomination
- B) the faculty member must be actively involved in the undergraduate academic programs administered within their own academic unit.

The Undergraduate Committee shall work to advise the Provost on matters pertaining to the assessment and strengthening of undergraduate academic programs and curriculum offerings, setting of standards and priorities leading to academic excellence, monitoring of college and departmental requirements for baccalaureate degrees, stimulation and assessment of excellence in teaching, development and implementation of strategies for the recruitment and retention of undergraduate students, implementation of crucial recommendations from any university level study and its impact on the undergraduate students, refinement and monitoring of the admissions criteria and process, particularly for target populations, create and maintain more effective coordination and cooperation with student organizations, and any other matters pertaining to or having an impact on undergraduate education.

In order to be eligible for nomination for election to the Graduate and Professional Studies Committee, the faculty member must come from a college with a graduate or professional program.

The Graduate and Professional Studies Committee is responsible for advising the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School regarding graduate and professional programs at the University of Houston. It is also charged with recommending changes in existing policies or suggesting the need for new ones, approving new programs, and approving new courses, course changes and/or deletions for submission to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Specifically, the GPSC will address matters relating to: A) Review of admission procedures of graduate and professional students as well as other policies affecting graduate and professional students. B) Review of new graduate and professional degree program proposals, program changes, and on-going programs. C) Review of and recommendations for graduate and professional programs policies and procedures.

**SIX** --Minutes for regular Faculty Senate meetings will be provided to each senator before the next regular meeting; copies will be available to others upon request from the Faculty Senate office. Minutes for special meetings will be prepared promptly and distributed in the same manner as the minutes of regular meetings.

**SEVEN** -- When the Senate is requested to nominate faculty members to serve on any committee or other body for which members are not nominated by the Faculty Governance Committee, the power to nominate rests with the president of the Senate. All nominations shall be promptly communicated by the president to the Executive Committee and the Faculty Governance Committee.

**EIGHT** -- The Faculty Grievance Committee, comprised of nineteen members, has thirteen tenured faculty representatives and six promotion-eligible non-tenure track faculty representatives of associate rank or higher. Committee members are elected by the entire faculty to three-year terms of office, with approximately one-third of the membership being replaced each year. If a member resigns, a replacement of the same representative track is appointed by the Faculty Governance Committee to serve until the next annual election. Those then elected serve out the original term of office (see Article Four).

The nominees should be broadly representative of the diversity in the faculty and in the academic perspectives. No more than four members, three tenured and one promotion-eligible non-tenure track shall be from the same college when said college has 200 or more full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty or promotion-eligible non-tenure track faculty and no more than three members, two tenured and one promotion eligible non-tenure track shall be from the same college when said college has fewer than 200 full-time tenured or tenure-track or promotion-eligible non-tenure track faculty.

The Faculty Governance Committee shall nominate at least two candidates more than the vacancies for the respective tenured and non-tenure lines. Recognizing the value of participation in the grievance process by members of each college, the Faculty Governance Committee shall work with due diligence to include a candidate from each college without a continuing member on the Grievance Committee. In consideration of the burdens of the grievance committee, any currently serving faculty senator who is elected to the grievance committee may resign from their current faculty senate committee assignments by submitting notice to the Faculty Senate president and the chair of the impacted committee.

The members of the Grievance Committee must be full-time tenured faculty or promotion-eligible non-tenure



track faculty as stipulated above. Members of the administration, including deans or directors, assistant or associate deans or directors, and department chairs, are not eligible to be members of the committee.

The University Grievance Committee exists as the final faculty body to which a faculty grievance may be submitted including a decision for nonrenewal of contract of a non-tenured faculty member if the appeal is based upon procedural issues including the allegation that adequate consideration of the individual's qualifications was not given or that considerations in violation of the individual's academic freedom contributed significantly in the decision not to renew the contract.

**NINE** -- The president of the Faculty Senate, the president-elect of the Faculty Senate and the chairs of the Faculty Governance Committee, Graduate and Professional Studies Committee, Research and Scholarship Committee, and Undergraduate Committee are members of the University Coordinating Commission (UCC) which shall operate to coordinate and expedite communication among faculty, staff, students, and the administration in the development of policies and procedures.

**TEN** -- The president and president-elect or their representatives shall serve as Senate representatives to the University Faculties Executive Council [UFEC]. Each representative shall serve until the end of the academic calendar year, or until replaced. A Senate representative may continue to serve even if the Senator's term of office has expired.

**ELEVEN** --The Senate is a member of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCoFS), a state-wide organization composed of state colleges and universities. The two representatives to TCoFS shall be the president and president-elect of the Senate.

**TWELVE** --The Senate is a member of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics. The delegate to, and an alternate for, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (CoIA) will be elected by the UH Faculty Senate for two-year terms. The CoIA Senate representative may continue to serve until the expiration of the term, even if the Senator's term of office has expired. The elections will be held as necessary at the same meeting as the other officers each year. The delegate and alternate must be members of the Faculty Senate at the time of their election. In the event that neither can attend a meeting of CoIA, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee may appoint another Faculty Senate member as the UH representative for that meeting

In the event the Delegate resigns, the Alternate will become the Delegate and the Executive Committee shall appoint another Alternate. In the event the Alternate resigns, the Executive Committee shall appoint another Alternate. Appointees must be members of the Faculty Senate at the time of appointment.

The elected CoIA Delegate or Alternate shall be a voting ex officio member of the University of Houston Athletic Advisory Committee.

**THIRTEEN** -- In situations where there is the possibility of eliminating or drastically reducing academic departments or programs with the result that faculty might be terminated, the president of the Faculty Senate will appoint an ad hoc committee representing the academic interests of the campus. This committee will participate actively in deliberations and proceedings concerning possible reduction or elimination. Committee participation shall be timely and shall afford ample opportunity for the Faculty Senate to represent adequately its viewpoints prior to final decision.