

# FACULTY SENATE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I. SENATE OFFICERS

In all elections of Senate Officers - President, Vice President, and Secretary - elections will be by the vote of majority of the senators voting, in the regular March meeting, as long as a quorum of the Senate is present. The election of the Senate President will be completed before the election for Vice President, and the election of Vice President will be made before the election for the Office of Secretary. Any senator interested in serving in one or more of these offices may submit a written statement of intention, with any supporting argument, not to exceed one page in length, to the Co-chairs of the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee by February 10th of the year in which he or she hopes to commence office. The Secretary will distribute each such statement and supporting argument with the agenda for the February meeting of the Senate. Persons may also be nominated for these offices from the floor at the February meeting, where a motion to close nominations, or the equivalent, is out of order. Each candidate will have an opportunity to speak to the Senate about his or her candidacy at the March meeting, and the Senate will have an opportunity to ask questions of each candidate.

### ARTICLE II. ORGANIZATION

#### Section 1. Senate Orientation

There will be an orientation session for all new Senators and Alternates on the first Tuesday in April that the University is in session. This will be an occasion for discussion of the history and the place of the Senate in the governance of the University, of the role and function of the Senate's officers, of the charge and function of the Senate's standing committees, and of other aspects of the Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

#### Section 2. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is authorized to make representations in its own name in regard to any matter within the scope of the Senate's responsibilities and functions (as defined in Article II of the Constitution) when, in the Committee's judgment, circumstances require action before it is possible to convene a meeting of the Senate. In such instances, the Committee will be guided by its best judgment regarding the intention of the Senate if such intention is known.

#### Section 3. Standing Committees

1. There shall be standing committees on:

- Academic Affairs (20%)
  - Financial Affairs (10%)
  - Information Technology and Strategic Communications (10%)
  - Research and Service (20%)
  - Student Affairs (10%)
  - Faculty Life (10%)
  - Faculty and Senate Governance (10%)
  - Community and Legislative Affairs (10%)
2. Subject to reasonable exceptions to accommodate the needs of the Senate and the interests of Senators, each Senator ordinarily will have one Senate standing committee assignment. The number of members shall be approximately that indicated in parentheses for the respective committees.
  3. After the orientation session described in Section 1, the Secretary will ask each Senator to list preferences for assignment to the Senate's standing committees. After consultation with those who served as chairs of standing committees the previous year, the Secretary will assign Senators to their first preferences, if possible, and using second or third preferences where first preferences are unavailable. Senators who have indicated no preference by the second Tuesday in April shall be assigned to committees by the Secretary. All such assignments are subject to the approval of the Senate. The Secretary will distribute the tentative assignment of Senators to committees with the agenda for the regular April meeting. The first order of business for the regular April meeting will be to debate the assignments of Senators to committees, to reassign if necessary, and to confirm the final assignments by vote of the Senate. The President of the Senate will thereupon name conveners for each of the standing committees, and following the close of the regular April meeting each convener will hold a brief meeting of each standing committee for purposes of electing co-chairs from among its membership and establishing a place for meeting, if necessary, before the next scheduled meeting of the Senate steering committee. Each co-chair of a standing committee serves as a full member of the steering committee. Each standing committee will normally meet on the first Tuesday of each month from September through November and January through March, and at other times as desirable.
  4. Standing committees will inform themselves, on their own initiative or pursuant to specific instructions from the Senate or Senate officers, concerning matters of current concern within their respective jurisdictions. Standing committees, directly, through their chairs, or through their representatives are expected to seek and maintain continual dialogues with the appropriate administrators and University committees. The committees shall make such reports and recommendations to the Senate as they deem appropriate or as the Senate requires.
  5. Senators are expected to attend meetings of their standing committees. The absence of a Senator from a regularly scheduled committee meeting is equivalent to an absence from a meeting of the full Senate. Senators who regularly fail to attend committee meetings and do not provide for the attendance of alternatives may be replaced.
  6. **Academic Affairs Committee.** The Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for considering issues that relate to instruction, curriculum, academic standards, academic freedom, collegiality, tenure and promotion, and other issues that directly affect the learning environment of the University and the quality of its intellectual life. Questions relating directly to research and service, or financial or student issues will, however, normally be referred to the appropriate committee of the Faculty Senate.
  7. **Financial Affairs Committee.** The Financial Affairs Committee reviews financial issues that are pertinent to the University community. It studies the allocation of resources within the University and works to ensure communication between faculty and administration in relation to

resource policies and allocations. It advances proposals consistent with Faculty Senate initiatives and priorities, and makes recommendations to the Faculty Senate, and through the Senate to the Administration, regarding issues pertaining to resource policies and allocations.

8. **Information Technology and Strategic Communications Committee.** The Information Technology and Strategic Communications Committee examines and makes recommendations on matters related to the implementation of technology as it pertains to classrooms and research and on matters related to strategic communications by the University.
9. **Research and Service Committee.** The Research and Service Committee studies and makes recommendations on matters that affect the research and service component of faculty life.
10. **Student Affairs Committee.** The Student Affairs Committee advises the Faculty Senate on issues related to the academic and social development of students.
11. **Faculty Life Committee.** The Faculty Life Committee addresses issues relevant to the general welfare and quality of life of the Faculty. These issues fall outside the teaching, research, and services roles of the Faculty and outside the domain of the Financial Affairs Committee. Such issues include, but are not limited to, non-pecuniary faculty benefits, faculty rights, faculty diversity, and faculty relations with the surrounding community.
12. **Faculty and Senate Governance Committee.** The Faculty and Senate Governance Committee:
  - A. Is responsible for the continuous review of faculty participation in University governance, including university committee structure and Faculty Handbook compliance.
  - B. Is responsible for continuous review of the Senate's organization and procedures and for recommending changes it deems desirable in either the Constitution or Bylaws.
  - C. Considers the reasonableness of all absences in excess of two by a Senator during the April through March term, in which a Senator is not represented by a duly elected alternate. In such cases the Committee will make a recommendation to the Senate on whether the position should be declared vacant. The Committee will also be responsible for determining if a Senate seat is vacant for reasons other than absence and will make appropriate recommendations to the Senate.
  - D. Interprets the Constitution and Bylaws and may receive requests for interpretation from the Senate or the Senate President, or may initiate action by itself. All such interpretations must be reported to the Senate and are subject to Senate concurrence.
  - E. Determines the constitutionality of any proposed changes in Senate Bylaws. Such determinations must be reported to the Senate and are subject to Senate concurrence.
  - F. Seeks nominations and conducts elections for Senate-appointed members of the Mediation Committee, Faculty Ombudsperson positions, Senate-appointed members of the Merger and Discontinuance of Academic Units Committee, and for Faculty Senate Officers.
13. **Community and Legislative Affairs Committee.** The Community Affairs Committee works with internal and external stakeholders of the University community, including legislators and other groups and organizations, to develop and maintain open communication channels for the purpose of exchanging information on matters of mutual interest.

#### **Section 4. Special Committees**

Special committees may be created by the Senate, or by its President, as needed. Unless the Senate directs otherwise, special committee members and chairpersons shall be designated by the same methods as for standing committees. Persons eligible to vote in Senate elections who are not members of the Senate may be appointed by special committees as their consultants. Upon appointment to a special committee, a non-Senator will be designated, by the committee, as either a voting or non-voting members.

#### **Section 5. Subcommittees**

Standing and special committees may establish such standing or special subcommittees as they deem useful. Persons eligible to vote in Senate elections who are not members of the Senate may be appointed by subcommittees as their consultants.

## **Section 6. Parliamentarian**

The Senate President will nominate a parliamentarian, subject to Senate confirmation, to serve as recommended in the most recent revision of Robert's Rules of Order except where these Rules are contravened by a rule adopted by the Senate. This person will be a member of the Faculty, as defined in the Constitution, who is not a senator; or a member of the retired faculty. It shall be the duty of the Parliamentarian to attend all meetings of the Senate and of the Steering Committee, including meetings with the Provost. The Parliamentarian shall have speaking privileges, but may not initiate motions or amendments, and may not vote. The Parliamentarian shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee of the Faculty Senate.

## **Section 7. Webmaster**

The Senate President will nominate a webmaster, subject to Senate confirmation, to serve as the producer and coordinator of the Senate's website. This person will be a member of the faculty, who may be but need not be a senator.

## **Section 8. Faculty Holding Regular Appointments**

A faculty member holding a regular appointment is a tenured, tenure-earning probationary, or temporary faculty member at The University of Alabama engaged in teaching or research at least half of a normal load during the regular (academic) year, or a librarian having corresponding rank and professional engagement.

## **Section 9. Offices**

The Senate shall maintain offices, in a room or rooms in the University assigned by the President of the University. The Senate offices shall be the location of the files of the Senate.

## **Section 10. Faculty Ombudspersons**

1. Ombudspersons shall be elected by the faculty in conjunction with Faculty Senate elections every year.
2. There shall be three ombudspersons.
3. The term of office for an ombudsperson shall be three years.
4. Terms shall be staggered so that one new ombudsperson shall be elected every year.
5. Candidates shall be as representative of the entire faculty as possible; therefore one ombudsperson shall come from Arts and Sciences, one from Business or Engineering, and one from the other colleges and academic units. However, any faculty member shall be free to seek the advice and help of any ombudsperson, regardless of the academic unit of either their appointments, and may seek the help of more than one ombudsperson at any given time.

6. If willing candidates can be identified, the total of three ombudspersons shall always include at least one female and one male ombudsperson. Gender and ethnic diversity shall be a prime consideration in selecting candidates.
7. Candidates shall have the following qualifications:
  - a. tenure,
  - b. rank of associate or full professor, with at least seven years of service at The University of Alabama as full-time faculty members with teaching and research responsibilities.
8. Candidates shall not be:
  - a. current members of the Faculty Senate.
  - b. current members of the Mediation Committee, or
  - c. current administrators of The University of Alabama.
9. At least two months prior to the review of nominees by the faculty senate, an announcement shall be sent to the entire faculty requesting nominations for candidates for the position of Ombudsperson. This announcement shall be accompanied by a copy of the guidelines, a list of current Ombudspersons, their term limits, and the academic units they represent (A&S, Business and Engineering, All Other). Any member of the faculty may nominate a candidate by submitting the name, with the candidate's approval, to the Faculty Senate. The names of all nominees shall be sent to the President of the Faculty Senate and to the Chairperson of the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee. These will be reviewed by the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee for candidates who meet criteria as itemized under items 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the guidelines. The slate of all qualified nominees will be distributed for election at the same time as Senate elections. Every effort shall be made to nominate multiple candidates and to rotate representation through the various departments and colleges over a period of time.
10. Ombudspersons shall not succeed themselves but may be nominated for another term after an interim period of three years or more.
11. The names of all ombudspersons shall be filed in the Office of Academic Affairs.
12. The names of all ombudspersons and their terms of office shall be posted prominently on the University website, and on the Faculty Senate website.
13. In the event that an ombudsperson is unable to fulfill his or her term of office, the existing ombudspersons shall name a successor from the same grouping of the no-longer-serving ombudsperson. The successor shall then stand for election for the remainder of the term, if any, at the next election.
14. The ombudspersons are expected to provide the following services:
  - Respect the confidentiality of all exchanges with faculty who seek their help; make themselves easily accessible; listen carefully to complaints and problems; help identify and evaluate options and strategies for solving problems; open channels of communication; help mediate resolutions to problems; identify, clarify, and help interpret University policies and procedures; refer faculty to appropriate campus resources;
15. When fulfilling the preceding primary roles reveals policies or procedures that seem unfair, outdated, or ineffective, recommend that the Faculty Senate, a University standing committee, or an appropriate administrator review or make changes in such policies or procedures.
16. Ombudspersons are not expected to provide the following services:
  - Legal advice or legal representation; intervention in a mediation or grievance;
  - (Of course, ombudspersons may participate in a mediation or grievance if properly invited. This statement is included to point out the fact that ombudspersons do not have the authority to intervene in an ongoing mediation or grievance procedure by their own volition.
  - Address non-University related problems or complaints.

17. Ombudspersons may elect to provide the following additional assistance:
  - Advocate for a faculty member whose complaint, in their informed judgment, is meritorious and deserving of support. This advocacy may include assistance in forming oral or written arguments by the faculty member, or the provision of additional oral or signed written statements by the ombudsperson supporting a faculty member's appeal for mediation or redress of a grievance.
18. While fulfilling their normal responsibilities to the fullest, ombudspersons may decline to advocate for a faculty member, but must never advocate against a faculty member. To do so, would compromise the confidentiality and trust essential to the effectiveness of such a relationship.

## **ARTICLE III. PROCEDURES**

### **Section 1. Meeting (Senate and Steering Committee)**

1. The Senate will meet the third Tuesday, August through November and January through April, and the second Tuesday of December, at 3:30 p.m. in locations to be determined by the Steering Committee. If the third Tuesday falls during a time when the University is not in session, the Senate will meeting on the second or fourth Tuesday, as the Steering Committee determines, and the meetings of Senate committees may have to be adjusted appropriately. The Senate may meet also on the fourth Tuesday, August through November and January through April, and the third Tuesday in December, in order to finish the business of the month, and Senators should keep this date free on their calendars. The Senate will also meet at other times, including the summer months, and at locations, as decided by the Senate or the Steering Committee. The regular meeting times and locations shall be decided for the upcoming year by the Steering Committee at its August meeting; Senators will be appropriately notified, and the information will be published in Dialog and/or other publications deemed useful.
2. Regular Senate meetings normally last until 5:00 and may last longer. Senators should clear their calendars until 5:15 on regular Senate meeting days upon such an expectation. Senators are expected to maintain their attendance until 5:00, or until the meeting is adjourned prior thereto.
3. The Steering Committee will hold a regular meeting one week before each regularly scheduled meeting of the Senate. Special meetings of the Steering Committee may be called by the President of the Senate, by the written request of three members of the Steering Committee or of five members of the Senate, by vote of the Steering Committee, or by vote of the Senate.
4. All resolutions and original motions to be presented to the Senate must be in writing and should be mailed by the Senate Secretary with the agenda for the meeting.
5. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum must be present before any vote can be taken.

### **Section 2. Agenda**

1. Except when the Steering Committee or the Senate orders otherwise, the customary order of business as described in Robert's Rules of Order will be followed.

2. The agenda will be distributed electronically from the Senate President to members during the week in advance of the meetings by the Senate Secretary except when exigent circumstances make it necessary, in the judgment of the Steering Committee, to prepare or change an agenda so soon before the meeting that advance circulation is impractical.
3. The Steering Committee will employ whatever means are feasible and appropriate to give notice of pending agenda items to all members of the Senate.
4. The agenda will be placed on the Senate's webpage and will contain sufficient information, both in summary or "bullet" form and in detail, so that the issues to be debated in the Senate are clear. Each person or committee that propounds a motion or submits a report to be included in or with the agenda is responsible for providing a succinct summary of the issue(s) involved. The President's Report, reports from the standing committees, and reports from Senators about the activity of the University committees should be included with the agenda if at all possible, so as to reduce the time used in Senate meetings for explanation and summary.

### **Section 3. Voting Procedures**

1. Voting procedures are governed by the rules recommended in the most recent revision of Robert's Rules of Order except where these Rules are contravened by a rule adopted by the Senate (**Article II. Section 6.**).
2. In all elections of Senate Officers - President, Vice President, and Secretary - elections will be by the vote of majority of the senators voting, in the regular March meeting, as long as a quorum of the Senate is present (**Article I.**).
3. The first order of business for the regular April meeting will be to debate the assignments of Senators to committees, to reassign if necessary, and to confirm the final assignments by vote of the Senate (**Article II. Section 3. Subsection 3.**).
4. The Parliamentarian may not vote (**Article II. Section 6.**).
5. Special meetings of the Steering Committee may be called by the President of the Senate, by the written request of three members of the Steering Committee or of five members of the Senate, by vote of the Steering Committee, or by vote of the Senate (**Article III. Section 1. Subsection III.**).
6. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum must be present before any vote can be taken (**Article III. Section I. Subsection 5.**).
7. An executive session, from which all persons except senators are excluded, may be held by vote of the Senate. Motions to hold executive sessions will take precedence over other regular business (**Article III. Section 4. Subsection 2.**).
8. Anyone other than a senator may address the Senate only on invitation by vote of the Senate or on invitation by the President of the Senate after an opportunity for the Senate to object and, in case there is an objection, after approval of the invitation by the Senate (**Article III. Section 4. Subsection 3.**).
9. The official minutes of all open Senate meetings shall be available for inspection by all persons eligible to vote in the election of senators. Minutes of the Steering Committee may be made available outside The University of Alabama only by a majority vote of the Steering Committee that is asked for such material (**Article III. Section 5. Subsection 2.**).
10. The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the Senate at a meeting subsequent to the meeting at which the amendment was proposed. Amendments to proposed bylaw changes may be proposed from the floor, and voted on, at either of these two meetings (**Article IV.**).

#### **Section 4. Access to Senate Meetings**

1. Any person may attend Senate meetings, except during executive sessions for the purpose of observing its proceedings. A meeting becomes an executive session for the purpose of discussing the character of an individual.
2. An executive session, from which all persons except senators are excluded, may be held by vote of the Senate. Motions to hold executive sessions will take precedence over other regular business.
3. Anyone other than a senator may address the Senate only on invitation by vote of the Senate or on invitation by the President of the Senate after an opportunity for the Senate to object and, in case there is an objection, after approval of the invitation by the Senate.
4. The privilege of the floor, including the right to address the Senate on any pending question subject to applicable rules or parliamentary procedure are extended to one delegate representing the Retired Faculty Association of The University of Alabama, one delegate representing the Professional Staff Assembly, one delegate representing the Office/Clerical/Technical Staff Assembly, one delegate representing the Maintenance Personnel Committee, one delegate representing the Student Government Association, and one delegate representing the Office of Alumni Affairs.

#### **Section 5. Minutes of Senate Meetings**

1. Minutes of all Senate meetings shall be made available online on the Senate's webpage as early as possible. Other documents of interest to faculty and/or pertinent to issues being debated in the Senate may also be placed on the Senate's webpage.
2. Copies of minutes of open Senate meetings are to be freely available to anyone within or without The University of Alabama: first, within the University; second, outside the University on request and if available.
3. Divisional delegations are expected to adopt measures for effective and expeditious reporting of Senate actions to their constituencies.



4. The official minutes of all open Senate meetings shall be available for inspection by all persons eligible to vote in the election of senators. The official minutes of executive sessions of the Senate shall be made available for this purpose only to the extent as the Senate may approve.
5. Minutes of executive sessions of the Senate are confidential and are not to be released.
6. Minutes of the Steering Committee may be made available outside The University of Alabama only by a majority vote of the Steering Committee that is asked for such material.
7. Reports submitted to the Senate become part of the open-meeting minutes or executive-session minutes and are to be treated as those minutes.

## **Section 6. Committee Records**

1. All Senate committees shall keep records of their meetings and proceedings, describing in summary form all noteworthy matters considered and noting all committee and actions.

## **Section 7. Additional Responsibilities of the Senate Secretary**

1. The Secretary has responsibility for conducting all University-wide referenda regarding proposed amendments to the Constitution.
2. The Secretary is charged with keeping the official, up-to-date copies of the Constitution and Bylaws, and with assuring that a signed and dated notification of official approval by the Secretary is affixed to all copies of the Constitution and Bylaws.
3. The Secretary will call the roll of senators at each meeting of the Senate. Any absences in excess of two by a senator will be reported by the Secretary to the Faculty and Senate Governance Committee. The Secretary shall also record the attendance, by name, of each visitor having floor privileges pursuant to Article III, Section 3, paragraph 4, of every attending member of the press, and of other special visitors to the Senate.
4. It shall be a duty of the Senate Secretary to notify the deans of the divisions of the University of the need for regular and special elections of senators. In so doing, the Secretary will note the name of the Senator who previously held the position or of the need to elect additional senators.
5. It shall be the duty of the Senate Secretary to publish a calendar of Senate meetings for the academic year at the beginning of each fall semester. It shall contain the times and locations of Senate meetings and the listing of the dates upon which the Senate must take actions such as the naming of members of official bodies of the University or the appointment of committees to nominate award recipients.
6. It shall be the duty of the Senate Secretary to gather and deposit the official records of the Senate with the University Archives at the conclusion of the Senate term.

## **Section 8. Senate Appointments to University Committees**

The following procedures apply to the appointments made under authority given to the Faculty Senate by the University's Faculty Handbook, or by the President of the University, or by other University authority:

1. Senators shall be asked in the spring by the Secretary for their preferences of service on University standing committees. The President, assisted by the Vice President and the Secretary, shall tentatively assign Senators to University standing committees, giving as much weight as

possible to the preferences they have communicated. Such tentative assignments shall be discussed, and modified if necessary, by the Steering Committee, and shall be submitted to the whole Senate for discussion, modification if necessary, and approval, before the list is timely transmitted to the President of the University.

2. All other University committee or task force appointments in the gift of the Faculty Senate, including appointments to search committees or review committees, shall be made by the President of the Senate in consultation, if possible, with the Steering Committee, and shall be communicated to the Senate at its next meeting. If time does not allow for such consultation at a regular meeting of the Steering Committee, the President may call a meeting of that Committee or, in an emergency, poll the Committee by telephone, by e-mail, in person, or in other available ways; at least two-thirds of the Committee must be polled. In the latter instance, the whole Steering Committee may, at its next meeting, refuse to confirm the appointee, in which situation another appointment must be made, subject to consultation with the Steering Committee.

#### **ARTICLE IV. AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS**

The Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the Senate at a meeting subsequent to the meeting at which the amendment was proposed. Amendments to proposed bylaw changes may be proposed from the floor, and voted on, at either of these two meetings.

*As revised December 13, 2016 by vote of the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  


Robert B. Riter, Secretary, Faculty Senate