

Revised May 2024

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

Constitution and Bylaws

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. NAME AND OBJECT

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Baylor University Faculty Senate.

Section 2. Object

The object of this organization is to serve and function as the representative, deliberative, and legislative body of the Baylor University Faculties.

ARTICLE II. SENATE REPRESENTATION

Section 1. Eligibility

- a. The Faculty Senate is composed of the full-time faculty members of the various academic units, where “academic units” comprise the various schools and libraries, the colleges, the seminary, and other such academic entities falling under the leadership of an academic dean.
- b. All full-time faculty members holding continuous appointments within academic units and with administrative appointments below associate dean are eligible to serve and vote.

Section 2. Composition

- a. Faculty Senators shall be elected from among the eligible faculty, with proportional representation from each academic unit following the method of apportionment described in the Bylaws. The apportionment of Senate seats will be checked on an annual basis, with seats added or deleted as necessary due to changes in academic units. If the number of faculty in an academic unit declines such that a seat is lost, then the first Senate seat to come open in that unit, after a full term has been completed, shall be removed from the election process.
- b. For academic units with multiple departments, no more than two Senators may serve simultaneously from any one department.
- c. Elected Senators shall serve a term of three years. Senators may be immediately reelected for a second term of three years. At the end of two consecutive full terms, a Senator shall wait at least one year before becoming eligible for election again to the Senate.
- d. The Chair, Chair-Elect, and Immediate Past Chair of the Senate shall be ex officio, voting members of the Senate. If the person serving as Immediate Past Chair completes a second consecutive full term prior to taking this office, that person shall wait at least one year beyond completing the term as Immediate Past Chair before becoming eligible for election again to the Senate.

- e. Senate terms shall be staggered such that approximately one third of Senate seats come up for election each year. New Senate seats may be filled by election to less than a three-year term for the sake of staggering. Serving in a shortened initial term for the sake of staggering shall not count against a Senator's limit of two consecutive full terms.
- f. Baylor personnel with full-time, faculty-like appointments in various centers and institutes reporting directly to the Office of Academic Affairs, but outside of established academic units, are entitled to elect a non-voting representative to the Faculty Senate following the same election procedure described in the Bylaws.

Section 3. Elections

- a. Elections shall be held annually following procedures defined in the Bylaws.
- b. Vacancies due to resignations shall be filled as soon as possible according to procedures defined in the Bylaws, with any replacement Senator serving the remainder of the unfinished term. Filling an unfinished term shall not count against a Senator's limit of two consecutive full terms.
- c. In case a Senator anticipates an extended absence due to a university-related leave, FMLA leave, or prolonged illness, he/she may nominate a substitute from the same academic unit to serve during the Senator's absence. This substitute must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Senate, will have full voting rights, and may not serve more than two semesters.

Section 4: Attendance at Meetings of the Faculty Senate

- a. A Senator who will be absent from a regularly scheduled meeting is expected to send a substitute from the same academic unit in his or her stead. The Senator's absence will be noted in the Minutes with the name of the substitute; the substitute will have full voting rights;
- b. A Senatorial vacancy shall exist when a Senator has missed three regularly scheduled Senate meetings in a given academic year for reasons other than University-related leaves, FLMA leave, or prolonged illness.

ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Meetings

The Senate shall meet at least monthly during the year, except for the months: June, July, and August. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of the Senate, or upon written request of any eight members of the Senate. A majority of voting members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum. Unless objected to by a majority of Senators, the Chair may from time to time invite nonmembers to attend meetings.

- a. Senate meetings will take place in person. Appropriate accommodations will be made to allow remote Senators to attend meetings virtually. Remote Senators who attend virtually will have full voting rights and may vote electronically (BU PP-045 defines remote faculty).
- b. Senate meetings are open to the general faculty; any faculty member wishing to attend a Senate meeting as an observer may do so with advance notice to and consent of the Chair to ensure seating capacity and address any extenuating circumstances.
- c. **Executive Session:** when the Senate Chair deems that sensitive matters should be discussed exclusively by Senators, s/he will call for a motion to go into Executive Session. The motion for Executive Session must pass with a majority vote of Senators. Executive Session:

1. Should be announced in advance, if possible.
 2. Must open and close within a scheduled, open meeting.
 3. Visitors, faculty observers, and other non-Senators must clear the room.
 4. Minutes will reflect only that Executive Session was called and ended.
Discussion during Executive Session will not be recorded in the Minutes.
 - 4a. Separate Minutes of Executive Session will be recorded only in the case that motion(s) were made, seconded, and passed or failed. In such a case, the Minutes of the Executive Session should be approved during the Executive Session.
 5. Senators present should hold discussions held during Executive Session in strictest confidence.
 6. Remote Senators may attend Executive Session virtually and vote.
- d. In the event of *force majeure*, e.g., natural disaster, armed conflict, pandemic, or in the case of called meetings, especially during holiday periods or the summer months, Senate meetings may take place virtually; in this case, voting may also take place electronically.

Section 2. Officers

The Senate shall elect annually from among its members a Chair, a Chair-Elect, a Secretary, a Publicity Officer, and such other officers as shall be provided for in the Bylaws. The Senate shall have the power to determine election procedures for these offices, to fill vacancies, and to resolve questions of eligibility. In the event of a permanent vacancy in any of the offices, an election shall be held at the next Senate meeting to fill the vacancy.

Section 3. Committees

The Faculty Senate may establish such Senate Committees as it deems appropriate, and may determine procedures for appointing chairpersons and committee members.

ARTICLE IV. JURISDICTION, DUTIES, AND POWERS

Section 1. Academic Governance and the Interests of Baylor University

The Faculty Senate shall provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all matters affecting Baylor University, and it shall have the power to consult with any individual faculty member about such matters whether or not they are members of the Senate. The Senate shall seek to express collective faculty judgment, as appropriate, on such matters as it deems significant. In all deliberation and action, the Senate shall seek effective faculty participation in the formation of University policy, especially as that policy bears on academic governance of the University.

Section 2. Educational Policy

The Senate shall have the power to review and evaluate educational policies and practices of the University and may make recommendations concerning them to any individual, faculty, or group within the University. It may provide for appropriate faculty discussion of any educational policy or practice. It may advise and consult with the chief administrative officers and inform them of faculty opinions about such matters. It shall facilitate and encourage communication within the University, among the academic units and reciprocally among faculty, students, and administration.

Section 3. Matters Referred to the Senate

The Senate shall review and act on matters referred to it by the University President, the Provost, or the individual academic units. Further, any faculty member may bring before the Faculty Senate in an appropriate manner any matter of concern, including individual grievances. The Senate shall have the power to establish guidelines and procedures for dealing with such submissions and grievances.

Section 4. Committees of the University

- a. The Senate shall select the University Committee on Committees from faculty members both within and without the Faculty Senate, and make recommendations to and advise with the University President regarding appointments to the various University committees.
- b. The Senate shall develop and maintain a working relationship with the various committees of the University.

Section 5. University Administration

The Faculty Senate will meet from time to time with the University President, the Provost, and other appropriate officers to develop guidelines for the exercise of its stated functions or to develop procedures for identifying and establishing additional functions.

ARTICLE V. ADOPTION, RATIFICATION, AND MODIFICATION

Section 1. Adoption

This constitution will come into effect when adopted by a majority of the membership of the Faculty Senate then present and voting at a regular or called meeting of the Senate.

Section 2. Modification

Modifications to the Constitution may be proposed by a passing motion at a regular meeting of the Faculty Senate, but may not be acted on until the next regular meeting of the Senate. To be approved, such proposed changes shall be made public to the University faculty at least two weeks prior to the next meeting of the Senate. Modifications shall require a two-thirds majority of the Senators present at said meeting.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. ELECTIONS, OFFICERS, AND DUTIES

Section 1. Senate Elections

- a. Allocation of Senate Seats to academic units will be based on increments of thirty faculty members, with each unit entitled to at least one seat. Academic units with thirty or fewer faculty will have one Senate seat. Academic units with thirty-one to sixty faculty will have two Senate seats. Additional Senate seats will follow in like manner in additional increments of thirty (61-90, 91-120, etc.). To buffer against rapid cycling of Senate seat allocations for academic units for which faculty numbers are fluctuating at or near a threshold value (31, 61, etc.), the reduction of a Senate seat shall occur only when the number of faculty falls below the threshold for three consecutive years. However, in the case of major changes due to program deletions or reassignment of departments to other academic units, Senate seat reductions will occur at the next reapportionment. If departments move between academic units, Senators from such departments should be allowed to make a smooth transition and complete their terms whenever possible.
- b. Elections shall be completed by the Friday preceding Spring Break in the Academic Calendar.
- c. In December, the full Senate shall elect two Senators (the Secretary of the Senate serves ex officio) to form a Senate Election Commission to assist the Secretary of the Senate in arranging and running the election. No two commission members may be from the same academic unit.
- d. In December, the established Election Commission shall work with the Department of Human Resources and the office of Information Technology Services to conduct a faculty census and create a list of eligible faculty voters according to the Constitution Article II, Section 1; and to determine the apportionment of Senate seats for each academic unit in the following academic year according to the Constitution Article II, Section 2; and develop an electronic ballot. Also in December the Secretary of the Senate shall contact Senators eligible for reelection to determine if they wish their names to be placed on the ballot. Any Senator who wishes to stand for reelection may do so by notifying the Secretary.
- e. Five weeks before Spring Break, the Secretary shall announce by email to the full-time faculty of each academic unit the number of positions on the Senate to be elected by that faculty for the following academic year and the names of the Senators eligible for reelection who have indicated a desire to run for the office again. The Secretary shall call for other nominations to be returned to him or her within two weeks. Nominations may be either in writing or by email. Each full-time faculty member may nominate herself (himself) or one other colleague. On a rolling basis, the Secretary shall confirm that nominees agree to serve if elected. At this point, nominees become candidates.
- f. In the case that there are not enough candidates nominated to fill all open positions within an academic unit, the Senate Secretary shall inform the Senate Chair. The Senate Secretary shall enlist Senators from said unit who are rotating off the Senate to solicit nominees who are willing to serve. If no nominees are forthcoming by the final deadline, then the seat(s) will remain open until filled with approval by vote of the full Senate.
 - o Under no circumstances, should a department chair, division head, associate dean, or dean appoint a faculty member as temporary replacement for a Senator or to fill a vacant seat.
- g. At the beginning of the week before Spring Break, an email shall be sent to all eligible faculty voters with instructions for accessing, filling out, and submitting their electronic ballots. Faculty members may vote only once. Faculty members with appointments in more than one academic unit shall vote in the unit in which their tenure status is

determined, or, if non-tenure track, in the academic unit which is otherwise determined to be their primary affiliation.

- h. Electronic elections shall take place, commencing at 8:00 am on Tuesday and continuing through Wednesday, in the week preceding Spring Break. At midnight Wednesday, electronic voting will cease to accept ballots and the results will be tabulated by IT and delivered electronically to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. At no time during the election process shall faculty names or identifiable information be collected other than to verify voting eligibility. Information collected will be limited to whom the candidate voted for and the time of the vote. In the event that an eligible faculty member will not have access to the Internet resources, the Secretary shall make provisions for casting absentee ballots.
- i. In the event of a tie, the Secretary will seek to mediate an outcome with the candidates in question. If no clear winner can be determined, a special run-off election will be held to determine the winner.
- j. If a Senatorial vacancy occurs, the Secretary shall contact the runner-up in the previous election for that academic unit to determine the willingness of that faculty member to serve. If willing, that faculty member shall be invited to complete the unexpired term. If that person does not wish to serve, the Secretary shall contact the next runner-up in like fashion. Special elections for vacancies will be called when there is a tie for a runner-up position and all candidates are eligible. When no one on the ballot of the previous election is willing to serve, the Chair, in consultation with the Senators from the academic unit where the vacancy exists, shall nominate a candidate to the Faculty Senate to serve until the next annual election. The candidate must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate. At the annual election, a Senator elected by the academic unit shall fill the balance of the unexpired term of the vacated seat.

Section 2. Election of Officers

- a. The officers of the Faculty Senate shall be the Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Publicity Officer. The Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Publicity Officer shall be elected annually from the Senate Membership; the Chair position shall be filled each year by the previous year's Chair-Elect. The Chair shall appoint a Parliamentarian and such other officers as shall be deemed desirable.
- b. On or before the regularly-scheduled April meeting of the Senate, the Chair shall appoint a Nominating Committee comprised of seven Senators. The Nominating Committee shall accept nominations and recommendations from members of the Senate, shall determine whether nominees will consent to serve if elected, and shall prepare a slate of candidates with at least one nominee each for the positions of Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Publicity Officer. Members of the Senate shall be advised of such slate of candidates at least one week prior to the regularly-scheduled May meeting.
- c. The annual election shall be held at the regular May Senate meeting with the order of election being Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Publicity Officer. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted with respect to each office. Each Senator may vote for only one candidate for each office. Candidates receiving a majority vote from those Senators present and voting shall be elected to the office. If no candidate receives a majority vote, the top two candidates shall be placed in a runoff. When a tie exists for the runoff positions, the tie shall be promptly resolved by lot. Voting in all cases shall be by secret ballot.
- d. Incoming officers shall take office on August 1 and serve until July 31 of the following year.

Section 3. Duties of Officers

- a. The Chair shall preside at meetings of the Senate and shall be responsible for preparing an agenda for each meeting and distributing it to each Senator on or before the Friday preceding the meeting. Except as otherwise provided, the Chair shall appoint the members, and chairs of committees as are from time to time provided for. The Chair shall communicate the Senate's advice and recommendations to appropriate University officials. The Chair shall serve as Chair of the Senate Executive Committee. The Chair may elect to receive a course release in each of the Fall and Spring semesters of the Chair's term of service, provided reasonable accommodations for course coverage can be arranged within the Chair's academic unit. The Chair-Elect should discuss such accommodations for the next academic year with the appropriate Department Chair or Dean prior to course scheduling for the upcoming year.
- b. The Chair-Elect shall assume the position of Chair on August 1 following election and one year of service as Chair-Elect. The Chair-Elect shall preside at the meeting of the Senate in the absence of the Chair and shall serve as Chair in the event of the Chair's death, resignation, or removal from office; provided, however, that if such a vacancy shall occur prior to January 1, the Senate shall instead elect a Chair to serve out such term, provided further, that the Chair-Elect shall be eligible for election to such position. In the event that the Chair-Elect thus prematurely assumes the Chairmanship, the position of Chair-Elect shall not be filled during this term; but the Chair shall designate a member of the Executive Committee to preside at meetings of the Senate in the absence of the Chair.
- c. The Secretary shall keep minutes and records of all proceedings of the Senate, including attendance, and shall receive and keep all reports and correspondence from committees of the Senate, University committees, University officials, and others. The Secretary shall regularly prepare minutes of each meeting of the Senate and shall convey such minutes to the Chair for distribution to members of the Senate. The meeting minutes shall include a roll of those Senators who are absent.
- d. The Publicity Officer shall be responsible for disseminating information about Senate activities, as deemed appropriate in consultation with the Executive Committee, to the faculty and other members of the University community, including also uploading Senate Minutes to and maintenance of the Senate website.
- e. The Parliamentarian shall advise the Chair on all matters of procedure at the meetings of the Senate, according to the latest revision of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE II. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Executive Committee

- a. The Executive Committee of the Senate consists of the Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Publicity Officer, and three additional members of the Faculty Senate appointed by the Chair for one-year terms.
- b. Members of the Executive Committee shall serve from August 1 until July 31 of the following year.
- c. The Executive Committee shall assist and advise the Faculty Senate Chair and shall exercise those powers delegated to it by the Faculty Senate. It shall have the power to act for the Senate in case of an emergency. All such actions shall be reported to the Senate at its next meeting.

Section 2. Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

The Senate may establish such Standing and Ad Hoc Committees as it deems appropriate. Except as may be otherwise provided, the Chair shall appoint the members and chair of any such committees; and such members and chair shall serve during the Senate Chair's term of office unless the committee is earlier dissolved or the Chair acts to replace a member or a committee chair.

Section 3. Nominating Committee

- a. The Nominating Committee shall be a representative body comprised of seven Senate members, selected by the Chair with the assistance and advice of the Executive Committee. The Senate Chair shall also be an ex-officio member of the Committee.
- b. The Nominating Committee shall have the duties and exercise the functions as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. It shall also nominate the members to be elected annually to the Committee on Committees and the Chair and Vice-Chair of said committee with the same procedure followed as in the case of the officers.

Section 4. Committee on Committees

- a. The function of the Committee on Committees is to advise the University President regarding appointments to the various University Committees, particularly those of concern primarily to the faculty, such as Tenure and University Research.
- b. The Committee on Committees shall comprise full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall present nominations for members of the Committee on Committees at the regular May Senate meeting.
- d. The composition of the Committee on Committees shall be: one each from every academic unit except the College of Arts and Sciences, which shall have three. The Faculty Senate Chair and Chair-Elect shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.
- e. Committee members shall serve terms on a three-year rotation basis, commencing with the Fall Faculty Meeting following their selection.

Section 5. Senate Policy Committee

- a. The function of the Senate Policy Committee is to liaise with the University Policy Committee and present the faculty voice to the University Policy Committee, particularly on policies that concern and affect primarily the faculty. The Senate Chair-Elect will serve as a member of the University Policy Committee and as a liaison between the UPC and the Senate Policy Committee.
- b. The Senate Policy Committee shall be a representative body comprised of five Senate members, chaired by the Senate Chair-Elect, and elected by the Senate via the Nomination Committee. The Senate Chair shall also be an ex-officio member of the Committee.
- c. The Nominating Committee shall present all nominations for new members of the Senate Policy Committee at the regular May Senate meeting. Senators may self-nominate or offer nominations to the Nominating Committee. Two new Senate Policy Committee members will be elected.
 1. The four members of the Senate Policy Committee in addition to the Senate Chair-Elect shall, as best as possible, represent the 12 colleges and schools of the University. Membership on the committee should rotate through at least all 12 colleges and schools every 5 years.
 2. In the case that there are more than 2 senators nominated for the Senate Policy Committee, the 2 senators out of all nominees that gain the most support from the senate will be selected, provided they meet the college and school diversity rule outlined in b.1.
- d. Members shall serve 2-year terms, with the exception of 2 of the inaugural members who will only serve one year. Half of the committee members after the inaugural year, not including the Senate Chair-Elect, will be elected during the current year. The two newly designated members will join the two continuing committee members, who will serve as mentors and carry forward historical knowledge until they are replaced by designees determined by the next Senate.
- e. The Senate Policy Committee shall have the duties and exercise the functions as provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. The Committee will review and provide comments and guidance on policies initiated from within the Faculty Senate or as developed and presented for review and feedback from Baylor University.

ARTICLE III. SENATE MEETINGS

Section 1. Meetings

- a. The Senate shall meet at least monthly during the months of September through May of each year. The Chair may call a special meeting of the Senate when the Chair deems it necessary, and a special meeting of the Senate may also be called upon receipt of a petition by the Chair signed by at least eight members of the Faculty Senate.
- b. No business shall be transacted unless a quorum is present and continues to be present at the meeting. A majority of the duly-elected and qualified Senators constitutes a quorum. In the absence of a quorum, the Chair may only make announcements of an informative nature, rule on the existence of a quorum, and recess once for a short period to attempt to secure a quorum.

Section 2. Agenda

- a. The Chair shall prepare an agenda for each meeting and shall distribute it to each Senator on

or before the Friday preceding the meeting. The Chair may allot a time period for agenda items and, if so, the duration of discussion of such items at the meeting shall be restricted unless altered by a majority vote of the Senate.

- b. Any student, faculty member, or staff member of the University may bring a matter of University concern to the attention of the Senate by communicating with the Chair of the Senate, either directly or through a member of the Senate. The Chair shall make an appropriate announcement of the matter either in writing attached to the agenda or by placing the matter on the agenda. However, only a Senator can introduce a proposition to be voted upon by the Senate.

Section 3. Procedure

A procedural proposition may be introduced by a Senator at a meeting. A substantive proposition may be introduced by filing the proposition with the Chair in time for it to be attached to the agenda for the next meeting. A matter of significant academic import or a policy recommendation can be introduced without previous inclusion on the agenda only by a two-thirds majority vote of the full Senate.

ARTICLE IV. MODIFICATIONS OF BYLAWS

Modifications to the Bylaws may be proposed by a passing motion at a regular meeting of the Faculty Senate, but may not be acted on until the next regular meeting of the Senate. Modifications shall require a two-thirds majority of the Senators present at said meeting.