

Faculty Senate Constitution

1989 Version

This is the 1989 version. The new one will be posted soon.

Article 1

The University Faculty

Section 1. Responsibilities – The University Faculty shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Elect representatives to the Faculty Senate, voting by and within all academic units.
- b. Consider actions of the Faculty Senate that may be submitted to it by that body.
- c. Pass on proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution.
- d. Present to the Faculty Senate any areas that it may deem pertinent to the welfare of the faculty and the well being of the University.

Section 2. Membership – The University Faculty shall consist of all full-time faculty members holding academic appointment with the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor or professor, whose primary duties are teaching, research, library service or department administration.

Section 3. Officers – The officers of the University Faculty shall be as follows:

a. Chairperson – The President of the University or his/her designee shall be the permanent Chairperson of the University Faculty.

b. Secretary – The Secretary of the University Faculty shall be a member of the faculty and shall be elected by the faculty for a period of two years. He/she shall record and distribute the minutes, serve as the custodian of all official records and reports of the University, and perform such other duties that are common practice to this office.

Section 4. Meetings

a. Regular meetings and special meetings. The regular meeting of the University Faculty shall be held each semester of the academic year.

b. Special meetings of the University Faculty shall be held as such times as the President may designate. A petition setting forth a proposed agenda and requesting that a special faculty meeting be called, if signed by not less than one-third of the members of the faculty who are privileged to vote or by the majority of the Faculty Senate, shall be honored by the President and a faculty meeting called at an appropriate time within a thirty-day period after the receipt of the petition. Also, the chairperson of the Faculty Senate, acting on vote by the Senate, can request that the President have a called meeting of the faculty.

For special meetings, the faculty should be notified not less than seven days prior to the meeting. In case of emergency, this notification requirement may be waived.

c. Fifty percent of the members of the faculty who are privileged to vote shall constitute a quorum.

d. The Agenda – The agenda for faculty meetings shall be prepared and distributed one week prior to the meeting by the President or by an individual or committee designated by him/her and shall include the following:

1. President's Business

2. Senate Business

3. Committee Reports

Section 5. Representation

a. Academic Units – “Academic Units” shall mean Agriculture and Home Economics, Allied Health, Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering and Technology, Library, Institute of Government, and Nursing.

b. Parliamentary Procedures – The parliamentary procedures shall be according to Roberts' Rules of Order.

Article II

The Academic Senate

Section 1. Preamble – In order to foster mutual trust and respect between the faculty and the administrative officers of the University and to effect cooperative efforts which enhance the stature of the University and its progress, it is necessary that the lines of communication between all constituencies of the University be kept open. To allow for full discussion of issues in the governance and development of the University and for adequate reaction from one constituency to another regarding these matters, formal and systematic lines of communication are needed. These can be provided best through the Faculty Senate as proposed by this document.

It is the premise of this document that the University faculty has the right and obligation, with the attendant responsibilities, to participate fully and actively in the determination of those policies pertaining to academic matters, to the welfare of the faculty, and to the well being of the University. The Faculty Senate, herein described, provides for meaningful and systematic participation by the faculty in the determination of policies in these areas of faculty concern.

Section 2. Purposes – The purposes of the Faculty Senate of Tennessee State University shall be as follows:

- a. To serve as the primary instrument for the effective participation of the faculty in the governance and development of the University.

- b. To serve as the representative governing body for the faculty through its elected membership from all academic units.

c. To serve as the means by which the faculty establish reciprocal communication with all segments of the University regarding University programs, policies, and procedures.

d. To serve as a setting for the initiation, formulation, discussion, and recommendation of academic and related policies affecting more than one academic unit of the University.

e. To assume the responsibility to study, report, advise, and make recommendations to the President of the University and through him or her to the Tennessee Board of Regents on matters of University policy and procedure in areas of primary concern.

The Faculty Senate shall expect to receive prompt notice of impending actions or decisions of the President or other administrative officers of the University, that could result in changes in University policy about which the faculty could be expected to have reasonable concern. The Senate shall discuss such actions or decisions and make recommendations thereon before these are put into effect. Similarly, the Senate shall expect to receive prompt notice of actions taken by the President of the University to implement the Senate's recommendations, as well as explanations by the President of any such recommendations not so implemented.

Section 3. Membership – The Faculty Senate shall consist of thirty (30) elected members plus non-voting ex-officio members.

a. Elected Members

1. Eligibility: the voting membership of the Senate shall consist of elected faculty members. Any member of the faculty shall be eligible for election to membership in the Senate, provided the following criteria for election are met at the time of election.

(a) Holds a full-time appointment with the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor.

(b) Has a minimum of one complete year of service as a member of the University faculty

(c) Represents one of the academic units of the University as enumerated in Section 3a, 3 below.

(d) Holds primary responsibility in instruction and/or research

2. Term of Office: The term of office for an elected member of the Faculty Senate shall be three (3) years, except that Senators chosen in the first election shall be divided into three classes of one-, two-, and three-year terms. The classification of Senators shall be done by lot for each academic unit as set forth in Section 3a, 3 below, so that each academic unit shall be divided as nearly as possible into three equal classes.

(a) Members of the Senate shall not succeed themselves to the Senate until they have been out of office for at least one (1) year – except those who are elected to complete unexpired terms of less than one year (effective Spring, 1981).

(b) Senators who take official leave-of-absence from the University are eligible for re-election upon their return provided they have been off of the Senate for at least one year.

3. Representation: Senators shall be elected from among the following academic units of the University and from any other independent academic units as may be established, according to Section 3a below:

College of Arts and Sciences

Institute of Government

School of Agriculture and Home Economics

School of Allied Health Professions

School of Business

School of Education

School of Engineering and Technology

Library

School of Nursing

University College

(a) Academic units are entitled to the number of Senators in the same proportion to 30 as the academic unit is to the total University faculty. That is, each academic unit is entitled to:

the number of unit faculty x 30

the total University faculty

(b) In no event may two or more Senators be elected from the same department within an academic unit until every department in that unit is represented.

(c) Reapportionment shall take place for every election, except that no Senator shall be required to abandon his/her seat before the term has expired.

(d) Any independent Academic unit organized after the adoption of this Constitution shall attain Senate representation in the first Senate Election following organization of such a unit.

Elections:

A Elections of Senators by units shall be held as soon as possible in the Spring Semester, during March so that the results can be submitted by each Unit Head to the Senate Chairperson prior to the April Senate meeting.

B. Vacancies which occur in the Senate shall be filled for the unexpired term by a special election in the unit in which the vacancy occurs.

a. Ex-Officio Members:

1. Eligibility: Those holding the following administrative positions are members of the Faculty Senate ex-officio

(a) The President of the University

- (b) The Vice President for Academic Affairs
- (c) The immediate past Chairperson of the Senate
- (d) Other administrative officers the Senate may invite

2. Eligibility: Other administrative officers and/or faculty the Senate may invite.

3. Voting: Ex-officio members may participate in Senate deliberations but they have no vote.

4. Term of Office: An ex-officio member shall serve in the Senate as long as he/she holds the office which confers membership

Section 4. Officers. The officers of the Faculty Senate shall be elected annually at the last meeting of the Spring Semester by the members of the new Senate, and shall serve for 12 months.

A. The officers for the Faculty Senate shall be

Chairperson Secretary-elect

Chairperson-elect Parliamentarian

Secretary Parliamentarian-elect

Two members at large

B At the April meeting the Senate shall elect a Chairperson-elect, a Secretary-elect, and a Parliamentarian-elect from among the elected members who at the time have two years to serve in the Senate. These three shall assume their office of Chairperson, Secretary, and Parliamentarian, respectively, at the April meeting of the Senate in the following year.

The two members-at-large shall be elected at the April meeting and shall assume their office immediately

C. In the event that an officer shall resign or become unable or ineligible to serve, the appropriate officer-elect shall serve the unexpired portion of the term of such office. In the case the Chairperson of the Chairperson-elect cannot serve, the Parliamentarian may convene the Senate.

D. Chairperson: The chairperson shall be the presiding officer of the Senate, chairperson of the Executive Committee, and an ex-officio member of all other Senate committees.

E. Chairperson-elect: The chairperson-elect acts as the vice-chairperson and shall substitute for the chairperson when necessary. This officer is vice-chairperson of the Executive Committee.

F. Secretary: The secretary shall perform the usual functions of such office; shall serve as secretary to the Executive Committee; shall publish monthly the minutes of the previous Senate session; shall maintain a permanent and public collection of all records of the Senate and its committees. The site of this collection shall be determined by the Senate.

G. Secretary-elect: The secretary-elect acts as the vice-secretary, shall substitute for the secretary whenever necessary, and shall assist the secretary.

H. Parliamentarian: The parliamentarian shall perform the usual functions of such office.

I. Parliamentarian-elect: The parliamentarian-elect shall act as the vice-parliamentarian and shall substitute for the parliamentarian whenever necessary.

Article III

Committees, The Senate

Section 1. Standing Committees. All committees report to the Senate and minutes are sent to committee members and ex-officio members.

The standing committees shall be:

- a. Executive Committee
- b. Academic Committees
- c. Basic Skills Committee
- d. Budget and Finance Committee
- e. Committee on Committees (Senators only)
- f. Constitution and By-laws Committee
- g. Curriculum and Instruction Committee
- h. Faculty Welfare/Relations Committee
- i. Library Committee
- j. Nominating Committee (Senators only)
- k. Research Committee
- l. Student Affairs Committee

Section 2. Membership of Standing Committees. Each standing committee except the Academic Committee shall consist of a chairperson elected by the Senate from its own voting membership and one representative from each academic unit, to be elected by the faculty of that academic unit. The chairperson of each of the two subcommittees of the Academic Committee shall be elected by the Senate from its voting membership and one representative to each of the two

subcommittees from each academic unit of the University shall be elected by the faculty of that academic unit

The members of all committees shall hold office for one year from the time of their election unless otherwise specified. The President of Tennessee State University, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Chairperson of the Senate are members ex-officio of all standing committees.

a. Executive Committee: The Executive Committee shall consist of the Senate officers, two members elected from the Senate as members-at-large, and the immediate past chairperson of the Senate as an ex-officio member. The Executive Committee shall convene during the summer and act on all matters of the Senate that are appropriate during that time.

Article IV

Standing Committees

Section 1. Academic Committee

Functions: To provide the University faculty the opportunity to counsel and be heard on matters of administrative and academic affairs, including curricula: measures for improvement of instruction, admissions, guidance of students, and other academic and non-academic administrative matters which affect the quality and effectiveness of the educational program.

The committee is concerned with the manner in which academic policy is administered in the several categories set forth above, after policy has been enacted by the faculty

Matters may be referred to the Committee for study by the faculty, the Faculty Senate, the President, or his designee, to some issues. The Committee may hear individuals of the faculty or student body who wish to express themselves on related issues important to them.

Further, the Committee may discover practices giving concern and advise with officers involved so as to preclude undesirable development. It should also offer helpful suggestions toward needed improvements, taking into account opinions of the individual members of the faculty and student body. The membership of the Academic Committee is divided into three subcommittees, with specific responsibilities.

a. Subcommittee I of the Academic Committee shall review academic regulations and procedures of the University specifically relating to the faculty and teaching. It shall recommend policy and policy changes that directly affect the faculty and teaching. Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the University.

b. Subcommittee II on Admissions, Readmission, and Retention shall address problems specifically relating to students. It shall recommend policy and policy changes and review appeals from students regarding policy and decisions made. Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, a representative from the Office of Admissions and Records, a representative from the Office of Student Affairs, and the President of the University.

c. Subcommittee III on Related Matters shall address problems relating to both faculty and students. It shall recommend policy and policy changes on such matters as academic standards, registration procedures and policies, and attendance procedures and policies. Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Academic Affairs,

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, a representative from the Office of Admissions and Records, a representative from the Office of Student Affairs, and the President of the University.

Section 2. Basic Skills Committee.

Functions: The Basic Skills Committee shall regularly review the University's provision for meeting the academic needs of all students and especially any student who may be deficient in the basic skills of reading writing, and mathematics. The review shall include but not be limited to studies of current offerings in developmental studies, of procedures of testing and referring students to the basic skills courses, as well as studies of the effectiveness of the current program and the need for revising the program and procedures. The Committee's findings shall be reported both to the Faculty Senate and the appropriate academic units of the University. Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the University.

Section 3. Curriculum and Instruction Committee.

Functions:

- a. To make recommendations of approval or disapproval to the Senate, then to the Vice President for Academic Affairs on proposed new courses, and other additions, curricular changes, deletions, modifications which may be requested by the various departments.
- b. To recommend approval or disapproval of proposed new programs.
- c. To review recommendations on instruction and instructional methods, resources and materials to the Senate and to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Ex-officio members shall

be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Head of the Learning Resources Center, Director of Institutional Research, and the President of the University.

Section 4. Budget and Finance Committee.

Functions:

- a. Examining budget proposals and all relevant financial information so as to review, advise upon, and make recommendations to the administration, prior to the development of budget priorities and the implementation of program changes and salary, wage, and fringe benefit policies.

- b. Reviewing cases of financial exigency in which termination to tenured and tenure track faculty has been proposed, and participating in all decisions regarding such matters prior to termination.

- c. Reviewing, making recommendations, and participating in decisions which affect the financial well-being of the faculty and the University.

- d. Reviewing prospects for state appropriations and other revenues and the likely impact on campus programs.

- e. Implementing a program to assure continuing public and legislative support for the University.

Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Business Affairs, and the President of the University.

Section 5. Faculty Welfare Committee.

Functions:

- a. The committee will make all decisions, rulings, recommendations, etc. in accordance with university policy, TBR policy, or with other relevant policy.

- b. All grievances should be addressed (in writing) to the Chairperson of the Faculty Senate of the Executive Committee and then assigned to the Faculty Welfare/Relations Committee. Members of the Committee will assist any faculty member in this process but will not entertain individual grievances.

- c. The committee as a body will not hear a grievance unless a quorum of six (6) is present.

Ex-officio members shall be the Chairperson of the Senate, Vice President for Business Affairs, and the President of the University.

Section 6. Library Committee.

Functions: The Library Committee shall advise the librarian as to the development of the book collections, interpret the library and its efforts to the faculty, interpret the objectives and requirements of the faculty to the library, discover ways in which the library may serve more effectively the instructional and research programs, and assist the librarian in the allocation of book funds. The librarian or designee is an ex-officio member of the Committee.

Section 7. Student Affairs Committee.

Functions: To address all matters concerning student activities that are brought to the Senate and make recommendations to resolve said matters. Ex-officio members are the Vice President for Student Affairs, two student representatives from the University, the Chairperson of the Senate, and the President of the University.

Article V

Rules and Procedures

Section 1. The Senate shall hold regular meetings once a month during the academic year, with the dates for such meetings to be adopted at the first meeting held in the fall semester. Special meetings may be called at any time by the President of the University, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Chairperson of the Senate, or upon written request of any ten elected members of the Senate.

Section 2. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting membership.

Section 3. The Senate shall have the power to adopt its own rules of procedure, except that no bill may be voted on which has not been before the Senate (in any manner prescribed by the rules of the Senate) for at least two weeks unless two-thirds of the Senators present (and a majority of the Senate membership) shall vote to waive this rule. The right of any member of the faculty to present a bill to the Senate or its standing committees shall be provided for in the Bylaws of the Senate.

Section 4. The Senate shall be responsible for a digest of its proceedings which will be distributed at regular intervals to the University Faculty and Administrative officers.

Section 5. Senate meetings shall be open to all members of the faculty, except by a vote of two-thirds of those present (and a majority of the total membership), may hold special executive sessions when matters of a confidential nature are being considered. Only members of the Senate shall be accorded privilege of the floor except that a two-thirds vote of those present shall be sufficient to permit a non-member to speak.

Section 6. Upon request by a majority vote of the Senate, the President of the University shall call a meeting of the University Faculty to present matters which concern the welfare of the faculty and/or the University community. The Senate is further empowered to take whatever steps it deems appropriate in carrying out its duty to provide for discussion and communication concerning the educational policies and practices of the University.

Article VI

Amendments

Section 1. An amendment to this constitution may be proposed by the Senate provided that two-thirds of those present concur, or by the petition of one-fourth of the members of the faculty of the University.

Section 2. The proposed amendment shall lay before the faculty for thirty (30) days before action thereon.

Section 3. The amendment shall be adopted either at a meeting of the full faculty, provided that three-fourths of those present concur, or by mail ballot of the full faculty, provided that two-thirds of those responding (and a majority of the full faculty) concur: the body proposing the amendment shall designate which procedure will be utilized in ratification.

Section 4. The amendment becomes effective upon approval by the President of the University and the Tennessee Board of Regents.