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Role and Structure of the Senate

University Statutes

Article V. The Faculty Senate

Section 1. The Faculty Senate shall serve as the representative and legislative agency of the faculty. As such, it shall serve as the official faculty advisory body to the President. Within the policy framework of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and with the approval of the President, the recommendations of the Faculty Senate shall be the academic policy of the University to be implemented by the administration. The academic affairs of the University which concern the Faculty Senate and for which it shall be responsible in formulating policies and reviewing procedures include those enumerated powers of the faculty listed in Article IV.

- The University Statutes take precedence over the Senate Bylaws.
- The Statutes describe, in a nutshell, the University’s structure and its governance. Its sections include:

Preamble

Article I: The University
Article II: The President
Article III: Academic Administration
Article IV: The Faculty
Article V: The Faculty Senate
Article VI: Academic Colleges and Departments/Schools
Article VII: Business and Finance Administration
Article VIII: Student Affairs Administration
Article IX: Vice President for Research & Economic Development
Article X: University Advancement
Article XI: Information Technology Administration
Article XII: Government Relations and Community Engagement
Article XIII: Professional/Administration and Staff Employees
Article XIV: Ratification
Article XV: Amendments
Article XVI: Miscellaneous Provisions
One Article, Article V, deals with the Senate. The Statutes do not go into as much detail about the Senate as the Bylaws. Bylaws cannot contradict the Statutes. Revisions of the Statutes must be approved by the faculty, the President, the Chancellor, and the Board Regents. The Statutes were last revised in 2014.

Faculty Senate Bylaws

- Bylaws are given the authority to direct the legislative affairs of the Georgia Southern University faculty by Article V, Section 12 of the University Statutes which state “The Faculty Senate shall operate in accordance with its Bylaws which must be approved by the Corps of Instruction. The Faculty Senate through its Bylaws shall establish standing committees or ad hoc committees to recommend policy and/or procedures on all matters appropriate to each respective area of responsibility. The Faculty Senate reserves the right to resolve all jurisdictional disputes and procedural questions that may arise among the committees.”

- The purpose of the Bylaws is described in Sections 1 and 2 Article I of the Bylaws.
- The major articles in the Bylaws are:
  - Article I: Purpose
  - Article II: Membership/Meetings
  - Article III: Officers
  - Article IV: Committees (includes the Senate Executive Committee, Standing and Ad Hoc)
  - Article V: Ratification/revision

The Bylaws were last revised in April 2015.

There is nothing more specific to the Senate business, structure, and governance than the Bylaws.
Shared Governance

Structure of the Faculty Senate

- 59 Senators
- Senate Executive Committee (8 members)
- 11 Standing Committees
  - Academic Standards
  - Faculty Development
  - Faculty Research
  - Faculty Service
  - Faculty Welfare
  - General Education and Core Curriculum Committee
  - Graduate
  - Library
  - Senate Elections
  - Senate Executive Committee
  - Undergraduate

Corps of Instruction

Board of Regents Policy Manual

Section 3: Academic Affairs
3.2 Faculties

3.2.1.1 Corps of Instruction

Full-time professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, senior lecturers, and teaching personnel with such other titles as may be approved by the Board, shall be the Corps of Instruction. Full-time research and extension personnel and duly certified librarians will be included in the Corps of Instruction on the basis of comparable training. Persons holding adjunct appointments or other honorary titles shall not be considered to be members of the faculty.
3.2.1.3 Other Faculty Members

**Research and Regional Universities**
In addition to the Corps of Instruction, the faculty will include the president, administrative and academic deans, registrar, librarian, chief fiscal officer, and such other full-time administrative officers as the statutes of the institution may designate as having ex officio faculty status.

Each institution is required to file with the office of the Board of Regents a list of administrative officers that have faculty status (by office, not by name of individual).

**State Universities, State Colleges, and Two-Year Colleges**
In addition to the Corps of Instruction, the faculty will consist of the president and the full-time administrative officers, and such other full-time administrative officers as the statues of the institution may designate as having ex officio status. Each institution is required to file with the office of the Board of Regents a list of administrative officers that have faculty status (by office, not by name of individual) (BoR Minutes, 1951-52, pp. 314-319; 1952-53, pp. 159-160; 1953-54, p. 225).
Section 2.0: Institutional Governance

2.5 Presidential Authority and Responsibilities

2.5.1 Executive Head of Institution

(Last Modified on May 28, 2009)

The president of each USG institution shall be the executive head of the institution and of all its departments, and shall exercise such supervision and direction as will promote the efficient operation of the institution. The president shall be responsible to the Chancellor for the operation and management of the institution, and for the execution of all directives of the Board and the Chancellor. The president’s discretionary powers shall be broad enough to enable him/her to discharge these responsibilities (BoR Minutes, 1972-74, pp. 69-71; 1977-78, pp. 167-168; April, 2007, pp. 76-77).

2.5.2 Ex-Officio Faculty Chair

(Last Modified on May 28, 2009)

The president shall be the ex-officio chair of the faculty and may preside at meetings of the faculty. The president and/or the president’s designee shall be a member of all faculties and other academic bodies within the institution. He/she shall decide all questions of jurisdiction, not otherwise defined by the Chancellor, of the several councils, faculties, and officers.

The president shall have the right to call meetings of any council, faculty, or committee at his/her institution at any time. The president shall have the power to veto any act of any council, faculty, or committee of his/her institution but, in doing so, shall transmit to the proper officer a written statement of the reason for such veto. A copy of each veto statement shall be transmitted to the Chancellor.

At those institutions that have a council, senate, assembly, or any such body, the president or the president’s designee may chair such body and preside at its meetings. The president shall be the official medium of communication between the faculty and
the Chancellor and between the council, senate, assembly, or any such body and the Chancellor (BoR Minutes, 1993-94, p. 239; April, 2007).

Section 3.0: Academic Affairs

3.2.4 Faculty Rules and Regulations

(Last Modified on May 24, 2010)

The faculty, or the council, senate, assembly, or such other comparable body at an institution (BoR Minutes, May 2010), shall, subject to the approval of the president of the institution:

1. Make statutes, rules, and regulations for its governance and for that of the students;
2. Provide such committees as may be required;
3. Prescribe regulations regarding admission, suspension, expulsion, classes, courses of study, and requirements for graduation; and,
4. Make such regulations as may be necessary or proper for the maintenance of high educational standards.

A copy of an institution’s statutes, rules and regulations made by the faculty shall be filed with the Chancellor. The faculty shall also have primary responsibility for those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process, subject to the approval of the president of the institution. (BoR Minutes, 1986-87, p. 333; May 2010).

The following items were prepared by Marc Cyr in 2009

Who is “Faculty”?

- The Board of Regents defines “faculty” as all full-time personnel holding academic rank. This category includes full-time temporary, permanent non-tenured, tenure-track, and tenured teaching and research personnel (including librarians), as well as administrators (vice presidents, deans, chairs, etc.) who hold academic rank; part-time temporaries and other adjunct personnel are not considered “faculty.”

- That is, what in everyday parlance most people would call “faculty” is defined by the BOR as the “Corps of Instruction.” Therefore, when crafting policies and especially policy language, we need to be careful with our terminology.

- All members of the faculty may vote in Faculty Senate elections. Temporary faculty, however, may not run for or serve on the Senate or its committees because election to such positions could be misinterpreted as a promise of future employment.
Members of the faculty who are full-time administrators (distinguished by an administrative contract or no teaching duties) are not eligible to serve as senators or on senate committees. Should a senator (or committee member) accept a full-time twelve months administrative position, whether permanent or interim, that individual should resign from their senate seat and/or all committees on which they are serving.

NOTE: This definition of “faculty” is relevant re: the Faculty Senate and its committees, and University Committees. It does not necessarily apply in all circumstances pertaining to individual college, department, or other university sub-unit shared governance situations (for example, faculty recommendations regarding tenure or promotion). However, it is strongly recommended that BOR-defined faculty not be excluded from shared governance situations unless overwhelming arguments can be marshaled to support that exclusion. We want as little class, caste, or in-group dynamic in our faculty as we can achieve.

What the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) Does

The main job of the SEC is to facilitate the work of the Faculty Senate and its committees. **PERSONNEL MANAGER:** The SEC coordinates and oversees elections to the Senate and Senate committees (via the Librarian), and various elections held in the Senate itself (such as for Senate officers). It also appoints Senators to Senate committees and searches out faculty to sit on other university bodies.

**TRAFFIC COP:** The SEC examines requests for information, discussion items, and motions, and potential Senate business items from other sources (such as discussions with the Provost) and decides (1) whether an item comes within the Senate’s bailiwick, and (2) if it is Senate material, what avenue of action is appropriate.

If an item is judged not to be Senate business – for example, if it involves only one college – it will be rejected with an explanation and sometimes suggestions for how to pursue the matter. Sometimes, even if an item technically falls within the purview of the Senate, the SEC will decide it is not worth Senate time and effort or could be as well or even better pursued on a personal basis.

More commonly, if an item is within the purview of the Senate, the SEC will decide whether it should be pursued by the SEC itself; directed to a standing committee under whose charge the item falls; whether an ad hoc committee should be formed; or whether it should come before the Senate as a whole.

**CLEARINGHOUSE:** This role often involves the SEC in helping a committee or individual refine an item accepted as proper Senate business, but which the SEC judges to be not yet ready for consideration by the Senate as a whole. Also, quite often information, suggestions, complaints,
etc. come the SEC’s way via unofficial or casual channels and the SEC will get involved in discussing the matter, and if it is seen as Senate-appropriate, pursuing it via its “Traffic Cop” role.

**LIAISON:** The Librarian, Secretary, and Senate Moderator/SEC Chair sit on various University standing and ad-hoc bodies, some in our usual Academic Affairs realm, and some (like Campus Physical Planning) outside it, thus keeping a faculty oar in those less usual, but no-less important waters. More centrally, before each Senate meeting the Moderator meets one-on-one with both the Provost and the President to discuss pending, ongoing, and/or simmering business; and the entire SEC has a breakfast meeting with the Provost prior to each Senate meeting. These meetings allow for frank give and take unencumbered by most formalities.

# Requests for Information:

**When, Why, & How**

A “Request for Information” may be submitted to the Senate, at which time the Senate Executive Committee will decide *(1)* whether it is within the purview of the Senate, *(2)* whether it should be pursued by the Senate, and *(3)* if it meets the first two requirements, how best to seek the information.

*(1)* The information sought must be relevant to elements of two or more colleges, or to the university and its academic community as a whole.

*(2)* The information sought must not be readily obtainable through less formal and involved means applied by the submitter, such as a simple phone call, email, or internet search; and must be of sufficient import to warrant the investment of Senate attention.

**NOTE:** Even if these first two criteria are met in a strict accordance to the letter, the SEC may decline to pursue an RFI if in their judgment the intent is or the outcome will amount to prosecution of a largely personal agenda on the part of the submitter.

*(3)* The SEC may refer the matter to a standing committee, but more frequently the Chair will contact whoever seems most likely to be able to provide an answer; often, this will be a high-level administrator.

If either criterion #1 or #2 is not met, the SEC will post that response to the RFI on the Senate web page. If the SEC has gathered the requested information to the best of its ability, that information will be posted as the SEC response to the RFI on the Senate web page. Sometimes the response will first come available via an oral report at a Senate meeting either by the Moderator or by the SEC’s source(s), often a University administrator.
“Requests for Information” often are submitted when the individual is not in a position to know what source to approach or access for an answer; when SEC access to upper-level administrators is the best means to facilitate an answer; or when formally, collegially, and publicly asking the question seems the best or only means of garnering the information.

“Requests for Information” should be just that. They should be questions, and should be professionally, succinctly, and collegially phrased. The questions asked should not be phrased so that they appear to be rhetorical, i.e. not phrased so that it appears the questioner already knows (or thinks he/she knows) the answer and is using a question format largely or wholly in order to make a statement. Statements, including background information and data – such as how long the issue has existed, and what other avenues to an answer have been unprofitably pursued – that have led to the RFI question(s), can be included in the Rationales section.

**Agenda Item Requests:**

**“Discussion Items” and “Motions”**

As with “Requests for Information,” “Discussion Items” and “Motions” must deal with items that involve two or more colleges, or some University-wide issue.

Any member of the faculty may submit a “Discussion Item” or “Motion” request to the Senate Executive Committee. If the submitter is not a Senator, he/she can arrange for a Senator to actually bring the item forward at a Senate meeting, or the SEC will find someone to do so.

“Discussion Items” generally serve two purposes: One is for a Senate or non-Senate body (like a committee or task force) to update Senators on some ongoing business. The second is to give to and receive from the Senate information pertaining to a potential action item, and perhaps gauge Senate attitudes, prior to coming forward with (or deciding not to) a Motion for Senate action.

“Motions” are requests for the Senate to take action of some kind. Often, motions come from Senate committees arising from their standing charges, such as curriculum items from the Undergraduate and Graduate Committees, or suggestions for changes to the Bylaws or the Faculty Handbook by the Faculty Welfare Committee or the Senate Executive Committee. There can also be motions requesting the formation of ad-hoc committees to deal with an issue not covered by the standing charges of standing committees (for example, to revise the Faculty Grievance procedures), or for the Senate to recommend administrative action of some kind (for example, to institute a remote parking and shuttlebus system), or for the Senate to offer its support for some other body’s initiative (for example, support of the Student Government Association’s request for a “Green Fee”). But these are only examples, and other kinds of motions cannot be *a priori* ruled in or out, but must be judged by the SEC as they arise.
Writing Motions

On occasion, motions come to the Senate Executive Committee that are written in a fashion ill-designed to get them passed and achieve their desired effects. Motions should be written so that not only can they be understood, but they can be put to a simple yea or nay vote at the various levels through which they pass.

A Poorly-Written Motion: An Example

TITLE: *Sic Semper Tyrannis*

**MOTION:** We, the members of the Senatorial Caucus of the College of Rehabilitative Programs (CRP), pledged inexhaustibly to the rights of faculty to academic freedom and the rights of freedom of speech granted to all Americans by our noble foreparents at the dawn of this great nation, and in sheer defiance of retribution, and in immutable support of all those who toil in the vineyards of our noble campus, feel compelled to cry out unto the multitudes of our Senatorial brethren that Tyranny stalks our hallowed halls! We here denounce the so-called Moderator – could anyone be more immoderate? – of the Faculty Senate, Dr. Jay Swift of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS). In his tenure, he has heaped calumny on colleagues, used harsh tones and mean words, sought to impose his despicable will on our community, and sullied our meetings with frequent use of language and imagery suited only to the most base of country two-hole outhouses. That the Senate might rise and stand, let us o’erthrow him, remove him from his seat (he thinks it a throne) as Chair of the Senate Executive Committee, drive him from the podium of our meetings, strike his name from the rolls and banish him from the Senate entire! Rid we ourselves¹ of this beast, can Spring be far behind?

**RATIONALES:** See above. So there.

¹ Try saying that three times fast. We did.

Analysis

**STYLE:** Overwritten. It is best to keep the language cool and business-like, particularly if the Motion is intended to become part of the University’s written policies. The central question to ask is “What do I want to accomplish?” Limit Motion language to a bald statement of that goal. And consider the use of bullet-point-type structure.

**ORGANIZATION:** The majority of the Motion material here belongs in the Rationales section. The Motion should include only language pertaining to the very action being requested, and that language should be open to a simple yea or nay on the acceptance of every element of that language: Each bit of non-essential material included is a potential reason to defeat the motion.
**CONTENT:** In the Rationales section, greater specificity is needed, including examples of offenses.

Also, the Motion calls for an action outside the authority of the Senate: the removal of Dr. Swift as a senator. While the Senate can remove him from his position as Chair of the Senate Executive Committee and perhaps suggest that the college hold a recall vote, they cannot strip him of his position as Senator.

And avoid notes in the Motion since it is unclear whether they form part of the language of the Motion or not. While sources for ideas and language must be credited, such citations belong in the Rationales section.

**A Well-Written Motion: An Example**

**TITLE:** Recall of Dr. Jay Swift

**MOTION:** That Dr. Jay Swift immediately be removed from his position as Chair of the Senate Executive Committee and Moderator of the Faculty Senate.

**RATIONALES:** Dr. Swift has abused these positions of trust and authority and brought the Faculty Senate into disrepute:

As tapes/transcripts of Senate meetings show, Dr. Swift insists, despite college faculty objections, on turning the acronym for the College of Rehabilitative Programs (CRP) into a one-syllable word via the insertion of vowels, which practice opens the college to derision.

At the meeting of 2-14, during spirited debate over the child-care center’s lunch menu, Dr. Swift became so incensed that he rapped his gavel till it shattered, and when told that he frightened some senators, made an obscene remark about those senators’ sense of humor. As the above items indicate, Dr. Swift is prone to foul language and the employment of images focused on bodily functions *(see the handout for numerous examples excerpted from meeting tapes)*.

During the meeting of 10-31, when the Senate defeated a lengthy motion because most/all senators could not understand it, Dr. Swift insulted all senators by giving revision guidance to Dr. Pound (CHHS) that consisted of adapting advice given to his subordinate officers by Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.: “Keep it clear and simple. Whenever you write a motion, remember you’re writing it for a damned fool.” *(Link to the minutes.)*
I. Purpose

State the purpose and scope of the policy.

II. Policy Statement

This is the policy statement.

1. **Number multiple policy statements if necessary**
   Descriptive text

III. Exclusions (if applicable)

These are exclusions and exceptions to the policy.

1. **Number major exclusions if necessary**
   Descriptive text.

IV. Procedures (if applicable)

State any major procedures. If the procedures are extensive or very detailed, consider breaking them out into a separate document that references this policy.

1. **Number major procedures if necessary**
   Descriptive text.