

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE CONSTITUTION

Revised March 9, 2017

(Approved by the TAMU Faculty 3/1/2017)

A university's foundation is its faculty. Therein lies the knowledge, the commitment to learning, and the source of constructive progress upon which universities rest. The interests of students, scholarship, and society are best served when the faculty brings its special talents to bear through cooperative participation in the governance of the university.

Therefore, this constitution is presented: to foster a community of mutual respect and cooperation within the university; to facilitate effective faculty participation in academic governance; to broaden communication in matters of concern to the university; and to engage the faculty's skills in the guidance of the university's programs.

## **PART I. FUNCTIONS**

The Faculty Senate shall report directly to the president of Texas A&M University. No Texas A&M University officer or body shall exercise control over the senate's recommendations. The Faculty Senate is the faculty's only representative body for university-wide participation in the governance of Texas A&M University.

### **A. Policy**

All university policies and regulations dealing with the following matters shall be reviewed by the Faculty Senate before being submitted to the president. Such university policies and regulations may be initiated by the Faculty Senate.

1. Policies dealing with curricula and instruction,
2. Policies dealing with academic standards, including admissions, graduation, and retention,
3. Policies dealing with scholarships, honors, and other forms of student distinction, and
4. Policies and procedures dealing with the hiring, retention, tenure, promotion, and evaluation of academic personnel.

### **B. Advisory**

The Faculty Senate may give advice on the following:

1. Overall educational policy and planning,
2. Policies affecting university development and utilization of resources,

3. Policies and procedures dealing with evaluations of administrators,
4. Appointments of administrators,
5. Physical plant and facilities affecting educational objectives,
6. The establishment, reorganization, or discontinuation of organizational units and areas of instruction or research,
7. University calendar, and
8. Other matters pertaining to the general welfare of the university.

C. Rhetorical

The Faculty Senate shall be a forum for discussion and debate of any issue vital to Texas A&M University. It will garner faculty opinions and transmit those opinions to the appropriate person.

D. Reporting

The Faculty Senate shall publish the minutes of its meetings and shall present a report annually to the faculty.

## **PART II. ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY SENATE**

A. Structure

1. The Faculty Senate shall be unicameral.
2. Electoral units shall be the University Libraries and the academic colleges, including the faculty at the Galveston and Qatar campuses.
3. Each electoral unit shall elect senators to the Faculty Senate on the basis of proportional representation as established by the Bylaws.
4. For the purposes of apportionment, the population of an electoral unit shall be determined as follows:
  - a. Each full-time equivalent faculty shall count as one member.
  - b. Each part-time faculty member shall count as one-fifth member.
  - c. The College of Medicine shall have two representatives from the clinical faculty of the College of Medicine. The College of Medicine shall otherwise be apportioned as above for their non-clinical faculty.
5. The number of seats established by apportionment shall not exceed 120.

6. No electoral unit shall have fewer than two senators.

B. Membership

For purposes of the Faculty Senate, individuals eligible for election shall be all faculty employed by Texas A&M University (1) whose appointment was approved by the Provost of Texas A&M University (2) whose faculty appointment at TAMU is the person's primary long-term position and (3) who is employed at TAMU with an annual FTE of at least 0.75. Other academic appointees who receive full time salary from funds appropriated as teaching or library salaries shall also be counted as faculty. In the case of questioned status under this provision, the decision of the Faculty Senate shall be final.

C. Terms and Qualifications of Office

1. A senator shall serve for three years.
2. To the extent possible, one-third of the senators from each electoral unit shall be elected each year.
3. Faculty members seeking election to the Faculty Senate shall be nominated by the faculty of their electoral units according to guidelines established by the Faculty Senate Bylaws.
4. Any faculty member, as defined above, is eligible for election to the Faculty Senate.

D. Electors and Elections

1. All faculty members, as defined above, are eligible to vote, but shall vote in only one electoral unit.
2. Senators shall be elected within their respective electoral units by a place system, by majority vote, and by secret ballot.
3. Elections of senators shall be held annually in April. Procedures for voting will be established by the Faculty Senate Bylaws.
4. Runoff elections shall be held according to guidelines established by the Faculty Senate Bylaws.
5. Vacancies during the year shall be filled by appointment according to guidelines established by the Faculty Senate Bylaws.
6. Faculty senators elected each spring shall take their seats during the first week of September following their election. Those members elected in the spring election are encouraged to attend Senate meetings during the summer session as non-voting members. Such attendance will acquaint the new members with Senate procedures.

E. Committees and Officers

1. Officers

- a. The Speaker of the Faculty Senate for the next session of the Texas A&M University Faculty Senate shall be the individual serving as Speaker-Elect at the time of the annual election of officers. The Speaker of the Faculty Senate shall serve as the chair of the Executive Committee.
- b. The Speaker Elect will be elected annually from the Faculty Senate membership.
- c. The Speaker shall be the presiding officer of the Senate and shall exercise other powers delegated by the Faculty Senate.
- d. Other offices may be established by the Faculty Senate to carry out its functions.

2. Standing Committees

- a. An Executive Committee shall be elected by majority vote from within the Faculty Senate and shall have no less than five members nor more than ten percent of the total membership of the Faculty Senate, with no more than two members of the Executive Committee from any one electoral unit. The Executive Committee shall be elected annually. The Executive Committee shall exercise powers delegated by the Faculty Senate. The president of Texas A&M University shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.
- b. An Election Committee shall be elected by the Faculty Senate from its own members. The Election Committee shall exercise powers delegated by the Faculty Senate.

3. Other committees may be established by the Faculty Senate to carry out its functions.

F. Quorum

1. A majority of the membership of the Faculty Senate shall constitute a quorum during the Fall and Spring Semesters.
2. A majority of the active membership of the Faculty Senate shall constitute a quorum during the Summer Sessions.

G. Parliamentary Authority

The parliamentary authority of the Faculty Senate is its Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Procedure and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

H. Reapportionment

Reapportionment of the Senate shall take place every three years.

**PART III. AMENDMENTS**

A. Initiation

Amendments to this constitution shall be initiated by:

1. Written petition presented to the Faculty Senate signed by twenty percent of the faculty, or
2. A two-thirds vote of the membership of the Faculty Senate, following a written presentation and discussion of the proposed amendment in a previous regularly scheduled meeting.

B. Ratification

After a proposed constitutional amendment is initiated, the speaker of the Senate shall publish notification of the proposed amendment. Two weeks after public notification the Faculty Senate shall hold an open meeting to discuss the proposed amendment. Within one month after the open meeting, the faculty shall vote for or against ratification. Ratification shall require approval of two-thirds of the faculty voting on the proposed amendment.