

# **Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws**

**Established Sep. 1, 1969**

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# **Constitution of the Faculty Senate**

## **Article I. Name**

This representative body shall be known as the Faculty Senate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, hereafter referred to as the Faculty Senate or the Senate.

## **Article II. Purpose**

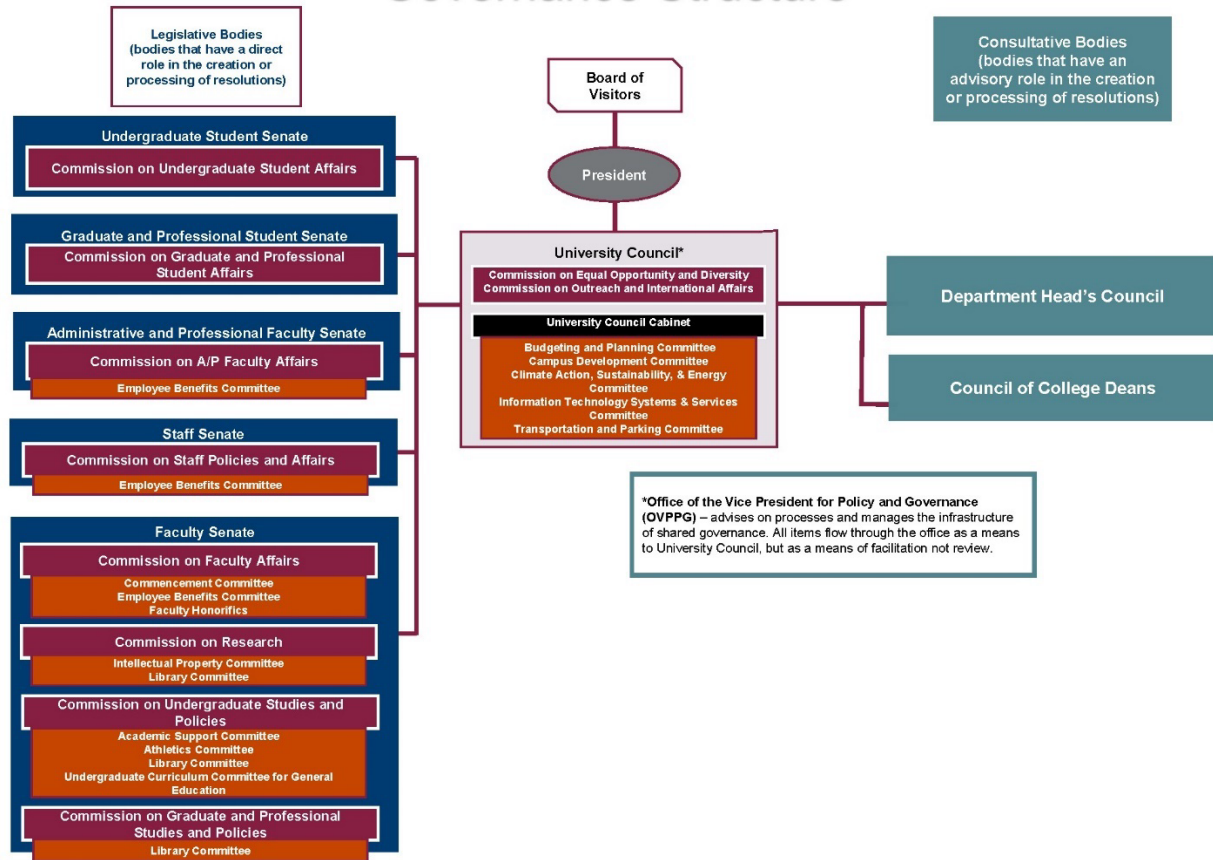
The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to represent the interests of faculty within Virginia Tech's system of shared governance (see below) and to work with the administration, A/P faculty, staff, and students to advance the shared goals of the university, including the creation and protection of a university environment conducive to the richest growth of scholarship, learning, teaching, research, service, and respect for human dignity and rights.

The Faculty Senate is part of the legislative system defined in the University Council Constitution. This system constitutes the main bodies for policy formation at Virginia Tech and also includes the University Council; the University Council Cabinet; the A/P Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Undergraduate Student Senate, and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate; the university and senate commissions; and the standing committees of the University Council. The senate commissions formulate and recommend policies to the senates, which in turn recommend policies to the University Council; the university commissions formulate and recommend policies directly to the University Council. The University Council makes policy recommendations to the president of the university. Final authority rests with the president and the Board of Visitors. Because these bodies constitute a legislative system, their functions, relationships, and the processes they hold in common will be defined in the University Council Constitution and Bylaws. All aspects of the Faculty Senate not defined in those documents will be defined in the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

In order for this system to function as intended, the roles and authority of its different components as presented in this document must be maintained, and participants in shared governance are expected to adhere to these statements of purpose, function, or charge. Senate and commission charges identify the areas of legislative authority and responsibility for the relevant body. These charges are not exhaustive: when questions arise regarding the relevance of the topic of a resolution to a commission or senate charge, they will be addressed to the University Council Parliamentarian, and if necessary, the University Council Cabinet. Per Article III Section 3 of the University Council Bylaws, the University Council Cabinet will review all resolutions for agreement with the commission charge. Determination of the authority of a commission to advance a resolution rests with the University Council Cabinet and the University Council.

Faculty Senate policy recommendations are advanced in the form of resolutions as prescribed in Article III of the University Council Bylaws and Article XI of the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

# Governance Structure



## Article III. Functions

In accordance with Article VII of the University Council Constitution, the functions of the Faculty Senate are as follows:

“The Faculty Senate shall be representative of the faculty as defined in chapter one of the *Faculty Handbook* and have the authority and responsibility to act on their behalf through legislative recommendations concerning academic policies and regulations; educational standards, curricula, and methods of instruction; faculty status; matters of equity and diversity that affect faculty; and the working conditions of faculty. Assigned commissions: Faculty Affairs (CFA), Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP), Research (COR), and Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP).”

The Faculty Senate also has the right to consider any matter of general interest to its members and to seek wider discourse on these topics within our system of shared governance. However, concerns that fall outside the purview of the Faculty Senate or of its commissions as delineated in the University Council Constitution may not be advanced as resolutions.

More specifically, the functions of the Faculty Senate are to:

- Provide leadership in the formulation of academic and educational policies.
- Develop policy recommendations both within the Senate and through its assigned commissions that advance the interests of faculty and the missions of the university.
- Express the views and preferences of faculty regarding university affairs and policy recommendations that impact faculty no matter their point of origin within our system of shared governance.
- Apply the disciplinary knowledge and perspective of faculty members to the issues and aims of shared governance.
- Coordinate the efforts of and partner with the college faculty associations.
- Advise and respond to the university commissions, the University Council, the administration, and the Board of Visitors on university affairs.
- Actively communicate with the other participants in shared governance through formal and informal channels in a timely manner.
- Accept and share responsibility with the administration, staff, and students in all efforts to improve the stature and usefulness of the university.
- Elect, appoint, or recommend members to the University Council, senate and university commissions, and university standing committees.
- Provide referral for individual concerns and issues to appropriate organizations or personnel.
- Evaluate the nature and procedures of the Faculty Senate in an ongoing manner in order to improve the senate's ability to fulfill its purpose and carry out its functions.
- Facilitate occasional discussion forums that meet outside of regular Faculty Senate meetings to discuss issues of importance to faculty, staff, students, and members of the Virginia Tech community that are informed by the scholarly expertise of the faculty.

Senators, though uninstructed representatives of their constituents, have the responsibility to seek the opinions of their electorate. Having done so, they shall make decisions and vote on matters brought before the Faculty Senate according to their own reasoned judgment.

## **Article IV. Membership**

### **Section 1. Composition**

The Faculty Senate consists of elected faculty members as determined and apportioned by the processes outlined in the Faculty Senate bylaws. Except as noted in the bylaws, the majority of senators are elected by and represent the interests of their respective constituencies (e.g., department, school, or institute).

### **Section 2. Eligibility**

Faculty members who hold appointments in the academic colleges and University Libraries and defined in the Faculty Senate bylaws are eligible for election to the Faculty Senate: tenured and tenure-track, collegiate, clinical, professor of practice, and instructor (the college faculty); continued appointment and continued-appointment track (University Libraries and Extension faculty); and tenured track, tenure-track, tenured-to-title track, tenure-to-title track, secondary, adjunct, clinical preceptor, and instructor (the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine faculty). Additionally, research faculty, including those on restricted appointments, are eligible for election: research professor, research associate, research scientist, and postdoctoral associate. Qualified faculty members who currently hold

primary appointments in administrative positions at the college or university level or within the University Libraries and faculty members studying for a degree at the university are ineligible for election to the Faculty Senate or to vote in Faculty Senate elections.

Because of their instructional, research, and service expectations, University Libraries faculty who hold a continued appointment or are on the continued appointment-track, though classified as A/P faculty, are eligible to be members of the Faculty Senate. All other A/P faculty with instructional or research responsibilities, such as Extension agents, project associates, or instructors in the University Libraries, are eligible to serve in the A/P Faculty Senate.

Interpretations of these eligibility requirements are provided in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

### **Section 3. Principles of Representation**

Insofar as possible, each senator shall represent an equal number of faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership. The faculty of each department and college should be represented by at least one senator, with exceptions as defined in the bylaws. Additional representation details are prescribed in the bylaws. The Faculty Senate Cabinet, upon recommendation of the operations officer, may annually adjust the number of faculty senators, in accordance with procedures outlined in the bylaws.

### **Section 4. Nominations and Elections**

Eligibility to vote in the election of senators is limited to those eligible for membership in accordance with this constitution and its accompanying bylaws. Nominations and elections are made as prescribed in the bylaws, which include the timing of elections.

### **Section 5. Term of Membership and Vacancies**

Senators are elected for a term of three years, or until their successor is elected, and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in the bylaws. Senators serve until their successors take office. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled as prescribed in the bylaws.

### **Section 6. Elected Alternates**

Each department, college, the University Libraries, and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine should elect at least one alternate senator and may elect additional alternate senators equal to the number of senators it elects. Alternate senators may attend any Faculty Senate meetings but are only allowed to vote when the senator for whom they serve as alternate is absent.

## **Article V. Officers**

### **Section 1. Officers of the Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate shall have a president, vice president, and operations officer elected by members of the Faculty Senate from elected senators. The previous president serves as the immediate past president. The president may appoint a parliamentarian from elected senators.



### *President*

The duties of the president include representing the faculty as the main point of contact and primary advocate for faculty to external entities including as the elected faculty representative to the Board of Visitors and the administration, presiding at all meetings of the Faculty Senate and cabinet, and performing duties prescribed in this constitution and its accompanying bylaws. Due to the demands of the office, the president is ineligible for membership on commissions or university standing committees, unless required by the role or when policy designates *ex officio* appointment.

### *Vice President*

The duties of the vice president include assisting and supporting the president and acting in their absence, monitoring the activities of the Faculty Senate commissions and the external standing committees, and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws. Though not required, the vice president typically chairs the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

### *Operations Officer*

The duties of the operations officer include organizing all Faculty Senate operations, monitoring internal standing committees and work groups, organizing the election of faculty members to the Faculty Senate, and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws.

### *Immediate Past President*

The duties of the immediate past president include advising the president; organizing the election of the Faculty Senate officers; and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws.

### *Parliamentarian (optional)*

The duties of the parliamentarian include advising the Faculty Senate on the application of the rules of order.

## **Section 2. Nomination and Election of Officers**

The Faculty Senate cabinet shall nominate a slate of officers and nominees for other senate elections. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Faculty Senate. The time and manner of election of officers are prescribed in the bylaws.

## **Section 3. Term of Office and Vacancies**

Officers are elected for a term of one year or until their successor is elected and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in the bylaws. The beginning and ending dates of the terms of office are prescribed in the bylaws. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled in the same manner as are full terms.

# **Article VI. The Faculty Senate Cabinet**

## **Section 1. Membership and Functions**

The members of the Faculty Senate Cabinet are the officers of the Faculty Senate, one senator from each college and the University Libraries, the chair of the Policy and Procedure

Committee, and the elected chairs of the Commissions assigned to the Faculty Senate. An officer may serve as their college's representative on the cabinet, provided they are elected in that capacity by senators from their college. Given the variability of faculty experience in shared governance, the president of the Faculty Senate may also appoint three advisory members to the cabinet.

The functions of the cabinet are to serve as the executive body of the Faculty Senate, to which it is responsible and to which it reports regularly on the disposition of matters submitted to it; to administer the business of the Faculty Senate between Senate meetings; and to discharge duties in accordance with this constitution and its accompanying bylaws.

## **Section 2. Nomination and Election of Faculty Senate Cabinet Members**

Cabinet members who are not Faculty Senate officers are elected by caucus of the senators from their respective colleges or the University Libraries. The time and manner of election of officers are prescribed in the bylaws.

## **Section 3. Term of Office and Vacancies**

Cabinet members are elected for a term of one year, or until their successor is elected, and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in the bylaws. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled in the same manner as full terms.

# **Article VII. The Commissions of the Faculty Senate**

All policy recommendations of the Faculty Senate must first be advanced and approved by one of its commissions before they are voted on by the Senate. The commissions of the Faculty Senate are the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA), the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP), the Commission on Research (COR), and the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP).

Though senate commissions are part of senates, their charges and membership are maintained within the University Council Constitution and cannot be altered directly by the senates. Charges of senate commissions are defined in the University Council Constitution and repeated here for convenience.

The chairs of the Faculty Senate Commissions are senators elected or appointed as prescribed in the bylaws.

## **Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA)**

Charge: To study, formulate, and recommend to the Faculty Senate policies and procedures affecting faculty working conditions and the professional standing of all faculty who qualify for membership in the Faculty Senate. Areas for consideration include commencement; academic freedom and faculty morale; procedures for appointing, evaluating, disciplining, and recognizing faculty, including department heads and chairs; tenure and/or promotion, benefits, academic and personal leave, and extra-university professional activity; and matters of equity and diversity that affect faculty.

### **Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP)**

Charge: To study, formulate, and recommend to the Faculty Senate policies and procedures concerning graduate and professional academic matters. Areas for consideration include admissions, academic progress, degree requirements, commencement; registration and scheduling; graduate curricular standards and expectations, advising, and instruction, both of and by graduate students; research involving graduate students; financial assistance including assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships; and library resources.

### **Commission on Research (COR)**

Charge: To study, formulate, and recommend to the Faculty Senate policies and procedures concerning research and research faculty. Areas for consideration include sponsored programs, core programs and interdisciplinary research; intellectual property; animal care and human subjects; indirect costs and returned overhead; research facilities, centers and institutes, and library resources; and liaison with affiliated corporations and institutes.

### **Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP)**

Charge: To study, formulate, and recommend to the Faculty Senate policies and procedures concerning undergraduate academic matters. Areas for consideration include library resources, admissions, academic progress, degree requirements, Honor Systems and study environment; In-Honors programs, undergraduate curricular standards and expectations, advising, and instruction; student honors and awards; financial aid, scheduling, and registration.

## **Article VIII. Faculty Senate External and Internal Standing Committees and Work Groups**

### **Section 1. Description**

Standing committees and work groups are established to carry out the functions and operation of the Faculty Senate. The actions of all standing committees are subject to review by the Faculty Senate.

There are two types of Faculty Senate standing committees: external and internal. External Faculty Senate standing committees serve in the preservation of academic freedom and the procedural integrity by which scholarly activities are evaluated, and in maintaining standards of professionalism. These committees report to the vice president of the Faculty Senate, are prescribed in the *Faculty Handbook*, and are summarized in the Faculty Senate Constitution (see below). Internal Faculty Senate standing committees serve the internal operations of the Faculty Senate, report to the operations officer, and are prescribed in Article XIII of the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

Internal Faculty Senate standing committees and work groups may be established, dissolved, or modified upon recommendation of the Faculty Senate president, the cabinet, or a senator, and approval by the Faculty Senate. In addition to Senate approval, the establishment, dissolution, or modification of external Faculty Senate standing committees requires approval through the resolution process.

The Committee on Faculty Ethics receives and considers charges of violations of faculty ethics that involve the abuse of professional responsibilities as outlined in the principles of ethical behavior prescribed in the *Faculty Handbook*. It is the venue for the examination of possible violations of the standards for research, teaching, and appropriate behavior with colleagues, students, and other supervisees that do not cross legal thresholds, such as behavior that is offensive but does not meet the standard for discrimination/harassment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

The Committee on Reconciliation offers advice and counsel to faculty members who seek it, particularly in relation to disputes with immediate supervisors or university administrators. The committee has a designated role within the grievance process to assist in resolving disputes that are eligible for consideration as a grievance if so requested by the faculty member. Its purpose is to help facilitate conversations between faculty members and their supervisors with the goal of reaching mutually agreeable solutions. The Committee on Reconciliation operates informally as a facilitator. It meets with the respective parties to determine if there is common ground for resolution of the matter, facilitating a solution that is agreeable to the principal parties and consistent with university policy and practice.

The Faculty Review Committee oversees the movement of grievances through the grievance process as prescribed in The Faculty Handbook, provides faculty review of faculty grievances that are not resolved at the college level, and considers appeals in the promotion and tenure or continued appointment process when the provost does not concur with a positive recommendation from the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure or the University Committee on Promotion and Continued Appointment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

## **Section 2. Membership, Terms of Membership, and Appointments**

Memberships and terms of membership for external standing committees are prescribed in the *Faculty Handbook*. Membership and terms of membership for internal standing committees are prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

The president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice of the cabinet, appoints members to and selects the chair of all external Faculty Senate standing committees. Members of internal standing committees are selected in the same manner, but chairs of internal standing committees are elected by the committee members subject to the concurrence of the president.

# **Article IX. Faculty Senate Representation on the University Council Cabinet, University Council, Senate and University Commissions, University Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, and the Faculty Senate of Virginia**

## **Section 1. Principles of Representation**

Recognizing the importance of democratic processes, representation of the Faculty Senate within the various bodies of shared governance shall be determined by election, except for

*ex officio* appointments or appointments made at the prerogative of the president or cabinet. Faculty Senate representatives shall keep in mind that the prime function of such bodies is policy making and that the implementation of policies and programs is properly the responsibility of administrators. In all cases, Faculty Senate members or Faculty Senate representatives who serve on shared governance bodies are expected to represent the position of the Faculty Senate in the formulation of policy; to inform the Faculty Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and of actions taken; and to bring matters of Faculty Senate concern before the body.

## **Section 2. Faculty Senate Representation on the University Council Cabinet**

The president of the Faculty Senate shall serve as an *ex officio* member and co-chair of the University Council Cabinet. The president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice of the Faculty Senate Cabinet and the confirmation of the Faculty Senate, may appoint two additional Faculty Senate members to the University Council Cabinet. While preference shall be given to the vice president and the immediate past president, experience in shared governance should be a significant factor in the selection. Term of membership (one-year) is prescribed in the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reappointment is prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

## **Section 3. Faculty Senate Representation on the University Council**

Faculty Senate representation on the University Council shall include the president, vice president, and immediate past president, who serve as *ex officio* members, and one senator from each college, who are elected by the Senate. Term of membership (three- years) and the procedure to fill vacancies in unexpired terms are prescribed in the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reelection is prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws. If the office of immediate past president is vacant, the operations officer will serve in their stead.

## **Section 4. Faculty Senate Representation on Senate and University Commissions**

The Faculty Senate holds membership on university commissions as prescribed in the University Council Bylaws. The Faculty Senate Commissions are listed in the Faculty Senate Constitution. The commissions of the other senates are the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA), the Commission on Graduate and Professional and Student Affairs (CGPSA), the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA), and the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs (CUSA). The university commissions are the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) and the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA). Term of membership and the procedure to fill vacancies in unexpired terms are prescribed in the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reelection is prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

## **Section 5. Faculty Senate Representation on University Standing and Other Committees**

The Faculty Senate representatives on university standing and other committees are nominated and appointed in accordance with the provisions of the University Council Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Section 6. Faculty Senate Representation on the Faculty Senate of Virginia**

The Virginia Tech Faculty Senate holds membership on the Faculty Senate of Virginia. The terms, functions, and duties of this representation are prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

# **Article X. Meetings and Procedures**

## **Section 1. Regular Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

The Senate shall hold at least five regular plenary meetings each fall and spring semester and other meetings as prescribed in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

## **Section 2. Special Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Special plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate may be called by the presiding officers at any time, including June, July, and August, upon recommendation of the cabinet. Requests for special meetings may be made as prescribed in the bylaws.

## **Section 3. Open Forum Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Open forum meetings may be called to provide an opportunity for all segments of the university to express their views on an issue of general concern. Such meetings are called as prescribed in the bylaws.

## **Section 4. Meetings of the Faculty Senate Cabinet**

Regular meetings of the cabinet shall be held at least once each month from September through May. Special meetings of the cabinet may be called at any time by the presiding officer.

## **Section 5. Meetings of the General Faculty**

In consultation with the other senates, the Faculty Senate may call a meeting of the general faculty.

## **Section 6. Meetings of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

Each standing committee meets as frequently as required to fulfill its responsibilities. The presiding officer prepares the agenda and distributes it to all members prior to each meeting.

## **Section 7. Quorum**

A simple majority of the total membership of the convening body, excluding non-voting members and vacant positions, shall constitute a quorum for all meetings of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Cabinet, the Faculty Senate commissions, and the Faculty Senate standing committees, with the exception of open forum meetings where no quorum is required. For establishing quorum, any alternate senator attending in the place of an elected senator is counted toward the simple majority. In the absence of a quorum, a meeting can be held but no votes taken or decisions reached, except votes on motions to obtain a quorum or to adjourn the meeting.

## **Section 8. Faculty Attendance**

Faculty members eligible for election to the Faculty Senate may attend but not vote in regular and special plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate.

## **Section 9. Guests**

Any Virginia Tech faculty member, employee, or student may attend plenary and open forum meetings of the Faculty Senate as a guest, with the understanding that guests:

- May participate in discussions if and when recognized by the chair but cannot vote or make motions for consideration.
- Will treat participants in shared governance with respect and in accordance with the expectations for decorum outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- May be removed from a meeting by the request of any member and a majority vote of the members in attendance.
- May not displace a regular member of the body when seating/space is limited.

Members of the public who wish to attend Faculty Senate meetings should contact the president of the Faculty Senate.

## **Section 10. Parliamentary Procedure**

The parliamentary rules used by the University Council, subject to special rules as may be adopted by the Faculty Senate, shall govern the procedures of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Cabinet, the Faculty Senate commissions, and the Faculty Senate standing committees.

## **Section 11. Voting on Senate Commission Resolutions and Other Matters**

All resolutions advanced to the Faculty Senate by the Faculty Senate commissions follow the process defined in the University Council Bylaws, either by means of a consent agenda or by actual vote. Faculty Senate votes will be carried out via the same software used by the University Council. In accordance with the University Council Constitution, votes on resolutions are by recorded ballot. The Faculty Senate shall determine the voting procedure on all other matters.

# **Article XI. Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution or Bylaws**

## **Section 1. Development**

Amendments to the constitution or bylaws may be developed by whatever means the Senate deems appropriate. Any amendment to the Faculty Senate Constitution that is not prompted by an amendment to the University Council Constitution requires approval through a resolution by the Commission on Faculty Affairs. When the University Council Constitution is amended, any content in the Faculty Senate Constitution that is directly replicated from the University Council Constitution will be incorporated automatically as a self-executing update, provided that the amendment has been ratified by the Faculty Senate and approved through the governance process as outlined in the University Council

Constitution. Amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws do not require a resolution by the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

One-fifth of faculty eligible for election to the Faculty Senate may petition the president of the university to convene a meeting of faculty eligible for election to the Faculty Senate to make changes to the constitution.

## **Section 2: Approval of Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution**

Amendments to the constitution not resulting from self-executing updates become effective upon the following sequence of actions:

- a. An affirmative majority vote by the Commission on Faculty Affairs.
- b. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- c. An affirmative vote in the University Council of the majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- d. Approval by the president of the university.

## **Section 3. Approval of Amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws**

Amendments to the bylaws become effective upon an affirmative majority vote of the senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached, and requires no further approval.

## **Section 4. Notice of Proposal**

Notice of proposal to amend the Faculty Senate Constitution or Bylaws shall be given in the Faculty Senate agenda and considered at no fewer than two meetings of the Faculty Senate prior to voting. A vote may be taken on an amendment at the second meeting. The proposed amendment shall be distributed with the agenda.



# Bylaws of the Faculty Senate

## Article I. Duties

### Section 1. Faculty Senators

Senators are expected to:

- a. Attend plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate and other meetings required due to Senate-related service commitments.
- b. Familiarize themselves with the university's system of shared governance; the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws; and the location and content of Senate documents. Faculty Senate officers will provide information on the platform used for communication and storage of Senate documents.
- c. Vote on resolutions advanced by the commissions of the Senate.
- d. Report regularly to their constituents on Senate proceedings and represent the interests of their constituents in Senate discussions.
- e. Treat other senators and participants in shared governance in accordance with expectations for decorum described in *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- f. Serve on one or more of the councils, commissions, and committees that compose the university's system of shared governance, if appropriate positions are available.

## Article II. Membership

### Section 1. Composition

The number of Faculty Senators shall be determined annually according to the timetable and procedures described below in Section 4. Eligibility for election to the Faculty Senate is described in Article IV of the Constitution and is further interpreted below in Section 2. For the purposes of these bylaws, a "constituency" refers to the organizational structures in which faculty represented by the Faculty Senate are employed.

### Section 2. Eligibility

Eligibility requirements for election to the Faculty Senate as described in the constitution shall be interpreted as follows:

- a. A faculty member's appointment is considered to be "continuing" unless the faculty member's letter of appointment states otherwise.
- b. For the purpose of the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws, the term "department" refers to an academic unit in which at least one faculty member eligible for election to the Senate resides. The term "department" shall apply only to those academic units that are actively involved in the teaching of credit-bearing courses or the awarding of degrees in specific academic disciplines. Further clarification of the term "department" will be made by the Faculty Senate Cabinet when necessary.
- c. Administrative positions at the college or university level or within the University Libraries consist of the following: the president, provost, associate and assistant

- provosts, vice presidents, associate and assistant vice presidents, deans, and associate and assistant deans, and assistants to any of the preceding.
- d. A faculty member is considered to be studying for a degree at the university if they are currently pursuing a program of study.
- e. An eligible faculty member who is not affiliated by appointment with an academic department will be assigned by the Faculty Senate Cabinet to the department that the cabinet considers most appropriate.

All senators are eligible for election or appointment to additional shared governance roles and all senators are eligible to vote in these elections.

The eligibility requirements for non-senators to serve in Faculty Senate–related shared governance roles are the same as the eligibility requirements for the election of faculty members to the Faculty Senate.

### **Section 3. Principles of Representation**

Senators are elected proportionally (insofar as is possible) based on the number of faculty eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate in each constituency.

#### *Departments*

- a. Each department shall be represented by at least one senator. Notwithstanding the provisions described below in Section 4, no department shall elect more than two senators.
- b. Schools that are a subdivision of a college are to be treated as departments.
- c. Departments may join and elect a single representative to the Senate. A simple majority of faculty members in each department must agree to join and the vote to join must take place before each senatorial election. Joined departments are then considered a single department for representation, elections, and voting purposes. (as such, joined departments are allowed a single vote in Senate proceedings). If the operations officer concludes a department falls below the representation threshold described in Section 4, that department must join another but has the freedom to choose with which department it will join.

#### *Colleges*

- a. Each college will have at least one senator.
- b. The University Libraries is to be treated as a college; however, it shall be represented by no more than two senators.
- c. No college will have more than 20% of the total number of senators.
- d. Senators from each college will include:
  - i. Faculty Senate officers from that college.
  - ii. One senator elected by the respective college faculty association who does not represent a department, unless waived as described below.
  - iii. At least one senator representing each department.
- e. Insofar as possible within these bounds, the number of senators from each college will be proportional to the number of faculty members in the college.

The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine will have one senator per department as an interim step in the process of the school's addition to shared governance. This exception to the standard method of election will be evaluated in 2026.

#### *Research Faculty Outside Academic Colleges*

Research faculty employed outside of academic colleges are to be represented in an at-large fashion. Six senators shall be elected by the research faculty employed outside of the academic colleges, in an at-large fashion. No more than two research faculty may be elected from any one constituency (e.g., a research institute). The election will be administered by the Vice President for Research or designee. This number of senators is subject to annual review and adjustment based on the number of research faculty and shall be approved by the cabinet.

### **Section 4. Nominations and Elections**

#### *Nomination and Election of Faculty Senators*

- a. In January, the Faculty Senate operations officer will:
  - i. Request the number of eligible faculty members in each college and department from the Provost's Office. These data are used to determine total number, and distribution, of seats in the Faculty Senate.
  - ii. Identify the college faculty associations that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election by virtue of having an unfilled position in the Senate for the upcoming term and notify all college faculty associations of their electoral obligations as prescribed in the constitution and bylaws.
  - iii. Provide materials to departments, the Vice President for Research, and college faculty associations that outline expectations for membership in the Senate and participation in the university's system of shared governance. All potential senators should review these expectations before agreeing to serve in the Senate.
  - iv. Remind all departments, the Vice President for Research, and faculty associations to elect alternate senators.
- b. In February, college faculty associations that are required to hold an election will:
  - i. Generate a slate of faculty nominees.
  - ii. Hold an election.
  - iii. Report the results of the election to the Faculty Senate operations officer. If the college faculty association does not supply the election results by the end of February, the college waives its right to a college faculty association representative in the Senate.
- c. In February, the Faculty Senate operations officer, in consultation with the Policy and Procedure Committee, will:
  - i. Determine the number of eligible faculty members for each constituency and present it to the Faculty Senate Cabinet, which will make a final determination of the number.

- ii. Determine the total number of senators that will compose the Faculty Senate from constituencies that do not have a fixed number of senators. For all other constituencies, there shall be one senator to represent up to thirty faculty members. If that constituency has more than fifty-nine faculty, it shall receive an additional seat on the Senate. Unless prescribed elsewhere in these Bylaws, no constituency shall be represented by more than two senators. Any constituency with fewer than ten faculty will be required to merge with another constituency to elect a senator if they so desire. Upon implementation of this convention, any constituency with more than two senators will be represented by those currently elected senators through the ends of their terms but upon expiration, their seats will not be re-filled if the total number of senators representing that constituency exceeds two. Senators elected from constituencies with fewer than ten faculty will serve out their elected terms.
  - iii. Identify constituencies that are required to hold an election by virtue of having an unfilled position or positions in the Senate for the upcoming term and notify all constituencies of the number of senators and alternate senators that must be elected by each constituency to fulfill its electoral obligations as prescribed by the constitution and bylaws.
- d. In March, those constituencies that are required to hold an election will:
- i. Generate a slate of faculty nominees.
  - ii. Hold an election.
  - iii. Report the results of the election to the Faculty Senate operations officer.

Senate terms begin with the first Senate meeting of the fall semester. Newly elected senators may attend meetings of the Faculty Senate as guests from the time of their election until their term of office begins.

*Nominations and Elections by the Faculty Senate (Including Officers)*

In April, the Faculty Senate Cabinet shall solicit nominations for all positions within shared governance that must be filled by the Faculty Senate within the coming year, including the officers of the Senate. No later than the penultimate plenary meeting, the cabinet shall present a slate of nominees for Senate representation on relevant commissions, committees, and councils. Permission of candidates must be obtained before names are placed in nomination. Nominees are elected by majority vote of senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached. These elections will be held by secret ballot. Those elected shall take office two weeks prior to the first day of classes in the fall semester with the exception of Faculty Senate officers, whose term begins on the day after the June meeting of Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors.

*Nomination and Election of the Faculty Senate Cabinet*

At the first Senate meeting of the fall semester, senators from each college will caucus and elect their cabinet representative for the coming year. As stated in Article VI of the constitution, college representation in the cabinet may be provided by an officer, but colleges have the option to elect a separate representative. To facilitate this option, officers must abstain from the discussion and election of cabinet representatives. After

the cabinet is formed, the Faculty Senate president may appoint one or two advisers to the cabinet after consulting with the cabinet and the Faculty Senate.

## **Section 5. Eligibility for Reelection or Reappointment (Term Limits) and Vacancies**

Senators are eligible for reelection or reappointment within the bounds of the term limits described below. Unless otherwise noted, term limits can be extended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of senators present and voting provided that a quorum has been reached. In all cases, partial terms will be treated as full terms. The standard term for university-level service (University Council, commissions, etc.) is three years.

- a. President, vice president, and operations officer: three consecutive one-year terms in one office.
- b. Immediate past president: one one-year term. A president elected for an additional term may request that the immediate past president serve as an advisor to the cabinet and to and fulfill duties of the immediate past president
- c. Cabinet members (who are not officers): three consecutive one-year terms.
- d. Senators: while academic units (e.g., departments) are encouraged to limit Faculty Senate representatives to no more than three consecutive three-year terms, the determination for eligibility for reappointment shall be made by majority vote of faculty within the academic unit).
- e. Alternate senators: eligibility for reappointment shall be determined by majority vote of faculty within the academic unit.
- f. Senators appointed to the University Council Cabinet: three consecutive one-year terms.
- g. Faculty Senate representatives elected to the University Council and senate and university commissions: three consecutive three-year terms.
- h. Faculty Senate-nominated representatives to university standing committees: three consecutive three-year terms.
- i. Members of the Senate's external standing committees: three consecutive two-year terms. Additional information concerning external committee membership can be found in Article VIII, below.
- j. Members of the Policy and Procedure Committee: three consecutive three-year terms.

After two years absence from any role, senators and faculty are eligible for re-election or re-appointment to that same role for the maximum amount of time allowed.

To fulfill their role as immediate past president, the Faculty Senate president must remain a senator for one year following their service as president. If the senate term of the immediate past president expires before their year of service in this role, they shall serve as a senator in an *ex officio* capacity.

In the event of a vacancy caused for any reason, including replacement by a department or University Libraries faculty, the respective constituent faculty shall, at its next meeting, elect a representative to fulfill the unexpired term.

## **Section 6. Elected Alternates and Attendance**

Each department and college faculty association must elect a faculty member eligible for election to the Senate as an alternate who will serve in place of a senator when that senator is unable to attend Senate meetings. Senators should encourage alternates to attend plenary meetings of the Senate as non-voting members to maintain representational continuity.

## **Article III. Attendance**

To ensure that a diverse and equitable representation of perspectives and interests by faculty from all departments is reflected in Senate discussions and decisions, it is essential that senators attend meetings required by their position.

### **Section 1. Meeting Attendance Expectations**

Elected members of the Faculty Senate are expected to attend all regular and special plenary meetings of the senate. Any senator who cannot attend a meeting of the senate should inform their alternate, who will attend the meeting on the senator's behalf. If an elected alternate attends a meeting on behalf of a senator, they should indicate that they are attending as an alternate and provide the name of the senator for whom they are serving.

Senators elected to serve on a university committee or commission are expected to attend all meetings of the committee or commission.

### **Section 2. Notification and Consideration of Absences**

Senators can ask their elected alternate to attend meetings when there are conflicts without contacting Faculty Senate officers. If a department or unit is not represented for two consecutive meetings without notice, an email will be sent to the senator and the senator's department or college faculty association notifying them of the absences. Any representational changes in the Senate based on absences will be determined by majority vote of the faculty in the respective unit. The senator or a representative from their academic unit should contact the operations officer to coordinate the change in representation.

### **Section 3. Resignation**

A senator is deemed to have resigned from the Faculty Senate if they submit a letter of resignation to the Faculty Senate President and the appropriate department or college association representative.

An officer, cabinet member, or commission chair is deemed to have resigned any of these positions if they submit a letter of resignation to the Faculty Senate president (or, in the president's case, the Faculty Senate vice president).

### **Section 4. Removal of a Senator**

A senator may be removed from the Senate by their department or college faculty association for failure to fulfill their duties as defined in Article I of these bylaws or as determined by their department or college faculty association. If a senator is removed by their department or college, the operations officer must be notified of the removal.

If a senator fails to fulfill their duties as a representative of the Faculty Senate to other bodies within the university's system of shared governance, they may be removed by the Faculty Senate. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is necessary to remove a senator under such conditions. A senator so removed is ineligible to serve in the Senate for the next five years.

### **Section 5. Removal of an Officer, Cabinet Member, or Commission Chair**

An officer, a cabinet member, or a commission chair of one of the four Faculty Senate commissions; may be removed from their position for failure to fulfill their duties as specified in the Constitution and Bylaws. The process for removing an officer, cabinet member, or commission chair from their position is initiated when ten senators sign a statement calling for removal that includes the reasons for their request and supporting evidence. Upon receipt of this statement from the claimants, the president will add this proposed action to the agenda of the next meeting of the Senate, at which time the claimants will state their charges and the senator will be allowed to respond. At the following meeting, the Senate will vote on the matter by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is necessary to remove an officer, cabinet member, or commission chair from their position. A senator removed from any of these positions may remain a member of the Faculty Senate but cannot hold the position of officer, cabinet member, or commission chair for the next five years.

### **Section 6. Replacement**

When a senator resigns or is removed, their constituency must elect a replacement following their policies and procedures.

When an officer, cabinet member, or commission chair resigns or is removed, the cabinet arranges a slate of candidates for the vacant position. The position must be filled as soon as possible by a majority vote of the Senate, providing that a quorum has been reached.

## **Article IV. Regular Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Regular plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be held each semester at a time set by the president and approved by the Faculty Senate. As prescribed in the constitution, at least five regular meetings shall be held each semester. If possible, the final plenary meeting of the Faculty Senate should be held after the final University Council meeting of the academic year.

## **Article V. Special Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Special plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be called by request of the president and approval by the cabinet; by recommendation of the cabinet; or on petition of at least ten senators or twenty-five faculty members. Requests for special plenary meetings shall include a statement of the purpose of the meeting. A special plenary meeting can be an

additional meeting, or a meeting conducted in total or in part as a closed (or executive) session.

## **Article VI. Closed Sessions of the Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate can meet in a closed session to consider topics that require the identification of an individual or individuals involved in, or party to, sensitive matters relating to instruction, scholarship, or service. A closed session is for the purpose of discussion only; any action(s) recommended in a closed session must be approved in an open session.

A motion passed by majority vote of senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached, is required to enter and exit a closed session.

Closed sessions are limited to senators and invitees who will be asked to speak on the topic(s) to be discussed.

The meeting agenda must identify the topic(s) to be covered in the closed session and no other topic(s) can be considered. The meeting minutes should indicate when the Senate entered a closed session, the topic(s) considered, and when the Senate exited the closed session.

Minutes may be taken during a closed session but are not required. If minutes are taken, they must also be approved in closed session. To avoid calling another closed session to approve these minutes, they should be written during and approved at the end of the closed session. The minutes of a closed session can only be shared with participants of the meeting and should not be attached to the regular minutes.

## **Article VII. Additional Duties of Faculty Senate Officers and Cabinet Members**

Officers and cabinet members are expected to attend cabinet meetings and all other meetings required by their position, represent the interests of the Senate in cabinet discussions with administrators, communicate the deliberations of the cabinet to the Senate, and perform additional duties listed below.

### **Section 1. Faculty Senate Officers**

In addition to those prescribed in Article V of the constitution and Article I of the bylaws, officers will perform the following duties.

- a. President
  - i. Report regularly to the Senate and the cabinet information received from faculty, administration, the Board of Visitors, and other parties that relates to the purpose and function of the Senate as prescribed in Articles I and II of the constitution.



- ii. Schedule a meeting of the officers, commission chairs, and administrative commission leaders to discuss commission agendas prior to the Senate's first regular plenary meeting in the fall.
  - iii. Outline the Senate's objectives for the year at the earliest opportunity in the fall after providing the full Senate an opportunity to suggest and comment on objectives and consulting with the cabinet.
  - iv. Prepare the agenda for Senate and cabinet meetings in consultation with the officers and the cabinet as needed and provide the agenda to the operations officer no later than four days prior to a meeting.
  - v. Oversee the functioning of the Senate and make temporary adjustments in work assignments based on the capacity of officers or cabinet members to fulfill their roles.
  - vi. Organize fall and spring discussions between the Senate and the president of the university and/or the provost.
  - vii. Organize fall and spring meetings between the cabinet and the provost.
  - viii. Appoint members of the Committee on Faculty Ethics, the Faculty Review Committee, the Committee on Reconciliation, and the Policy and Procedure Committee in consultation with the cabinet and with confirmation by the Senate.
  - ix. Manage the Senate budget and consult with the cabinet on all budgetary decisions.
  - x. Attend all meetings of the Board of Visitors and deliver an address at each meeting representing current topics of interest to faculty and report to the Senate and/or the cabinet on topics of interest to faculty provided by the Board of Visitors, as appropriate.
  - xi. Request information from faculty and senators pertaining to the following year's objectives no later than the senate's last plenary meeting in the spring.
  - xii. Prepare and distribute to the Senate, faculty, administration, and Board of Visitors an annual report of the Senate's accomplishments in time for the June Board of Visitors meeting.
- b. Vice President
- i. Organize a meeting between the officers, commission chairs, and the chair of the Policy and Procedure Committee, no fewer than two weeks prior to the first plenary meeting of the Senate in the fall to discuss the commissions' ongoing and upcoming work and create draft commission agendas as prescribed in Article XII, Section 1 of the bylaws.
  - ii. Coordinate the Senate review of resolutions from Faculty Senate commissions and the Senate vote on commission resolutions as prescribed in Article XII, Section 2 of the bylaws.
  - iii. Assist in the Senate review of resolutions from non-Faculty Senate commissions as prescribed in Article XII, Section 3 of the bylaws.
  - iv. Oversee the "Faculty Senate Position Development Process" (see Article XII, Section 4 of the bylaws).
  - v. Update the cabinet on commission agendas and policy development plans no later than one week following the first plenary meeting of the Senate in the fall.
- c. Operations Officer

- i. Distribute the agenda no fewer than three days prior to each meeting of the Senate and the cabinet.
  - ii. Maintain records, attendance, and minutes for each meeting of the Senate and the cabinet.
  - iii. Distribute minutes of Senate and cabinet meeting minutes to senators and post these minutes to the Senate website and other Senate–related software platforms.
  - iv. Maintain the Senate website and other Senate–related software platforms.
  - v. Obtain a current list of faculty members eligible for membership in the Senate and organize the election of faculty members to the Senate as prescribed in Article II of the bylaws.
  - vi. Identify the college faculty associations that are required to hold a Faculty Senate election, notify all college faculty associations of their electoral obligations and collect election results from college faculty associations as prescribed in these bylaws.
  - vii. Maintain a current list of senators and their membership as Senate representatives to all entities, including councils, commissions, committees, and work groups.
  - viii. Recommend new membership for the Senate’s internal standing committees and work groups to the president and the cabinet.
  - ix. Maintain a list of all nominees for election or appointment to the councils, commissions, and committees on which senators, or faculty members nominated by the Senate, serve. See Section 2 below.
- d. Immediate Past President
- i. Form and chair a committee of cabinet members who have chosen not to be considered for an officer position; organize this committee’s efforts to seek nominations for Senate officers and perform an open call for nominations by the Senate; prepare a slate of nominees for consideration by the cabinet; present this slate of nominees to the cabinet for review and approval; and on behalf of the cabinet, present the slate of nominees to the Senate for its consideration and vote, in accordance with Article V, Section 6 of the constitution. For the timing of this process, see Article II, Section 4 of the bylaws.
  - ii. Oversee the cabinet’s efforts to seek nominations or recommendations of Senate representatives to all bodies specified in Section 2 of this article (see below).
  - iii. If the office of immediate past president is vacant, the cabinet will elect a cabinet member to fulfill the duties outlined in subsections i and ii above.
- e. Parliamentarian
- i. Advise the Faculty Senate officers and cabinet on parliamentary procedure.
  - ii. Review proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws for internal consistency and compliance with the University Council constitution.

## **Section 2. Faculty Senate Cabinet Members**

In addition to those prescribed in Article VI of the constitution and Article I of the bylaws, members of the cabinet will perform the following duties.

- a. Report regularly to their respective colleges' senators and represent their interests in cabinet discussions.
- b. Assist the president in preparing the agendas for meetings of the cabinet and the Senate. (Cabinet members and Senators may move additions to the agenda at the time of adoption by the cabinet or Senate.)
- c. Prepare a slate of senators to be nominated for election as officers of the Senate.
- d. Prepare a slate of faculty senators to be nominated for election by the Senate to the following positions:
  - i. Senate representatives on the University Council (one per college).
  - ii. Chairs of the senate commissions (as noted in Article V, Section 3 of the constitution, though not required, the vice president typically chairs the Commission on Faculty Affairs).
  - iii. Senators on commissions.
  - iv. Senate representatives on university standing committees. Representatives are either senators or non-senator faculty members, depending on the committee. The president of the university must approve these appointments.
- e. Consult with the president on the president's appointments to the external and internal standing committees and work groups.
- f. Review resolutions received from commissions, draft Senate resolution responses, and offer comments on resolutions in accordance with Article XI, Sections 3 and 4 of these bylaws.
- g. Determine the best approach for the development of a policy -- whether by a commission or work group, for example -- subject to concurrence by the Faculty Senate.
- h. Identify topics that require the application of the Senate position development process, inform the Policy and Procedure Committee of identified topics and make recommendations to the Policy and Procedure Committee following Senate discussions of identified topics as prescribed in Article XII of the bylaws.
- i. Call special meetings of the Senate as prescribed in Article X, Section 2 of the constitution.

## Article VIII. External Committees of the Faculty Senate

The standing committees of the Faculty Senate include the Committee on Faculty Ethics, the Committee on Reconciliation, and the Faculty Review Committee. For all external committees of the Faculty Senate, members are appointed for a two-year term and may serve up to three consecutive terms.

### Section 1. Committee on Faculty Ethics

- a. Committee Charge  
The Committee on Faculty Ethics receives and considers charges of violations of faculty ethics that involve the abuse of professional responsibilities as outlined in the principles of ethical behavior prescribed in the *Faculty Handbook*. It is the venue for the examination of possible violations of the standards for research, teaching, and appropriate behavior with colleagues, students, and other supervisees that do not cross legal thresholds, such as behavior that is offensive but does not meet the standard for

discrimination/harassment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

b. Committee Membership

All members of the Committee on Faculty Ethics hold tenure or continued appointments. The committee is composed of:

- i. one faculty member from each college
- ii. one from the University Libraries faculty
- iii. one from the Extension faculty.

The president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice of the senate cabinet, appoints committee members. The senate president designates one committee member to serve as chair. Quorum of the Committee on Faculty Ethics consists of two-thirds of the appointed members.

c. Committee Procedures

Complaints about alleged violations of faculty ethics may be sent by any member of the university community, in writing, to the Chair of the Committee on Faculty Ethics. If the complaint is about the Chair, the complainant should notify the Faculty Senate president of the intent to file a complaint. The Faculty Senate president shall inform the Chair of the Committee on Faculty Ethics of the need to recuse themselves and shall name a new Chair in accordance with the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

A written complaint must include the nature of the alleged violation, the affected parties, and any substantiating evidence that the concerned party possesses (relevant communications, publications, public documents, etc.). Upon receiving the complaint, the Chair of the Committee on Faculty Ethics shall confer with university legal counsel to determine if the issue should proceed to the Committee on Faculty Ethics or another office at the university. If it is not deemed a legal matter, the Chair of the Committee on Faculty Ethics shall bring the matter to the Committee and inform the Faculty Senate president that a complaint has been reviewed by legal counsel and the Committee is commencing work. The Committee shall decide the case. There are three possible outcomes:

- i. The issue does not fall within the charge of the Committee, and the complainant is informed that they should seek resolution by other entities at the university;
- ii. The Committee does not believe the behavior constitutes an ethical violation and votes to take no further action. This decision is communicated to the Faculty Senate president, the complainant, the accused faculty member;
- iii. The Committee decides there is evidence that a violation may have been committed and additional investigation is necessary. The Committee conducts the investigation. The Committee decides what documentation and/or interviews will be needed. Following the investigation, the

Committee votes on recommendations for further action. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Chair of the Committee notifies the Faculty Senate president, the complainant, and the accused faculty member that the investigation has concluded. The accused faculty member is informed of the Committee's decision. If the Committee recommends any sanctions, this decision is communicated to the provost.

## **Section 2. Committee on Reconciliation**

### **a. Committee Charge**

The Committee on Reconciliation offers advice and counsel to faculty members who seek it, particularly in relation to disputes with immediate supervisors or university administrators. The committee has a designated role within the grievance process to assist in resolving disputes that are eligible for consideration as a grievance if so requested by the faculty member. Its purpose is to help facilitate conversations between faculty members and their supervisors with the goal of reaching mutually agreeable solutions. The Committee on Reconciliation operates informally as a facilitator. It meets with the respective parties to determine if there is common ground for resolution of the matter, facilitating a solution that is agreeable to the principal parties and consistent with university policy and practice.

### **b. Committee Membership**

The Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is composed of eight (8) tenured faculty members eligible for membership in the Faculty Senate. Faculty appointed to administrative positions with responsibility for recommending promotions, salary adjustments, and distribution of teaching, research, and Extension assignments are ineligible for membership. The president of the Faculty Senate, in consultation with the cabinet, appoints the chair. The chair may be a member of the Faculty Senate or a member of the Committee on Reconciliation.

## **Section 3. Faculty Review Committee**

### **a. Committee Charge**

The Faculty Review Committee oversees the movement of grievances through the grievance process as prescribed in The Faculty Handbook, provides faculty review of faculty grievances that are not resolved at the college level, and considers appeals in the promotion and tenure or continued appointment process when the provost does not concur with a positive recommendation from the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure or the University Committee on Promotion and Continued Appointment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

### **b. Committee Membership**

Committee members, who are appointed by the Faculty Senate president in consultation with the cabinet, must, at the time of their initial appointment,

- i. have served on their college or equivalent promotion and tenure committee or in the Faculty Senate.
- ii. Members may not serve on a university or college promotion and tenure committee and on the Faculty Review Committee simultaneously.
- iii. The Faculty Review Committee will include a minimum of two (2) faculty members from each college and two (2) each from the University Libraries and Extension faculty.
- iv. Additional members from colleges may be appointed in direct proportion to the colleges' representation in the Faculty Senate.

The president of the Faculty Senate, in consultation with the cabinet, appoints the chair. The chair may be a member of the Faculty Senate or a member of the Faculty Review Committee.

If no eligible faculty members from a particular college or the University Libraries or Extension can be identified who are willing and able to fill a vacant position on the Faculty Review Committee, the Faculty Senate president, in consultation with the cabinet, may appoint the appropriate number of tenured faculty members to complete the membership of the Faculty Review Committee.

## **Article IX. Faculty Senate Work Groups and Internal Standing Committees**

In accordance with the Faculty Senate Constitution, the Faculty Senate may form work groups and internal standing committees as needed that report to the Faculty Senate by way of the operations officer and are subject to the purview of the Senate.

### **Section 1. Internal Standing Committees**

- a. College Faculty Association Committee: The members of the College Faculty Association Committee are the leaders of each of the college faculty associations or their designee. The functions and duties of the College Faculty Association Committee are to strengthen college faculty associations' roles in shared governance, strengthen the communication between all College Faculty Associations and the Faculty Senate, and provide a forum for faculty leadership engagement.
- b. The Policy and Procedure Committee (PPC): The Policy and Procedure Committee shall consist of two or more members of the Senate. Committee members serve three-year terms and are eligible for reappointment as prescribed in Article II of these bylaws. The function and duties of the Policy and Procedure Committee are to annually review and recommend updates to the constitution and bylaws, to assist as needed in drafting documents related to the work of the Senate (resolution comments, etc.), to maintain continuity in documentation across Senate terms, and to assist with maintaining consistency in the writing of documents related to shared governance.

# **Article X. Membership on Commissions and University Standing Committees**

In addition to electing the chairs of the Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, the Commission on Research, and the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies, the Faculty Senate elects senators to the following commissions and university standing committees:

## **Section 1. Commissions**

- a. Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA): one senator.
- b. Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD): one senator.
- c. Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA): nine senators (in addition to the chair).
- d. Commission on Graduate and Professional Student Affairs (CGPSA): one senator.
- e. Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP): two senators (in addition to the chair).
- f. Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA): two senators.
- g. Commission on Research (COR): one senator (in addition to the chair).
- h. Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA): one senator.
- i. Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs (CUSA): one senator.
- j. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP): two senators (in addition to the chair).

## **Section 2. University Standing Committees**

Subject to approval by the president of the university, the Faculty Senate elects senators or faculty members to the following university standing committees (for more details on these appointments, see Article VIII of the University Council Bylaws):

- a. Academic Support: one senator.
- b. Athletics: one senator.
- c. Budgeting and Planning: one senator.
- d. Campus Development: three faculty representatives.
- e. Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy: four faculty representatives.
- f. Employee Benefits: three senators.
- g. Honor Council: three instructional or library faculty.
- h. Information Technology Services and Systems Committee: one senator and one tenured or tenure-track faculty representative.
- i. Intellectual Property: see the University Council Bylaws.
- j. Library: one senator.
- k. Transportation and Parking: three faculty representatives.
- l. University Curriculum Committee for General Education: two senators.

# **Article XI. Faculty Representation on the Faculty Senate of Virginia**

## **Section 1. Membership**

According to the Faculty Senate of Virginia (FSVA) bylaws, the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate elects one senator and as many as four representatives to the FSVA.

Senators serve a three-year term. The term of representatives is determined by each faculty senate, and the practice of the Senate is to elect representatives for one-year terms.

## **Section 2. Functions and Duties**

The functions and duties of the senator and faculty representatives to the FSVA are to:

- a. Represent the position of the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate and the faculty on pertinent matters considered by the FSVA.
- b. Inform the Virginia Tech Faculty Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and of actions taken by the FSVA.
- c. Bring matters of faculty concern before the FSVA.

# **Article XII. Policy Review and Recommendation Process**

The Faculty Senate is charged to develop policy recommendations that advance the interests of faculty and the missions of the university, and to express the views and preferences of faculty regarding all policy recommendations, no matter their point of origin within the system of shared governance.

For policy recommendations of the Faculty Senate to be advanced to the University Council, they must first be proposed as resolutions that are approved by one of its commissions (CFA, CGPSP, COR, and CUSP) and then by the full senate. Resolutions receive two readings in the senate: first reading opens the resolution for discussion and debate and second reading provides an opportunity for further discussion and to vote on the resolution. Resolutions are advanced by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached, except for revisions to the constitution, which require a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting. For more information on the policy review and recommendation process, see below.

More complicated policy work may require the creation of a working group or task force connected to the Faculty Senate or one of its commissions or may be handled as a University Mission Initiative (see Article XII of the University Council Constitution) overseen by a committee that includes Faculty Senate representation but is not a part of the Senate itself. Because policy work of this nature often involves multiple Senate discussions across one or a span of years, it is critical that the Faculty Senate employs a process for gathering the views of senators, reflecting those views back to them, refining those views, conveying them to departments in order to obtain and incorporate the feedback of faculty throughout the university, and repeating these steps as required to facilitate an informed Faculty Senate position on the policy.



The Faculty Senate is expected to conduct its first and second readings of resolutions roughly concurrently with the first and second readings in its commissions, with a week between commission and senate readings whenever possible.

Commission chairs are expected to keep the cabinet and Faculty Senate informed of their work, including the progress of resolutions through the commissions, and to meet with the cabinet and/or the Faculty Senate as necessary to facilitate the development and passage of resolutions.

While resolutions may be written by senators, they cannot be advanced directly by the Faculty Senate and must be processed by one of the Faculty Senate commissions prior to consideration by the Senate.

### **Section 1. Policy Planning**

According to the University Council Constitution: “The senate commissions report to and work with their respective senates in accordance with their respective charges. Chairs of senate commissions shall coordinate their agendas with the appropriate senate and administrative office and meet with senate leadership on a regular basis according to expectations included in senate bylaws.”

Prior to the start of the fall semester’s senate and commission meetings, the Faculty Senate officers will meet with commission chairs and the chair of the Policy and Procedure Committee (PPC) to discuss the commissions’ ongoing and upcoming work and to draft commission plans for the coming year.

The officers will determine the best approach for the initial development of a policy, whether through a commission or by other means, such as a work group or task force, with the understanding that, however a policy recommendation is initially developed, it can only be advanced as a resolution through a commission. Once the cabinet is selected in the fall semester, they will review the commission agendas and policy development plans and recommend revisions. As soon as possible in the fall semester, the Senate will discuss the Senate’s legislative agenda.

### **Section 2. Senate Review of Resolutions from Faculty Senate Commissions**

- a. The commission chair notifies the vice president of the date of the first commission reading of a resolution so that the vice president can schedule the first reading of the resolution in the Senate.
- b. Prior to the first reading in the Senate, the vice president posts the resolution for Faculty Senate review and comment.
- c. Resolutions received prior to the completion of the Faculty Senate agenda (no later than Tuesday in the week of a Faculty Senate meeting) are added to that agenda; those received after that are added to the agenda of the subsequent meeting. Resolutions are also added to the Faculty Senate Cabinet agenda. Once a resolution has been added to these agendas, it is included on the agenda until the Senate has voted on the resolution.

- d. The Faculty Senate cabinet forms a preliminary opinion about the resolution prior to its first reading by the Senate. If necessary, this can take place by electronic communication.
- e. Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate cabinet agendas shall include a section for resolutions that will be voted on by the Senate (see below). For each resolution, the following information is provided: resolution # and name; and the dates of the first and second readings in the Senate.
- f. At first Senate readings, all resolutions are discussed. The extent of the discussion depends on the response of senators, and concerns about the nature of a resolution should be raised at this time. The commission chair leads the discussion, and along with senators who are members of the commission, answers questions about the resolution and takes notes on revisions recommended by the senators.
- g. If there is no clear consensus on whether the Senate supports a resolution, a straw ballot is conducted. If the Senate does not support passage of the resolution, the commission chair will meet with the cabinet to discuss if and how the resolution can move forward, including the possibility of deferring the second commission reading so that the commission has more time to develop the resolution.
- h. At second Senate readings, the commission chair again leads the discussion, after which the Senate votes on the resolution.
- i. The results of the vote on a resolution are sent to the Office of Policy and Governance with the date of the vote and its outcome by the operations officer within two business days so that the resolution can proceed to University Council.
- j. If there is a desire by the Faculty Senate to provide a written comment on a resolution, the process described below will be followed.

Example of what will be included in the Senate agenda for a resolution from one of the Senate commissions:

**CFA 2022-23A:** Resolution to Revise Language in Faculty Handbook Regarding Emeritus or Emerita Designation. **Draft Notice:** 12/2/22. **FS 1st read:** 12/9/22. **2nd Read /Vote:** 1/27/23

### **Section 3. Senate Review of Resolutions from University Commissions and Commissions of Other Senates**

- a. As soon as available, resolutions are posted for Faculty Senate review and comment and senators are notified via email or announcement of the posting. Resolutions received prior to the posting of the Faculty Senate agenda (no later than Tuesday in the week of a Faculty Senate meeting) are added to that agenda; those received after that are added to the agenda of the succeeding meeting.<sup>1</sup> Resolutions are also added to the Faculty Senate cabinet agenda. Once a resolution has been added to these agendas, it is included on succeeding agendas until the comment on the resolution has been completed or the Senate's right to comment has been waived.
- b. The Faculty Senate cabinet forms a preliminary recommendation (waive comment; express support; express disapproval) prior to the consideration of the resolution by the Faculty Senate. If necessary, this can take place by electronic communication (e.g., email).
- c. Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate cabinet agendas include a section for resolutions under consideration by the Senate (see below). For each resolution, the following

information is provided: resolution # and name; when the resolution was received; when a response is due; the date of the senate review; the amount of time after senate review in which to write a response; and the preliminary cabinet recommendation (see examples below).

- d. Resolutions are discussed in the Faculty Senate at the request of any senator. If there is no clear consensus on how the senate wants to respond to a resolution, senators vote on the three options: waive comment; express approval; express disapproval. If no discussion is requested, the meeting moderator indicates the preliminary recommendation of the cabinet to make sure that the Faculty Senate agrees.
- e. Faculty Senate resolution responses are drafted by the cabinet. Senators who are not members of the cabinet may participate in writing the response, provided they can work within the time available. Responses reflect the consensus of the Faculty Senate and are posted for review by the Faculty Senate. If non-cabinet senators participate in drafting a response, editorial disagreements are resolved by the cabinet, which must have a minimum of three days to do so.

Examples of what will be included in the Senate agenda from one of the University Commissions or a commission of other senates:

**COIA 2021-22C:** Resolution Title. **Rcvd:** 1/8/22. **Due:** 2/5/22. **FS review:** 1/21/22. **Time to draft response:** 12 days. **Prelim. rec:** waive

**CUSP 2021-22F:** Resolution Title. **Rcvd:** 1/5/22. **Due:** 2/2/22. **FS review:** 1/21/22. **Time to draft response:** 9 days. **Prelim. rec:** write comment

#### **Section 4. Senate Position Development Process**

- a. The cabinet will identify topics that require the application of this process and inform the PPC chair accordingly.
- b. A member of the PPC will take notes during relevant Faculty Senate discussions.
- c. Based on those notes and other information that may be provided by the cabinet, a member of the PPC will write a summary report. In addition to a summary of the discussion, the report will include a list of open questions and concerns and an initial assessment of the overall Faculty Senate position on the topic.
- d. The report will be presented to the cabinet at the first meeting of the cabinet following the discussion in Senate, which is typically one week later. The author of the report will participate in and take notes on that discussion and write an updated version of the report based on recommendations or alterations suggested by the cabinet.
- e. The report will be made available to senators, reviewed at the next senate meeting, and revised by the PPC based on that discussion. This process will be followed each time the Senate or cabinet discusses the topic.
- f. At the discretion of the cabinet, senators will be asked to share and review the report with the faculty in their departments and inform the Senate of the outcome of those discussions.
- g. At the discretion of the cabinet, the Senate may use periodic straw ballots as a means of ascertaining the support of senators for a given statement or alternative statement options.

- h. Notes on Senate and cabinet discussions and iterations of the statement will be maintained by the Senate to record the statement's evolution and the ultimate position of the Faculty Senate on the topic.

Nothing in this process alters the requirement that all resolutions advanced by the senate are processed initially by commissions and voted on by the senate.

## **Article XIII. Additional Senate Procedures**

### **Section 1. Data Creation and Retention Procedures**

Faculty Senate currently uses SharePoint to preserve and archive essential documents. Access to the Senate SharePoint site is restricted to elected senators and alternates. Important documents for the Senate can be found in the 'Documents to Review' folder for each Senate meeting.

During Faculty Senate meetings, Zoom chat is to be utilized only by senators. Chat contributions are not observed by the convening officers, and these comments will not be reflected in the meeting minutes unless they are elevated verbally by a senator to the entire senate. The chat transcript is not saved, nor is it used to prepare the meeting minutes. Convening officers and those senators who are co-hosts of a Faculty Senate meeting must ensure that the chat transcript is not automatically saved to their local hard drives. Faculty Senate meetings, for those with host and co-host privileges, are not complete until every convening officer and co-host have confirmed with the Operations Officer that the Zoom chat transcript is not saved on their local hard drive.

The closed-captioning feature in Zoom is enabled during Faculty Senate meetings to improve accessibility for our members and guests. Faculty Senate employs Zoom's default close captioning service only. The transcript of the closed captioning is not used in any way in the generation of the meeting minutes. Therefore, Faculty Senate expects convening officers and co-hosts to ensure that the Zoom closed-captioning transcript is not saved on their local hard drive. The Faculty Senate meeting, for those with co-host privileges, is not completed until every convening officer and co-hosts have confirmed with the Operations Officer that Zoom's closed-captioning transcript was not saved on their local hard drive. The host of the Faculty Senate Zoom meeting must ensure that attendees of the Zoom meeting are not able to manually save the chat and closed-captioning transcripts at the time the Zoom meeting and link are created.

More information about how to disable the automatic saving of Zoom's chat and closed-captioning transcripts is provided in the Essential Documents folder on the Faculty Senate SharePoint site. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Senate Operations Officer to keep the information provided in the above-mentioned document current as Zoom settings might change in future versions.

### **Section 2. Meeting Expectations for Senators and Guests**

It is critically important that senators bring concerns and worries from faculty in their units to the Faculty Senate. We refer to the Statement from the Task Force on Freedom of Expression and Inquiry and affirm the Principles of Community. While some of the topics being brought forward by senators can be controversial, we expect that those bringing

forward concerns do so with civility and decorum and employ respectful language. Furthermore, if the concerns include individuals, the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws stipulate that the respective discussion must take place in a closed session.

If a senator wishes to bring a concern to the senate floor involving individuals and knows before the meeting starts, the Faculty Senate Officers appreciate a note so preparations can be made, and the closed session can be noted in the agenda. If there is a need to hold a portion of the meeting as a closed session that is known prior to the start of the meeting, this will be noted in the agenda. During a meeting, a member of the senate can request a closed session in accordance with the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

Faculty Senate meetings are open to any member of the campus community. The location of the in-person meeting of the Faculty Senate is available on the Virginia Tech Governance calendar. Guests can request access information to join the meeting remotely from the Faculty Senate Operations Officer. Senators approached by members of the Virginia Tech community for remote access to the meeting must refer them to the Faculty Senate Operations Officer.

The Faculty Senate expects guests not to engage actively in the meeting unless they are recognized by a convening officer. This expectation includes engaging in the Zoom chat. A guest who wishes to be recognized can do so by raising their hand if they are participating in person or via Zoom. On each Faculty Senate meeting agenda, a member of the cabinet will be identified as the Zoom resource for that meeting. If a senator or guest is experiencing technical difficulties it is expected that the individual will contact the Zoom resource through private message and help will be provided.

If a guest to the senate would like to provide information for the senate and are not comfortable speaking in the meeting, it is expected that the guest provides this information through a direct message to the cabinet member who is serving as the Zoom resource and if appropriate that information will be shared with the rest of the senate both via the chat as well as verbally to those attending the in-person meeting. Guests will be allowed to contribute to a discussion or to comment after senators have had the opportunity and they are recognized by the convening officer. If a guest becomes disruptive or does not adhere to the above expectations, they can be removed from the meeting at the request of the Faculty Senate Officers or members of the Faculty Senate Cabinet.