

The University of Houston-Downtown
Faculty Senate Constitution
Original Adoption: 1978
– Amended Fall 1998 –

The members of the faculty of the University of Houston-Downtown establish this Constitution to provide an instrument for cooperative action in attending to such professional goals as the members may select.

ARTICLE ONE: MEMBERSHIP

Section One. The Faculty Senate shall consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary-treasurer, and representatives from all academic departments of the university.

Section Two. All full-time university employees holding faculty rank [tenured/tenure-track] excluding those on leave and those with administrative duties above the level of department chair, shall be eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate. Those who are eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate shall constitute the Faculty Assembly.

Section Three. Each academic department of each degree granting college shall elect at least one representative to the Senate. Departments with more than seven members eligible to serve in the Senate shall elect one additional representative for every additional seven members or major fraction thereof in the department at the time of the election.

Section Four. The term of office for each representative shall be two years, and no representative may serve more than two consecutive terms. In the event of a vacancy prior to the normal expiration of a term, a special election shall be held within thirty days to fill the unexpired term. The terms shall be overlapping, with one-half of the representatives being elected each year. Initial terms of office of one year or of two years shall be determined by lot.

Section Five. Terms of office shall run from May 1 through April 30. Each department shall elect by secret ballot the number of representatives to which it is entitled prior to April 1. The Committee on Credentials and Elections shall establish guidelines for department elections.

Section Six. A senator may be removed from office by a vote of two-thirds [2/3] of the faculty assembly members of the department which the senator represents. The Committee on Credentials and Elections shall be informed two weeks in advance of the election and shall certify the results. If the senator in question is on the Committee on Credentials and Elections, that senator shall be temporarily excused from the committee.

Section Seven. All faculty members may attend and participate in discussions at the regular meetings, though only members of the Faculty Senate may propose motions and vote.

ARTICLE TWO: OFFICERS

Section One. The faculty senate shall have a president, a vice president and a secretary-treasurer. The vice president and the secretary-treasurer shall be regular voting members of the Senate, but the president shall vote only to break a tie.

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Section Two. Senate officers shall be elected at large through secret ballots distributed by campus mail to all members of the Faculty Assembly. Elections shall be held prior to March 15 each even numbered year. If a member of the Senate representing a department is elected to a Senate office, that Senate position shall become vacant. If no candidate for Senate office receives a majority of the votes cast, a run-off election between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be held within ten days.

Section Three. Terms of all officers shall be two years beginning May 1 immediately following the election. No person may hold the same office for two consecutive terms.

Section Four. In the event of a vacancy prior to the normal expiration of a term, a special election shall be held within thirty days to fill the unexpired term.

Section Five. The functions of the president are to

1. Preside over meetings of the Faculty Senate,
2. Report official Senate action to the President of the university,
3. Ensure that all provisions of the Constitution are executed,
4. Represent the Faculty Senate on appropriate university and/or UH-System Committees and before external community or governmental bodies.

Section Six. The functions of the vice president are to

1. Preside over meetings of the Faculty Senate in the absence of the president,
2. Serve as chairperson of the Committee on Committees,
3. Assist the Faculty Senate president,
4. Represent the Faculty Senate on appropriate university and/or UH-System Committees and before external community or governmental bodies.

Section Seven. The functions of the secretary-treasurer are to

1. Compile a complete set of minutes of the meetings of the Senate and of the Faculty Assembly and make the minutes of regular meetings available to members of the Faculty Assembly,
2. Keep a record of members present at each meeting,
3. Maintain the financial records of the Senate,
4. Conduct all Senate correspondence,
5. Represent the Faculty Senate on appropriate university and/or UH-System Committees and before external community or governmental bodies.

Section Eight. Senate officers may be removed from office by a sixty percent [60%] vote of the Faculty Assembly. A vote for removal is called after a two-thirds [2/3] vote of the Faculty Senate membership or after a petition signed by one-third of all Faculty Assembly members. The Faculty Assembly petition must be presented to and certified by the Committee on Credentials and Elections. The Committee on Credentials and Elections must conduct the recall vote within 10 days of the Faculty Senate vote or of the certification of the Faculty Assembly petition.

ARTICLE THREE: MEETINGS

Section One. The Faculty Senate shall normally meet twice every month during the fall and spring academic semesters. The University President, or designated representative, is invited to sit with the Senate in its regular meetings. An agenda of business to be considered by the Senate shall be posted publicly and distributed to the faculty assembly at least one week prior to each regular meeting.

Section Two. Sixty percent [60%] of the total Senate membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section Three. All meetings of the Senate and its committees shall be conducted according to the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* unless otherwise stipulated by a two-thirds [2/3] vote of the members present.

Section Four. Components of the university other than academic departments may be authorized by the regular Senate membership to elect nonvoting representatives to the Senate. Any component of the university desiring such representation may petition the Faculty Senate for authorization to elect a non-voting representative.

Section Five. A meeting of the Faculty Assembly shall be called at least once a semester by the Faculty Senate president and a formal report made to the Assembly on the activities of the Senate. A quorum at Assembly meetings shall be a majority of the Assembly membership. At Assembly meetings, resolutions may be passed in the name of the faculty by a majority vote of all members present or may be referred to the Committee on Credentials and Elections to be voted on through a referendum. The Senate president must call a special Assembly meeting when requested to do so by a petition signed by twenty-five percent [25%] of the Assembly members. The presiding officer of the Senate shall serve as presiding officer of Assembly meetings.

ARTICLE FOUR: COMMITTEES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Section One. The following committees shall be standing committees of the Faculty Senate: Executive Committee, Committee on Committees, Committee on Credentials and Elections, Budget Committee and the General Education Committee.

The Faculty Senate may appoint such committees as are necessary for reviewing policies and policy changes and for conducting research and/or investigation on topics that are of concern to the faculty. Such committees include but are not limited to the General Education Day Committee and the Government Relations Committee. No department will have more than one member on any committee.

Section Two. The Executive Committee shall consist of the president, the vice president, the secretary-treasurer and two Senate members elected by the Senate. The members elected by the Senate shall serve one-year terms but may be reelected. Functions of the committee are to

1. Prepare and distribute an agenda prior to each Senate meeting,
2. Act for the Senate on routine business and in the implementation of policies and procedures,
3. Receive and file all committee reports,
4. Nominate and appoint faculty members to serve on university and/or UH-System committees or task forces whenever the Committee on Committees is not available to make nominations and the Faculty Senate is not available to appoint representatives.

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Section Three. The Committee on Committees shall consist of the Senate vice president, who shall serve as chair, and other members of the Faculty Assembly elected by the Senate for one-year terms. No department may have more than one member on the Committee on Committees. Representation should be equally divided among the academic colleges. Functions of the committee are to

1. Nominate, to the Senate, faculty members for all Senate committees,
2. Nominate faculty members to run for president, vice president and secretary-treasurer of the Senate,
3. Nominate to the Senate [or to the Senate Executive Committee], faculty members to serve as faculty representatives on the committees or task forces of the university or system
4. Solicit committee nominations from the faculty.

Section Four. The Committee on Credentials and Elections shall consist of three faculty members elected by the Senate for one-year terms. No department may have more than one member on the Committee on Credentials and Elections. Representation shall be equally divided among the degree-granting colleges. Functions of the committee are to

1. Conduct the election of Faculty Senate officers as well as other elections ordered by the Senate. The committee shall circulate to all members of the Faculty Assembly a ballot listing no more than three nominees for each office. Faculty members who wish to run for Senate office but who were not nominated by the Committee on Committees may have their names listed on the ballot by submitting to the Committee on Credentials and Elections a petition signed by at least ten percent [10%] of the membership of the Faculty Assembly,
2. Inform each department through its chair, by February 1 of each year, of the number of representatives that department is entitled to elect to the coming session of the Senate,
3. Investigate and report to the Senate all questions pertaining to elections. Final decisions on such questions shall be made by the full Senate,
4. Decide questions concerning an individual's eligibility for membership in the Faculty Assembly,
5. Establish guidelines for the election of departmental representatives to the Senate.

Section Five. The Budget Committee shall consist of at least one faculty member from each degree granting college appointed by the Senate for one-year terms. No department may have more than one member on the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee consults with the administration and represents faculty views on budgetary matters of concern to the faculty in general. The committee is also responsible for providing information to faculty concerning budgetary matters.

Section Six. The General Education Committee shall consist of one faculty member from each department. The committee addresses educational issues of concern to the faculty.

ARTICLE FIVE: UNIVERSITY STANDING POLICY COMMITTEES

Section One. The following committees are designated as University Standing Policy Committees in PS 01.A.03 Section 2.5, the Academic Shared Governance Policy, dated 10/16/95, and by the Faculty Senate. University Standing Policy Committees are responsible for developing and /or reviewing all university policies that directly affect the academic environment. The Committee on Committees nominates faculty representatives for University Policy Committees. The Faculty Senate then elects the faculty representatives to the university standing policy committees. No department will have more than one faculty representative on any committee.

The University Standing Policy Committees include

Faculty Affairs Committee [PS 01.A.03, §2.5.1]

Academic Policies Committee [PS 01.A.03, §2.5.2]

Curriculum Committee [PS 01.A.03, §2.5.3]

Section Two. University Standing Policy Committees shall have equal representation from the academic colleges whenever possible. Terms of committee members shall run from early May through April 30. Each Committee shall elect a chairperson and a secretary whose primary function is to keep a record of committee actions.

Section Three. The Faculty Affairs Committee is responsible for the review and recommendation of policies pertaining to faculty related issues and any matters affecting the professional lives of faculty. The committee is concerned with such faculty-related issues as rank and tenure, promotions, faculty benefits, course loads, faculty leaves, grievances, and academic freedoms and responsibility.

Section Four. The Academic Policies Committee is responsible for the review and recommendation of policies pertaining to academic standards, practices and regulations.

Section Five. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for the review and recommendation of policies pertaining to the development and approval of new courses, new degree programs and other curriculum changes and requirements.

Section Six. Faculty representatives to other university committees and councils may be selected through standard Committee on Committees procedures or other alternative procedures as agreed to by the Faculty Senate or by election when appropriate. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is responsible for working with the President's office and the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost's office to identify all university committees on which faculty representatives will serve.

Section Seven: Faculty representatives serve on the following councils and on any other councils that may be constituted in the university by virtue of their being nominated to the Credentials and Elections Committee and their election by the faculty assembly members in their academic colleges.

1. University Planning Council
2. University Marketing Council
3. University Academic Affairs Council [PS 01.A.03 Section 2.7.1]

ARTICLE SIX: AMENDING PROCEDURE

Section One. Amendments to this constitution may be presented by any senator at any meeting of the Faculty Senate and shall be voted on at the next regular meeting, provided that there be at least one week between the two meetings. If two-thirds [2/3] of the Senate membership supports a proposed amendment, the amendment shall be presented to the Faculty Assembly for a vote.

Section Two. Between fifteen and thirty days after the Senate approves an amendment, the Committee on Credentials and Elections shall submit by campus mail the amendment(s) and ballots to the Faculty Assembly. Ratification of proposed amendments shall require the support of a two-thirds [2/3] of those voting in the election.

The Constitution was adopted in 1978.

Attachment: PS 01.A.03, Academic Shared Governance Policy, dated 10/16/95