



SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

Faculty Senate Bylaws



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SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY US-90,
Alpine, TX 79832

Table of Contents

PURPOSE AND SCOPE	3
ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE FACULTY SENATE	3
MEMBERSHIP	3
Eligibility	3
Membership structure	4
Selection of members	4
Faculty Membership List.....	4
Terms	4
Expectations of members.....	4
Removal.....	4
Compensation	4
OFFICERS.....	5
Appointment	5
Duties.....	5
MEETINGS	5
Regular meetings	5
Special meetings	5
Quorum.....	5
Transparency and access.....	5
Agenda.....	6
Voting.....	6
Resolutions	6
Parliamentary Procedure.....	6
Attendance recorded	6
COMMITTEES AND Working Groups	6
Standing Senate Working Groups.....	6
Special Committees	6
Working Group Membership	6
Working Group Officers	6
Student Representation	6
Working Group Procedures	7
University Committees	7
Reports.....	7
AMENDMENTS	7

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Sul Ross State University Faculty Senate is established under and ratified by the governing board of Sul Ross State University in accordance with SB 37.

The Faculty Senate shall enhance communication within the University community, strengthen the faculty's commitment to the academic mission, provide a forum for the discussion of university policy, and promote academic freedom and shared governance. The Faculty Senate is advisory only and shall not have final decision-making authority on any matter (Sec. 51.3522(c)).

ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The Faculty Senate represents the entire faculty of SRSU and advises the University administration and, when appropriate, the TSUS Administration on matters affecting the general welfare of the institution. The Faculty Senate may establish standing working groups and special or ad hoc committees to advise the administration on academic and faculty matters. Such standing working groups and special or ad hoc committees are established subject to the authority of the faculty senate's presiding officer. Such working groups or committees are advisory only, and no proposal or recommendation by a working group or committee is binding on the administration. Membership on such bodies shall be limited to faculty members; no administrators at the dean level or above, nor non-faculty, may serve as voting members (Sec. 51.3522(b)(2)).

The Faculty Senate operates within the framework of shared governance, as defined in Texas law. Shared governance shall not be used to obstruct, delay, or undermine necessary institutional reforms or serve as a mechanism for advancing ideological or political agendas-(Sec. 51.3523).

The Faculty Senate may not issue statements or publish reports using the University seal, trademarks, or official resources except in matters directly related to its advisory role (Sec. 51.3522(c)). Nothing in this policy limits a faculty member's right to freedom of association under the U.S. or Texas Constitutions.

MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility

All full-time and part-time faculty members are eligible to serve. Administrators at the dean level or higher and non-faculty may not serve as voting members (Sec. 51.3522(b)(2)).

Part-Time Faculty Membership

Part-time faculty are eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate provided they hold a current faculty appointment, as defined by applicable Board or System policy, at the time of selection and maintain faculty status, as defined by Board or System policy, throughout their term of service.

Faculty status is determined by appointment and is not dependent on continuous or semester-specific teaching assignments. Loss of faculty status during a term shall result in vacancy of the Senate position.

Membership structure

The Faculty Senate shall consist of no more than 60 voting members. Each academic college or school shall have at least two full-time faculty representatives: one appointed by the President and one elected by the faculty of that college or school. Additionally, two at-large part-time faculty representatives shall serve: one elected and one appointed by the President (Sec. 51.3522(b)(3)).

Selection of members

In the spring semester of each year, all faculty shall be polled for interest in serving. Elections of college representatives will take place via electronic ballot before the end of the spring semester. With the exception of academic administrators at the dean level or higher, all full- and part-time faculty members may vote for college representatives. Winners shall be determined by plurality. The remaining list of interested faculty will be forwarded to the President for consideration for appointed roles, however the President retains the discretion to appoint individuals who may not appear on the list.

Faculty Membership List

The Secretary shall maintain the official Faculty Membership List, including dates of service for both elected and appointed members. The list shall be submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval at the first meeting of each fall semester.

Terms

Elected members serve staggered two-year terms and may not be re-elected until two years after their last term ends. Appointed members serve one-year terms and may serve up to six consecutive terms, with a two-year break before reappointment (Sec. 51.3522(e)).

Expectations of members

All members are expected to attend meetings, including summer meetings if called. Absences must be communicated in writing to the officers. College representatives are expected to keep their faculty informed and seek input on matters to be voted upon. Officers represent the entire faculty.

Removal

Members may be removed for failing to perform duties, failing to attend meetings, or other misconduct. Removal requires recommendation from the Provost and approval by the President (Sec. 51.3522(f)).

Compensation

Service on the Faculty Senate and its working groups is an additional duty of the faculty member's employment. Faculty Senate members are not entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses unless approved by the institution (Sec. 51.3522(d)).

OFFICERS

Appointment

In accordance with SB 37, the President of the University shall appoint a Presiding Officer, Associate Presiding Officer, and Secretary from the members of the Faculty Senate. (Sec. 51.3522(g)).

Appointment as Presiding Officer, Associate Presiding Officer, or Secretary does not alter a member's underlying term of service as an elected or appointed Faculty Senate representative. Membership term limits apply regardless of officer designation.

Duties

Presiding Officer (President): Presides over meetings, serves as official representative in communications with administration, conducts meetings according to rules of order. (Sec. 51.3522(h)). The Presiding officer will ensure that the Senate remains informed of relevant communications and information shared with and from university administration

Associate Presiding Officer (Vice President): Assists in organizing meetings, ensures transparency, maintains working group lists, solicits requests for working group service, and serves as Presiding Officer when necessary.

Secretary: Maintains records, including minutes, attendance, vote tallies, and the official Faculty Membership List with dates of service; ensures timely public posting of records.

MEETINGS

Regular meetings

The Faculty Senate shall meet monthly during the fall and spring semesters. The Faculty Senate officers may cancel a meeting if there is insufficient business.

Special meetings

Special meetings may be called by the University President, Provost, Faculty Senate officers, or by petition by at least 20% of Faculty Senate members.

Quorum

Quorum is established when 67% of the senate is in attendance. Once established, quorum remains unless challenged (Sec. 51.3522(l)).

Transparency and access

- All meetings must be open to the public. If more than 50% of members of the senate are present, meetings must be broadcast live with video and audio online (Sec. 51.3522(k)).
- Meeting agendas, minutes, attendance, and vote tallies must be posted publicly within 14 days of each meeting (Sec. 51.3522(m)-(n)). Rules for speaking.
- Meetings are open, but only Faculty Senate voting members, those invited to speak, and presenters on agenda items may address the Senate.

Agenda

- The Faculty Senate officers set the agenda. Any faculty member may submit an item for the agenda to any member of the Faculty Senate. The agenda for the meeting must contain sufficient detail to indicate the items that are to be discussed or that will be subject to a vote; and
- Any curriculum proposals reviewed by the Faculty Senate that will be discussed or voted on at the meeting.
- Agendas and curriculum proposals must be posted at least seven days in advance (Sec. 51.3522(m)).

Voting

Votes may be taken by ballot, voice, show of hands, or electronically. Absentee votes may be filed with the Secretary in advance. All ballots must be preserved until the next regular meeting.

Resolutions

Resolutions supported by fewer than a majority of eligible members shall not be considered by the Component or System (TSUS Rules, Ch. II, Sec. 1.3). Votes of no confidence must be reported to the President, Chancellor, and TSUS Board of Regents (Sec. 51.3522(n)).

Parliamentary Procedure

Meetings shall follow the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise specified.

Attendance recorded

The names of the members in attendance must be recorded at a meeting in which the Faculty Senate conducts business related to:

- A vote of no confidence regarding a University or System administrator; or
- Policies related to curriculum and academic standards.

COMMITTEES AND Working Groups

Standing Working Groups

The Faculty Senate shall establish standing working groups necessary to advise the administration on matters related to the academic mission.

Special Committees

The Presiding Officer may appoint special committees for specific tasks.

Working Group Membership

The Faculty Senate shall determine and place faculty on working groups unless otherwise prescribed. Terms are three years and staggered. Membership lists shall be approved at the beginning of the fall semester by the Faculty Senate. (Sec. 51.3522(b)(2)).

Working Group Officers

Each working group shall elect a Chair and Secretary, serving one-year terms and not more than two consecutive terms.

Student Representation

The Faculty Senate may request student representation on certain working groups and notify the Student Government to appoint those representatives or solicit nominations from faculty.

Working Group Procedures

Working groups meet as needed. A majority constitutes a quorum. Working groups may adopt rules consistent with university policy.

University Committees

Faculty members shall serve on selected University Committees and report to the Senate regularly.

Reports

- Working Groups and University Committee representatives shall submit written reports to the Secretary to be presented at Senate meetings. Working groups and committee representatives are also allowed to provide updates during Faculty Senate meetings when those updates are listed on the agenda.
- Such committees shall be comprised of sitting faculty senators and are established subject to the authority of the Faculty Senate President. Such committees are advisory only and no proposal or recommendation by a committee is binding on the administration.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this policy require approval by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate. Changes to the bylaws require approval by a majority of those casting ballots.