

University Faculty Senate

New Senator Orientation Guide



New Senator Orientation

A. History of the Senate

The University Faculty Senate held its first meeting in Albany on December 15, 1953, five years after SUNY was founded. The idea for a university-wide faculty governance organization was raised in 1950 at the State Teachers College Faculties Association and a committee chaired by Professor J. Murdock Dawley from the Fredonia campus was given the task of exploring the possibility of forming such an organization. The following year, on December 7, 1951, at the Paris Hotel in New York City, representatives from 29 SUNY units formed a committee to write a constitution. On March 19, 1953, the document was completed and submitted to the SUNY campuses for ratification. After three-quarters of the campuses ratified the constitution, the SUNY Board of Trustees approved the creation of the University Faculty Senate on October 8, 1953, and shortly thereafter, the Senate met. The original language called for the President of SUNY (now the Chancellor) to be the presiding officer of the Senate, with the body electing its own Vice Chair and Secretary. At this historic first meeting, the President of SUNY, William Carlson, presided; J. Murdock Dawley was elected Vice Chair, and Loren Petty (Cornell Agriculture) was elected Secretary.

Each campus had equal representation and one vote in the Senate's formative stage, but in short order a proportional system of representation was adopted. A committee structure was utilized, with the number of committees changing over the years. Currently there are six standing committees.

The Faculty Senate serves as a resource on governance for the University. It serves as a deliberative body on educational policies for the SUNY system. In this capacity it issues publications including proceedings, directories, and handbooks on matters such as budget program revision, and presidential searches. It serves as a repository for documents and for tapes of Plenary Sessions.

B. Purpose

The Policies of the Board of Trustees (Article VII. Title A §1, 2) state:

§ 1. *Name*. There shall be a University Faculty Senate of State University of New York.

§2. *Purposes*. The senate shall be the official agency through which the University Faculty engages in the governance of the University. The Senate shall be concerned with effective educational policies and other professional matters within the University.

C. Organization

1. Organization of the Senate

Representation on the Senate is by elected Senators and alternates from the four University Centers, the five Health Science Centers and Colleges, the thirteen Colleges of Arts and Science, the five upstate Colleges of Technology, and the nine Specialized and Statutory Colleges. The number of Senators from each campus is determined by a weighted formula.

As of 2006 there were 48 Senators. The term is for three years with a two term maximum; after an intervening term, one may seek additional term(s). Alternate Senators are also elected to substitute for the elected Senator when the need arises. The Chancellor appoints two Senators, plus Alternates, from System Administration. Senate seats are on a cycle with approximately one-third of the seats up for election each year. The Senate also includes designated observers from principal SUNY constituent groups.

2. Standing Committee Structure

The charges of the Standing committees are reviewed annually at the Fall Planning Meeting. Members of standing committees (except the Executive Committee), including the Chairs, are selected by the Executive Committee and serve one-year terms. Reappointment is a common practice, with three years being the usual period of service.

a. Executive Committee

The Senate's Executive Committee is chaired by the President of the Senate. Other members include the Vice-President/Secretary and five elected Senators, chosen in accord with Article VIII, Section B of the Senate's By-Laws, and one Senator from System Administration chosen by the Chancellor. The Immediate Past President and Vice-President/Secretary serve as ex-officio, non-voting members for one term of two years.

The Executive Committee prepares the Senate's agenda, acts for the Senate (whenever possible) if the Senate is not in session, reacts to items submitted by the Chancellor, individual campuses and such other responsibilities that are in the best interests of the Senate. It meets approximately seven times a year.

b. Committee on Diversity and Cultural Competence

The Committee on Diversity and Cultural Competence will concern itself with issues pertaining to equity, inclusiveness and access, as they are reflected in the curriculum, student body, and personnel of the State University. Among the activities of this committee will be collecting and disseminating information, organizing periodic

meetings and workshops, and providing guidance and recommendations to the Senate so that it may act with the best intentions of all people in mind.

c. Committee on Ethics and Institutional Integrity

The committee will study and make recommendations to the SUNY University Faculty Senate President regarding issues of professional behavior, ethical conduct and institutional integrity as they relate to faculty, students, administrators and other personnel in SUNY and higher education. The committee will gather information and serve as a resource for the Senate and the University.

The Committee will not serve as a disciplinary body nor will it take part in judicial proceedings.

d. Governance Committee

The Committee shall concern itself with University-wide governance and shall provide guidance on matters of campus governance. The Committee shall interact with local governance leaders of the University.

e. Graduate Academic Programs and Research Committee

The Committee serves as a source of professional advice and guidance to the Senate on matters relating to the quality, operation, and encouragement of graduate programs and research. To these ends, the Committee may be concerned with the procedures, criteria, and support of existing and new graduate programs within the University. The Committee may review and recommend policies and procedures relating to moral and ethical concerns of research and graduate studies and other matters involving the furtherance of research and graduate studies within the University.

f. Student Life Committee

The Committee will be concerned with significant educational, developmental, social, cultural, and recreational policies, programs, issues and services that affect the quality of student life and the campus environment of the State University of New York.

g. Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies Committee

The Committee provides advice and guidance to the Senate on matters relating to undergraduate programs and policies throughout the University. To these ends, the Committee may review such areas as existing and proposed curricula, standards for academic degrees, teaching techniques and evaluation, special undergraduate

programs, articulation among units of the State University of New York, and the various aspects of international education and development.

h. University Operations Committee

The Committee shall be concerned with the effective participation of the professional staff in University personnel policies including equal employment practices and affirmative action, The Committee shall also be concerned with the development and administration of the budgetary and planning activities of the University, and to provide advice and guidance on matters related to libraries, computing, and telecommunications.

i. University Programs and Awards Committee

The Committee will concern itself with the enhancement of intercampus educational and scholarly interests of the faculty through the development and strengthening of University-wide programs, grants and awards.

D. The Senate Office

The Senate Office is currently located at System Administration, State University Plaza in Albany. It serves as the Albany office for the Senate President. The complete address and phone numbers are:

University Faculty Senate
State University of New York
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246
Office Phones: (518) 320-1376
(800) 547-1548
Fax Number: (518) 320-1543
Website: www.suny.edu/facultysenate

E. Activities of the Senate

1. Fall Planning Meeting

Each September the University Faculty Senate holds a planning meeting attended by members of the Executive Committee, and members of standing committees. The Planning Meeting provides new committee members with an opportunity to be initiated into the policies, procedures, and operations of the Senate and its Committees. Whenever possible, the Chancellor of the University attends the meeting and provides an overview of issues of current concern to the University.

The agenda for the meeting also includes meetings between the Executive Committee and each of the Standing Committees. The purpose is to review the activities of the Senate planned for the year. The Committees plan their activities for the year according to a set of priorities determined in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Prior to adjournment, all committees meet together for a summary session with the Executive Committee. The chair of each committee reports on its major activities and priorities for the year.

2. Senate Plenary Meetings

Three Plenary Sessions of the University Faculty Senate each lasting two days, are held each academic year, in the fall, winter, and spring. Rotation among the campuses as sites for these meetings with each campus hosting a meeting approximately every ten years, provides an opportunity to visit other campuses. Senators receive electronic and/or paper materials approximately one month prior to each Plenary session. The host institution also provides information about the campus and surrounding area. The Faculty Senate office provides information on accommodations, directions, parking, etc. The host campus also makes provision for taping the entire Plenary.

Senate meetings include a session with the Chancellor with a question and answer period.

The Plenary Session agenda usually includes:

- Chancellor's Report
- President's Report
- Executive Committee Report and Action Items
- Reports of the other Standing Committees and Action Items
- Presentations on important higher education issues
- Sharing of Concerns
- Resolutions from campuses

The Fall Plenary typically includes reports on the Fall Planning Meeting, At the Winter Plenary, the Chair and other members of the Board of Trustees often engage in a formal exchange with the Senate.

3. Faculty Senate Bulletin

The Executive committee shall be responsible for the Faculty Senate Bulletin and shall be its editorial board.

F. Financing the Senate

The Senate budget is derived from assessments made against the campuses. Each campus assessment is based upon the number of senators from that campus. The Senate budget supports the Senate office, the committee structure, Senate Plenary Meetings, and the Fall Planning Meeting. The President receives full released time from campus responsibilities and the Vice President/Secretary half-time release. Expenses of Senators to attend plenary sessions are the responsibility of their respective home campuses.

G. Official Observers

The Policies of the Board of Trustees (Article VII.A,2) denotes the Senate as the official agency through which the University Faculty engages in the governance of the University. In addition to its own deliberations and discussions of matters concerning governance, the Senate recognizes the need to communicate effectively with other constituencies and representatives of other enjoys an ongoing reciprocal relationship with the leadership of the community colleges and the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and the City University of New York Faculty Senate and the SUNY Student Assembly. The chairs of all three organizations are often invited guests at Senate functions.

The University Faculty Senate officially recognizes the following Official Observers:

- The chairperson or designee of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York.
- A designee of the Council of Presidents of the State University of New York.
- The President or appointed designee of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges of the State University of New York.
- The President or appointed designee of the Student Assembly of the State University of New York.
- A representative of the Educational Opportunity Centers of the State University of New York.
- The President or designated alternate of the Association of Council Members and College Trustees of the State University of New York.
- The President or designated alternate of the Alumni confederation.
- The Chair of the Faculty Senate of the City University of New York.

These Official Observers are welcome to attend all sessions of the Senate Plenary meetings and to participate as fully as they wish. As Official Observers they have full parliamentary privileges with the exception of voting rights.

H. Senators and Alternate Senators

In accordance with *Article VI of the By-Laws* the Senator shall attend all Plenary Meetings of the University Faculty Senate and shall make oral and written reports to the campus governance body. Senators should have established local campus lists to post copies of reports to.

The University Faculty Senate has recommended that a University Faculty Senator be a member of the local campus governance executive committee.

The Alternate shall perform all duties of the Senator in the Senator's absence.

In addition, Senators serving as sector representatives to the Executive Committee (see By-Laws Article VIII, Section B) shall have the following responsibilities;

- Represent the sector as a member of the Executive Committee
- Facilitate/chair the Sharing of Concerns session for that sector at Plenary meetings.
- Prepare and present an oral report of the Sharing of Concerns session for delivery to the full Plenary.
- Deliver to the Senate office, Vice President/Secretary and to the Editor of the Faculty Senate Bulletin, within two weeks of each Plenary, a publishable copy of the report of the Sharing of Concerns session for inclusion with the Senate Proceedings.
- Distribute a copy of each report to all members of that Sector.

I. Senator Campus Report

Following each Plenary Session the University Faculty Senator shall make a report to the local campus faculty senate. The report should include the following summaries:

**University Faculty Senate President's report
System Administration Budget Officer's report
University Provost's report
University Chancellor's comments
Special Plenary presentations
University Faculty Senate resolutions**

J. Form of a Resolution

The text of the resolution is preceded by a rationale which lists the reasons for the concern over the issues at hand, the problems involved, and the particular solution sought.

All resolutions must clearly state the specific action the Senate or other entities are expected to take, as well as the individuals or groups who should be informed of this action (usually the Chancellor).

Resolutions should be presented on behalf of the Senate, and each resolution, together with its supporting rationale, must be submitted separately from the committee report or any other materials.

Resolutions are directed to:

- The President of the University Faculty Senate
- The Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate
- The Chancellor
- The Chancellor for transmission to campus presidents
- Senators to transmit to their campuses
- Senators to refer to campus governance bodies

Resolutions that originate on a campus must be passed by the campus governance body. Each campus resolution should be transmitted to the President of the Senate, The Senator from that campus should try to have the resolution passed by the governance body early enough to reach the Senate Office at least four weeks before a scheduled Plenary, allowing it to be placed on the agenda and distributed in the Meeting packets. Resolutions received in time for the Executive Committee meeting the night before the Senate Plenary session may be incorporated into the New Business section of the Agenda.

An example of a resolution in an appropriate form follows:

TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate

FROM: Executive Committee

RE: Resolution: Dates for Election of Senators and Alternate Senators

DATE: April 25, 2009

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS to be most useful the Faculty Senate Direction and the SUNY Campus Directory needs to include timely and accurate information about University Faculty Senators and Alternate Senators; and

WHEREAS determination of representatives from each sector type to Faculty Senate Executive Committee occurs at the Spring plenary; and

WHEREAS Senators need to know who among them is eligible for selection:

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE It RESOLVED that the University Faculty Senate directs the Campus Governance leaders to change their local senate/assembly by-laws, if necessary, so that local dates for election of Senators and Alternate Senators comply with SUNY Faculty Senate By-laws' date, April 1, for receiving results of the election of Senators and Alternate Senators (Article III, Section 3).

K. Coding of Resolutions

The disposition of each resolution brought to the Plenary will be recorded as follows:

The first number in the code indicates the meeting number; the second indicates the resolution number; the third represents the disposition. The numbers are followed by the source of the resolution.

An example: 116-01-1 Executive means: At the 116th regular meeting of the Faculty Senate the first resolution introduced was adopted, and it was submitted by the Executive Committee.

The third number showing the disposition of the resolution is as follows:

1. indicates adoption of a resolution; a resolution passed unanimously has the word without dissent added to the code;
2. indicates defeat of a resolution;
3. indicates recommittal of a resolution or referral to another committee;
4. indicates tabling of a resolution;
5. indicates indefinite postponement of a resolution.

L. Reimbursement Procedure

Travel expenses of Senators to the three Plenary Sessions are provided through local campus budgets; therefore Senators must adhere to campus budget procedures to secure reimbursement for travel and lodging. Senators who simultaneously serve as Committee Chairs have their travel to the Plenary Sessions funded through their local campus.

Travel to Plenary Sessions by Executive Committee members and Committee Chairs who are not Senators, and Campus Governance Leaders is supported by the Senate. Those requiring air travel for Plenary Sessions need to contact the Senate office. Necessary approvals will be obtained and arrangements made by the Senate secretary.

Expenses for travel in connection with meetings of Senate Committees or the Fall Planning Meeting are paid for by the Senate. Travel must be in a cost-effective manner consistent with state policies, rules, and regulations. Travelers need to keep all receipts, including those for lodging, meals, transportation, and tolls. Reimbursement rates and travel restrictions change frequently; Campus business offices have information on current rates. Travelers must provide original receipts, not copies.

Use of rental cars is encouraged for travel supported by the Senate. The State of New York has a contract with Enterprise Rent A Car. Contact the Senate office for more information or visit the website at www.suny.edu/facultysenate.

At the completion of the trip, a New York State Travel Voucher and a Statement of Automobile Travel (if applicable), are filed with the Senate Office. These forms are available on the Faculty Senate website and usually at meetings. When filling in forms, please note that the Agency is SUNY System Administration, not the local campus. Please see instructions on the Faculty Senate website and complete the forms accordingly. Contact the Senate office with questions and concerns about travel.

Other travel expenses for those committee members who are appointed by the Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate are funded through the Senate's budget and will be reimbursed by the Senate office. Likewise, expenses of persons invited as consultants to committees shall be paid by the Senate. The Senate will also assume responsibility for funding the travel expenses of its representatives who are observers at meetings or committees of other agencies or constituencies if approved by the President of the Senate.

Travel expenses of observers at meetings of the University Faculty Senate or its committees shall be funded by the agencies or constituencies that the observers represent.

