

SUNY ULSTER ACADEMIC SENATE CONSTITUTIONAL BYLAWS

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Article I. Name

The name of the organization is the SUNY Ulster Academic Senate. On September 6, 2000, the Ulster County Community College Board of Trustees recognized and approved this organization in support of the belief that it is appropriate and good for the College to involve teaching faculty directly in assisting the administration and the Board of Trustees in the formulation of academic policies. On this date, the Board of Trustees also accepted this document in support of the belief that professional involvement in the governance of an institution of higher education is desirable and will prove beneficial to Ulster County Community College

Article II. Mission

Section 1. The Academic Senate shall exist to:

- a. function as the institutional voice of the full-time and adjunct teaching faculty on matters of academic and educational policies, procedures and issues in the governance of SUNY Ulster;
- b. serve as an advisory body to the president in her/his capacity as chief executive of SUNY Ulster for the formulation and development of its educational policies and procedures;
- c. provide a forum for the faculty to discuss and debate educational and academic issues and, when appropriate, to transmit to the president its resolutions and recommendations on matters including, but not restricted to: curricula; requirements for degrees; advancement and graduation standards; and the establishment, modification or discontinuance of any academic credit course, curriculum or program, or department;
- d. provide an arena for the faculty to identify and discuss pedagogical strategies, issues, and concerns that are deemed relevant to enhance faculty development and attainment of educational goals and objectives;
- e. promote the general academic climate by ensuring academic quality, securing academic integrity, and protecting academic freedoms;
- f. promote communication and understanding among all segments of the College community;
- g. provide a conduit for the president and/or the Board of Trustees to solicit and secure advisory input from the teaching faculty on issues and concerns for the overall operation and governance of the College;
- h. initiate action on all matters with which the faculty is concerned;
- i. support the administration, when appropriate, in its relationship with regulatory bodies and outside agencies.

Article III. Membership

- Section 1.** The membership of the Academic Senate shall consist of all current full-time and adjunct teaching faculty at SUNY Ulster.
- Section 2.** For voting purposes, each full-time faculty shall be entitled to one vote. Adjunct faculty representatives will each have one vote; their total number shall not exceed twenty percent of the full-time faculty for that academic year.
- Section 3.** Adjunct faculty will elect their representatives in whatever manner they deem appropriate.
- Section 4.** The chief academic officer shall be a non-voting ex-officio member.

Article IV. Officers & Representatives

- Section 1.** The officers of the Academic Senate shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.
- Section 2.** Officers, at-large representatives, Faculty Council of Community College (FCCC) representatives, and standing committee chairpersons must be full-time members of the teaching faculty.
- Section 3.** Officers, standing committee chairpersons, and elected at-large representatives shall not simultaneously serve in any other of these respective capacities.
- Section 4.** Officers of the Academic Senate shall not be simultaneously officers in the Faculty Association.
- Section 5.** The Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall preside at all meetings, regular and special, of the Senate. This person will also be the Chairperson of and preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee. The Chairperson or his/her designee shall attend all IAC or DAC meetings. The Chairperson or his/her designee shall also attend all public SUNY Ulster Board of Trustee meetings and communicate on faculty activities to the Board in an official report performed at least quarterly at a Board of Trustees meeting and shall also report to the faculty regarding Trustee deliberations and actions. The Chairperson shall also meet periodically with a designated Board of Trustee member designated by the board to discuss those matters associated with the established mission of the SUNY Ulster Academic Senate. This officer shall have such authority and responsibilities as are appropriate to the office as specified in these constitutional by-laws.
- Section 6.** The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson whenever the Chairperson is absent, including presiding at regular and special meetings of the Academic Senate as well as meetings of the Executive Committee. The Vice-Chairperson shall be the Senate representative on the College Cabinet.
- Section 7.** The Secretary shall generate and maintain a written record of the minutes of all full Academic Senate meetings and all official correspondence; keep a current

official roll of faculty members, both full-time and adjunct, reflecting their eligibility to participate in faculty elections; be responsible for circulating an agenda, prepared by the Executive Committee, for all meetings along with the minutes of the previous meeting to all appropriate individuals at least 48 hours prior to the time of the next meeting; and ensure that a copy of all minutes and important documents are archived by the end of the academic year.

Section 8. The faculty elected FCCC Delegate shall represent their campus faculty to the Faculty Council. Delegates should actively seek out the multiple perspectives of the faculty they represent as well as the positions of the local faculty governance bodies on academic matters. The FCCC Delegate reports to their campus leaders on the deliberations and actions taken by the Faculty Council and makes periodic reports to the faculty. The FCCC Delegate shall attend Faculty Council plenary meetings held once per semester at a community college in New York to discuss issues of importance and serves as an active voice for academic issues at community colleges. The faculty elected FCCC Alternate fulfills the voting responsibilities of the Delegate only in his/her absence.

In addition, Alternates are often participating members of FCCC committees, and may serve as committee chairs or vice-chairs. They are encouraged to join and participate fully in the work of the Faculty Council. If neither the Delegate nor the Alternate Delegate can attend a meeting, the Academic Senate through the Executive Committee shall determine a means of providing a voting representative to the meeting

Section 9. The officers and at-large representatives of the Academic Senate will be elected for one-year terms of office. A person may not be elected to more than two consecutive terms for any office of the Senate, representative at-large, or FCCC representative, but may run for a different office. Officers and elected representatives of the Senate shall assume office on June 1st of the year in which elected and serve until the following May 31st except for the FCCC representatives whose term shall expire after serving a three year term.

Section 10. Faculty members holding governance and representative positions have the following responsibilities:

- a. A faculty member elected to or accepting a position in the faculty governance structure shall be obligated to fulfill the duties of that position;
- b. Any officer, committee chairperson, FCCC representative, or at-large representative who fails to attend any three meetings during the academic year will be considered for removal by the Executive Committee;
- c. The Executive Committee, at its discretion and subject to the approval of the Senate, may determine to remove any officer, committee chairperson, FCCC representative, or at-large representative that it deems derelict in appropriately discharging the duties of that office, or position.
- d. Charges stating failure to fulfill responsibilities on the part of officers, committee chairpersons, FCCC or elected at-large representatives or appointees may be initiated in writing by any member of the Senate. The Executive Committee shall hear charges laid before it and shall make

decisions accordingly. The decisions shall be reported to the Academic Senate. The Senate may exercise the right of review.

Section 11. It is expected that the College shall provide the Chairperson of the Senate clerical support and six hours of academic release time per academic year to be utilized for Academic Senate affairs during her/his term of office.

Article V. Academic Senate Meetings

- Section 1.** The Academic Senate may hold the following kinds of meetings:
- a. regular meetings, which will be held at least three times per semester from September through May. (The dates of these meetings will be included in the College calendar.)
 - b. special meetings, which may be called by the Chairperson of the Academic Senate or by written request of ten members of the Senate to the Executive Committee.
- Section 2.** It is the general policy of the Academic Senate to open its meetings to all interested observers. It should be recognized, however, that occasionally there may be cause to limit this policy. In such cases, it is the prerogative of the Chairperson to decide why and how an accommodation will be made. If the decision must be made before the Senate meeting, the Chairperson shall consult with the Executive Committee; if the decision must be made during a Senate meeting, the decision will be made by a majority vote of those members present and voting.
- Section 3.** Special meetings may be open to any or all segments of the College community under such rules and regulations as the Academic Senate may establish.
- Section 4.** The agenda for each regular meeting shall be distributed 48 hours before the meeting.
- Section 5.** The meetings shall be conducted according to latest version of Robert's Rules of Order, which shall be the official source of standard parliamentary procedure and authority. In the event that some procedure established in the current version of Robert's Rules of Order conflicts with these locally approved Constitutional Bylaws, the provisions of these bylaws shall supersede.
- Section 6.** Presence of one-third of the full-time teaching faculty shall constitute a quorum.
- Section 7.** Included as the first item on the agenda will be the opportunity for the chief academic officer to report to or address the teaching faculty. The Executive Committee may also permit, at its discretion, the opportunity for others, including the president of the College, students, etc., to address the Academic Senate.
- Section 8.** Ten members of the Academic Senate, by affixing their signatures to a proposal submitted to the Executive Committee, can require the Executive Committee to include an item and/or motion on the agenda of the next meeting.

- Section 9.** Individual members of the community at-large may be asked to address Academic Senate meetings to offer advice and recommendations or to supply information in fields in which they have acknowledged expertise or authority.
- Section 10.** Nothing in these constitutional by-laws shall be interpreted as limiting the freedom of the Academic Senate to consider any matter at any time.
- Section 11.** No verbatim recording of the proceedings of Academic Senate meetings by mechanical or electronic means shall be allowed except by specific permission of the Chairperson of the Senate and with two-thirds consent of members present and voting.
- Section 12.** A special meeting must be called within 30 days of Executive Committee receipt of a written request for that meeting from ten members of the Academic Senate. Email notice of a special meeting must be provided to the membership at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- Section 13.** No business shall be conducted at a special meeting except the business stated in the call of the meeting, unless two-thirds of members present and voting decide to suspend this rule.
- Section 14.** Any member of the Academic Senate may request a secret ballot. Such secret ballots, conducted by the Chairperson, shall read “yes,” “no,” and “abstain.” It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to have a sufficient supply of preprinted ballots available for each meeting.
- Section 15.** Proxy votes shall be considered in voting on any issue provided they are submitted in writing, are signed and dated, and authorize a designated faculty member to vote on one specific issue. Faculty members holding proxy votes shall so inform the Chairperson before voting begins on the issue in question. Absentee ballots may not be counted toward a quorum.

Article VI. Election Procedures

- Section 1.** Any Academic Senate member may request the elections for any officer, at-large representatives to the Executive Committee, or FCCC representatives be conducted by secret ballot.
- Section 2.** Regular elections for officers of the Academic Senate, at-large representatives to the Executive Committee, and FCCC representatives shall take place at the last regular Senate meeting for the academic year in which the term expires.
- Section 3.** Special elections shall be held upon the occurrence of a vacancy in the composition of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall determine if such a vacancy exists and when the special election shall be held. Elections shall be held in accordance with standard parliamentary practices.
- Section 4.** Eight class weeks prior to the end of regularly scheduled classes in the spring semester, the Chairperson of the Senate shall notify all members of the date, no later than May 15th, when election of officers and representatives to the Executive Committee will be held and of their right to be nominated.

- Section 5.** At the same time that the Chairperson notifies the faculty of the upcoming election, she/he will make known the composition of a Nominating Committee composed of no fewer than three faculty selected earlier by the Executive Committee. Any member interested in becoming a candidate for any office or representative position must submit in writing that intention to a member of the Nominating Committee.
- Section 6.** One week prior to the election, the Nominating Committee will compile a list of the candidates and disseminate it to the full membership.
- Section 7.** Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the time of the election. No member shall be nominated or elected in absentia to any office without the nominee's signed written consent. Nominations from the floor will be added to the prepared ballot.
- Section 8.** The sequence of voting shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, at-large members of the Executive Committee, followed by FCCC Delegate, then FCCC Alternate when applicable.
- Section 9.** A group of three members other than officers or elected representatives at the meeting shall be drafted by the Chairperson to register and certify all secret ballots and voting outcomes.
- Section 10.** No one shall be declared elected to any office or representative position unless she or he receives at least 50% plus one of the ballots cast. In the event two or more candidates receive 50% or fewer of the ballots cast, run-off elections will be held.
- Section 11.** In run-off elections for Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, or FCCC Delegate/Alternate, each balloting shall reduce the number of candidates by one candidate, that individual with the fewest votes being dropped from consideration.
- Section 12.** The two nominees receiving the highest number of votes for at-large representative shall be elected. In the event that a vote elects one and results in a tie for two other candidates, all three will serve as at-large representatives to the Executive Committee for the year elected.

Article VII. Committee Structures

- Section 1.** The Academic Senate shall have the following standing committees:
Executive Committee, Academic Standards Committee, Curriculum Committee, Assessment Committee, Instructional Resources Committee, and Pedagogic Committee. The Senate may establish standing and ad hoc committees in addition to those specified. The Executive Committee shall meet with the members of the College administration to discuss the need for faculty representation on campus committees outside the Senate structure; as necessary, the Executive Committee shall recommend faculty representatives to those committees.

- Section 2.** All standing committees shall be comprised in such fashion that each academic department may have representation. There are currently eight academic departments established by the College. These are: Music, Art, Design, Communications & Theater; Biological Sciences; Business & Professional Studies; Criminal Justice & Human Services; English, Foreign Languages, & Philosophy; Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math; Nursing; Social Sciences, & Education.
- Section 3.** With the exception of the Executive Committee, standing committees shall consist of representatives selected by each department. The Executive Committee shall consist of the three elected officers plus, normally, two at-large representatives elected by the Senate. As noted in Section 12 of Article VI, however, there may be three at-large representatives in the event of a tie between two nominees at the time of election. The immediate past chairperson of the Senate and the faculty elected FCCC Delegate shall also serve as non-voting, advisory members of the Executive Committee.
- Section 4.** Each department may design and execute the procedures and methods it will employ in selecting its representative to each standing committee. A department may choose to have a faculty member outside its area serve as its representative. At the first department meeting of the academic year, each department will select its representatives to serve on the standing committees for the current academic year, and each department chairperson will relay that information to the Executive Committee.
- Section 5.** Each standing committee, with the exception of the Executive Committee, may opt to include ex-officio, non-voting members who represent other segments of the College community.
- Section 6.** The Executive Committee will assign a pro tempore chairperson for each standing committee for its inaugural organization meeting of the academic year in the fall. With the exception of the Executive Committee, the members of each standing committee shall elect a chairperson from its membership to guide that committee for the coming academic year.
- Section 7.** Each committee may adopt whatever operating procedures, guidelines, and rules it deems prudent for the conduct of its deliberations, subject only to the will of the Academic Senate.
- Section 8.** Each committee shall annually review and, if necessary, revise its operational procedures.
- Section 9.** Each committee may invite and/or involve any individual or entity in its proceedings that it deems will be helpful in its deliberations and attainment of its charges.
- Section 10.** Each committee shall be responsible for periodically advising the Academic Senate on its deliberations and progress in attaining its goals and submit proposals, as necessary, for action by the Senate. Committee chairpersons shall be responsible for advising the Executive Committee if and when their committees desire to submit a proposal to the Senate so this proposal may be reflected in the agenda for that meeting.

- Section 11.** Written annual reports shall be received by the Executive Committee from all standing and ad hoc committees within 30 days of the final Senate meeting of the academic year.
- Section 12.** The responsibilities of the standing committee chairpersons will include but not be limited to:
- a. in concert with committee members, establishing meeting times and places (including reserving the location with the Registrar's office);
 - b. asserting leadership in guiding and directing the committee to attainment of its objectives;
 - c. reporting periodically and as needed to the Academic Senate on committee deliberations, developments, and progress;
 - d. preparing and submitting to the Secretary a written final report detailing the work and accomplishments of the committee.
- Section 13.** No person shall be elected to be chairperson for more than two consecutive terms.
- Section 14.** Each standing committee of the Academic Senate may appoint subcommittees subject to approval by the Executive Committee, with subsequent notification to the Senate provided that:
- a. the charge to each such subcommittee is clearly stated in writing;
 - b. the manner in which committee members are to be selected is provided to the Academic Senate.
- Section 15.** The Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall be empowered, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to form ad hoc committees when deemed necessary as well as to select the members and chairperson of such committees.
- Section 16.** The Secretary of the Academic Senate shall be responsible for archiving the annual written reports submitted by the standing committees.

Article VIII. Standing Committees

A. Executive Committee

- Section 1.** The Executive Committee shall carry on the work of the Academic Senate between meetings. It shall establish the agenda for all regular and special meetings and shall be responsible for providing direction to the Senate in striving to fulfill its mission.
- Section 2.** The Executive Committee shall also be responsible for appropriate execution, when and where necessary, of actions approved by the Academic Senate and the will of the faculty. This charge will include transmitting to the president all appropriate resolutions and recommendations, along with the accompanying rationale and justification.
- Section 3.** The Executive Committee shall monitor and ensure that all resolutions and recommendations approved by the president and Board of Trustees are implemented.

- Section 4.** The Chairperson of the Academic Senate, as chief executive, and the Executive Committee shall be entrusted to ensure allegiance and fidelity to the constitution and its by-laws in all the deliberations of the Senate, its committees, and other entities as may be formed.
- Section 5.** The Executive Committee shall be vested with the authority to rule in questions of delinquency from the constitution and shall be required to ensure that as the Senate approves constitutional amendments, they are reflected in appropriate modification(s) of the constitution.
- Section 6.** The Executive Committee shall resolve jurisdictional disagreements, should any arise between committees.
- Section 7.** The Executive Committee, in consultation with the standing committee chairpersons, shall recommend and work with the chief academic officer to establish the calendar of governance committee meetings for the subsequent academic year. The Executive Committee shall schedule at least one meeting per academic year with the Senate's standing committee chairpersons or delegated committee representatives in an effort to improve communications and the coordinated efforts and responsibilities of the faculty as established by these by-laws.
- Section 8.** In event of a disagreement between Senate committees as to their charges, the Executive Committee will decide which committee receives the charge.

B. Curriculum Committee

- Section 1.** The Curriculum Committee shall study, within the context of the philosophy and mission of the College, the following matters, among others, and submit to the Academic Senate recommendations pertaining to them:
- a. proposals and revisions concerning new and/or revised academic courses, programs, and curricula;
 - b. new as well as existing course offerings and their fulfillment of current educational needs, and possible additions, deletions, or modifications in course offerings;
 - c. academic support services as they impact academic programs.
- Section 2.** The Curriculum Committee shall be responsible for formulating and adopting as well as promulgating to the entire College community the guidelines, procedures, and rules it will employ in entertaining any and all recommendations and proposals.
- Section 3.** Due to the high volume of and the importance of timeliness in the implementation of curriculum proposals, a permissible standard procedure is to email all voting faculty members of the Senate all recommendations and proposals approved by the Curriculum Committee and thereby afford Senate members with the opportunity to review them. If six or more faculty members object to any of the approvals, an email statement of that objection must be emailed within 10 working days to both the committee chair and the chair of the senate in order to register their objection

The curriculum committee chair will remove that proposal from the list of proposals approved at the meeting. The senate chair will place that proposal on the agenda for the next Senate meeting for discussion and adjudication. If there are no regular Senate meeting scheduled for the remainder of the semester, or it is otherwise deemed appropriate, a special meeting of the Senate may be called for this purpose.

All uncontested proposals will be forwarded to the President of the college for his approval 10 working days from the date that the approved curriculum committee proposals were emailed to the voting members of the Senate. The chair of the curriculum committee will include a list of the forwarded proposals in his or her monthly report to the Senate.

Nothing in this established procedure is meant to prevent discussions and regular deliberative process regarding curricular and academic matters from being discussed and matters resolved under the normally proscribed procedures of democratic process and parliamentary procedure.

Section 4. The Curriculum Committee will include a faculty member from each department who has been full time for at least three years.

Section 5. The Curriculum Committee must include ex-officio, non-voting members who represent each of the following: the Registrar's Office, Library, and Transfer Office.

C. Academic Standards Committee

The Academic Standards Committee shall formulate and propose to the Academic Senate recommendations concerning academic standards in light of the philosophy of the College and its tradition of academic excellence. It shall concern itself with, but not be limited to:

- a. academic advisement;
- b. grading and examination systems and procedures;
- c. academic status, academic honors, and graduation standards;
- d. policies and regulations concerning admissions, and separation from or reinstatement to the College.

D. Assessment Committee

The charge of the Assessment Committee is to determine how the assessment of educational (student learning) outcomes offers SUNY-Ulster opportunities for strengthening its credit-bearing programs and enhancing their relative accountability. In keeping with shared governance, the committee will provide, as needed, University-wide perspective on student assessment and guide the development of effective assessment process for credit bearing and developmental courses and programs through its recommendations. Toward the accomplishment of this charge, the committee members will identify gaps in assessment information; recommend changes in assessment processes; review the usefulness of assessment strategies, reporting strategies, and feedback processes; and guide the use of assessment data utilized to inform decision-making in an effort to continuously improve credit courses and programs offered at SUNY Ulster. The Assessment Committee will maintain close communications with the Academic Senate and other appropriate administrative bodies, and academic departments.

Objectives:

- a. to review, develop and recommend institutional assessment procedures and policies.
- b. to develop mechanisms for using assessment data in decision-making.
- c. to review the usefulness of assessment strategies, reporting strategies and feedback processes of other, New York two year colleges.
- d. to review the place of pre-assessment models at SUNY-Ulster.
- e. to carry out other duties as charged by the Academic Senate.

E. Instructional Resources Committee

Section 1. The Instructional Resources Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending policies governing the development and use of all learning and instructional resources. This Committee shall evaluate and recommend policies regarding instructional resources and services in support of class-room instruction and the overall learning process. The Instructional Resources Committee shall also identify resources including hardware, software, space, personnel, and related supplies and review and/or develop guidelines and policies related to their use.

Section 2. The Instructional Resources Committee, and the members that comprise it, shall also ask for representation on any College-wide Information Technology or Distance Learning Committee. The Instructional Resources Committee will thus represent faculty input and interest on these committees while also advising the Academic Senate of the developments of the larger College-wide initiatives.

F. Pedagogic Committee

The Pedagogic Committee shall be responsible for considering matters relevant to the art and science of teaching and recommending or conducting programs, discussion, workshops, etc. that in its judgment may facilitate the professional growth of the teaching faculty or its ability to fulfill its responsibilities to the goals and mission of the College. It may address any variables deemed to affect teaching and its success.

Article IX. Committee & Academic Senate Recommendations & Outcomes

Approved recommendations from standing committees will be brought to the Academic Senate for consideration and disposition. Recommendations and resolutions originating from committees or from the floor must be approved by a majority of those members present and voting. When appropriate, approved recommendations or resolutions shall be forwarded in writing by the Chairperson of the Academic Senate to the president of the College. Policies approved by the president of the College shall be subsequently submitted to the Board of Trustees for consideration and, upon approval, become College policy. Should the president of the College decline to approve or fail to act on the policy or procedural recommendations

emanating from the Academic Senate, the president will provide to the Senate the rationale for her/his decision. This written justification will be provided to the Chairperson of the Senate. After the Senate has considered this information, it may then request, by majority vote, reconsideration of the recommended policy/procedure.

Article X. By-Laws of the Academic Senate

- Section 1.** The Academic Senate, since it derives its authority from the faculty, must be responsive to referendums of the faculty, and the faculty must approve all constitutional by-law amendments.
- Section 2.** A petition for a constitutional by-law amendment must be presented to the Chairperson of the Academic Senate. Within two weeks after receiving the petition, the Chairperson shall distribute a written copy of the proposed amendment to all members; said petition must be submitted in writing to the membership at least 30 days prior to coming to the floor. The Executive Committee will then include that petition on the agenda for consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the Senate. A proposed amendment must receive a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.
- Section 3.** By-laws become approved by the faculty by advance email notification of 30 days prior to coming to the floor of the Senate and a two thirds vote of those members present and voting at an Academic Senate meeting. If approved, the Chairperson of the Academic Senate shall present the amendment/s to the president of the College, who shall present it to the Board of Trustees for final approval or rejection.
- Section 4.** At least every three years, an ad hoc committee of the Academic Senate shall be established to review the constitutional by-laws and make recommendations for necessary changes, if any.
- Section 5.** No standing committee shall be created or abolished except by faculty approved amendment of these constitutional by-laws.