

# Constitution of the Faculty Senate of Westchester Community College

Spring 2012

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## **Preamble**

We, the Faculty of Westchester Community College, in order to assume and execute our professional responsibilities as a faculty of the entire college, to provide the institutional means by which the faculty voices its opinions and recommendations to the College Administration, to enable an effective system of shared governance for the College, to create formal and official channels of communication between the Faculty and Administration of the College, and in accordance with educational policy and recommendation of the State University of New York, and with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Westchester Community College Federation of Teachers and the College Administration, do hereby establish this Constitution.

## **Objectives**

The Faculty Senate is the body recognized as officially representing the faculty in its consultations with the administration on academic and faculty status matters. The term “faculty” applies to individuals who work as teaching faculty and primarily identify as such, librarians, Academic Support Coordinators, and counselors.

The Senate’s objectives are

- A. to formulate and recommend to the President policies and procedures, unless otherwise restricted by law and the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, regarding: curricular offerings, degree requirements, student course placement, academic standards, the academic calendar, the campus environment, aspects of student life related to educational processes, academic assessment, recruitment and retention of students, maintaining and increasing student enrollment, academic resources, and modes of instruction;
  
- B. to gather data and solicit opinions and advice from members of the WCC community which will assist in the formulation of the above recommendations;
  
- C. to oversee the official procedures by which the faculty recommends personnel actions including reappointment, promotion, tenure, and the granting of sabbatical leaves;

- D. to create formal structures and procedures for collaborating with the administration on issues related to the academic mission of the college, except in situations where procedures are specified by the Collective Bargaining Agreement;
  
- E. to provide a forum for discussing issues of general concern to the faculty, including by inviting outside speakers when appropriate;
  
- F. to create and maintain an atmosphere of academic freedom and intellectual integrity at the College;
  
- G. to contribute to the cultural environment at the College;
  
- H. to act as the voice of the faculty in recognizing achievements of members of the WCC community;
  
- I. to act as the voice of the faculty in expressing its concern for personal hardships faced by members of our community; and
  
- J. to maintain and develop relations of the faculty with students, with the Board of Trustees, and with the Foundation of Westchester Community College.

## **Composition**

The Faculty Senate is composed of two types of representatives: voting faculty members and ex-officio administrators and students. All representatives, as well as the entire College body, are invited to attend Faculty Senate meetings. Faculty member senators are permitted to vote, and voting faculty representatives and ex-officio representatives are permitted to engage in Senate discussions. All other attendees must be recognized by the Presiding Officer, if they wish to contribute to a Senate discussion.

### **I. Organization of Senate: A Definition of Roles**

The Senate depends on the coordinated efforts of the following individuals and committee organization. Definitions of these roles follow.

- a. Executive Committee
- b. Presiding Officer
- c. Assistant Presiding Officer
- d. Treasurer
- e. Secretary
- f. Parliamentarian
- g. Faculty Council of Community College Delegate
- h. Senator
- i. Committees
- j. Executive Committee

### **Executive Committee**

In the spirit of collaborative leadership, the executive committee will coordinate the collective efforts of the Faculty Senate.

- The composition of the Executive Committee follows: the Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and FCCC Delegate (non-voting), all of whom must be faculty members.
- The Executive Committee will conduct the affairs of the Senate within the parameters of its Constitution.
- When the Senate is unable to be convened, the Executive Committee will conduct the affairs of the Senate within the parameters of its Constitution.
- The Executive Committee will meet once a month and as needed, if additional meetings are necessary.

## **Presiding Officer**

Role: The primary responsibility of the Presiding Officer is to represent the faculty to the Administration, the Foundation, the Board of Trustees, and the College at large. In fulfillment of this responsibility, the Presiding Officer will:

- communicate with the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs in an appropriate and timely manner, representative of the Faculty Senate.
- communicate with the Board of Trustees in an appropriate and timely manner, representative of the Faculty Senate.
- schedule and conduct all senate meetings.
- conduct all senate meetings within the parameters of Robert's Rules of Order.
- schedule and facilitate monthly meetings with the executive board where he or she will have equal voting rights.
- collect reports, proposals, and topics for discussion for consideration by the executive committee.
- organize and schedule acceptable reports, proposals, and topics for discussion by the senate.
- distribute all documents requiring a senate vote at least one week in advance of the meeting where the vote will be held.
- not vote in the senate.
- attend all appropriate college events.
- serve as a voting member of the Faculty Student Association (FSA).
- attend Foundation Board meetings as a non-voting member.

### Qualifications for Presiding Officer

To serve as Presiding Officer, an individual must:

- have served as a senator for at least one two-year term.
- have served on at least one senate committee.
- not serve as a senator while serving as Presiding Officer.
- have demonstrated significant leadership in the college context.

Term: 2 years

Term Limit: 2 consecutive terms

Term begins at the end of the last meeting of May after the Presiding Officer election.

## **Assistant Presiding Officer**

Role: The primary responsibility of the Assistant Presiding Officer is to support the Presiding Officer as needed. In fulfillment of this responsibility, the Assistant Presiding Officer will:

- fulfill the Presiding Officer's duties when circumstances prevent him or her from fulfilling them.
- participate as a voting member of the Executive Board.
- represent the faculty to the FSA Board as a voting member.

### Qualifications for Assistant Presiding Officer

To serve as Assistant Presiding Officer, an individual must:

- serve simultaneously as a senator.
- have served on at least one senate committee.
- have served as a senator for at least one two-year term.

Term: 2 years

## **Treasurer**

Role: The primary responsibility of the Treasurer is to oversee, manage, and distribute Faculty Senate funds. In fulfillment of this responsibility, the Treasurer will:

- collect dues and make deposits in the Faculty Senate account.
- balance the Faculty Senate account.
- distribute funds for memorials, gifts to faculty and speakers, and other funds as needed.
- participate as a voting member of the executive board.

### Qualifications for Treasurer:

To serve as Treasurer, an individual must:

- serve simultaneously as a senator.
- have knowledge of managing accounts

Term: 2 years

## **Secretary**

Role: The primary responsibility of the Secretary is to record and publish all senate business conducted within senate meetings. To fulfill this responsibility, the Secretary will:

- record and publish the minutes of all Senate meetings.
- keep current senator attendance rosters.
- maintain the senate's public electronic communication, such as the blog or website, as well as the Public Folders.

Qualifications for Secretary:

To serve as Secretary, an individual must:

- serve simultaneously as a senator

Term: 2 years

## **Parliamentarian**

Role: The primary responsibility of the Parliamentarian is to serve as the expert on the formal rules and procedures of the senate. To fulfill this responsibility, the Parliamentarian will:

- attend all senate meetings.
- not participate as a voting member of the executive board.

Qualifications for Parliamentarian:

To serve as Parliamentarian, an individual must:

- not serve simultaneously as a senator.
- have an understanding of Robert's Rules of Order

Term: 2 years

## **Faculty Council of Community Colleges (FCCC) representative**

Role: The primary responsibility of the FCCC representative is to communicate and articulate current developments in the broader SUNY governance system. To fulfill this responsibility, the FCCC representative must:

- attend all FCCC plenary meetings.
- report to the senate about the plenary meetings.

Qualifications of the FCCC representative:

To serve as the FCCC representative, an individual:

- must serve on the executive committee as a non-voting member.
- may or may not be a senator, but is not required to be a senator.

## **Senator**

Senators shall be of two categories:

- A. Voting senators elected by the Faculty:
  - a. Ratio of representation: For every five full-time members of a department, one senator may be elected.
  - b. Adjunct ratio of representation: Two adjunct instructors may be elected to represent adjunct concerns.
- B. Ex-officio members of the Administration:
  - a. Ratio of representation: For every five administrators at WCC, one administrator may be elected.
  - b. Ex-officio members may participate in Senate discussions
- C. Ex-officio members elected by the Student Council
  - a. Ratio of representation: The student body is afforded two elected members.
  - b. Ex-officio members may participate in Senate discussions.

Role: The primary responsibility of a senator is to represent his or her departmental constituents. To fulfill this responsibility, a senator will:

- attend all Senate meetings or arrange for the attendance of an appropriate alternate in an emergency situation.
- review and evaluate all committee reports, proposals and topics for discussions that accompany each agenda prior to Senate meetings.

- bring to the Senate the issues, concerns, and opinions of his/her department.
- report fully and regularly to his/her department the activities of the senate.
- serve terms of two years, beginning at the first meeting in September. He or she is eligible for re-election or re-appointment while serving as a senator.
- serve on at least one senate committee.

For a full-time faculty member to serve as a senator, an individual must:

- Have a minimum of one year of service to the college.
- Represent his or her department at a ratio of one senator per five department members.

For an adjunct faculty member to serve as a senator, an individual must:

- Have a minimum of one year of service to the college

For an administrator to serve as an ex-officio senator, an individual must:

- Have a minimum of one year of service to the college
- Represent the total number of administrators at a ratio of one senator per five members.

For a student to serve as an ex-officio senator, an individual must:

- Be enrolled as a full- or part-time student at the college.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that senator terms are limited to two two-year consecutive terms.

Attendance policy:

- Senators must attend all senate meetings. In the event that a senator misses more than two senate meetings, the executive committee may communicate with the individual's department, recommending a senator replacement.

## **II. Organization of Senate: Processes & Procedures**

### **Reports**

The purpose of a report is solely to share information with the senate; a report may include the possibility of discussion but excludes the possibility of a vote during the same senate session. A report may be written and distributed in addition to verbally articulated to the Senate. A report brought to the Senate for consideration must fulfill the following criteria:

- a. The report must belong in one of the categorical areas of consideration expressed in the Preamble
- b. Reports may be brought to the Senate for consideration by any senator.
- c. The report must reviewed by the executive committee for possible inclusion on the Senate agenda or for forwarding to the appropriate committee.
- d. When a report is forwarded to a Senate committee, the presiding officer will set a response date in consultation with committee chairs. The presiding officer communicates the decision of the executive committee and will schedule the presentation of the report.
- e. When the Senate presents a report to the President, it will require a response within one month or a response date may be set in consultation with the Presiding Officer and the President.

### **Proposals**

The purpose of a proposal is to present viewpoints and ideas for discussion and support. A proposal provides the vehicle for a Senate decision making. A proposal for a policy or a resolution will be voted on by the Senate, provided a quorum is present.

A proposal brought to the Senate for consideration must fulfill the following criteria:

- a. The proposal must belong in one of the categorical areas of consideration expressed in the Preamble.
- b. Proposals may be brought to the Senate for consideration by any senator.

- c. The proposal must be reviewed by the executive committee for possible inclusion on the Senate agenda or for forwarding to the appropriate committee.
- d. When a proposal is forwarded to a Senate committee, the presiding officer will set a response date in consultation with committee chairs. The presiding officer communicates the decision of the executive committee and will schedule the presentation of the proposal.
- e. When the Senate presents a proposal to the President, it will require a response within one month or a response date may be set in consultation with the Presiding Officer and the President.

### **Discussions**

The purpose of a discussion is to allow the expression of all viewpoints on a topic; it excludes the possibility of a vote. A topic for discussions brought to the Senate for consideration must fulfill the following criteria:

- a. The topic must belong in one of the categorical areas of consideration expressed in the Preamble
- b. Topics for discussion may be brought to the Senate for consideration by any senator; however, exceptions may be made for non-senator-led discussions, when the topic is relevant to senate business. The objective(s) of a proposed discussion must be made clear.
- c. The topic for discussion must first be presented to the executive committee for possible inclusion on the Senate agenda or for forwarding to the appropriate committee.
- d. When a topic for discussion is forwarded to a Senate committee, the presiding officer will set a response date in consultation with committee chairs. The presiding officer communicates the decision of the executive committee and will schedule the presentation of the discussion.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances**

Extraordinary circumstances exist when time is limited for a vote or other action (in other word, immediate action before the next senate meeting is required) or the faculty are unavailable for consultation (such as during the summer).

- a. The Administrator should contact the Presiding Officer with the proposed report, discussion, or resolution. Included in this directive are any pending policies that fall into the categories identified in the Objectives of the Senate.
- b. The Presiding Officer will contact the members of the Executive Committee and, if possible, contact the chair(s) of relevant committees for conference over the proposal.
- c. With the Administrator, the Presiding Officer will coordinate a deadline for a timely response to the proposal, after also conferring with all interested parties, including the Executive Committee and committee chairs.

### **Resolutions and Recommending Policies**

- a. The Senate is empowered to construct resolutions and recommend policies to the Administration for adoption; resolutions and recommended policies must fall within the categorical scope of the Senate as identified in the Preamble.
- b. Written Senate resolutions should follow the model provided in Appendix I.
- c. When the Senate presents a resolution or policy to the Administration, it will require a final response within one month or a response date may be set in consultation with the Presiding Officer and President (or another Administrative representative indicated by the President).

### **Committees**

- a. Committees must fulfill the following criteria:
  - i. They serve a significant and explicit long-term purpose in the college.
  - ii. Their purpose falls within the scope of the senate's scope.
  - iii. Their purpose does not overlap with another committee's purpose.
- b. With the exception of provisions in the Senate Bylaws or in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, all Senate committees must be ratified and will be reviewed by the Senate.
- c. The annual agendas of committees are determined by the scope of the committees' individual charges.
- d. Proposals for new committees may be considered by the Senate with expressed (written or verbal) support from 5 senators. The proposal for a new committee will first be presented to the

- Executive Committee, and then, pending approval of the Executive Committee, it will be presented to the entire Senate.
- e. Committees will determine their annual agendas in consultation with the Executive Committee at the close of the spring semester and will announce their objectives for the upcoming academic year at the final spring meeting of the Senate. Committees will submit reports in writing of recommendations and actions.
  - f. Committee chairs, except when provisions are made by this Constitution or by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, will be elected at the end of the spring semester for the following academic year.
  - g. At least one of the chairs of a committee must be a senator.
  - h. All members of the College community, regardless of Senate position status, are eligible to serve on Senate committees; however, committees with membership requirements are obligated to fulfill these roles.
  - i. Except where identified by the provisions of this Constitution, committee members will serve a two-year term and either be appointed or volunteer to serve on the same committee for a consecutive term.
  - j. Committee membership will be established at the beginning of the academic year and closed by October 20 for the academic year.
  - k. Committee membership is comprised by voting members, who are standing members, and resource members, whose skills and/or knowledge facilitate the work of the committee at a given time or during a particular project. Resource members can be long-standing members, as long as their services require their 'on call' status.
  - l. It is recommended that standing committees must have no less than four voting members, and no more than ten voting members. However, they can have unlimited resource members.
  - m. To be a voting member of a committee, the individual must have consistent attendance at committee meetings or consistent participation in committee activities.
  - n. It is recommended that an individual serves on a maximum of two committees.
  - o. When a committee is lacking members with needed knowledge and expertise, the executive committee may assist in recruiting new members.
  - p. Adjunct faculty are encouraged to participate on committees.

## Standing Committees

### a) Academic Technology

#### i. Purpose

1. To promote the improvement of teaching and learning through the effective use of technology and information resources.
2. To facilitate communication between academic and administrative areas regarding academic technology.
3. To recommend institutional priorities and policies related to the development of academic technology within the mainstream of teaching and learning at WCC, based on broad input from all interested parties.
4. To coordinate the development of programs and initiatives aimed at expanding faculty and student use of technology.
5. To recommend budget allocations (yearly review).
6. To promote the evaluation of successful teaching and learning strategies that use information technologies.

#### ii. Essential Representation

1. Academic Affairs
2. Academic Technology Coordinator
3. Online Education Coordinator

#### iii. Other Representation

1. Advisory/as-needed representatives from Counseling, Student Affairs, Media Services, Information Systems

### b) Academics

#### i. Purpose

1. To help ensure that the academic integrity of the college is upheld and that its academic policies and procedures reflect the changing educational, technological, and social needs of the diverse and dynamic population the college serves.
2. To evaluate, amend, clarify, and create the college's academic policies, procedures, and regulations, including, but not limited to, issues pertaining to academic standing, matriculation, scholastic

standards, student success standards, courses and degree requirements.

- ii. Essential Representation
  - 1. Faculty from all divisions
  - 2. Administration
- iii. Other Representation

c) Assessment

i. Purpose

- 1. To provide leadership and assistance in developing and overseeing a program of evaluation of degree programs, general education and institutional effectiveness
- 2. To provide feedback to enhance the effectiveness of the College.
- 3. To develop and recommend college-wide policies, and assist in developing assessment procedures that meet accepted standards for data collection and analysis
- 4. To review the progress of the college in implementing assessment activities, and to review General Education assessment plans.

ii. Essential Representation:

- 1. Chair of Assessment Committee
- 2. A faculty representative from each division
- 3. Any other interested faculty

iii. Other Representation

- 1. Faculty Assessment Fellows (if positions exist)
- 2. Assistant Dean of Institutional Assessment

d) Curriculum

i. Purpose

- 1. To support the development of new curricula to foster career and transfer opportunities for its graduates. To review associate degree and credit certificate proposals, as developed by individual faculty and/or academic departments.

ii. Essential Representation

- 1. Faculty representation from all divisions

2. Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs or the administrative representative who is responsible for facilitating, developing, and presenting degree and certificate proposals.
- iii. Other Representation
  1. Continuing Education representative

e) Diversity

- i. Purpose
  1. To encompass a transformative mission of fostering multi-cultural organizational development and a consciously inclusive culture with an awareness of diversity issues, including an acknowledgment of the effects of privilege. To educate the college community, especially the faculty, through training seminars, dialogue, and activities which promote a culture of awareness and acceptance; a core of change agents; and a realized commitment to supporting or assisting Affirmative Action efforts in recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse faculty.
- ii. Essential Representation
  1. Faculty
  2. Administration
- iii. Other Representation

f) Electronic Textbooks

- i. Purpose
  1. To--neutrally and without bias-- investigate the use, function, advantages, disadvantages, and evolution of electronic textbooks, and shall regularly inform and report to the college community on this investigation.
- ii. Essential Representation
  1. Faculty representation from all divisions
- iii. Other Representation

g) Environment

- i. Purpose
  1. To promote a healthy, safe, and beautiful campus environment, as well as that of the larger, global environment, including county, state, and nation.

2. To educate students as well as all members of the college community regarding any and all issues that might affect our environment on any level, including threats to the environment.
- ii. Essential Representation
  1. Faculty (full and part time)
- iii. Other Representation
  1. Students
  2. Staff
  3. Administration

h) Faculty Personnel Policies

- i. Purpose
  1. The Faculty Personnel Policy Committee investigates matters specific to procedural and personnel issues directly effecting faculty for recommendation to the senate.
- ii. Essential Representation
  1. A diverse mix of teaching, non-teaching, adjunct and full-time faculty. Ideally, all divisions would be represented reflecting the entire body of the faculty.
- iii. Other Representation

i) General Education

- i. Purpose
  1. To articulate the values that the college community holds for students through how it defines a college educated person.
  2. To find ways to connect these values to course objectives and outcomes.
  3. To collaborate and support assessment efforts and curriculum development within the parameters of SUNY Gen Ed requirements.
- ii. Essential Representation
  1. Faculty from all divisions
- iii. Other Representation

- j) Student Personnel Policies
  - i. Purpose
    - 1. To evaluate policies that concern the relationship between college personnel and students in the academic setting. These policies reflect such issues as academic appeals, academic honesty, attendance, classroom and campus conduct, electronics and computer use, intellectual property use, and tripartite elections.
  - ii. Essential Representation
    - 1. Faculty and administration, particularly from the areas of all academic divisions, Student Support Services, Disability services, Student Development, Counseling services, Library services, Academic Support Center, Security.
  - iii. Other Representation

### **Ad hoc Committees**

- Ad hoc committees may be formed spontaneously and as needed during the academic year in response to specific college needs not addressed by standing committees. The executive committee will coordinate the committee's composition and be on hand to clarify its charge as needed, after such a need is approved by the senate as a whole.
- Ad hoc committees will have a defined purpose and hence a defined time period for operation. Such committees should not overlap with the charges and work of standing committees.
- Ad hoc committees shall be accountable to the executive committee.

### **Meeting Procedures**

The following procedures apply to the organization of the meetings of the Faculty Senate.

- Faculty Senate meetings shall adhere to the guidelines of Robert's Rules of Order.

- The Presiding Officer shall convene the Senate on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month, with the exceptions of the months of September, January, and the summer.
- Quorum: A quorum for all meetings shall consist of a majority of the members of the Faculty Senate. No official action shall be taken in the absence of a quorum. Proxy votes shall not count toward a quorum.
- The Executive Committee may call a Special Meeting at its discretion or upon petition of five or more members of the Faculty Senate. In the case of a petitioned Special Meeting, the Executive Committee must authorize a special meeting of the Faculty Senate to be held no later than five working days after the receipt of the petition. Each petition shall be in writing, dated and signed by all petitioners and contain the specific item(s) to be included on the agenda of the special meeting.

## **Election Processes**

### Election of senators

- Elections of Senators shall take place in April of the year in constituencies whose Senators are in their last year of service. Senators from these constituencies shall publish, one week in advance, the date and place for elections in their respective constituencies and shall conduct such elections and report the results to the Presiding Officer within three academic days.
- Adjunct and student senators may determine the best election process among the adjunct instructors and students themselves, depending on the circumstances. Both constituent groups may request assistance from the Executive Committee for coordinating elections. If an adjunct or student senator cannot fulfill the two-year commitment, he or she will alert the Executive Committee and a special election will be held to fill that seat.
- When a Senator becomes Presiding Officer and thus relinquishes that senate seat, that Senator's constituency shall hold a special election to fill the remainder of that term in the manner prescribed for the regular election.

### Election of executive committee members

- Approximately six weeks prior to the end of the Spring Semester of an election year, the Presiding Officer shall appoint a nominating committee of three Senators. A slate of five officers (President, Vice-President,

Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian) shall be prepared by this Committee, and presented to the Senate approximately four weeks prior to the end of the Spring Semester. At that time, additional nominations may be made by a Senator.

- Other nominations for this position may be made, provided:
  - at least 20 names of the College Faculty's members on a nominating petition; and
  - each such petition should be filed with the Presiding Officer within seven academic days after publishing of Senate nominees.
  - The election by the WCC Faculty of the Senate's Officers shall take place before the last Senate meeting in May. The largest number of votes shall elect, and the election shall be by majority of those voting.

### **Constitution**

Every five years, an ad hoc committee, appointed by the Presiding Officer, will review the relevance of the Faculty Senate Constitution to the needs of the Faculty Senate. If the committee finds that alterations or revisions are needed, another ad hoc committee may be convened to address the Constitution.

- Changes to the constitution require a majority of votes from the full-time faculty at Westchester Community College.