

Faculty Senate Handbook

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HISTORY OF THE FACULTY SENATE

On May 6, 1968, at 4:30 p.m., the first meeting of the TCU Faculty Senate was called to order by Dr. James Newcomer, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. This meeting was the culmination of a long process which included the development and revision of a constitution by the faculty, approval of that constitution by mail ballot by a majority of the faculty, and approval by the Board of Trustees.

The first Senate consisted of 36 elected members and two ex-officio members. As mandated by the constitution, each school and college (except Graduate School and the Division of Evening Courses) elected representatives in proportion to the number of faculty in the school or college. Also, fourteen members at-large were elected by the general faculty. Approximately half the members of the original Faculty Senate were elected for two-year terms, the remainder for one-year terms, so that in subsequent elections approximately half the Senate members could be elected each year.

According to the original Constitution, the Faculty Senate could discuss and express its views upon any matter affecting the University. It was also able to originate nominations for honorary degrees and had to confirm any nominees by other bodies.

Some of the first issues addressed by the Senate were the development of a Faculty-Student Concerns committee to "propose policy in the general field of student concerns as related to the faculty" (minutes, Nov. 6, 1969), the discussion and subsequent approval of The Bill of Students' Rights and Responsibilities, discussion and rejection of a pass/no credit grading system, faculty salaries, and the development of a tenure policy. The faculty and the administration did not always see eye-to-eye on all matters and some attention was focused on the decision-making process.

Created simultaneously with the Faculty Senate was the Faculty Assembly, which had its first meeting on September 14, 1968. This was the organization of the whole faculty and its major functions were to facilitate and encourage communication within the University, among the several schools, and among the faculty, students, administration, and the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate was, and continues to be, the representative body of the Faculty Assembly designed primarily to express the views of the teaching and research members of the faculty. According to its constitution, actions of the Faculty Senate were subject to the review by the Faculty Assembly.

The organization and operation of the Faculty has remained much as it was in 1968. Many issues of concern at its origination continue to be addressed. The Faculty Senate has grown as the university has expanded and reorganized and now represents eight schools and colleges.

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This handbook serves to provide pertinent information that will enable all senators to better understand their roles and to better serve their constituents. The handbook describes the responsibilities of faculty senators, senate officers, and the senate committees with their various charges. It also provides information about important policies that govern our teaching and research roles, and our rights as faculty at Texas Christian University. It also clarifies the established channels of communication at selected levels of university administration. The handbook is a centralized source of pertinent information, it is not intended to replace the *Handbook for Faculty and Staff*, but it is meant to provide each senator a ready reference, especially at Faculty Senate meetings. A brief history of the contributions of the Faculty Senate is also included to help senators understand that their participation in the Faculty Senate can be instrumental in bringing about the kinds of changes that enhance our effectiveness as teachers and scholars.

II. FACULTY SENATE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of the Texas Christian University Faculty Senate is found in the Constitution of the Faculty Assembly and Faculty Senate:

"The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the Faculty Assembly designed primarily to express the views of the teaching and research members of the faculty."

Views may be expressed upon any matter affecting the university, including educational policies, degree requirements, curricula, questions of academic freedom, student-faculty relations, faculty-administration relations, and practices of the University.

RELATION TO THE MISSION THEMES OF THE UNIVERSITY

- A. The Core Mission: The free expression of the views of the teaching and research members of the faculty is essential to the fulfillment of the core mission of fostering learning in the liberal arts, sciences and professions. This expression serves to ensure integrity of educational programs and promotes the academic freedom necessary to fulfill the primary mission of the University
- B. The University Environment: The expression of views regarding student-faculty relations as well administrator-faculty relations affirms the value of individuals in a University community and fosters an environment that permits and encourages pluralism, diversity, and critical inquiry. The open debate of these and other issues in the Senate provides an example to other members of the University of the values of the Faculty in these matters.
- C. The University and its public: The Faculty Senate reviews policies related to research contracts, athletics, and admission policies and makes recommendations. The Faculty Senate reviews and makes nominations for Honorary Degrees acknowledging the interrelationship of the University and the community. Issues of social importance such as minority concerns or divestment are openly debated and recommendations forwarded. The Senate works closely with the student leaders on issues of mutual concern.
- D. The Management of the University: The Faculty Senate reviews broad financial policies and makes recommendations to the appropriate body. The Senate also closely monitors resources crucial to the education endeavor such as the Library. The Faculty Senate as a body and its members individually participate in planning and self-evaluation. Each year, the Senate forwards recommendations for University Committee appointments and makes recommendations when necessary to fill vacant appointments or select committees.

Approved by the Faculty Senate 2 December 1999
Revised May 2005, June 2006, [May 2008](#)

III. STRUCTURE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

A. Officers

1. The Officers of the Senate shall be the Chair, Chair-elect, past Chair, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. As a general guideline, officers shall be from different Colleges or Schools.
2. The Chair-elect, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary shall be elected by the Senate at the last meeting of the academic year and the term of office shall be one year. The incumbent Chair-elect shall become Chair. The Committee on Committees, in consultation with the Faculty Election Committee, shall serve as the nominating committee for all officer elections.
 - a) Eligibility for Office
A Senator who has served during the current academic year is eligible for nomination to any office.
 - b) Vacancies
In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Chair-elect becomes Chair, and the Senate elects a new Chair-elect. In the event of a vacancy in the offices of Chair-elect, Secretary, or Assistant Secretary, a new Chair-elect, Secretary, or Assistant Secretary is elected by the Senate. Election of officers to fill these vacancies shall be administered by the Faculty Election Committee through mail ballot within 30 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

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B. Standing Committees

1. The Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate are: Academic Excellence, Committee on Committees, Faculty Governance, Student Relations, Tenure, Promotion, and Grievance.
2. Faculty Senate Committees normally meet the Thursday after each Senate meeting at 3:30 p.m. unless otherwise scheduled.
3. Committees meet as needed with the Chair or Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC).

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C. Meetings

1. Normally, the Faculty Senate meets at 3:30 PM on the first Thursday of each month during the academic year, except January.
2. To increase communication, additional meetings with the administration are encouraged specifically with the Vice Chancellors and the Deans.

D. Responsibilities of Senators

1. Attend all Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Sub-Committee meetings.
2. Notify the Faculty Senate Secretary of absence from Faculty Senate meeting; otherwise, absence will be noted as unexcused in the minutes.
3. The Faculty Senate may discuss and express its views upon any matter affecting the University.

4. The Faculty Senate shall have the power to review and evaluate the educational policies, degree requirements, curricula, questions on academic freedom, student-faculty relations, and all questions pertaining to the practices of the University, and make recommendations concerning them through appropriate channels.
5. The Faculty Senate may review admissions policies, research contract policy, student behaviors policies, athletic policies, and broad financial policies and make recommendations to the Administration, Faculty, University Council, House of Student Representatives, and to the Board of Trustees
6. Senators may communicate with their constituencies by
 - a. Scheduling meetings or through other forms of communication.
 - b. Attending Faculty Assembly meetings and functions.
7. Senators may communicate with the Chancellor by
 - a. Scheduling meetings with the Chancellor.
 - b. Faculty Senate input to the Executive Committee for their meetings with the Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
8. Promote interdisciplinary communication among faculty
 - a. Invite and/or consult with the appropriate Administrative and Faculty office and committees to bring speakers/consultants who will address topics of interdisciplinary concern to the University
 - b. Promote Faculty Senate input on the establishment of interdisciplinary programs
9. Serve on Senate Committees and attend Committee meetings.

E. Other Senate functions

1. Solicitation of recommendations for persons to receive Honorary degrees.

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate solicits recommendations from the general faculty for recipients of honorary degrees to be awarded by the University during the month of October each year.

Recommendations will be reviewed initially by the Executive Committee and final nominees will be determined in executive session of the Faculty Senate. Nominations approved by the Faculty Senate will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The honorary degree nominees must be persons who have distinguished themselves nationally or internationally in their field, or persons who have contributed significantly to the University's development and progress by their substantial involvement and giving of their time, talent, or resources to strengthen the intellectual vitality and general health of the University. See Appendix 1.0 for Criteria & Application Guidelines.

2. Oversight of Core Curriculum

The Faculty Senate is responsible for overseeing the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values portion of the university Core Curriculum. The HMMV Committee is a special Faculty Senate committee that is responsible for vetting courses and developing assessment procedures for those courses. At least two members of the committee must be Senators. The Director of TCU Core Curriculum, serves as liaison to the Senate Executive Committee and the Senate. See Appendix 2.0 for Charge and Committee Description of the HMMV Committee.

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IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY SENATE OFFICERS

A. General Faculty Senate Executive Committee Responsibilities

1. Faculty Senate Officers comprise the Executive Committee.
2. Fulfill responsibilities as listed in the Senate Constitution and by-laws
3. Attend meetings
 - a. The Executive Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month during academic year at 3:30 p.m.
 - b. The Executive Committee meets with the Board of Trustees in November and March of each academic year. The date and time are not predetermined.
 - c. The Executive Committee meets with the Chancellor once in the fall and once in the spring. The time and date are not predetermined.
 - d. The Executive Committee meets with the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on the fourth Thursday of each month during the academic year, except December, at 3:30 p.m.
 - e. Each Executive Committee member will serve as a liaison to a Standing Senate committee.
 - f. Executive Committee members may meet during the summers and Christmas holidays as deemed necessary and shall act on behalf of the Senate on matters that, in their judgment, cannot be deferred.
 - g. The Executive Committee members will serve in the capacity of the Grievance Committee as indicated in the Faculty Grievance Policy TV, B1, Handbook for Faculty and University Staff.

B. Chair

1. Work in consultation with the Executive Committee.
2. Schedule meetings of the Executive Committee during summer to plan upcoming year's agenda items and committee charges.
 4. Identify and secure Chairperson's for each Faculty Senate committee in consultation with Executive Committee.
 4. Establish yearly committee charges in consultation with Executive Committee and Committee Chairperson's (these are in addition to Standing Committee Charges).
 5. Schedule Fall and Spring Faculty Assemblies and plan agendas in consultation with Executive Committee and Provost.
 6. Plan agenda for all regularly scheduled Senate meetings.
 7. Work with Skiff reporter to cover all regularly scheduled Senate meetings during the year.
 8. Schedule and plan an orientation meeting for the Senate Committee Chairs.
 9. Update the Faculty Senate Handbook as deemed necessary.
 10. Schedule and plan agenda for meetings of the FSEC with the Chancellor.
 11. Make presentation before the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

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The Heritage, Mission, Vision, and Values Committee is a special Faculty Senate Committee that will vet courses for the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMVV) Curriculum and works with other constituencies to develop assessment procedures for the HMVV Curriculum. Committee membership is a combination of Faculty Senators and the faculty at large. The purpose, oversight, liaison, and membership is stated below.

Purpose:

<#>To vet courses for the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMVV) Curriculum using as criteria the outcomes and action steps for each category

<#>To work with the Faculty Senate and the University Assessment Committee to develop HMVV course assessment procedures

Oversight: Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

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- | 12. Schedule meetings of the Executive Committee and Provost.
- | 13. Report to Provost all motions or resolutions passed during Senate meetings that require further action
- | 14. Represent the Faculty and the Faculty Senate at the following events
 - a. Fall Convocation
 - b. Honors Convocation
 - c. December and May Commencement ceremonies
 - d. Meeting of Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee meeting and other events as requested,
 - e. Administrative council luncheon and meeting
 - f. Other university events as requested.
- | 15. Prepare year-end report and distribute to all faculty, Provost, & Chancellor.
- | 16. Discuss annual Senate budget line with Provost to provide for the following expenses:
 - a. Funds to compensate for Chair's course release
 - b. Funds for printing, mailing, copying, and supplies
- | 17. Work with Provost to ensure faculty representation on College Dean and other Vice Chancellor position candidate search committees.
- | 18. Consult and advise the Chancellor and other administrative officers and, under unusual circumstances, the Board of Trustees on matters of general University concern, including faculty grievance appeals.
- | 19. Serve as liaison to one of the Senate standing committees.

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C. Chair-elect

1. Assist the Senate Chair as needed.
2. Serve as Chair of the Faculty Senate in the absence of the Chair.
3. Serve on the University Budget Advisory Committee.
4. Serve as a liaison to one of the Senate standing committees.

D. Secretary

1. Take minutes and attendance at all formal Senate meetings. Take minutes at Faculty Assemblies.
2. Distribute the following to all Senators one week prior to each Senate meeting: the minutes of the previous meeting, the agenda of the upcoming meeting, other documents related to the upcoming meeting. These documents must also be distributed to the Assistant to the Provost, the Library Archives, the President of the Student House of Representatives, and the *Skiff* reporter assigned to cover Senate business.
3. One week before the meeting date, distribute the agenda and minutes to all faculty members and members of the administration.
- | 4. Distribute to all faculty and members of TCU's administration agenda for the Faculty Assembly or any other special meeting.

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5. Assist the Chair of the Faculty Senate in revising the *Faculty Senate Handbook*, as needed.
6. Consult and advise the Chancellor and other administrative officers and, under unusual circumstances, the Board of Trustees on matters of general University concern, including faculty grievance appeals.
7. Serve as a liaison to one of the Senate standing committees.

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E. Assistant Secretary

1. The principal duty of the Assistant Secretary is to conduct the annual Faculty Senate elections in consultation with the Faculty Election Committee and Committee on Committees Committee.
 - a. Obtain an official faculty list from the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
 - b. Determine the number of Senators allocated from each unit of the university
 - c. Canvas eligible faculty members as to their willingness to serve on the Faculty Senate
 - d. Conduct the election of new Senators.
 - e. Fill vacancies that may occur between elections in accordance with the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate (Article II, Section 2, B-9).

2. Conduct the election of University Council at-large members from current Senators.

3. Conduct the election of the University Advisory Committee (UAC) for Faculty Senate elected members with expiring terms. The Faculty Senate elects four members to the UAC from among the total tenured University faculty.

4. Conduct any other elections required by the Faculty Senate.
5. Oversee the assignments of Senators to Senate standing committees.
6. Serve as liaison to one of the Senate standing committees.

7. Serve as Parliamentarian.

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F. Past-chair

1. Conduct orientation for newly elected senators and distribute Faculty Senate Handbook at final Senate meeting of the year.
2. Serve as the Senate Historian.
 - a. Advise current Senate Chair on the historical foundation of Senate initiatives
 - b. Serve as a resource at Senate meetings
 - c. Consult with previous Senate Chairs and officers to resolve questions regarding past Senate actions that cannot be fully explicated from examination of prior relevant meeting minutes
3. Serve as liaison to one of the Senate standing committees.
4. Serve as Co-Chair to University Compensation Advisory Committee (UCAC).

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V. STANDING COMMITTEE CHARGES

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A. Academic Excellence

1. Maintain interest in and awareness of all policies, procedures, programs, and goals that affect the academic excellence of the University
2. Study and advise the Faculty Senate on any request concerning academic matters forwarded by the Student House of Representatives
3. Report annually to the Faculty Senate regarding library resources
4. Meet with the Student House of Representatives' Academic Excellence Committee at least annually in order to monitor issues of concern for university students
5. Act as a consultative body for the TCU Core Director and the Senate representative to the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA)

B. Committee on Committees

1. Represent the interests of the faculty in the structure, functions, and membership of University Committees
2. Review university committees to determine if (1) existing committees are necessary; (2) their charges, memberships, and administrative oversight are appropriate; and (3) new committees are needed
3. Working jointly with the Executive Committee, nominate candidates for Senate offices
4. Nominate members for all university committees
5. Review strategies to maintain effective student participation on University committees

C. Faculty Governance

1. Monitor the structure and functions of the Faculty Senate and Senate committees
2. Recommend changes that will improve the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate and Senate committees in University governance

D. Student Relations

1. Represent the Faculty Senate on matters involving student concerns
2. Meet with the officers of the Student House of Representatives at least annually in order to monitor issues of concern to the student community of the University
3. Plan and schedule joint assembly of Faculty Senate, Student House of Representatives, and Staff Assembly at least once an academic year
4. Have committee representative(s) attend scheduled Student Government meetings when possible

Approved by the Faculty Senate 2 December 1999
Revised May 2005, June 2006, [May 2008](#)

E. Tenure, Promotion, & Grievance

1. Monitor the effectiveness of the University policies on tenure and promotion as set forth by the Handbook for Faculty and University Staff
2. Monitor the effectiveness of the faculty conflict resolution process for ensuring due process

F. Committee Chairperson Responsibilities

1. Work with FSEC to formulate specific charges for academic year.
2. Formulate ideas and provide feedback to committee members regarding specific or general charges.
3. Communicate to the Executive Committee via Liaison issues that require presentation to the Administration to determine routing procedure prior to presentation to full Senate.
4. Prepare informal report, formal motion or resolution as appropriate for presentation to full Senate.
5. Follow-up with Executive Committee to ensure that the proper administrator has been informed of report/motion and that action is being taken to resolve the issue.
6. Submit an End of Year (EOY) report at the final Faculty Senate meeting and provide the Senate Secretary with an electronic copy.

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Appendix 1.0 Criteria and Guidelines for Honorary Degrees

The following criteria are offered for faculty considering submission of recommendations for honorary degrees. The Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees make their recommendations and selections based upon the criteria below as well as consideration of the candidate's potential to enhance the reputation of the University.

1. Persons considered for an honorary degree normally will be classified in one of more of the following categories:
 - a. National figure whom TCU would like to honor
 - b. An individual with renown in their field
 - c. TCU alumnus and/or emeritus faculty member
 - d. Individuals who have made significant contributions to the University. The nominees may be alumni, former faculty or staff, or leaders in a range of fields but should have strong ties to TCU.
2. Persons currently active in political life (sitting politicians) are not eligible for honorary degrees.
3. Full-time or part-time employees of TCU will not normally be considered for honorary degrees.
4. TCU will award no more than six honorary degrees each twelve months.
5. Recommendation and nomination of an individual are conducted on a confidential basis.
6. A person recommended one year but who did not receive an honorary degree may be considered in succeeding years.
7. In rare circumstances when a distinguished guest is invited to campus for a major address, the Senate may convene in Executive Session to consider whether the award of a degree would be appropriate or desirable.
8. The granting of an honorary is expected to bring positive recognition and benefit to TCU.
9. Recommendations may be made by individual faculty or by TCU departments or schools. The format for submission of recommendations follows.
10. All completed recommendations must be received by the Secretary of the Faculty Senate by January 15, if they are to be considered for award at following May commencement.
11. Application Format for Honorary Degree Nominations (Minimum Requirements)
 - a. Name
 - b. Current Address
 - c. Date and place of birth (if known)
 - d. Honorary degree recommended (e.g., Doctor of Law, Doctor of Divinity, Doctor of Science, Doctor of Letters)
 - e. Education
 - f. Career history
 - g. Publications (if any)
 - h. Community, State, and National Service
 - i. Awards
 - j. Recommended by

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k. Include a one-page exposition (not to exceed 200 words) which gives the major qualitative reasons the individual is being recommended for an Honorary Degree from Texas Christian University. Explicitly address how the granting of an honorary degree to this person will likely bring positive recognition and benefit to TCU.

Appendix 2.0 Charge to, and Composition of, the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values Committee

The Heritage, Mission, Vision, and Values Committee is a special Faculty Senate Committee that will vet courses for the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMOV) Curriculum and works with other constituencies to develop assessment procedures for the HMOV Curriculum.

Purpose:

- To vet courses for the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMOV) Curriculum using as criteria the outcomes and action steps for each category
- To work with the Faculty Senate and the Office of Assessment & Quality Enhancement to develop HMOV course assessment procedures

Oversight: Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

Liaison: The Director of TCU Core Curriculum will liaison with the FSEC and the Faculty Senate.

Membership:

Seven (7) faculty, two (2) of whom must be elected by, and from, the Faculty Senate and five (5) nominated by the Faculty Senate Committee on Committees. One of the members from the Faculty Senate shall serve as the Chair of the Committee. The selection process must be made with the following criteria in mind:

- At least 2 members must teach, have recently taught, or be scheduled to teach, a course consistent with the Heritage component of the HMOV.
- At least 2 members must teach, have recently taught, or be scheduled to teach, a course consistent with the Mission, Vision, and Values component of the HMOV.

The Director of TCU Core Curriculum serves as an *ex-officio* member. The Committee on Committees will work in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to achieve the necessary balance and representation. Although effort should be made to represent the various colleges, it is not imperative that all be represented at all times. Consultation with those well versed in areas being considered during vetting will be considered the norm.

Terms of Service:

Members from the Faculty Senate will be elected for rotating three-year terms. Non Faculty Senate members will be appointed for rotating three-year terms. Members may serve as many terms as desired. A term year will be considered September– August.