

Information for New Senators

Senator Responsibilities, Committee
Assignments, and Other Helpful Information



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.



Senator Responsibilities

1. Attend all Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate 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 policies, 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



Senator Responsibilities Cont.

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.



Senator Responsibilities Cont

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.
10. Solicitation of recommendations for persons to receive Honorary degrees.
11. Oversight of Core Curriculum

Responsibilities not listed in the handbook

- Assist in soliciting a diverse pool of faculty senators



Each Senator is assigned to a committee.

Committee assignments are made based on Senator preferences and Senate need.

COMMITTEES



Faculty Senate Executive Committee

This committee consists of the Senate Officers

- Chair
- Chair Elect
- Past Chair
- Administrative Secretary
- Recording Secretary
- Information Officer

As a general guideline, officers shall be from different Colleges or Schools.



Academic Excellence

1. Develop proposals that foster and promote the academic excellence of the University.
2. Explore the issue of online education in order to articulate the faculty's position on how and in what manner TCU might engage most effectively with new modes of learning and information delivery.
3. Act as a consultative body for the FS representative to the Faculty Advisory Committee for the John V. Roach Honors College and bring relevant issues to the FS. (Grade inflation issue? Marketing questions?)
4. Propose strategies for innovation, creativity, & rigor in the development and delivery of university programs. (Academy of Tomorrow & ePortfolios)



Academic Excellence

Accomplishments or Notable Charges

- Propose solutions to issues arising from policies, procedures, programs, and goals that affect the academic excellence of the University.
 - Plans for dissemination of a TCU faculty-wide survey and how the administrative policies and procedures in the past year have impacted academic excellence among faculty and students.
- Explore the issue of on-line education in order to articulate the faculty's position on how and in what manner TCU might engage most effectively with new modes of learning and information delivery.
 - Recognize that online/hybrid models of teaching and education will continue; what works and what support is still needed. Survey items to the TCU faculty to query faculty how an online/hybrid model of teaching supports AE
- Special Charge: Mental Health of Students and Academic Excellence
 - Implemented a 2020-2021 Mental Health Colloquium focused on the link between mental health and academic excellence
 - Resolution to Faculty Senate for university wide mental health support and training
- Propose strategies for innovation, creativity, and rigor in university programs.
 - Resolution to the Faculty Senate to apply for a Basic Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement
 - Completed Proposal for the Core Curriculum Review Committee in Fall 2020



Committee on University Committees

1. Represent interests of faculty in the structure, function, and membership of University Committees.
2. Solicit faculty preferences and nominate faculty for membership on all University Committees.
3. Review University Committees to determine if (a) existing committees are necessary; (b) their charge(s), memberships, and administrative oversight are appropriate; and (c) new committees are needed.
4. Annually organize and present orientation for new University Committee chairs.
5. Work jointly with the Governance Committee to explore ways to enhance the communication and interface between University Committees and the FS.
6. Solicit and forward to the FSEC and the Provost annual reports from each University Committee chair by May 1st .



Committee on University Committees Accomplishments or Notable Charges

- Submitted revised charges and updated committee structure for
 - University Budget Advisory Committee
 - University Compensation Advisory Committee
 - University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness Committee
- Nominated faculty to serve on all University committees



Educational Evaluation Committee

1. Represent interests of faculty on issues of teaching quality and the services that support and enhance it. (technology, services, resources, training, classroom, Koehler Center)
2. Act as a consultative body for the Director of the TCU Core Curriculum.
3. Act as a consultative body for the University Evaluation Committee regarding eSPOT survey policies and practices.
4. Work with department chairs and deans to facilitate the implementation of the “Best Practices” recommendations from the FS on teaching excellence and evaluation.



Educational Excellence Committee

Accomplishments or Notable Charges

- Works directly with IT to provide faculty input on classroom technology upgrades and maintenance
- Created the language now present in the faculty/staff handbook describing the appropriate use of SPOTs for faculty seeking tenure, promotion, or merit pay increases
- Works with the Koehler center to provide faculty opportunities to improve or evaluate their teaching effectiveness



Faculty Relations Committee

1. Monitor the effectiveness of the University policies on tenure and promotion as set forth in the Faculty-Staff Handbook.
2. Monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of the faculty conflict resolution procedures in order to ensure due process.
3. Serve as liaison with Human Resources on Benefits and Compensation.
4. Provide a liaison with the Gender Equity Committee in order to keep the FS apprised of its findings.
5. Craft a policy template to facilitate consistency and to address the discrepancies between tenure policies in the various colleges and departments across the University.



Faculty Relations Committee

Accomplishments or Notable Charges

- Addressed several matters regarding the role and status of the faculty, including
 - Resolution calling for representation of faculty on the Board of Trustees.
 - Resolution calling for no further changes to benefits without passing through processes of shared governance.
 - Report and resolution concerning the status and compensation of adjunct faculty.
 - Report and resolution calling for shortening of the sabbatical cycle from 8 years to the “industry standard” of 7 years.
 - Extensive report indicating that TCU faculty compensation is not “too rich” in comparison to peer and aspirant nationally-ranked private universities.



Governance Committee

1. Revise and edit the Faculty Senate and Faculty-Staff Handbooks to ensure congruence with new programs, policies, and initiatives.
2. Work jointly with the FS Executive Committee to nominate candidates for Senate offices.
3. Monitor function of FS Committees and recommend changes that will improve effectiveness of FS in University governance.
4. Work jointly with the Committee on University Committees to explore ways to enhance the communication and interface between University Committees and the FS.
5. Develop strategies for enhancing the role of the faculty and the FS in the shared governance of the University.



Governance Committee

Accomplishments or Notable Charges

- Developed framework for Honorary Senator to recognize long-time champions of the Senate and shared governance
- In process of developing strategies to
 - Insure leadership succession within committees and Senate
 - Promote a sense of belonging and community within the Senate



Student Relations Committee

1. Represent the Faculty Senate on matters involving student concerns.
2. Meet with officers of the SGA and SGA House of Representatives at least annually in order to monitor issues of concern to the student community.
3. Consult with Student Life and Academic Affairs, and share gathered information with FS; provide FS feedback to these University units.
4. Review strategies to maintain effective student participation on University Committees.
5. Have committee representative(s) attend scheduled SGA House of Representative meetings when possible.
6. Seek information from both Admissions and First-Year experience and share with Faculty Senate; provide Faculty Senate feedback to these units.



Student Relations

Accomplishments or Notable Charges

Notable Charges

- Promote mental health & safety of students
- Implementation of universal testing center
- Work with Graduate Student Senate on Childcare Initiatives

Accomplishments

- Honor Code
- Pass / No Credit policy amendment



Quick, Dirty, and Painless

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES



The Basics

Disclaimer

These slides focus on one person's interpretation of the situations that arise most often in the TCU Faculty Senate.

Many other procedures might be relevant at various times.

TCU Faculty Senate *loosely* follows parliamentary procedure.



The Basics

The Most Important Rule: Strict adherence to established rules of parliamentary procedure is only critical when there are disagreements about how to proceed or when there is a risk of viewpoints being suppressed. Otherwise, it's probably best not to be too picky.

If we're all sitting in the dark and someone turns on the lights, we probably don't need to argue about whether it was properly seconded.



The Basics

Main Motions: In principle, anyone can make a motion when recognized by the Chair and when another motion is not already on the floor. In practice, due to limited Senate time, most Senate motions will come from Senate Committees. In such situations a second is not necessary, as coming from a committee already implies that more than one person wants the issue considered.



The Basics

Debate Decorum: By official Robert's Rules, no one may speak more than twice on a given motion, and no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to has spoken once. On the other hand, Robert's Rules says that when you do speak you can have 10 minutes. It's probably for the best that the Senate is flexible on such matters, but the underlying moral is that *no one should hog the floor.*



The Basics

Amendments: While a motion is being debated, anyone (when properly recognized by the Chair) may move for an amendment. Consideration of the proposed amendment requires a second. While we often play fast and loose with multi-person editing (which is fine as long as it doesn't get out of hand) the final proposed amendment must be voted upon to ensure the amendment is the will of the body.



The Basics

Calling the Question (or, more correctly, “moving the previous question”): This is not the same as voting on a motion. A motion to call the question is a motion to end debate and proceed to a vote on the pending main motion (or amendment). This requires a second and does not allow for debate. ***It requires a two-thirds vote to pass.*** This is a good motion to make if most of the assembly seems ready to vote but discussion is lingering on among a few. If it passes, the Senate goes right into a vote on the pending main motion (or amendment). If it fails, debate continues.



The Basics

Making Motions Go Away Without Voting on Them: Despite common usage, a motion to “table” is only a motion to set the currently pending motion aside temporarily to deal with more urgent business, after which the motion comes right back. To get rid of a motion permanently without voting directly on it, one should move to “postpone indefinitely.” Alternatively, a motion can be referred out to a committee for further work; this is a “motion to commit.” Both of these motions require a second, are debatable, and pass with a simple majority.



The Basics

Adjournment: Once the appointed time for the end of a meeting has arrived or when the agenda for the meeting has been finished, the Chair may declare the meeting adjourned. This does not require any motion, any second, or any vote.



The Basics

A word document with these 'rules' is available for your use during meetings.



Senators Share Information

They Wish They Had Known Earlier in Their Tenure

I WISH I HAD KNOWN



I Wish I Had Known...

Senate resolutions are advisory statements to the Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and others. They are not definitive. Thus, the work to convince them to implement our resolutions doesn't end with a yea vote. We need to continue to lobby them, and find other ways to influence them.



I Wish I Had Known...

Engage!

You represent something or someone. That might include tenured, tenure track, instructors, professors of professional practice, a person of color, a specific gender, a parent, a new hire, or even an administrator.

You most likely represent others at TCU and don't even know it.



I Wish I Had Known...

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will sometimes make recommendations without input from the Faculty Senate as a whole.



I Wish I Had Known...

Progress is sometimes painfully slow and you may begin activities that never go anywhere.



I Wish I Had Known...

Faculty Senate is largely what you make of it - and what we make of it.

You are encouraged to approach Senate with the expectation that you will have "homework." That might involve gathering data, talking to colleagues, or drafting a resolution. The more we all participate in that work, the better decisions we will achieve.



I Wish I Had Known...

We need to remember that the Faculty Senate goal is to represent the faculty. At times our representation will align with the priorities of the administration; at other times we will be in opposition. Too often, I fear that the Senate seems to think we need to suppress our representation in order to keep the administration "happy." But that doesn't help anyone. We will all make the best decisions when we can communicate honestly, committing to listen to each other, about the issues that confront our community.



I Wish I Had Known...

If we meet in-person, arrive a few minutes early so that

- 1) you get a good seat, and
- 2) you have a chance to talk to colleagues from across campus before the meeting starts.

It helps you meet other Senators and network, but it also helps to lighten the mood before the meeting begins.



I Wish I Had Known...

The use of acronyms is RAMPANT, so study the names of committees, initiatives, and roles. If you don't know acronyms, you might be lost!



I Wish I Had Known...

Sometimes names are used without reference to a person's role or position. Familiarize herself with key players on the Chancellor's Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, and anyone presenting to the Senate.



I Wish I Had Known...

The Chancellor answers to the Board of Trustees. While the Faculty Senate votes on issues and resolutions, they are not 'decisions' on running the university (budgets, benefits, pay, etc.).

Shared governance is letting all players (administration, faculty, & staff) have a say in how the university is run. The goal is to have all players aligned toward a common goal, even if administration gets to make the ultimate decision.



I Wish I Had Known...

When the Faculty Senate votes, it may or may not be binding.

Some decisions are binding and impact the university. Faculty own the core curriculum. The implementation of the DEI core component is an example of a binding vote.

Some decisions only impact the Faculty Senate. Like a vote on senate committees and bylaws.

Continued...



I Wish I Had Known...

Resolutions presented for vote in the Faculty Senate are not decisions. They are statements about issues, concerns, or events that the Faculty Senate want known. They represent the will of the faculty.

If approved, they are forwarded to the appropriate administrator, usually the Provost. In some cases, they are released to the media as a public statement.



I Wish I Had Known...

Resolutions may be presented to the Senate and voted on in the next meeting. This gives Senators a month to meet with their Dean and colleagues to discuss as well as provide feedback back to committees.

You are encouraged to set up a monthly meeting with your Dean and colleagues to discuss Senate business and how their units might support and implement various resolutions.



Welcome New Senators!

We are excited you have volunteered
to serve as a representative
for your fellow faculty members.

