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From the Faculty Manual

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PART 3 – FACULTY ASSEMBLY

The Faculty Assembly and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly

A. The Faculty Assembly

PREFACE: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHING FACULTY

The following paragraph is from the Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1966; revised, 1990). In general terms it summarizes the role of the faculty:

When an educational goal has been established, it becomes the responsibility primarily of the faculty to determine appropriate curriculum and procedures of student instruction... The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process... The faculty sets the requirements for the degrees offered, determines when the requirements have been met, and authorizes the President and the Board [i.e., Board of Trustees] to grant the degrees thus achieved.

It is the intention of the teaching faculty that this Assembly will be guided by and act in a manner which is consistent with the above Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities.

1. Scope and Function of the Faculty Assembly

The Teaching Faculty (as defined in A.3 below), in addition to their particular classroom and department responsibilities, together share a general responsibility for the integrity of the University's entire educational endeavor. Broad issues that go across departments (e.g., the Core Curriculum, General Education Requirements, major restructuring, and governance matters) all benefit from the input of the Teaching Faculty.

The Teaching Faculty are primarily responsible for the University's essential activity, education, and they shall exercise their corporate responsibility through the Faculty Assembly. This body shall keep in mind that its principal role is one of service and positive contribution to the Mission, educational goals, and academic quality of the University. The Faculty Assembly makes recommendations in an advisory capacity. The nature of the issue determines whether the recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Trustees, the President, a member of the Administration, or all of the Instructional Staff. Responses to or communications with the Faculty Assembly are made through the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly and/or the Speaker of the Faculty Assembly.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, all communications from the Faculty Assembly to the Board of Trustees are made through the President of the University, and responses from the Board of Trustees to the Faculty Assembly are made through the President of the University.

With all of the above in mind, the scope and function of the Faculty Assembly shall be as follows:

- a.** It shall make recommendations on matters of concern to the Teaching Faculty.
- b.** It shall be the vehicle through which the Teaching Faculty express their corporate voice on all matters related to the welfare of the University.
- c.** It shall have the authority to set up committees which report to it.
- d.** It shall have the right to advise the appropriate administrative officer on all matters concerning curriculum, and the right to be informed by that same officer concerning significant developments in curriculum matters.

- e. It shall have the right to be informed by the Administration about significant financial developments before they become public knowledge.
- f. It may advise the President of the University on matters relating to teaching conditions and faculty salary and benefits, as well as standards and processes for faculty appointments, rank, promotion, and tenure.

2. Power, authority and limitations of the Faculty Assembly.

a. Power and Authority

The Assembly's vote on an issue is a recommendation of the Teaching Faculty. For this recommendation to have any credibility, the work of the Assembly must be viewed by the University community as useful, constructive, thorough, fair based on research and broad vision, and strongly supported by the Teaching Faculty. In addition, the committees of the Assembly must have the reputation for being efficient and useful. The de jure power and authority of the Faculty Assembly are specified in section A.1. above, but the de facto power and authority will always be in the credibility of the Assembly's advice. If the Assembly maintains a reputation for the thoroughness of its debate and for work of high quality, then its advice will have considerable weight. In other words, the power and authority of the Assembly are in direct proportion to the credibility and professional quality of its actions.

b. Limitations

- 1) As part of the Faculty Manual, the power and authority of the Faculty Assembly and its Executive Committee are subject to the Limitations specified in the Foreword hereto with respect to the Faculty Manual and to any future amendment, restatements or replacements to the Foreword made by the President and/or the Board of Trustees.
- 2) Nothing in this Chapter shall be seen as limiting the University Administration's authority; for example, to call and preside over meetings of the faculty; to authorize new courses, departments, experimental courses, and pilot programs; to discontinue courses or programs, and so forth. The University Administration shall keep the Faculty Assembly informed of substantial changes in University policy and the direction of the University, before these changes are made public, and, as appropriate, seek input from the faculty.

3. Membership

- a. Full-time Teaching Faculty who are appointed to the ranks (Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor), or hold a Special Faculty Appointment (e.g., Professional Lecturer) are regular members of the Faculty Assembly.
- b. The term “Teaching Faculty” is defined as those full-time faculty whose primary, contractual duties include instruction that results in the awarding of grades to students. Responsibilities that Teaching Faculty may assume without relinquishing Teaching Faculty status are: Chair of a department, Director or Coordinator of an academic program, mentor or reader of a dissertation, or similar academic instruction-related duties.

4. Delegates, other Instructional Staff not in the Assembly, Guests, and Executive Session

- a. The following have a right to attend meetings of the Faculty Assembly: the President of the University, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and all deans designated by the President of the University as deans for academic matters.
- b. Professional Librarians are welcome, without invitation.
- c. Part-time members of the Instructional Staff are welcome, without invitation.
- d. The Executive Committee or the Speaker of the Faculty Assembly may invite some or all of the following as delegates to attend specific meetings: (1) four undergraduate student delegates, chosen in a manner determined by Student Government; (2) one graduate student delegate, chosen in a manner determined by the Graduate Council.
- e. The Executive Committee or the Speaker of the Assembly may invite guests.
- f. Delegates, part-time members of the Instructional Staff, and guests may speak and participate in all debates, when recognized by the Chair, but they may not participate in parliamentary procedure (e.g., by offering motions or amendments) or vote on motions.

- g.** Executive Session means that only regular members are present in the room. With the Assembly's approval, however, someone who is not a member may attend. The Chair may call for a meeting in Executive Session. The regular members of the Assembly may vote to recess a meeting and then continue it in Executive Session.

5. Chair/Speaker of the Faculty Assembly

- a.** The Chair of the Faculty Assembly is the Chair of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly (see B. below) and shall also be known as the Speaker of the Faculty Assembly. This Chair may appoint someone from the Teaching Faculty to act as chair for all or part of a meeting of the Faculty Assembly. The Executive Committee shall provide an alternate to chair a meeting if the Chair is not available.
- b.** The Chair shall be impartial and must relinquish the chair temporarily when speaking for or against an issue during a debate. The Chair may also direct debate by asking for clarifications, interrupting digressions, summarizing the debate, and so forth.
- c.** The Chair may vote when there is a written ballot and may also cast a vote if a show- of hands results in a tie. Otherwise, the chair does not vote.

6. Meetings

There will be meeting of the Assembly at least once a semester. Meetings will be organized according to Roberts' Rules of Order, as adapted for smaller assemblies by a recognized authority (e.g., O. Garfield Jones, Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance, most recent edition). A parliamentarian will be appointed annually by the Chair.

The Faculty Assembly shall have the authority to devise its own procedures for meetings, as long as these procedures (a) do not conflict with anything in the Faculty Manual, (b) are readily available to anyone who wishes to have a copy, (c) are approved and amended by the Assembly as a routine matter (see 8.d. below).

7. Quorum and Attendance

A quorum for conducting business is forty percent of the regular members. Because it may not be possible for all of the Teaching Faculty to attend every meeting, departments are expected to make arrangements for at least one member of the department to attend meetings.

8. Voting and Motions Presented for a Vote

- a. Normally, non-procedural motions presented for a vote must first be presented in writing to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly, which may or may not place the motion on the agenda. The Chair may refuse to accept from the floor any non-procedural motion that has not been placed on the agenda by the Executive Committee.
- b. Delegates may submit a motion to the Executive Committee for consideration if a member of the Faculty Assembly agrees to act as its sponsor.
- c. A motion that is long, complicated, or especially significant should, whenever possible, be submitted to the Chair before the meeting. The Chair may refuse to accept any amendment from the floor if it is not submitted in writing.
- d. The manner of voting will depend on whether the vote is on a routine matter or a matter requiring a mail ballot.
 - (1) **Routine matter:** Normally, a non-procedural motion presented to the Assembly is routine if it concerns the ordinary business of the Assembly and/or it is placed on the agenda by the Executive Committee. A motion on any issue, even a substantive one, may be treated as a routine matter if (a) the members of the Assembly receive a copy of it at least five working days before the meeting, and (b) this copy includes a "History" which explains the origin and intention of the motion.

When a routine matter is presented to the Faculty Assembly for a vote, it must have a majority of the actual votes for passage. Abstentions and invalid ballots are not counted as actual votes when determining a majority. The Chair decides whether voting is by voice vote, show of hands, or ballot. The Assembly may overrule the Chair's decision on how to vote by a parliamentary procedure called "Appeal from the decision of the Chair."

When a vote on the motion is taken, a majority of the actual votes (i.e., the valid pro and con votes) is binding.

- (2) **Matter requiring a mail ballot:** The Executive Committee may decide or the Chair may rule that certain substantive matters are best resolved by a ballot which is mailed to all the members of the Assembly. The motion, however, is not sent to the Assembly members for a vote if it is prevented from coming to a vote at the Assembly meeting by a parliamentary procedure.

As with any ballot sent to the Faculty Assembly, the ballot shall outline a history of the motion and the debate on it and specify a reasonable deadline for being returned. The motion passes if it is supported by more than half of the votes returned. Invalid ballots and abstentions are not counted as votes when determining a majority.

9. Minutes

Minutes of meetings shall be recorded, circulated among the faculty, and forwarded to the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Deans. They are the official record of the Assembly's discussions, decisions, and recommendations.

B. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly

1. Scope and function

- a.** It shall represent the interests of the Faculty Assembly when the Assembly is not in session; it reports to and answers to the Assembly.

- b.** It shall act as the steering committee of and prepare agenda for the meetings of the Faculty Assembly.

2. Eligibility

Full-time Teaching Faculty (as defined in A.3. above) are eligible to serve on the Executive Committee.

3. Membership and election procedures

- a.** There shall be nine members elected by the Teaching Faculty from nominees and self-nominees. Terms are staggered; every spring, three members of the committee shall be elected.

- b.** The Elections Committee conducts the election process and certifies the outcome.

4. Length of terms

- a.** A term shall begin on the seventh day after Commencement in the spring and shall end on the sixth day after Commencement in the spring three years later.

- b.** A member is limited to two full, consecutive terms at a time. After completing the second full consecutive term, the member must wait at least one year before running again (in a special election or regular election). A member may be elected to complete a term that was not finished and then immediately serve two full terms.

5. Vacancies

A member of the committee is automatically removed from the committee and that member's place on the committee becomes vacant under one of the following conditions:

- a.** when s/he accepts an administrative position and is no longer a member of the Teaching Faculty,
- b.** when s/he goes on leave of absence or sabbatical, resigns from the committee, or is no longer working for the University,
- c.** if s/he is absent from four consecutive meetings and provides no reasonable explanation for the absence or date for returning, or
- d.** if a majority of the committee votes to remove the member, with cause.

The Executive Committee shall ask the Elections Committee to begin the election process to fill a vacancy. The Executive Committee does not have to ask for a special election if it decides that such an election would be too close to the regular election.

6. Officers

The officers of the Executive Committee are the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. They serve for a term of one year (beginning on the seventh day after Commencement in the spring and ending on the sixth day after Commencement in the following spring). Only members of the Executive Committee are eligible for nomination and election as officers.

The Chair of the Executive Committee shall also be the Chair of the Faculty Assembly and shall be known as the Speaker of the Faculty Assembly. The Chair will also serve as the faculty representative to the Board of Trustees.

- a. As soon as possible after the results of elections to the Executive Committee are announced, the Chair of the outgoing Committee will schedule, convene and preside over a Faculty Assembly at which the process of nominating and electing the Chair of the incoming Executive Committee by secret ballot will be carried out.
- b. Nominations for the Chair/Speaker of the Faculty Assembly will come from and be voted upon by the Assembly. Members of the Elections Committee will conduct the election process and certify the outcome. The election ballot shall indicate the names of members of the Executive Committee who are willing to serve. The nomination and election process shall be based on what is described in B. 3. above.
- c. The Chair will schedule and preside over a meeting at which the incoming Executive Committee shall nominate and elect (by secret ballot in both cases) the Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The Committee may vote to replace these officers any time during the term.
- d. If the Assembly votes to replace the Chair, or if the Chair resigns before his/her term is finished, a new Chair/Speaker shall be elected according to the procedures described above.

C. Amendments

Amendments to this chapter of the Faculty Manual must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Assembly. Prior to a vote by the Faculty Assembly, a proposed amendment must be presented and posted for at least thirty (30) days at a time when the University is in session. Amendments will become effective thirty (30) days after Board of Trustees' approval.