

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
FACULTY SENATE**

Preamble

Principles

Shared governance is the collective commitment of the faculty and administration at the University of Houston-Clear Lake to work cooperatively, together with other University constituencies, to achieve a common vision of excellence for the University. Successful shared governance requires an active partnership at all levels of the enterprise, from individuals to the overall University, to provide a basis for joint participation in setting priorities and formulating policy. Effective implementation of shared governance depends on mutual trust, shared confidence, and on-going communication between faculty and administrators, informed by an appreciation of their interdependent roles and responsibilities.

Faculty Role in Shared Governance

The faculty provides the excellence in teaching and research that determines the quality and reputation of the University. The faculty has a major role in devising academic policies, establishing performance standards, and in protecting academic freedom. Therefore, the faculty has the primary responsibility for curricular matters and degree programs. Recommendations about appointments, retention, and post-tenure review are a central faculty responsibility. The faculty has significant input in the formulation of budget priorities, including compensation policies. The faculty has a major role in the selection and review of administrators at all levels of the University. The faculty assists in setting goals to improve the quality of campus life and the utilization of campus resources.

Article I - Name and Purpose

Section A – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Faculty Senate of the University of Houston—Clear Lake (UHCL).

Section B – Purpose

- 1) The purposes of this organization are:
 - a) to provide the means to share responsibility among members of the faculty for UHCL's academic direction and policy making;
 - b) to work toward accomplishing the mission of UHCL;
 - c) to support to the letter of the law House Bill 199, which created UHCL;
 - d) to represent the faculty of UHCL in all matters (both internal and external) relating to faculty welfare, opportunities, responsibilities, administration; and
 - e) to provide the faculty of UHCL with an effective instrument for communication with all other aspects of the institution and the System.

Article II – Senate Membership and Elections

Section A - Membership

- 1) The membership of the Faculty Senate shall consist of eight full-time Senate-eligible faculty members elected from each college, a president and president-elect elected from the faculty at large, and the immediate past president. Tenured or tenure-track senators elected from their respective colleges must have been members of the UHCL faculty for at least one full year prior to election. Non-tenure track faculty elected as senators must have at least three years continuous full-time service at UHCL prior to election. At least six of the eight senators from each college must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members.
- 2) Excluded from eligibility to serve in the Faculty Senate as an elected faculty representative, are the university president, provost, and all other vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, associate/assistant deans, or faculty who participate in faculty merit evaluations or the promotion and tenure process (excluding peer review committees).
- 3) The directors of the Faculty Development Center and the Neumann Library are non-voting Ex Officio members of Faculty Senate. They may participate fully in discussions in open Senate meetings.

Section B – Election and Term of Office

- 1) Senators will normally be elected during the spring semester. Terms of office will start August 1, and run for two years until July 31 of the second year.
- 2) The full-time faculty (excluding those listed in Article II, Section A, 2) of each college will elect their senators to the Faculty Senate. A college will elect four Senators each year. At least three of the four senators elected in each year must be tenured or tenure-track faculty. If at any point a member of the Senate cannot finish the term to which that person was elected, within 30 days the faculty of the senator's college will elect a replacement to complete that term of office.
- 3) Faculty Senators are eligible for reelection.

Article III - Officers of the Faculty Senate

Section A – Officers

The Faculty Senate shall have three officers: a president, a president-elect, and the immediate past president. These officers must be full-time tenured faculty at UHCL. The president-elect shall have been a member of the Faculty Senate for at least two long semesters sometime prior to election (possibly including the semester when elected).

Section B - Term of Office

Officers shall serve for terms of one calendar year (August 1 through July 31).

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

Section C – Nomination and Election of the president-elect

At the regular spring Faculty Assembly, (to be held no later than March 31) members of the Faculty Assembly will make nominations for president-elect of the Faculty Senate. Nominations will remain open for three working days following the Faculty Assembly. Within a week of the nomination closing date, and after the nominees have accepted or rejected their nomination, names shall be submitted for a secret ballot to all those individuals who are eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate, as described in this Constitution. Faculty will have five working days to cast their votes. A simple majority of the votes cast will be required for election. Voting will be by preferential voting, with rank ordering of candidates. If no candidate secures an absolute majority of primary **votes**, the candidate with the fewest votes is then eliminated from the count. The **votes** for this eliminated candidate are then redistributed among the remaining candidates according to the number two preference indicated on the original ballot.

Section D - Accession to Office

The president-elect of the Faculty Senate automatically becomes president of the Faculty Senate upon the expiration of the term of the president of the Faculty Senate or upon that officer's resignation, ineligibility or removal. The president of the Faculty Senate shall automatically become immediate past president upon expiration of the term of his/her term as president.

If the president-elect accedes to the office of the president after October 15, he or she will serve until the end of the term of office for which he or she was elected. If the president-elect accedes to the office of the president prior to or on October 15, he or she shall serve until the next July 31.

In the event of a vacancy prior to the normal expiration of a term, a special election shall be held within thirty days to fill the unexpired term. A request for nominations will be sent to Faculty Senate eligible faculty and be open for at least five business days. The election will begin within a week after nominations close, and be conducted as in Article III.C above.

Pending that election, in the event that the president resigns before his/her term has ended and the president-elect becomes president, the Senator-at-large on the Executive Committee will fill the role of acting president-elect until an election can be held. If the president-elect resigns before his/her term has ended, the Senator-at-large will fill the role of acting president-elect until an election can be held.

In the event the position of past president become vacant due to the resignation or ineligibility of the past president, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will appoint a past president from among those who have previously served as president of Faculty Senate and are currently eligible to serve on Faculty Senate. That appointment will be confirmed by the Faculty Senate at its next regular meeting.

Section E - Duties of the Officers

- 1) The president is charged:
 - a. to preside over all meetings of the Faculty Senate;
 - b. to call all meetings of the Faculty Senate;
 - c. to provide an agenda for all Faculty Senate meetings;

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

- d. to report to the Faculty Senate at its regular meeting all business transacted by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and any of its standing or ad hoc committees since the most recent meeting of the Faculty Senate;
 - e. to advise the president of the university, the vice presidents, and the deans of the particular schools of the university on matters of general interest to the Faculty Senate;
 - f. to transmit information from the university president, vice presidents, and the deans of the particular colleges of the university to the Faculty Senate;
 - g. to preside over meetings of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee;
 - h. to fulfill any other duties as the Faculty Senate shall in its bylaws direct;
 - i. to cast a vote in the Senate only if that vote makes a difference in the final outcome of a vote.
- 2) The president-elect is charged:
- a. to preside over all meetings of the Faculty Senate in the absence of the president;
 - b. to assist the president in the performance of his/her duties whenever requested;
 - c. to fulfill any other duties as the Faculty Senate shall in its bylaws direct;
 - d. to act as Secretary of the Senate, that is:
 - to maintain the minutes of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Faculty Assembly, and Faculty Senate Executive sessions and to be responsible for their appropriate distribution. To supervise the distribution of the meeting minutes for the Faculty Senate.
 - to transmit to the appropriate administrative authorities of the University the recommendations and resolutions passed by the Senate,
 - to arrange for orderly conduct of the correspondence of the Senate;
- 3) The immediate past president is charged:
- a. to assist the president in the performance of his/her duties whenever requested;
 - b. to serve as chair of the Faculty Governance Committee; and
 - c. to fulfill any other duties as the Faculty Senate shall direct.

Article V - Senate Committees

Section A - Faculty Senate Executive Committee

- 1) The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) shall be composed of the president, the president-elect, and the immediate past president of the Faculty Senate, the chairs of the five Senate standing committees, and one at-large member confirmed by the Senate from its membership. If a college is not represented by this membership, the membership of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall be expanded to include a senator from that college confirmed by the Senate as a second senator-at-large.
- 2) The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall also act as the committee on committees for the Faculty Senate.
- 3) The Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall serve as the interpreter of the constitution and bylaws, and shall settle any questions that arise under the constitution and bylaws due to conflicting or ambiguous language.

Section B – Senate Standing Committees

- 1) The standing committees of the Faculty Senate are the Budget and Facilities Committee, the Teaching and Research Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Faculty Life Committee, and the Faculty Governance Committee.

- 2) Vacancies

Should the chair of one of the Senate standing committees resign or be removed from office, the president will appoint an interim convener who will call committee meetings until a new chair is elected. This election will take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate.

- 3) Membership of committees

- a. The Senate will approve the nominations from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for chair of each standing committee during its regularly scheduled May meeting. Chairs will serve one-year terms and are eligible to serve as chair for no more than 3 consecutive years. Whenever possible, the chair of a committee shall be a tenured Senator who has served on the same committee for at least one academic year prior to being elected as chair.
- b. The Curriculum Committee and Faculty Life Committee each will consist of eight Senate members, including the chair. There will be two senators from each college on these committees. The Teaching and Research Committee and the Budget and Facilities Committee each will consist of six Senate members, with at least one and no more than two representatives from each college. The Faculty Governance Committee will consist of five members, the past president and a Senator from each college.
- c. The committee chairs for these committees will be one of the members, except for the Faculty Governance Committee, which will be chaired by the past president.

The proposed membership of each committee will be recommended to the Senate by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, based on the preferences for

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

committee assignments expressed by the Senators and the needs of the Senate. The Senate will confirm the final membership of the standing committees.

4) These five committees may create subcommittees as necessary. A subcommittee will be composed only of members of the committee creating the subcommittee.

5) The Budget and Facilities Committee

The Budget and Facilities Committee works with the University President, Provost, and Vice President for Administration and Finance, the Planning and Budget Committee, Facilities and Support Services Committee and other shared governance committees as appropriate.

Responsibilities:

- a. To make recommendations to the university president and provost concerning the allocation of monies for the academic component of the university's annual operating budget
- b. To monitor the preparation, implementation and variances of the university's budget with respect to those priorities, thus insuring resource accountability
- c. To make recommendations concerning funding for faculty compensation and financial support for teaching and research
- d. To monitor space allocation and utilization, including overseeing classroom management and the allocation of space between classrooms and other uses
- e. To make recommendations concerning the allocation and utilization of space, including new or planned space
- f. To monitor the tuition and fees charged to students; and to monitor the operation of the campus bookstore
- g. Other responsibilities as assigned by the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

6) The Teaching and Research Committee

The Teaching and Research Committee works with the University President, Provost, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Information Resources, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President of Student Services, Academic Council, and other shared governance committees as appropriate.

Responsibilities:

- a. To develop and monitor the implementation of policies and financial support related to the enhancement of research, scholarship, creative activities, and teaching.
- b. To monitor and make recommendations concerning research, scholarship and teaching support functions, including academic computing and telecommunications, the university library, audio-visual services, and other research support services

- c. To assist university administration with recommendations concerning research and scholarly activities, faculty research fund administration, protection of human subjects, student research assistants, and animal care
- d. To develop and monitor policies that affect intellectual property, research resources and research ethics
- e. To develop and monitor policies and practices related to educational institutes and centers
- h. To develop and monitor policies on teaching improvement and evaluation
- i. To develop and monitor cooperative programs with other educational institutions
- h. Other responsibilities as assigned by the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

7) The Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee is responsible for maintaining the integrity of undergraduate and graduate education at the university. It develops, recommends and approves necessary rules, policies and guidelines that govern academic programs leading to degrees and certificates.

The Curriculum Committee or Faculty Senate may create separate subcommittees to address undergraduate and graduate policies and degrees. If it does so, the members of the undergraduate subcommittee must have taught at least one undergraduate course in the two years prior to serving on the subcommittee, and the members of the graduate subcommittee must have taught at least one graduate course in the two years prior to serving on the subcommittee.

The Curriculum Committee works with the University President, Provost, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, Academic Council, and other shared governance committees as appropriate.

Responsibilities:

- a. To develop, monitor and approve policies on recruitment and marketing, admissions, enrollment and retention
- b. To develop and monitor and approve policies on curriculum (including core curriculum), degree requirements, minors, and certificates
- c. To develop and monitor policies on student scholarships
- d. To develop, monitor and approve catalog revisions.
- e. The approval of (1) new academic programs, (2) the discontinuance of existing programs, and (3) the modification of courses
- f. To develop and monitor policies on honors and awards

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

- g. To develop and monitor policies on continuing and distance education
- h. To develop and monitor policies on international programs
- i. To develop and monitor policies on graduate programs and degrees
- j. To develop and monitor policies on general grading standards
- k. To monitor SACS standards adherence, compliance with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requirements, and other accreditations
- l. To develop and monitor policies on core competencies and assessment
- m. Other responsibilities as assigned by the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

8) The Faculty Life Committee

The Faculty Life committee works with the University President, Provost, Executive Director of Human Resources, University Council, Academic Council, University Life, and other shared governance committees as appropriate.

Responsibilities:

- a. To develop and monitor policies on issues affecting the life of the faculty of the university community, including faculty search and selection; promotion and tenure; faculty workload and evaluation; faculty dismissal; and faculty retirement issues
- b. To monitor university services to faculty and visitors and recommend ways to improve those services
- c. To monitor and support university-community relations; fund-raising; and partnership development
- d. To make recommendations concerning faculty fringe benefit compensation, and other traditional faculty personnel matters
- e. To develop and recommend policies that address work / life balance and related issues impacting faculty
- f. To encourage support for faculty governance in each of the four colleges, and make appropriate recommendations to maintain high levels of faculty morale and high levels of ethical standards at the university
- g. Other responsibilities as assigned by the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

9) Faculty Governance Committee

The Faculty Governance Committee works with the University President, Provost, shared governance committees, standing university committees, colleges and other university constituencies. It addresses issues of faculty governance and faculty

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

appointments to committees other than internal Faculty Senate committees and the standing shared governance committees. It seeks to actively include faculty in committees addressing issues on campus and in personnel searches for key university positions.

Responsibilities:

- a. Regularly review and report on faculty governance with the university and make recommendations on improvements
 - b. Oversee the election of the Faculty Senate, including the vote for president-elect and working with the college Election Coordinators to elect Senators
 - c. Oversee the election of faculty for the grievance pool
 - d. Recommend faculty members for university committees
 - e. Track the progress of actions taken by the Faculty Senate
 - f. Encourage support for faculty governance in each of the four colleges and throughout the university
 - g. Monitor compliance of college by-laws and practices with university policies and address inconsistencies that are found
 - h. Other responsibilities as assigned by the Senate and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.
- 10) Senate committees may invite non-senators to attend committee meetings when the presence of the non-senators will provide additional information that may be useful to a committee in its deliberations

Section C - Senate Ad Hoc and Advisory Committees

Ad hoc and advisory committees shall be established by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate in any regular or special meeting and shall consider any subject that the majority considers necessary. The chairperson and membership of any ad hoc or advisory committee shall be appointed by the president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice and consent of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The charge to each committee shall be made by the president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice and consent of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

No ad hoc or advisory committee (with the exception of the Council of Professors) may continue in existence for more than one year from the date of its creation without the annual approval of a majority of the Faculty Senate in regular or special meetings.

The Council of Professors is an independent faculty body, but will be an advisory body to the Faculty Senate and its committees and its guidance may be sought as appropriate. For coordination purposes, their input will be communicated to the Senate and the standing committees through the FSEC.

Article VI – Meetings, Procedures and Policies

Section A - Regular Senate Meetings

Regular meetings currently are scheduled for the first Wednesday of each month on which classes are scheduled in the academic year, except for August and January. If there is not sufficient business to warrant a meeting the FSEC may cancel a regular meeting during the week before it is scheduled.

The dates for the Senate meetings may be changed by 60% vote of the Senate membership without requiring an amendment of this Constitution.

Section B - Special Senate Meetings

A special meeting of the Faculty Senate may be called at any time by the president, or upon signed request by one-third of the Senators.

Section C - Organization of Senate Meetings

The president shall preside over all meetings and provide an agenda to all members at least four working days prior to the meetings. Only members of the Faculty Senate may address the Faculty Senate. Nonmembers may address the Senate upon invitation of the Senate President. A Faculty Senate member may appeal to the full Faculty Senate a decision to either invite/permit a non-member to speak or to deny a non-member's request to speak.

Section D – Actions of the Senate

Some actions of the Senate are final within themselves and do not go forward in the university or the UH System. However, if an action of the Senate does require additional action beyond the Senate, the Senate action will be forwarded to the responsible party.

Section E - Procedural Rules

1). Voting Procedures

At all meetings of the Faculty Senate a simple majority of the membership of the Senate shall be required for a proposal to pass.

2). Referendum

Upon request of 1/3 of the members present, a proposal shall be submitted for a secret ballot to all those individuals holding a Senate-eligible faculty appointment to the university. A simple majority of those voting shall cause a proposal to pass.

3). Parliamentary Procedure

In all other matters not explicitly addressed in this Constitution, the most recent edition of the Robert's Rules of Order shall govern meetings. The president, shall be final arbitrator of the rules.

Article VII – The Faculty Assembly

The president of the Faculty Senate shall call and preside over at least one meeting per long semester of the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Assembly consists of all full-time faculty (excluding those listed in Article II, Section A, 2) members at the university. The Faculty Senate or the Faculty Senate Executive Committee may elect to invite non-members to attend the Assembly. The president of the Faculty Senate will distribute an agenda before the meeting.

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

Faculty Assembly meetings may also be called at any time by the president of the Faculty Senate at his or her discretion, upon request of a majority of the Faculty Senate, or upon written request of one-third of all those individuals holding a tenure-track faculty appointment to the university.

The most recent edition of the Robert's Rules of Order shall govern meetings. The president, shall be final arbitrator of the rules.

Article VIII – College Election Coordinators

At the first college faculty meeting of each academic year, the tenure-track faculty (excluding those listed in Article II, Section A, 2) from that college will elect an election coordinator who is a Senate-eligible faculty member. This person will be responsible for conducting the election of the college's faculty senators during the year the person serves as election coordinator. While serving as the election coordinator, this person may not be a candidate for election to the Faculty Senate.

The college election coordinator will serve for one academic year. Should the elected coordinator not be able to serve for the entire year, the faculty of the college will elect a replacement.

Article IX – Shared Governance Committees

The Faculty Senate will confirm the recommendations of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee of the faculty representation to the university's three shared governance committees: Planning and Budgeting Committee, Facilities and Support Services Committee, and University Life Committee. The faculty representatives to those committees will be elected from the membership of the Faculty Senate. The Senate will elect at least one person and no more than two persons from each college to any of these three committees

Article X – Representation to External Entities

Section A. University Faculties Executive Council

The president and president-elect or representatives as determined by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall serve as Senate representatives to the University Facilities Executive Council (UFEC), which includes faculty leadership from each of the University of Houston component universities. Each representative shall serve until the end of the academic year or until replaced.

Section B. Texas Council of Faculty Senates

The Senate is a member of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates (TCoFS), a statewide organization composed of state colleges and universities. The two representatives to the TCoFS shall be the president and president-elect of the Senate. Another representative may be appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee if either the president or president-elect is unable to attend.

Article X - Removal from Office

Any officer, Faculty Senate Executive Committee member, or standing or ad hoc committee Chairperson may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. This decision must then be confirmed by a majority of the membership of the Faculty Senate in a secret ballot.

UHCL Faculty Senate Constitution – Amended April 2017

Any Faculty Senate Executive Committee member, or standing or ad hoc committee Chairperson, may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Faculty Senate in a secret ballot.

Failure of a member of the Faculty Senate to attend three scheduled Senate meetings in the two long semesters of a school year, including assigned Faculty Senate committee meetings and university shared governance committees will result in removal of the senator from the Senate subject to review by Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Upon the removal of a senator for absences, the seat will be declared vacant and the appropriate school will elect an eligible faculty member to complete the term of office. A senator removed from office due to absences at Senate meetings is eligible to be re-elected to complete the vacated term.

Any Faculty Senate Executive Committee member, or standing or ad hoc committee Chairperson, may be removed from office for cause. Such cause may be failure to fulfill the required responsibilities as outlined in Article V that prevents the committee member or chair from adequately or fairly representing the interests of the Faculty Senate.

Article XI - Amendments to the Constitution

Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be received from any member of the Faculty Senate at a regular meeting. Upon a majority vote of the members present, the proposed amendment shall be submitted by the president of the Faculty Senate for a ballot to all those individuals who are full-time faculty (excluding those listed in Article II, Section A, 2) at the university. Amendments approved by a 60 percent majority of the ballots returned within five working days of the mailing (including e-mail distribution) shall become effective immediately.