



ECU[®]

FACULTY SENATE

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Faculty Senate?

A legislative and advisory body representing the general faculty and consisting of elected and ex-officio members. The Faculty Senate and the various committees on which the faculty serve shall be the primary venue for the essential joint effort of faculty and administration in the governing of East Carolina University.

Where is the Faculty Senate referenced in the [ECU Faculty Manual](#)?

Complete details about the organizational structure of ECU's Faculty Senate are referenced in Part II, Section II. Faculty Constitution and By-Laws of the *ECU Faculty Manual*. The website address is <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/currentfacultymanual/part2section2.pdf>.

What is the mission of the Faculty Senate?

The purpose of the Senate is to provide the means by which the faculty fulfills its essential functions with respect to academic and educational policies and other affairs of East Carolina University.

What are the duties of the Faculty Senate?

The legislative powers of the general faculty are delegated to the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate has the powers of the general faculty, subject to the limitations stated in the constitution, in formulating the policies of East Carolina University. The Faculty Senate ratifies, amends, or remands all matters of academic policy or faculty welfare that have been recommended by any standing or special committee of East Carolina University, or initiates any policies in such matters that it deems desirable.

How does the Faculty Senate communicate with the faculty at large?

The general faculty is informed of the time, place, and agenda of all regular and special meetings via an email notice at least one week before the date of the meeting. In addition, all Faculty Senate meeting agendas and minutes are posted online [here](#).

What should senators do to prepare for the Faculty Senate meetings?

For in-person meetings, Senators should either bring their computers or print the entire agenda, including any attachments, and review the documents to familiarize themselves with the content and issues before each meeting. For virtual meetings, Senators should have the agenda open on

their screens, as well as look for email communications from the Faculty Senate office regarding additional meeting and voting procedures. Senators should consult with faculty members within their unit to gather their view on key issues in the agenda or questions that need to be posed to the Chancellor or other high-level administrators. If Senators have questions regarding reports presented by Faculty Senate Committees, it is recommended that they contact the chairs of the committees to raise concerns before the Senate meeting

What is the role of the Senate alternate?

The alternate represents that electoral unit if the regular Senator within the electoral unit cannot attend. In such a situation, the alternate should notify the Secretary of the Faculty or Faculty Senate office that they are representing that electoral unit prior to the convening of the Senate session in question. When the alternate is attending, the alternate will have the speaking and voting privileges, and the regular Senator they are replacing will not have speaking or voting privileges.

What are the responsibilities of Faculty Senators to their units and to the university?

Because the legislative powers of the general faculty are delegated to the Faculty Senate, and Senators are the elected representatives of their academic units to this legislative body, Senators are responsible for communicating with the faculty in their units about all actions, pending and completed, of the Faculty Senate. Best practices for Senator-unit communications include reviewing the Faculty Senate agenda with actions, sharing announcements with the unit faculty, and serving as a liaison between the unit faculty and the Faculty Senate.

What should senators do if they arrive late for a Senate meeting?

Senators arriving late for an in-person meeting should proceed quietly to their assigned seats. During the break, Senators should make sure that the Secretary of the Faculty has noted their arrival. Senators arriving late to a virtual meeting should message the Secretary of the Faculty or the Faculty Senate Office Administrator to make sure their attendance is noted.

What if a Senator misses a meeting or two due to illness or other University responsibility?

The seat of an elected senator who fails to attend more than three consecutive meetings of the Faculty Senate shall be declared vacated by the Chair of the Faculty. The Senator's unit will be informed and asked to elect another representative to fill the vacated seat. If a senator is awarded a research or medical leave and an alternate senator attends in their place, the three consecutive meeting rule will not be invoked.

What do senators call each other during senate meetings?

The generic term "professor" is usually used as a title for all senators. For administrators with titles, it is appropriate to use that title. The Chair of the Faculty is usually addressed as Mr./Ms. Chair or Mr./Ms. Chairperson.

How are Senators recognized to speak during a meeting?

The Chair of the Faculty will recognize all speakers and will call them by name. Be sure your name is clearly displayed in front of you at the table for in-person meetings and that your screen name is

correct or that you type it into the chat before asking for recognition in virtual meetings). At in-person meetings, the Senator will raise their hand to be recognized. During virtual meetings or when the Senator is attending the meeting remotely, they will type "R" in the chat to be recognized. It is especially helpful for senators who wish to speak during an in-person senate meeting to stand (if they are able to do so), state their name and academic unit, and then make their point. For virtual meetings, once a senator is recognized by the Chair of the Faculty, the senator should unmute themselves and turn on their camera (optional), state their name and academic unit, and ask their question. The Secretary records these comments in the minutes of the meeting. It is important that persons are credited with their own comments as those ideas are included in the meeting minutes.

How are speaking rights granted?

Members of all committees reporting to the Senate are automatically granted speaking privileges. Visitors may not participate in Senate discussions and business except by advance invitation of the Senate Agenda Committee or the Chair of the Faculty. Such an invitation will be announced to the Senators prior to the meeting. Speaking privileges extend to the chat window during a virtual meeting, meaning that only Senators and those with speaking privileges may utilize the chat window during the meeting. Those wishing to address an issue and speak to the Senate should contact the Chair of the Faculty prior to the meeting and make a request.

Who can ask questions during the general question period in Senate meetings? To whom can questions be addressed?

Faculty senators and ex-officio members may ask questions during the question period. Questions may be addressed to anyone who has given a report to the Senate, Faculty Officers, ex-officio members (including administrators) in attendance, or individuals who have been granted speaking privileges. Questions should be well-articulated and to the point. Senators should refrain from longwinded speeches or questions.

How does a senator make a motion?

The Senator raises their hand and waits to be recognized by the Chair of the Faculty, or types "R" in the chat window. After receiving formal recognition from the Chair, a member is then said to "have the floor." Once recognized, the Senator rises, states their name and academic unit. Addressing the Chair, the Senator introduces a motion in form of "I move that..." followed by a statement of the motion. Please note that motion sheets are provided at the Senator's tables for in-person meetings. Any Senator making a motion must be ready to provide a written copy of the motion to the Chair and the Secretary at the time the motion is stated. Another member seconds the motion. Without recognition from the presiding official, another member may say, "I second the motion." If the motion is not seconded, it "dies for lack of a second."

How is voting conducted?

Each member of the Senate shall have one vote. A vote by choice will be the regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote for its adoption. According to parliamentary procedures, the Senate may request a different form of voting, i.e. rising vote (standing up to indicate one's vote), secret vote. In virtual meeting, for items that do not appear controversial (as evidenced by few/no questions or concerns expressed) the Chair of the Faculty may utilize a vote by general consent. This option saves time and bypasses the need for a poll, and

the Chair of the Faculty will ask if there are any objections to voting by general consent before the approval is declared.

What do I need to know about parliamentary procedure if I'm serving as a faculty senator?

There are some [basic points of parliamentary procedure](#) that are most critical: making a motion, seconding a motion, debating a motion, and voting on the motion. Meeting procedures are governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. It is the responsibility of the Parliamentarian to make interpretations and advise the Chair during Senate meetings.

Why use a set of rules in the Faculty Senate?

[Robert's Rules](#) provides organizations like the Faculty Senate a set of rules for conduct at meetings, all in an effort to allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions fairly and without confusion.

Who sets the Faculty Agenda?

The Faculty Senate establishes its own agenda. The Agenda Committee is charged with formulating monthly agendas, provided that all matters of academic policy brought forward by action of the general faculty, any senator, or any standing or special committee are placed on the agenda no later than the second regular meeting of the Faculty Senate after receipt of the request.

Who determines the schedule of meetings for the Faculty Senate and its committees?

The organizational meeting of the Faculty Senate is held on a Tuesday following the last regular meeting of the spring semester but before the beginning of the examination period. Four regular meetings of the Faculty Senate are held each fall and spring semester according to a schedule prepared by the Agenda Committee and approved by the Senate in the Fall Semester of the preceding year.

In an exceptional situation, in which the regular procedures for scheduling a meeting of the Faculty Senate are clearly inadequate and would cause undue delay, the Chair of the Faculty is empowered to call a special session of the Faculty Senate. Also, upon written petition of fifteen members of the Faculty Senate, the Chair will call a special session of the Faculty Senate within four days. A notice stating the purpose of any special session will be distributed to the members of the Faculty Senate and the general faculty at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

How are faculty senators chosen and how long are their terms in office?

Elections are held in spring of each year and members-elect take office on the day following the last regular meeting of the Faculty Senate in the spring semester. Please consult [ECU Faculty Manual, Part II, Section II](#) for information about election procedures.

What are the duties of the Faculty Officers? How long do they serve?

All faculty officers are elected for one-year terms, with the ability for re-election. The Chair of the Faculty presides at all meetings and is empowered to call special meetings when necessary. The Chair is an ex-officio member of all academic committees and various administrative committees and may delegate to the Vice Chair or an appointed representative their seat on any of the

academic or administrative committees. They shall appoint persons to fill unexpired terms on academic committees.

The Chair is responsible for conveying greetings of the Faculty at commencement exercises and representing the Faculty at university functions and Board of Trustee meetings. For the length of their term as Chair, the Chair of the Faculty serves as a Delegate to the Faculty Assembly (but not exceeding six consecutive years), with duties as a delegate described in the Bylaws of the Faculty Assembly of the University of North Carolina, and referenced in the *ECU Faculty Manual*.

The Vice Chair of the Faculty will perform all duties of the Chair in the absence or incapacity of the Chair and will succeed to the office of Chair of The Faculty in the event that office should become vacant during the term of the incumbent.

The Secretary of the Faculty keeps accurate minutes of all regular and special meetings and performs such other appropriate duties as directed by the Faculty Senate.

The Chair appoints a Parliamentarian who advises the Chair and the faculty on parliamentary matters according to the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and the *Faculty Constitution* and its *By-Laws*. They do not need to be a member of the Faculty Senate to serve in this role.

What is the relationship between the Faculty Senate and administration?

The ECU Faculty Senate is the centerpiece of shared governance. The elected ECU Faculty Senators serve as the voice of ECU's general faculty. The Faculty Senate and the various standing University Committees on which the faculty serve are the primary conduit for the essential joint effort of faculty and administration in the long-standing shared governance of East Carolina University. The Chancellor and the Chair of the Faculty facilitate communication that enables continuing and effective faculty participation in all aspects of the University community.

What is the role of the Faculty Senate committees in determining university policy?

All University Academic Committees are standing committees of the Faculty Senate. Information about these committees is available [here](#). The committees initiate and review policies on all matters of academic and faculty welfare and present those policies to the Faculty Senate for ratification, amendment, or remand. They meet on a standard schedule, set and revised by the Committee on Committees.

In addition to the Academic Standing Committees, the Faculty Senate has the Appellate Committee, which deals with grievances related to discharge, imposition of serious sanction, employment status, instructional relationship, implementation of governance procedures, nonreappointment and non-conferral of permanent tenure.