



Frequently Asked Questions about the Faculty Senate

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 is 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 this 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?

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. Talking to other faculty members within a Senator's unit is a good way to learn about their views on key issues that are relevant to individual units. Talking to committee chairs presenting reports prior to the meeting is also a good way to address any concerns with about an item on the agenda.

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 he or she is representing that electoral unit prior to the convening of the Senate session in question.

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?

If Senators arrives late for a meeting, they should proceed quietly to their assigned seats. During the break, Senators should make sure that the Secretary of the Faculty has noted their arrival.

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 his or her 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.

Do senators have to stand up if they want to speak?

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). It is especially helpful for senators who wish to speak during a senate meeting to stand, state their name and academic unit, and then make their point. 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. 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.

How does a senator make a motion?

The Senator raises his/her hand and waits to be recognized by the Chair of the Faculty. After receiving formal recognition from the Chair, a member is then said to “have the floor.” Once recognized, the Senator rises, states her/his 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. 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. standing vote, secret vote.

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. 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 February of each year and members-elect take office on the day following the last regular meeting of the Faculty Senate in the spring semester.

To obtain nominations, each department/school/college develops a ballot that lists every eligible member of that department/school/college. Each member of the faculty votes by secret ballot for twice as many nominees as that faculty member's department/school/college is entitled to elect. The group of nominees equal to twice the number of representatives to be elected that receive the largest number of votes are then placed on a separate ballot for the election of representatives. An alternate method of nominating Senators by schools is found in the [*ECU Faculty Manual, Part II, Section II, subsection VI.*](#)

To elect representatives each faculty member votes by secret ballot for the number of representatives allotted that electoral unit. Votes are counted in accordance with procedures agreed upon by the electoral unit. Each senator serves a two-year term. Senators may be elected to succeed themselves twice. After a lapse of one year following the expiration of this third term, they will again be eligible for election.

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 his or her seat on any of the academic or administrative committees. He or she 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 his/her 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*. He or she does 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 five standing appellate committees that deal with grievances related to discharge, imposition of serious sanction, employment status, instructional relationship, implementation of governance procedures, sexual, racial or ethnic harassment or discrimination or conflict of interest, nonreappointment and non-conferral of permanent tenure.