

OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE UWM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE  
[Adopted on September 3, 2002]

Introduction

The UWM University Committee (hereafter called UC) serves as the executive committee (UWM A3.9) of the UWM Faculty Senate. It is comprised of seven faculty members, six elected to rotating 3-year terms and the President Pro Tem of the Senate. The UC generally serves as the hub about which faculty governance turns at UWM and has traditionally been the front-line faculty governance partner with campus administration, to ensure faculty positions and interests are heard and actively pursued (also called "shared governance"). The UC meets every Tuesday afternoon at 1pm; meetings may occur less frequently during the summer months.

To be an effective governance partner pursuant to the UC charge (see UWM Policies & Procedures, Supplement to Chapter 6 - Membership and Functions of Faculty Standing Committees, A.3.9.), the UC must often engage in a variety of issues that require professional discretion, and, in some cases, confidentiality. Unfettered discussion is expected and necessary. Consensus-building within the UC has been a long-standing tradition; as such, very few formal votes are taken, as discussion is pursued until a position on an issue can be supported by all members of the UC. This collegial approach allows the UC to provide a unified voice for the faculty that is broadly representative of the collective interests of all faculty, in the context of the UWM mission and initiatives/priorities. UC agenda items touch nearly all aspects of faculty life ... academic/research policies and programs, budget, administrative policies and personnel matters.

Meeting Format & Operating Procedures

1. Agendas will be published by noon on the Monday before a Tuesday Meeting (electronic). Meetings will be noticed pursuant to campus policies regarding same and the "Open Meeting Law." Given the sometimes late-breaking nature of campus initiatives and issues and to accommodate guests, items may be added by the UC Chair to the agenda after its dissemination, with consent of the UC, consistent with the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law. All personnel and other sensitive matters will be undertaken in "closed session" pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85 (citing relevant subsections). Matters appropriate for closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85 shall be appropriately noticed according to the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
2. Meetings will be conducted by the UC Chair (or Vice Chair, if unable to attend).
3. Meeting Minutes will be presented at the immediately subsequent meeting for final review and approval; Minutes will be posted on the UC Website, after approval.
4. All report, discussion and action items will be pursued consistent with *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*. The UC will follow the expectations covered under **Conduct of Business in Boards**, more specifically those pertaining to small boards. Generally speaking, meetings will be conducted informally, with UC positions approved by group consensus; often discussion will cut across related agenda and other items in order to draw constructive consensus. Very few formal motions are pursued and only when

- necessary (eg election of UC Chair or lack of consensus). The Chair often directly participates in discussion (does not "absent" the chair role to speak).
5. UC members, while engaging in unfettered discussion, will conduct themselves at all times consistent with the [UWM Statement on Professional Ethics \(UWM Faculty Document #2229, Feb 2000\)](#) and relevant AAUP statements cited therein. The exercise of appropriate discretion and, at times, confidentiality (in closed session) in discussing UC meeting business with non-UC members will be expected and necessary, to ensure UC effectiveness as a governance entity.
  6. The UC Chair (or UC member designee) is the official spokesperson for the UC. UC members will be expected to refer all queries regarding UC business to the UC Chair. Further, UC members will be expected to refrain from independently discussing and/or communicating UC business, unless the UC has agreed as a group what can be communicated, to and by whom. Confirmation and communication of actions taken that are a matter of record in the Minutes is very appropriate; communicating about discussion leading to a UC action or position taken may be inappropriate, depending on the issue. Any personnel matters discussed in "closed session" shall be held in complete confidence.
  7. The secretary to the UC is expected to fully comply with the professional expectations of UC members that pertain to discretion, confidentiality, and professional demeanor.
  8. At the outset of each year, the UC will discuss its operating guidelines for the benefit of new members to ensure that all UC members and the secretary fully understand how the UC will conduct its business for the upcoming year.