

Revisions to AS Senate Bylaws

Background

The current representational structure of the Academic Staff Senate is based on schools, colleges, and divisions (s/c/d) as distinct entities, with the highest-level academic units being either a school or a college. Under the academic realignment that will be fully implemented on July 1, 2023, some schools will be contained within colleges. There also has been recent reorganization and consolidation of divisions in which a few academic staff are left unrepresented (they are not part of a school, college, or division). Additionally, certain processes specified in the bylaws are unclear. This prompted an examination of the bylaws and exploration of possible models of senate representation starting with the 2024 elections.

The assumption behind the current model of one senate seat for each s/c/d is that it promotes a range of voices based on differing experiences among these units. While recognizing that senators do not only represent the s/c/d in which they are employed, 1:1 representation is disproportionate to the number of academic staff in each s/c/d and would be more so if retained under the coming academic structure. In the past few years, open seats in schools with lower numbers of academic staff have gone unfilled as no names were forwarded for the ballot. This would be an additional concern in trying to replicate the current model as there will be more schools with relatively low numbers of staff as of July 1.

A small workgroup developed four models of representation which were discussed by the Academic Staff Committee (ASC) at several meetings and were presented to the Senate for feedback on November 8, 2022.

Summary of changes and rationale

- Increase the minimum number of seats represented by instructional and non-instructional staff from four to eight.

This change is proposed mainly to provide more representation for instructional staff on the Senate. In discussions of the various models, differences between the concerns of instructional vs. non-instructional staff were much more prevalent than differences within each group among s/c/ds. There has been increasing dependence on instructional academic staff to teach introductory level courses which are often gateway courses to majors, to support students' health and well-being, and to play an important role in retention efforts. There is also a greater variety of titles in instructional titles now (e.g., Lecturer, Clinical Professor, Teaching Faculty, Teaching Professor). Therefore, more representation of instructional staff is warranted, with continuing the same protection in the minimum number of seats for non-instructional staff.

- Rather than having representation by s/c/d, have all non-ASC Senate seats be elected at-large, but set a maximum number that could be from each college and division.

Based on comments at the November 8 Senate meeting and ASC discussions, this model had the most support. Eligible academic staff in smaller schools and divisions would still have the opportunity to serve on the Senate with all seats elected at-large, and seats are less likely to be unfilled under this model. Issues that affect specific s/c/ds can still be brought to the Senate or the ASC by any member of the academic staff. Setting a maximum number of seats per college and division (the main high-level organizational units) will help preserve a variety of knowledge and experience that contributes to informed discussion.

- Adopt a definition of a college as a unit lead by a dean. This change will be enacted through ASPPP Chapter 101.

This is how the maximum count will work operationally and will simplify language in the bylaws as some “stand-alone” schools will still exist (those not named as or contained within colleges, i.e., School of Freshwater Sciences, Graduate School).

- For purposes of determining the maximum number of seats with employees from the same college or division, or for other similar purposes, academic staff who are neither in colleges nor in one of the six current divisions will be counted in the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

As of this writing, there are six divisions and all report to the Chancellor: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; University Advancement; Academic Affairs; Marketing & Communications; Finance & Administrative Affairs; and Student Affairs. Of these, DEI has the lowest number of academic staff. There are units under the larger umbrella of the Chancellor’s Office (each having a few academic staff) that are not within one of the six divisions. These include the Office of the Secretary of the University, the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center, the Office of Strategic Partnerships, and the Chancellor’s Office proper. Academic staff in these areas need to be counted somewhere in determining the maxima and DEI seems the logical place.

- Institute a yearly review of the university organizational structure to determine if changes to the Senate bylaws are necessary before the next election.

If the proposed changes are adopted, parts of the Academic Staff Senate bylaws will still be predicated on college and division structure. This practice is recommended as not all organizational changes are as overt as the July 2023 academic realignment, neither are they always planned with lengthy advance notice.

SENATE OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF BYLAWS

ARTICLE I PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of the Senate of the Academic Staff is to serve as the representative body of the University academic staff. As such, the Senate holds the jurisdiction and powers of the academic staff between general meetings of the academic staff.

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Structure

- A. The Senate consists of the nine-member Academic Staff Committee and ~~26~~ additional senators elected ~~by and representing their respective schools/colleges/divisions at the time of their election to the committee or elected as senators~~ at-large as specified below in Article II, Section 2, Paragraphs A and B; and such additional membership as may be provided in Paragraph C of this section.
(AS Doc 71, 2/2012 revised)
- B. Anyone with an academic staff appointment, regardless of percentage of time, may stand for election to the Senate. Eligibility for Senate membership expressly excludes individuals with limited appointments whose back-up appointments are not in the academic staff. Such individuals are not permitted to stand for election or to vote for senators.
- C. The Senate must have at least two senators from each of the following appointment categories: indefinite, probationary, and fixed-term. There must be at least ~~four~~ eight senators each from the ~~teaching-instructional~~ and non-~~teaching-instructional~~ categories. Should the election result in the Senate having fewer than the appropriate number of senators from any of these categories, ~~the academic staff members from the underrepresented categories with the greatest number of votes at-large are elected for one-year terms as additional members as authorized by Paragraph A of this section. If there are no available candidates from the at-large pool,~~ the additional senators ~~are~~ will be appointed by the Academic Staff Committee.

Section 2 Nomination/Election Procedures

- ~~1. Each school/college/division with at least 5.0 FTE academic staff members nominates its own slate of candidates and elects from it one senator. Schools/colleges/divisions with fewer than 5.0 FTE academic staff members combine to nominate a slate of candidates and elect from it one senator.~~
- ~~2. A. The Office of the Secretary of the University conducts the election of school/college/division senators.~~ The Nominations Committee prepares the slate of

~~candidates nominees for the at-large positions~~ based on preference forms. ~~If needed,~~ Additional nominations candidates are solicited by the ~~Nominations Committee the Office of the Secretary of the University~~. The election is completed before the date of the academic staff spring general meeting. ~~If no nominations are submitted to the Nominations Committee for a school/college/ division prior to the Committee's deadline, that unit is unrepresented for the year. Such seats are not filled by senators at-large.~~

- B. In determining election results, no more than five at-large seats shall be held by those from the same college or division. In making this determination, incumbents will be counted in the college or division that they were in at the time of their election. Academic staff who are neither in colleges nor in one of the six current divisions will be counted in the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. (ASC members are elected on a separate ballot, so are not included in setting this maximum).

C. Each July, the Office of the Secretary of the University will review the university organizational structure to determine if changes to the Senate bylaws are necessary before the next election.

~~B.~~ D. Academic Staff Committee members and at-large senators are nominated and elected in accordance with standard Academic Staff Operating Rules.

Section 3 Term of Office

All members serve three-year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. The senate year is September 1 through August 31.

Section 4 Absences

Attendance at Senate meetings is part of each senator's duties. The attendance record of the senators is maintained by the Secretary of the University and published in the calendar of the two general meetings of the academic staff. Senators who miss four regular meetings within a given appointment year (September 1- August 31) forfeit their Senate seats. If the seat is held by an Academic Staff Committee member, that individual also forfeits Academic Staff Committee membership. There are no excused absences other than those for governance-related work that is directed by the Academic Staff Committee to senate members.

(AS Doc 34 approved 10/2008)

(AS Doc 46 approved 10/2010)

Section 5 Vacancies

If a vacancy occurs in a Senate seat held by an Academic Staff Committee member, the vacancy is filled in accordance with Article II, Section ~~4~~ 5 of the Academic Staff Committee Bylaws.

Commented [KJK1]: This is the correct reference.

A. If a vacancy occurs in an at-large Senate seat, the vacancy will be filled by either ballot results or appointment as specified in B1 and B2 following, and also in such a way that the distribution specified in Article II, Section 1, Paragraph C of these bylaws is preserved.

~~1.~~

~~B1.~~ If a vacancy in an ~~unit or~~ at-large Senate seat occurs between September 1 and the next spring election, ~~except through the failure of a school/college/ division to elect its senator as specified in Article II, Section 2, Paragraph B of these bylaws,~~ it is filled for the remainder of the senate year by the eligible candidate who received the next highest number of votes in the previous ~~unit or at-large~~ election, ~~as appropriate.~~ If no eligible candidate is available, the Academic Staff Committee appoints an academic staff member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the senate year. If the term of office extends beyond the senate year, an election for the unexpired term is held in conjunction with the next annual election.

~~B2.~~ If a vacancy in an ~~unit or~~ at-large Senate seat occurs between the date of the election and September 1, the candidate who received the highest number of votes in the most recent election assumes the vacant position until September 1 when they assume ~~the~~ elected position. On September 1, if the term of office extends through the next senate year, the eligible candidate with the most votes who was not elected to a regular term fills the vacancy for the current year. If no eligible candidate is available, the Academic Staff Committee appoints an academic staff member to fill the vacancy for the current year. If the term of office extends beyond that year, an election for the unexpired term is held in conjunction with the next annual election.

~~D. Vacancies in Senate at large positions for which the Academic Staff Committee selects an incumbent are filled in such a way that the distribution specified in Article II, Section 1, Paragraph C of these bylaws is preserved.~~

Commented [KJK2]: Moved to paragraph B, which covers both appointed and elected positions.

ARTICLE III ORGANIZATION

Section 1 Executive Committee

The Academic Staff Committee is the executive committee of the Senate. As such, it performs those functions outlined in Article I of the Academic Staff Committee Bylaws.

Section 2 Officers

The Chair of the Academic Staff Committee is the presiding officer of the Senate. If the Chair is absent, the member of the Academic Staff Committee who has been selected to conduct business in the absence of the chair presides.

A. Responsibilities

The Chair presides at all meetings and reports Academic Staff Committee activities and any action(s) taken since the last Senate meeting. The Secretary of the University or a designee takes minutes of all meetings and distributes them to the senators and Secretary of the University. In addition, the Secretary of the University maintains the official files and the attendance records of the senators.

B. Eligibility

Because the Chair of the Academic Staff Committee serves as the presiding officer of the Senate, eligibility for this office is determined in accordance with Article III, Section 1, Paragraph B of the Academic Staff Committee Bylaws.

C. Election, Term of Office, Vacancies

Refer to Article III, Section 1, Paragraph C of the Academic Staff Committee Bylaws.

Section 3 Meetings

A. Regular and Special Meetings

The Senate meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except when the Senate determines, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, that a change in a date is necessary. Such a vote must be taken at a regular Senate meeting prior to the meeting to be changed. The new meeting date must be within two weeks after the original date. The meetings begin at 2:30 p.m. and adjourn no later than 4:30 p.m. Either the Senate or the Academic Staff Committee, by majority vote, may schedule special Senate meetings to discuss specific topics. Discussion is limited to the topic(s) for which the meeting has been called.

B. Quorum

A quorum consists of a majority of the total membership.

C. Standing Rules

All Senate meetings are conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws or in Senate rules.

D. Calendar and Minutes

(1) The agenda is prepared by the Academic Staff Committee. A motion to place on the agenda any item not included by the Academic Staff Committee may be made at any meeting of the Senate. If such a motion is passed, the item is placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the Senate.

- (2) Items which have not been included in the circulated calendar for which immediate action is imperative must be presented in written form to the Chair of the Senate prior to the scheduled meeting. An item with an externally imposed deadline is placed under New Business by the Chair. Other items where immediate action is imperative may be placed under New Business by a motion to amend the agenda and an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting.
- (3) The final action on all motions before the Senate is recorded in the minutes, and upon request a roll call is taken indicating the names of those voting affirmatively, those voting negatively, and those abstaining.
- (4) All senators receive copies of the agenda and minutes of Senate meetings. Upon request non-senators may receive copies of the agendas and minutes.

Section 4 Subcommittees

The Senate may empower the Chair to appoint subcommittees subject to the appointment conditions approved by the Senate. The Senate may delegate its responsibilities to these subcommittees, providing this delegation does not abridge the responsibility or authority of the Senate. Subcommittees may be composed of a majority of academic staff members who are not senators but at least one member must be a senator. University staff and faculty also may serve on these subcommittees as non-voting members.

ARTICLE IV RELATIONSHIP TO UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF

Section 1 Report of Action

The Senate submits a report of its actions at each general meeting of the University academic staff. The report is considered as "automatic consent" business unless a majority of the Senate votes to present its report or any portion(s) thereof to the academic staff for action.

Section 2 Appeal of Action

Upon written petition to the Secretary of the University either by a majority of the members of the Senate or by one hundred members of the University academic staff, exclusive of senators, any action of the Senate may be appealed to a general or special meeting of the academic staff. Any matters subject to such appeal have priority in the preparation of the calendar of the general or special meeting.

ARTICLE V AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

A motion to amend these bylaws may be made only by a senator. The proposed change(s) must be discussed in at least one Senate meeting prior to the meeting at which the vote on the

proposed amendment is taken. All proposed amendments must be reviewed by the Codification Committee for logic, clarity, and consistency prior to final approval. Amendments must be accepted by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and, if accepted, be submitted at the next [General Meeting of the academic staff](#) ~~academic Staff Meeting~~ for a simple majority vote.

Senate Bylaws

12/89

6/98

10/08

10/10

2/12

2/23

Commented [KJK3]: AS Document 119 (April 9, 2019) made the clarification of the General Meeting in all the standing committee bylaws, but missed applying this to the Senate bylaws.