Chapter 2

Government of the University

Proposed Changes to Sections 3-B (3) of Faculty Handbook
Version 5; Mar 9, 2020

Summary: The section 3-B (3) Faculty Councils has been significantly expanded. Academic Senate’s Task Force on Faculty Governance prepared the first draft. The draft was shared with the Provost and the Deans, and the Senate Leadership worked with the Provost on revisions to address the concerns raised. The Handbook Committee discussed and made minor revisions. (Deletions are shown in strikethrough and additions in boldface.)
2-B FACULTY

2-B (1) The Faculty Assembly, Academic Senate and Faculty Councils

The faculty at large constitute the Faculty Assembly. When convened in a general meeting, or acting through referendum, the Faculty Assembly is the ultimate body for determining faculty positions on academic and University issues. It usually acts through its representative bodies, the Academic Senate and the school Faculty Councils, to debate issues and express faculty opinion to the University administration.

The Constitution of the Academic Senate describes the goals of these faculty bodies as follows:

The primary purpose of the Faculty Assembly, the Academic Senate, and the school faculty councils, is to contribute to the intellectual vitality of the University, to faculty governance, and to the faculty environment. They are forums for faculty decision-making, and are the voice of the faculty in the making of university policy and the consideration of academic issues. They strive to safeguard academic freedom, full academic due process, and the tenure system. They also determine positions on faculty status, responsibilities and welfare, other important institutional issues, and any and all issues pertaining to the wellbeing of the faculty and the University.

2-B (2) The Academic Senate

According to its Constitution, the Academic Senate "is the representative body of the faculty at large for university-wide issues." The Senate is described in the University Bylaws as follows:

9.4 Academic Senate The Academic Senate, as from time to time elected or designated by the faculty, shall be a deliberative and consultative body, with power to make studies, reports, and recommendations to the President of the University in any and all matters pertinent to the well-being of the faculty.

2-B (2)(a) Academic Senate Constitution and Bylaws

The complete text of the Constitution of the Academic Senate, which sets forth the purposes and organization of the Faculty Assembly, the Academic Senate, and the school Faculty Councils, is available at the Senate website (https://academicsenate.usc.edu/documents/constitution/).

The text of the Academic Senate Bylaws is also available at the Senate website, (https://academicsenate.usc.edu/documents/bylaws/).
The Academic Senate Constitution describes the Academic Senate as a body that shall, among other responsibilities,

seek to enhance the University’s intellectual vitality..., be the voice of the faculty in making university policy..., carefully monitor University issues..., [and] strengthen faculty participation in governance.

The Senate especially concerns itself with the processes by which major University decisions about personnel and academic policy are made, with a view to obtaining and disseminating information about such decision-making.

Faculty members who accept their election to the Senate declare their individual commitment to work through it for the realization of these goals.

2-B (2)(b) Officers and Executive Board

As is provided in the Senate Constitution, the University-wide executive officers of the faculty are the President of the Faculty, the Academic Vice President, the Administrative Vice President, and the Secretary General. The President of the Faculty presides as chief executive officer of the Faculty Assembly, the Academic Senate, and the Executive Board. The Executive Board serves as the channel of communication between the Academic Senate and the administrative officers of the University and may act for the Senate between meetings, if there is urgency.

2-B (2)(c) Members

Voting members of the Academic Senate are the President of each Faculty Council, any additional delegates from the Councils as specified by the Senate Bylaws, the executive officers of the faculty, and members at large of the Executive Board. Non-voting members are the chairs of faculty committees and, if authorized by the Bylaws, representatives of other university organizations.

2-B (3) Faculty Councils

The faculty of each school have established an elected council to participate in the governance of the unit and the University. The elected faculty President of each school’s Faculty Council represents it as a member of the Academic Senate, as do additional delegates as designated by the Senate Bylaws with regard to the size of the academic unit.

The faculty of each school elects a Faculty Council, or its equivalent, to participate in the governance of the school and the University.

a. Purpose
Faculty Councils are fora for faculty decision-making and are the voice of the faculty in making policy and advancing academic values. In accordance with the Academic Senate Constitution, Faculty Councils contribute to the intellectual vitality of the University, faculty governance, and the faculty environment.

b. Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the Faculty Council include the following:

- As the voice of the school faculty, the Faculty Council is tasked with understanding and representing faculty views concerning academic policies, curriculum, instruction, annual faculty merit reviews, academic programs, admission policies, academic priorities for the budget, student-life initiatives, diversity and inclusion, and strategic planning; and the school’s administration should consult the Faculty Council concerning any actions, policies, or programs that affect these areas.

- However, working with the school administration, the Faculty Council (or a school’s faculty at large) may choose to assign, delegate, or divide the responsibility for faculty governance among the faculty at large, departments, divisions, or other faculty committees.

- The Faculty Council shall abide by the university policies governing on confidentiality, and those relating to appointments, promotions, and tenure, as provided in Section 4-H (2).

- The Faculty Council works with school administrators and University leadership, directly or through the Academic Senate, to address other issues of concern to faculty, staff, and students.

- The Faculty Council may undertake studies and surveys, produce reports, and make recommendations concerning issues of importance to its faculty. To this end, the Faculty Council should be given access to a current, complete roster of the school’s faculty, including the contact information for both full and part-time faculty.
• The Faculty Council is responsible for communicating the faculty’s views and interests to both the school administration and to the Academic Senate, as appropriate.

*d. Membership and Structure*

i. *Elections*

The Academic Senate Constitution requires that each school have a democratic and fair nomination and election process for its Faculty Council, with opportunity for open nominations, at least two candidates for every seat, and secret ballots, counted by neutral person(s).

ii. *Service Responsibility*

All faculty bear the responsibility of being fully engaged members of and helping to lead the university and their colleagues. For shared governance to reach its full potential, those whom their colleagues most respect must take their turn in leadership roles, including service on the Faculty Council.

iii. *Executive Board/Committee*

It is recommended that large Faculty Councils elect a smaller executive committee (or committee of officers) to facilitate interaction with the School’s administration.

*e. Academic Senate representation*

The elected president/chair of each Faculty Council (or a substitute elected by the Faculty Council) represents the Council as a voting member of the Academic Senate, along with additional delegates elected by the Faculty Council, as designated by the Senate Bylaws.

See the Constitution of the Academic Senate, Article II, Purposes and Roles, and Article V, School Faculty Councils. ([https://academicsenate.usc.edu/documents/constitution/](https://academicsenate.usc.edu/documents/constitution/))