

CONSTITUTION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

This Constitution was voted upon and approved by a referendum vote of the Faculty of the University of Southern California in the spring of 1993. The first meeting of the Academic Senate was held April 22, 1993. The Constitution was amended by the Senate in Resolution 96/97-14 at the September 17, 1997 meeting, in the Resolution 11/12-02 at the February 15, 2012 meeting, in the Resolution 19-20-02 at the December 11, 2019 meeting, in the Resolution 20/21-03 at the January 20, 2021 meeting, and in the Resolution 20/21-08 at the March 10 meeting.

ARTICLE I: **Faculty Governance.**

Section 1. The University faculty at large constitutes the Faculty Assembly (Article III, Section 1), which may act through a General Meeting or a referendum, or through representative bodies. Each school has an elected ~~faculty~~ Faculty Council. Presidents or other elected members of the school councils, additional delegates from the larger schools, and the university-wider faculty officers and Executive Board members make up the Academic Senate. Working committees will be selected from members of the Academic Sen~~ate~~ as well as the faculty at large.

Section 2. All members of the Faculty Assembly (Article III, Section 1) are eligible to participate in faculty governance including in the Academic Senate and faculty committees. Each School's Faculty Council will determine how best to include Part-time faculty in the School's governance mechanisms. However, ~~research~~ Research, ~~teaching~~ Teaching, ~~practitioner~~ Practitioner, and ~~clinical~~ Clinical (RTPC) faculty are restricted from participation in certain bodies and votes (see Section 3).

Section 3. Only tenured and tenure eligible faculty members may vote on recommendations pertaining to University policies and procedures concerning tenure; modification of the tenure system; and due process concerning tenured or tenure-eligible faculty members.

ARTICLE II: **Purposes and Roles.**

Section 1. The primary purpose of the Faculty Assembly, ~~consists of the faculty at large, including all full and part-time faculty members (tenured and tenure-track faculty, RTPC faculty, and librarians), and those who have retired from these positions~~ is to contribute to the intellectual vitality of the University, to faculty governance, and to the faculty environment. The Faculty Assembly consists of the faculty at large, including all full and part-time faculty members (tenured and tenure-track faculty, RTPC faculty, and librarians), and those who have retired from those positions. 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.

Section 2. The Faculty Assembly, the Academic Senate, and the school ~~faculty~~ Faculty Councils, are centers of independent initiative in investigating issues, recommending policies, and disseminating information. They are also fact-finding, deliberative, and consultative bodies, with authority to make studies, reports, and recommendations on all matters which have a significant bearing upon the work of the faculty.

ARTICLE III: **The Faculty Assembly.**

Section 1. The membership of the Faculty Assembly consists of all full-time and part-time faculty members (tenured and tenure-track faculty; research, teaching, practitioner, and clinical faculty; and librarians), and those who have ~~retired~~ retired from these positions.

Section 2. While the Academic Senate is the representative body of the faculty at large for university-wide issues, when the Faculty Assembly is convened, it becomes the ultimate decision-making body of the faculty of the University.

Section 3. The President of the Faculty shall convene a General Meeting of the Faculty Assembly at least once annually, and more frequently as requested by the President of the University, the Academic Senate, the Executive Board, or on petition of 10% of the membership of the Faculty Assembly.

Section 4. Actions of the Faculty Assembly are taken by referendum or by a vote at a General Meeting, on condition that at least one-third of the membership of the Faculty Assembly votes in the referendum or is present at the General Meeting. If there is not one-third participation, any vote is advisory and is referred to the Academic Senate for action.

ARTICLE IV: **The Academic Senate.**

Section 1. The Academic Senate is the representative body of the faculty at large for university-wide issues. The Academic Senate shall assist in carrying out the responsibility the faculty shares to help enhance the University, particularly its academic life. Therefore, the Academic Senate, faculty committees under instruction of the Executive Board, and the Board, shall as necessary:

- A. seek to enhance the University's intellectual vitality, research, teaching, libraries, and quality of academic programs;
- B. be forums for faculty decision-making, and the voice of the faculty in making university policy or considering academic issues;
- C. carefully monitor University issues involving academic integrity, preservation of academic freedom, faculty rights and responsibilities, full academic due process, the tenure system, promotion of equality and pluralism, and safeguarding the process for faculty appointment and promotion; and they shall, when necessary, conduct investigations on such issues, make findings or recommendations, and issue confidential (or where necessary public) reports;
- D. strengthen faculty participation in governance in each school through the elected ~~faculty-Faculty councils~~Councils, and in governance at the university level through appropriate committees;
- E. be concerned with the retired faculty, faculty employment and remuneration, benefits of employment, faculty environment, student life, athletics, institutional advancement, and university public service;
- F. be the voice of the faculty in the development of the Faculty Handbook and in the selection of University administrators; develop guidelines for the review of administrators and conduct evaluations of their performance, issuing confidential (or when appropriate public) reports; monitor and issue regular reports on the status of resolutions of the Academic Senate, showing which have not been implemented or acted upon by the administration.

The Academic Sen~~ate~~ate of the faculty is the same body referred to in some University documents as the Faculty Senate.

Section 2. The voting members of the Academic Senate are: (a) the elected president or one other elected member of the ~~faculty-Faculty council~~Council of each school, ~~the College, and each Division in the College~~ (or the closest equivalent elected faculty officer, by whatever title); (b) additional delegates from the school ~~faculty-Faculty councils~~Councils, selected as provided in Section 4 below; (c) the executive officers of the faculty and Members at Large of the Executive Board.

The non-voting members of the Academic Senate are: (a) the chairs selected by the Executive Board of faculty standing committees authorized by the Academic Senate, and (b), if authorized in the Bylaws, representatives of other University organizations.

Section 3. The University Libraries and the Retired Faculty Association shall each be represented in the Academic Senate as separate entities.

Section 4. The faculty of each school, by referendum, will decide how the additional delegates from the school to the Academic Senate will be selected. Unless a school decides otherwise, they will be selected from among those the faculty elects to the school's ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#). If a school does not decide otherwise, its additional delegates will be members of the school's ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#) who received the highest number of votes when elected. Members who decline to serve, or are unable to attend regularly, will be replaced in the same manner.

Section 5. The total size of the Academic Senate, including voting and non-voting Senators, will be at least 40 and not more than 100 members. The size, allocation of additional delegates, and special situations and exceptions shall be specified from time to time in the Bylaws. Apportionment of additional delegates will take into account the proportionate size of the faculty in each school.

Section 6. The Academic Senate shall hold meetings on a fixed schedule from September through May, unless the Academic Senate or Executive Board decides otherwise. Special meetings of the Academic Senate will be held on petition of one-third of the members of the Academic Senate or at the request of the Executive Board.

Section 7. The ~~Academic Senate~~ [Faculty Assembly](#) shall elect the executive officers of the faculty and the Members at Large of the Executive Board.

Section 8. The Academic Senate shall ensure it has an active functioning attendance by establishing a quorum and providing for the replacement of members who are unable to attend regularly.

Section 9. A person who has been a member of the Academic Senate for a continuous period of six years shall be ineligible for the two years following, except to complete an ~~and~~ elected term as an executive officer.

Section 10. Unless a school decides otherwise, the term of office of its Senate members shall be one academic year.

ARTICLE V: **School Faculty Councils.**

Section 1. The faculty of each school shall have an elected ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#) to participate in the governance of that unit, whose basic purposes and roles are stated in Article II.

Section 2. The ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#) in each school is established in accordance with the will of the faculty as determined by a vote of the faculty by secret ballot, as provided in the Bylaws.

Section 3. If the dean and faculty of any school cannot reach agreement on the establishment and role of the ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#), either may seek assistance of the Academic Senate.

Section 4. The elected faculty president of each school's elected ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#) shall be a member of the Academic Senate. If a school is entitled to additional delegates on the Academic Senate, they shall be chosen as provided in Article IV, Section 4. A school may choose to have another elected ~~faculty~~ [Faculty Council](#) member serve as a Senator in the President's place.

Section 5. The Academic Senate, through ~~an election committee~~ [the Executive Board or a committee the Board designates](#), shall act to ensure that each school has a democratic and fair nomination and election process. There must be opportunity for open nominations, at least two candidates for every seat, and secret, written ballots counted by neutral teller. [Schools may consult with the Executive Board for help with strategies to recruit faculty to stand for Faculty Council elections.](#) If election procedures or results are questioned, the ~~election committee~~ [Executive Board or a committee the Board designates](#) shall investigate and report its findings to the Academic Senate,

which may take appropriate action. The Academic Senate may set standards for the manner, time, and details of elections. The Bylaws shall provide for reports to the Senate, for each school, of the names of its members of the Faculty Assembly, the member of its school ~~faculty-Faculty council~~Council, and its members in the Academic Senate.

ARTICLE VI: **Officers and Executive Board.**

Section 1. The university-wider executive officers of the faculty are the President of the Faculty, the Academic Vice-President, the Administrative Vice-President, and Secretary General.

Section 2. The President of the faculty shall be the chief executive officer of the Academic Senate and preside at meetings of the Faculty Assembly, Academic Senate, and the Executive Board. In the temporary absence of the President, the Academic Vice President shall coordinate programs contributing to faculty welfare, and the Secretary General shall coordinate the selection and supervision of committees.

Section 3. Executive officers and Members at Large of the Executive Board are elected by the Faculty Assembly in the spring. The Academic Senate will provide for the nomination and election process ~~as provided in the by~~ Bylaws.

Section 4. The term of office of the Academic Vice President shall be one year. The Academic Vice President shall be elected annually. At the completion of the term as Academic Vice president, this officer shall become President of the Faculty. The term of office of the President of the Faculty is one year; at the completion of this term, this officer shall then serve a one-year term as Immediate Past-President. The term for the offices of Administrative Vice President and Secretary General shall each be two years. These officers shall be elected in alternating years. The term of office of Members at Large of the Executive Board is ~~one~~ year (July 1 through June 30).

Section 5. The voting members of the Executive Board shall be executive officers, four Members at Large, and the immediate past President of the Faculty. ~~The editor of the Senate newspaper and other Senate committee chairs designated by the Executive Board shall be non-voting members of the Board. The Executive Board may designate selected Senate committee chairs as non-voting members of the Board.~~

Section 6. Executive officers and Members at Large of the Executive Board are elected from the membership of the Faculty Assembly.

Section 7. The Faculty Assembly shall elect the executive officers of the faculty and the Members at Large of the Executive Board.

Section 8. The Senate, through its Executive Board, may present any of its findings and recommendations to the students and faculty at large, to appropriate administrative officers of the University, to the Board of Trustees, or to the general public.

Section 9. The Executive Board may refer topics to faculty or University committees; will receive copies of committee agendas, minutes, reports; may request reports from committees, and make recommendations concerning such reports. The Executive Board ~~approves the Senate budget,~~ 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.

Section 10. In the event that an executive officer of Executive Board Member at Large resigns or becomes unable or ineligible to serve, the Academic Senate shall elect a successor to serve the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLE VII: **Committees.**

Section 1. Working committees will be selected from the membership of the Faculty Assembly. Standing committees are established by the Academic Senate; special committees are established by the Academic Senate or Executive Board. Committee chairs and members are selected by the

Executive Board. Individuals who are not members of the Faculty Assembly may also be appointed to committees.

Section 2. The Faculty Handbook provides that faculty members of University Committees are selected by the University President upon nomination by the Faculty Senate. For this purpose, the Senate acts through the Executive Board or a committee or process designated by the Executive Board.

~~The Executive Board will seek to coordinate the faculty and University committees, and may agree with administrative officers of the university for nomination or selection of University or faculty committees in a joint or coordinated fashion. The Senate through the Executive Board may nominate members of University Committees and joint Provost-Senate Committees.~~

Section 3. Committee reports are forwarded through the Executive Board to the Academic Senate for action or publication, except for committees that have been delegated special decision-making responsibilities by administrative officers of the university.

Committees shall report at least ~~semi~~-annually, and more often at the request of the Academic Senate, the Executive Board, or the committee itself.

ARTICLE VIII: **Communication.**

Section 1. Members of the Academic Senate are responsible for informing their units of the Academic Senate's work and informing the Academic Senate of their faculty's views.

Section 2. The Executive Board shall keep the members of the University faculty informed of the current activities of the Academic Senate and the committees.

Section 3. A faculty newsletter will be published as a means of communication of the Academic Senate, a forum for faculty views, a means for polling faculty opinion, and a chronicle of University and national developments important to the faculty.

Section 4. The Faculty Handbook may be revised from time to time through established collegial processes. As provided in the Handbook, consistent with University Bylaws and the delegation of authority to the University President in carrying out policy established by the Board of Trustees, revisions to the Faculty Handbook are based on recommendations from faculty and administration. These recommendations are subject to review and consultation involving appropriate faculty committee and the Executive Board, and are designed to lead to a joint formulation by the faculty and the administration. The joint formulation is submitted to the Senate for its discussion and endorsement. The joint formulation, as endorsed by the Senate and adopted by the University President, is published. Copies of the Faculty Handbook are distributed by the administration to the entire faculty.

ARTICLE IX: **Amendments.**

Section 1: Amendments to this Constitution are proposed by the Academic Senate by majority vote.

Section 2. ~~Amendments may be ratified by the Academic Senate, by two-thirds vote, at a meeting subsequent to the meeting that voted the proposal. Amendments may be adopted by two-thirds of the Academic Senate, provided that the proposed amendment has been proposed at a prior meeting as provided in Section 1.~~

ARTICLE X: **Bylaws.**

Section 1. The Academic Senate shall adopt such Bylaws as it considers necessary to the conduct of its business.

Section 2. The Bylaws may be adopted or amended by majority vote of the Academic Senate at any meeting, provided that the proposed Bylaws or amendments have been submitted in writing to the Academic Senate at a prior meeting.