

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

University Faculty Senate

Senate Council

Guidelines for Faculty Organizations

Introduction

A faculty organization shall serve as the voice of its faculty both within the academic unit and throughout the University. It shall function for its faculty as a whole within its academic unit regarding internal matters. Although the legislative authority allows for the submission of certain actions directly to the University Faculty Senate, it does of necessity, submit matters concerning courses and programs under the jurisdiction of departments and colleges through the appropriate department and/or college. The academic unit must establish a faculty organization according to these principles before the University Faculty Senate considers the delegation of authority and responsibility to the academic unit. Any additional authority and responsibility outside the jurisdiction of the University Faculty Senate requires authorization from the President of the University.

History

To respond to the general need of the various segments of the University as provided for in the following documents, it is incumbent on the University Faculty Senate issue a policy statement concerning guidelines for faculty organizations. The Senate Council recommends that the following statement be approved by the University Faculty Senate and submitted to the President for approval.

1. The July 28, 1972 Academic Policy Plan of The Pennsylvania State University issued by President Oswald and approved by The Board of Trustees states on page 78 that: “Faculty participation in decision-making and academic policy formulation is of major importance in shaping and assuring quality programs of instruction, research, and public service.”
2. The 1980-81 Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules of the University Faculty Senate, Article II, Section 6(i), page 25, directed the Committee on Intra-University Relations to “prepare criteria and guidelines to assist academic voting units in setting up appropriate faculty organizations....”
3. The July 3, 1972 Academic Organization, Policies and Procedures for the Commonwealth Campuses issued by President Oswald in which he directs on page 4 that: “A local faculty organization shall be established at each campus....”
4. The March 13, 1973 Report of the Committee on Intra-University Relations, Appendix III, set the original guidelines for faculty organizations.

Definition

The groups to which the guidelines shall apply will be called “academic units.” While the “academic units” are identified as the same groups defined in the University Faculty Senate Constitution, Article II, Section 3, as “academic voting units,” the membership of an academic unit is not identical to the membership of academic voting unit. The membership of an academic voting unit is the electorate of the University Faculty Senate, whereas the membership of an academic unit is not. Furthermore, because of the interaction among campuses, colleges, departments, and schools, a faculty member may be a member of more than one academic unit, but may only be a member of only one academic voting unit. Academic units include:

- (a) Each College at University Park;
- (b) Penn State Abington;
- (c) Penn State Altoona;
- (d) Penn State Erie, The Behrend College;
- (e) Penn State Berks;
- (f) Penn State Harrisburg;
- (g) Dickinson School of Law;
- (h) Great Valley;
- (i) University Libraries at University Park. (All members of the University Libraries at locations other than University Park fit the definition
- (j) of the Senate electorate are included in the Senate electorate and census for that particular location.);
- (k) College of Medicine;
- (l) The Combined Departments of Military Science at University Park. (All members of the Departments of Military Science at locations other than University Park who fit the definition of the Senate Electorate are included in the Senate Electorate and census for that particular location.);
- (m) University College; and
- (n) Such groupings as may be designated, according to such procedures as the Senate may establish.

Purpose

For the purpose of performing legislative, advisory/ consultative, and forensic functions within its own academic unit and for the purpose of requesting delegation of

certain legislative functions of the University Faculty Senate, each academic unit shall have one faculty organization which will be recognized by the University Faculty Senate.

Membership

The membership of the various faculty organizations may differ according to the needs and desires of each academic unit. A general framework of membership shall include the following:

1. All full-time faculty including instructors and all professorial ranks and Equivalent ranks as defined in Policy (HR-21).
2. The chief administrative officer of that academic unit who shall be an ex officio member and other members of the University appointed by this officer. The total number of ex officio and appointed members shall not exceed ten percent of the full-time faculty members.
3. Student members may not exceed ten percent of the full-time faculty members.

In some instances, the members of a faculty organization may wish to designate a representative group to perform its functions, in which case the membership becomes the electorate of the representative group. Any such representative body shall have its own membership distributed as follows:

- (a) a minimum of 80 percent shall be full-time faculty, as defined in Item 1;
- (b) a maximum of ten percent shall be ex officio and appointed members, as defined in Item 2;
- (c) a maximum of ten percent shall be student members, as defined in Item 3.

These are mandatory requirements. In some instances, an academic unit may seek exceptions. Exceptions are permissible provided that the unit can show that such change in membership would still leave the faculty organization or its representative body nonetheless qualified to execute any authority or responsibility of the organization and the University Faculty Senate Council approves such request.

Structure of Faculty Organizations

Chairs of faculty organization standing committees are elected or appointed by a representative electorate or by the presiding officer of the faculty organization. An administrator of the unit should not serve as the chair of the faculty organization. The chair of the faculty organization should be elected by the faculty of the unit.

In most cases, units will establish committees such as curriculum, faculty affairs, and student affairs to fulfill the functions of the faculty organization. Other committees will be constituted, as appropriate.

Delegation of Authority

The University Faculty Senate as the properly organized and recognized faculty organization can delegate authority and responsibility and has done so in the case of various voting units. Acknowledgement of such delegation of authority in the constitutions of the voting units, as requested by the Senate Council, should be in the form of a statement such as, “The authority vested in this constitution has been delegated by the University Faculty Senate.”

Legislative Functions

A faculty organization shall serve as the sole legislative body representing its academic unit in participating in the legislative functions of the University Faculty Senate. It shall submit its actions for approval through the appropriate academic and administrative units to the appropriate University Faculty Senate Committee or the University Faculty Senate concerning such matters as:

1. Instructional program;
2. Courses and programs of study;
3. Academic admissions standards;
4. Retention and graduation requirements;
5. Scholarships, honors programs, and honors designations;
6. Academic standards for intercollegiate athletics; and
7. Access to library and information systems

Advisory/Consultative Functions

A faculty organization acts in an advisory and consultative capacity, both through its corporate whole and any of its constituent parts, to the administrators of its academic unit, on matters concerning the academic unit, such as:

1. The establishment, reorganization, or discontinuation of organizational units and areas of instruction or research;
2. Policies concerning the planning and physical facilities when these may affect the attainment of the educational objectives of the University;

3. Policies and administration of the libraries of the University;
4. Policies affecting University development and utilization of resources;
5. Matters pertaining to the general welfare of the University;
6. Overall educational policy and planning;
7. University calendar;
8. Faculty affairs;
9. Student affairs;
10. General admissions policy; and
11. Other appropriate matters

Forensic Functions

To serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas among the members of the academic unit faculty. The Standing Rules of the University Faculty Senate shall serve as a model for conduct of forensic business.

Delegation of Responsibilities and Authorities

The faculty organization may request the delegation of authorities and responsibilities now under the jurisdiction of the University Faculty Senate by submitting documentary evidence to the University Faculty Senate through the Senate Council that it has the capability to assume these responsibilities and authorities and that such delegation is in the best interests of the University as a whole.

Revised by Senate Council: November 12, 1997

Revised and approved by Senate Council: April 11, 2006