

University Senate and Faculty Council Bylaws Western New England University

Preamble

The University Senate and the Faculty Council are shared governance structures designed to encourage discussion, collaboration, and compromise among faculty members across the Colleges and Schools at Western New England University.

1. Composition of the University Senate

The University Senate will be made up of two representatives each from the College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Pharmacy, and the School of Law, and four representatives from the College of Arts & Sciences. The additional two seats for A&S are intended to ensure representation for the broad range of fields currently housed in that College.

The University Senate is a recommending body that meets at least twice each semester. Recommendations of the University Senate will be communicated to the Provost, who is an *ex officio* non-voting member of the Senate. The Provost shall report back to the University Senate in a timely manner the status of all University Senate recommendations. The President of the University will address the University Senate at least once each academic year.

Each College/School will designate its Senators based on its own procedures. Senators from Colleges or Schools with distinct departments may not have more than one Senator from a single department. Each College/School will also select an Alternate Senator, who may replace a Senator who will be absent from a scheduled meeting. No Senator or Alternate may hold the rank of assistant professor. Deans, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans are not eligible to be elected as a Senator or an Alternate. Associate Deans and Assistant Deans with faculty status are eligible to vote in University Senate elections and referenda.

University Senate representatives serve three-year terms, with one re-election possible. For the inaugural University Senate, new Senators from each College/School will be elected for 2- and 3-year terms to ensure that as the years pass, there is a balance between new perspectives of recently-elected Senators and the experience of returning Senators.

A Senator shall be automatically removed for lack of attendance at three consecutive Senate meetings unless represented by their College/School Alternate. A Senator may also be removed for repeated lack of participation in Senate votes or for disruptive behavior at Senate meetings. Except for lack of attendance, a vote of eight of the eleven other Senators is required to reprimand, censure, or remove a Senator. Should a Senator be removed or step-down, the Alternate will serve the remainder of the term and the College/School will select a new Alternate Senator within one month.

The Chair of the Senate will rotate on a two-year basis from one College/School to another, with that College/School responsible for selecting which of its Senators will serve as Chair for this period. The Chair of the Senate shall have full voting power on all matters and motions before the Senate. Other Senate officers, as may be established by the by-laws, must come from other Colleges or School. The first Chair will be elected by the University Senate via simple majority vote. Following that individual's term, the Chair will rotate alphabetically through the other Colleges and School. Each Chair elected or designated must be eligible for a two-year term.

A majority vote shall be required to entertain a vote of no confidence in the Chairperson. A vote of eight of the eleven other Senators in Executive Session is required to remove the Chairperson from that position.

In addition, in the interest of a procedurally efficient Senate, a Parliamentarian who is a member of the faculty will be appointed by the Provost for an indefinite term as an *ex-officio* non-voting member, and be responsible for the timely release of the agenda for upcoming meetings, the circulation of the minutes from previous meetings, the maintenance of order, and for rulings on Senate procedure. The Parliamentarian shall not be a Senator or Alternate. The Parliamentarian will have working knowledge of Roberts' Rules of Order and will be paid a small stipend for attending all University Senate meetings and ensuring order. Further, if the Chair of the Senate wishes to participate in the discussion, the Parliamentarian will assume the Chair's role in the proceedings.

2. Jurisdiction of the University Senate

The University Senate's jurisdiction will be limited to matters that affect the entire university community; the University Senate will not be responsible for academic, non-academic, personnel, or any other matters that are internal to a College/School.

New academic programs shall fall under the jurisdiction of the University Senate only if the program requirements include courses offered by departments in another College/School or for courses whose content knowledge and degree level overlap with those of a discipline housed in another College or School.

The University Senate shall provide a vehicle for the expression of faculty views and for communication between the University administration and the faculty. The University Senate provides a centralized body for the faculty to raise questions, to make recommendations, and to enter into dialogue with the administration. It shall be the responsibility of each Senator to report Senate activities back to the individual College/School and to report individual College/School concerns to the Senate.

The University Senate shall be concerned with the general campus environment, and have input or raise questions regarding elements of this environment, including but not limited to: the student environment, University facilities, facility safety issues, travel policies, parking policies, public safety policies, the Institutional Review Board, Animal Care and Use,

athletics, university-wide strategic planning, university-wide campaign and fund-raising policies, and institution technology.

The University Senate shall have jurisdiction over policies related to academic freedom, intellectual property, and any other elements common to Faculty Handbooks. The University Senate shall be made aware of relevant NEASC accreditation issues and shall participate in NEASC accreditation processes as needed. Accreditation requirements for particular Colleges, Schools, and programs shall supersede any decisions of the University Senate or Faculty Council.

University-wide committees such as Diversity, Lecture Day, the International Programs Coordinating Council, shall become committees of the University Senate with the Senate deciding their composition. The Senate may also create standing or ad hoc committees as needed. The University Senate shall confirm the faculty members appointed to other University-wide standing committees, including the Budget Advisory Committee, Internal Advisory Committee for Institution Technology, the Faculty Athletic Representative, and the Strategic Planning Committee. The President shall solicit University Senate input for faculty membership on any new, University-wide Committees, Councils, or Task Forces. The University Senate shall elect faculty members serving on the All-University Disciplinary Board.

Information regarding graduate and professional programs, and proposed programmatic and scholarly initiatives, shall be shared with the University Senate.

3. Procedures and Protocols for University Senate Business

The formal matters of procedure followed on a meeting-to-meeting basis will be determined by the appointed Parliamentarian following Robert's Rules of Order.

The most significant procedural matter is a built-in contingency meant to protect all College/Schools from University Senate decisions that are detrimental to that College/School's academic wellbeing, even as a minority.

To wit: in order to pass, a motion before the Senate must be supported by a majority vote of the Senators eligible to vote. If, however, a motion receives a "no" vote or abstention from all the representatives of the College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Pharmacy, College of Arts & Sciences, or School of Law, the dissenting College or School can make a formal request that the motion be put to a referendum vote of the full faculty of the University. This formal request will then be considered at the following Senate meeting. If at that meeting, it is seconded by two additional Senators, the University Senate is bound to honor the request. If there is no formal request for a referendum, or if it is not seconded as indicated above, the motion will pass or fail as voted on by the Senate.

Any University Senate referendum will be held on-line and will require a supermajority of 66% of the faculty vote overall and simple majority in 3 out of 5 Colleges and School to pass.

4. Composition of the Faculty Council

To address issues that concern only undergraduate and graduate programs from the Colleges of Business, Engineering, and Arts & Sciences, a second body will be formed – the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council is a recommending body that meets at least twice each semester. Recommendations of the Faculty Council will be communicated to the Provost, who is an *ex officio* non-voting member of the Faculty Council. The Provost shall report back to the Faculty Council in a timely manner the status of all Faculty Council recommendations.

The Faculty Council will consider all matters relevant to undergraduate and graduate programs of the three Colleges. It will be composed of elected representatives from the College of Engineering, the College of Business, and the College of Arts and Sciences. The Colleges of Engineering and Business will each elect two representatives; the College of Arts & Sciences will elect three representatives.

Each College will designate its Representatives based on its own procedures. No College may have more than one Representative from a single department. Each College will also select an Alternate Representative, who may replace a Representative who will be absent from a scheduled meeting. No Representative or Alternate may hold the rank of assistant professor. Deans, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans are not eligible to be elected as a Representative or Alternate. Associate Deans and Assistant Deans with faculty status are eligible to vote in Faculty Council elections and referenda.

Faculty Council Representatives serve three-year terms, with one re-election possible. For the inaugural Faculty Council, new Representatives from each College will be elected for 2- and 3-year terms to ensure that as the years pass, there is a balance between new perspectives of recently elected Representatives and the experience of returning Representatives.

A Representative shall be automatically removed for lack of attendance at three consecutive Faculty Council meetings unless represented by their Alternate. A Representative may also be removed for repeated lack of participation in Faculty Council votes or for disruptive behavior at Faculty Council meetings. Except for lack of attendance, a vote of five of the six other Representatives is required to reprimand, censure, or remove a Representative. Should a Representative be removed or step-down, the Alternate will serve the remainder of the term and the college/school will select a new Alternate Representative within one month.

The Chair of the Council will rotate on a two-year basis from one College to another, with that College responsible for selecting which of its Representatives will serve as Chair for this period. The Chair of the Council shall have full voting power on all matters and motions before the Council. Other Council officers, as may be established by the by-laws, must come from other Colleges. The first Chair will be elected by the Faculty Council via simple majority vote. Following that individual's term, the Chair will rotate alphabetically through the other Colleges. Each Chair elected or designated must be eligible for a two-year term.

A majority vote shall be required to entertain a vote of no confidence in the Chairperson. A vote of five of the six other Representatives in Executive Session is required to remove the Chairperson from that position.

To ensure the widest possible involvement of the faculty in the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Arts & Sciences, Representatives serving on the Faculty Council may not serve concurrently on the University Senate.

5. Jurisdiction of the Faculty Council

The Faculty Council will address topics of relevance to the undergraduate and graduate degree programs of the university and elements specific to the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering. Issues that fall under the purview of the Faculty Council will include: Undergraduate General University Requirements, On-line Teaching, Academic Honesty, Academic Standards, Undergraduate Admissions and Retention, Non-common Handbook issues, Promotion and Tenure, the Adjunct Handbook, Faculty Grant Competitions, and Sabbaticals.

It shall be the responsibility of each Representative to report Council activities back to the individual College and to report individual College concerns to the Council.

6. Procedures and Protocols for Faculty Council Business

On the Faculty Council, motions must receive a majority vote in order to pass. If any of the three Colleges represented votes unanimously against a motion, the dissenting College can request a referendum. This request will then be considered at the next Council meeting. If the request for a referendum is seconded by one other member of the Council, it will be put to referendum. If there is no formal request for a referendum, or if no other Council member seconds the request, the motion will pass or fail as voted on by the Council.

Any Faculty Council referendum vote will be held on-line and shall require a supermajority of 66% of the faculty vote overall from the three Colleges and a simple majority in 2 of the 3 Colleges to pass.

Afterward

Approval of the University Senate and Faculty Council requires a minimum 67% yes vote of the full-time faculty and a minimum 50% yes vote of the full-time faculty from each College/School voting in an online ballot.

This document may be amended based on a motion passed by a majority of either the University Senate or Faculty Council and approved by a university-wide faculty referendum requiring 66% of the faculty vote overall and a majority within all five Colleges/Schools to pass.

This proposal requires a faculty vote after 5 years to decide if this new University shared governance structure shall continue. The decision will be determined using the same protocols

for University Senate referendum votes. If the faculty votes to reject continuation, then the Provost will appoint a committee charged with proposing a replacement model. Until a new system is approved by the faculty via referendum, the existing structure will remain in place.

Additional items of procedure and rules (“By Laws”) will be determined and affirmed by a supermajority of each body (9 of 12 Senators for University Senate and 5 of 7 Representatives for Faculty Council). No element in the by-laws of either body may contravene the structures and processes described herein.

The necessity for protection of minority interests via referendum votes is meant to provide the fullest possible protection for all Colleges and Schools. It is also meant to remove the stigma associated with the current, rare instances of campus-wide voting. When University Senate or Faculty Council debate reveals that an issue is sufficiently contentious, a referendum will bring resolution to that issue in the most broadly representative fashion possible, giving each faculty member a voice in the decision.

Amendments

1. If an amendment to the bylaws related to the Senate receives unanimous support with no abstentions from all Senators from all Colleges/Schools, that amendment need not go to the entire university faculty for a vote. The proposed amendment will require votes at two successive meetings to be approved.