

## **Membership and Elections Committee Procedures for Operations**

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### **Introduction**

The Membership and Elections Committee is charged with running elections for the Faculty Senate; Faculty Senate standing, special purpose, and ad-hoc committees; Other Faculty Organizations as specified in Article IX of the Faculty Senate Bylaws; and Consortium committees (for Faculty positions only). In addition, the committee will run Bylaws and referendum votes at the request of the Senate, as well as elections for faculty representation on other committees at the Senate's request.

This document outlines the responsibilities of the Membership and Elections Committee and describes the procedures the committee follows.

### **Procedures for Elections for Out-of-the-Ordinary Committees**

When running elections at the request of the Senate for faculty membership on committees other than Faculty Senate committees, Bylaws-specified Other Faculty Organizations, and Consortium committees, the following criteria must be adhered to:

- (1) Senate approval must be given to the requesting committee and the Membership and Elections Committee must be notified a minimum of two months in advance.
- (2) The number of elections to be run must be specified by the requesting committee and this must be communicated to the Membership and Elections Committee.
- (3) The group requesting an election must have publicly posted Bylaws governing elections so that voting faculty have the opportunity to review the Bylaws and the Membership and Elections Committee can follow them.
- (4) The committee requesting an election must give the Membership and Elections Committee an accurate current listing of eligible faculty for their election and inform the committee of all currently eligible faculty allowed to vote.

### **Maintain Faculty Database**

The committee, in conjunction with the Provost's Office and Payroll staff, will establish and maintain an electronic database of all full-time Faculty and all part-time tenure-track Faculty (as defined by the Senate Bylaws) by Unit, department/discipline, rank, and tenure status. This database will be used to allow only authorized access to electronic ballots. For example, in Unit elections, only faculty from the designated Unit will be able to access the ballot for that particular Unit.

The database is updated at the start of each semester. Ad hoc updates may be made as the Membership and Elections Committee becomes aware of changes.

### **Determining Unit and Discipline Membership**

In accordance with Article I, Section 4, Faculty members may only be designated as a member of at most one Unit. M&E will also designate Faculty members as a member of only one discipline for the purposes of determining committee eligibility.

In cases where a Faculty member has a cross-Unit or cross-departmental appointment, their Unit and discipline for election purposes shall be assigned based on the Unit and discipline of the person responsible for completing their annual evaluation.

In accordance with the Faculty Senate Bylaws Article 6, Section 4, unless the Faculty Senate directs otherwise, the discipline of a Faculty member shall be considered to be 1) their department if their Unit is Fulton, Henson, Perdue, or Seidel; 2) their school if their Unit is CHHS and their school is Nursing or Social Work; 3) their program if their Unit is CHHS and their school is Health Sciences; or 4) "library" if their Unit is the SU Libraries. If the Faculty Senate determines that multiple disciplines exist within a department, then the Faculty Senate shall be responsible for providing instructions to the Membership and Elections Committee on how to determine the disciplinary membership of the Faculty in that department.

#### [Call for Nominations](#)

The committee will call for self-nominations by e-mail a minimum of three business days prior to an election. The call corresponds to all open positions to be voted on in the following election. All open positions will be listed in an email while directing faculty to the Faculty Senate website to view other faculty currently holding office and eligibility requirements for each position. The email will direct faculty to a URL at which they can nominate themselves. A staff member in the SU Web Office maintains this web page. Eligibility to run for a particular position is checked by the committee prior to construction of the final ballot, and a final ballot is drafted from these self-nominations.

#### [Actions When No Candidates Self-Nominate for a Position](#)

In the event that no candidates self-nominate for a position and the position remains vacant after elections, the committee will continue to call for nominations for the vacant position at each normal election time (fall and spring) until a candidate is found. In such an event, the term of office will be reduced by the amount of time that the position was vacant to keep the rotation of membership off the committee constant. (Example: If the original request for nominations was for a term of 2003-2006 and the position was vacant for all of 2003, then an individual elected would only serve from 2004 – 2006.)

#### [Conduct Elections](#)

Elections are run twice a year, once in April-May to replace all expired terms and other vacancies and once in September-October to replace inactive members, retirees, long-term sabbaticals, and other vacancies. In addition, special elections may be run at the direction of the Senate when needed.

Elections are conducted in two phases. The first phase includes elections at the Unit level to fill positions designated to a particular Unit. The second phase includes elections for at-large positions. These are held after the results of Unit elections are known to prevent conflicts such as having two people from the same department elected to a committee, one as a Unit representative and the other for the at-large position.

Elections are announced by email. The email directs faculty to a URL at which they can vote. A staff member in the SU Web Office maintains this web page. Voting occurs for a minimum of three business days.

#### [Bylaw Referendums](#)

If there are Bylaw changes on which the faculty must vote, these can be added to an at-large ballot or run as a special referendum. The choice is left up to the committee unless the Senate provides specific direction. The annual deadline for submission of Bylaw changes to the committee is April 15 to allow sufficient time for a referendum vote before the end of the spring semester.

#### [Filling Long-Term Vacancies](#)

Vacancies longer than one semester are considered long-term vacancies and are filled by election. In cases where a Unit seat has been filled at-large and then is subsequently vacated, the seat reverts to its Unit status and must be first offered as a Unit seat in the elections cycle.

### Unopposed Elections

When there is only one valid nominee for a committee seat, the Membership and Elections Committee will vote as a committee to elect by acclamation all nominees that are unopposed.

### Elections Where More Than One Seat Is To Be Filled

If there are more candidates than open seats for a given body, eligible voting faculty members may vote for as many candidates as there are open seats. If there are a number of candidates equal to the number of open seats for a given body and all the seats are identical, then the Membership and Elections Committee will vote as a committee to elect by acclamation all nominees for that body. Otherwise, eligible voting faculty members may vote for one fewer candidate than the number of candidates.

### Returning of Ballots

Electronic ballots are automatically returned in the online voting system. Under extraordinary circumstances of technical failure or faculty disability, a faculty member will be issued a paper ballot that will be returned to a member of the committee. Since this mechanism cannot be adjusted to assure voting confidentiality, every effort will be made by the Membership and Elections committee members to aid all faculty members in the successful completion of the electronic ballot as a first and preferred course of action.

### Re-voting

Faculty have the option to recall or change a vote within the voting time frame. Each time a faculty member logs on and votes using the online voting system, the previous votes are overridden. No changes may be made after the election is closed.

### Counting Results

The results are retrieved from a secure website by a minimum of two members of the Membership and Elections Committee shortly after the election has ended.

### Tie Breaking

In the event of a tie, a second election, including the tied winners only, is run for the position. In the case where all the valid candidates tie and no candidate can be removed for a run-off election, the Membership and Elections Committee will appoint a winner by drawing a name out of a hat.

### Verifying Results

Once the results are complete, new rosters of committee memberships are constructed. The composition of the committees is examined by the Membership and Elections Committee to see if any adjustments must be made to abide by the relevant bylaws. For example, faculty members could be elected to three committees when they can only serve on two. As a general rule, these individuals are contacted and asked which committees they would prefer, and the slots on the committees that they vacate are given to the second place finishers in the election. Individuals so contacted shall have three business days to reply to Membership and Elections Committee with their choice; this deadline shall be communicated as part of the contact. If the individual does not respond by the end of three business days, their final seats shall be determined by random selection by the Membership and Elections Committee.

### Recording Results

The committee shall provide complete, detailed, and public results concerning elections, referenda, or other votes which the Committee conducts. In particular,

- (1) After every election, the Membership and Elections Committee shall provide a detailed, public written report listing all candidates, the number votes each candidate received, and the winner(s) (if any).
- (2) After every referendum or other vote conducted by the Membership and Elections Committee, the committee shall provide a detailed, public written report listing all matters

and options voted upon, the number of votes received for each matter or option, and the result(s) of the voting.

The Senate Webmaster shall maintain a copy of these results for 1 year.

#### [Appoint Faculty for Temporary Vacancies](#)

The Membership and Elections Committee can appoint replacements for temporary vacancies (with the exception of the Promotions Committee) for no more than one semester. These appointments are carried out at the beginning of each semester for unfilled vacancies in that semester and at end of each semester for any identified temporary vacancies in the next semester. Vacancies may be due to sabbaticals, illnesses, or other reasons.

The appointments are made after sending an e-mail announcement to faculty calling for self-nominations for the open position(s). If more than one self-nomination is received for a given position, the appointment is made by drawing names from a hat.

If a vacancy continues for more than one semester and another appointment is necessary, the committee will as a matter of policy re-appoint the same faculty member currently serving as a replacement to facilitate continuity of operations within the committee. Should the current replacement be unwilling to continue service, an appointment will be made following the usual procedures.

If the vacant position is a designated Unit position, then every effort will be made to appoint a replacement from the particular Unit. If no one from the particular Unit is willing to serve then the position will remain vacant.

#### [Handling Resignations from Committees or from Senate](#)

To resign from a committee or from Senate, an individual must provide the Chair of the Membership and Elections Committee with a statement of resignation in writing, which includes a clear statement that the individual is resigning, the name(s) of the body or bodies from which they are resigning, and the date their resignation goes into effect. If a resignation is received that does not include all information, then the Chair of the Membership and Elections Committee shall request the rest of the information. If no response is received within 5 business days, then the resignation shall be assumed to be immediate and from all bodies the person is a member of unless it was otherwise specified in the original statement.

The Chair of the Membership and Elections Committee shall confirm in writing to the resigning individual that the resignation has been accepted and shall copy the chair(s) or president(s) of the affected body or bodies on the confirmation.

An individual may rescind their resignation until the soonest of 1) their stated resignation date or 2) the Membership and Elections Committee lists the vacant seat created by the resignation in an election.

An individual who has left employment with the University is considered to have automatically resigned from all their seats.

#### [Change of Discipline While On A Committee](#)

On rare occasions, a faculty member may change department/discipline while serving on a committee. This does not affect their ability to continue serving on committees to which they have already been elected, even if the committee already has a member from their new department/discipline. Faculty Senate Bylaws Article V, Section 10 establishes that eligibility to serve is determined at the time of election.

However, all future checks for eligibility will use the faculty member's new department/discipline, and this may affect eligibility for re-election for any member of the committee on which that faculty member is serving.

### Remove Inactive Committee Members

The Membership and Elections Committee can remove inactive committee members at the request of the committee chairs. The chairperson of a committee who would like to replace an inactive member must submit a signed letter of recall to the chairperson of the Membership and Elections Committee stating the reasons the member is considered inactive. The Membership and Elections Committee will then notify the inactive member that a letter of recall has been submitted and request a response from the inactive member within one week of the notification. If the member wishes to remain on the committee, the member's response shall be a letter, in writing, outlining any extenuating circumstances that should be considered during the recall deliberations. The letter of recall and the member's letter are reviewed by the Membership and Elections Committee who then approve the letter of recall and remove the inactive committee member or disapprove the chair's request. In the event that the recall is for a position on the Membership and Elections Committee itself, deliberations and voting will occur in the absence of the inactive member. Appeals regarding a recall decision will be forwarded to the entire Senate. The decision of the Senate is final. A member of a committee shall be considered inactive and may be removed from the committee by the Membership and Elections Committee in accordance with Article V Section 8 and Article VII Section 1 of the Bylaws if the member has during a semester:

- (1) failed to respond to the committee chair's call for a meeting two or more times by indicating suitable meeting times, or
- (2) failed to offer five or more suitable meeting times during a week two or more times in response to the committee chair's call for a meeting, or
- (3) failed to attend two or more meetings scheduled at a time they had indicated was suitable, or
- (4) failed to attend two or more meetings of the committee when said committee has a standing meeting time.