



**Constitution and Bylaws  
of the  
Faculty Senate**

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**PREAMBLE**

*Realizing that a faculty forms the creative and energizing force of institutions of higher learning, the Mississippi Valley State University Faculty Senate is hereby established to participate actively in the decision-making process affecting all institutional components, to foster a sense of security, freedom, respect for individual dignity, and to promote growth and progress benefitting characteristic excellence in higher education.*

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of the organization shall be THE FACULTY SENATE.

**ARTICLE II - FUNCTION AND AUTHORITIES**

Section 1: Function

The Faculty Senate shall, as the representative body of the Faculty, undertake studies and make recommendations to the Administration that shall:

- enhance faculty performance, ensure academic freedom, and academic security, and guarantee its involvement in institutional governance;
- promote the representation of the faculty in the governance of the university;
- encourage active faculty participation in the development of university policies and procedures that promote the welfare of the faculty;
- discuss and recommend, as a Faculty Senate, policies affecting the faculty and the university
- serve as a conduit to ensure that all policies and procedures affecting faculty are approved/disapproved by the faculty before consideration for implementation by the Administration;
- ensure maintenance of academic freedom at the University;
- serve as the forum for the formulation of faculty opinion;
- keep the faculty and Administration fully informed of its activities; and
- maintain committees, as necessary, to serve as an effective voice of the faculty in the shared governance of the University.

Section II: Authorities

The Senate shall have the authority and responsibility to act for and on behalf of THE FACULTY. Actions of the Senate shall be effective upon approval of THE FACULTY by a 51% vote of the total membership of THE FACULTY for the approved issue. A majority of Faculty voting at a Full Faculty or departmental meeting may call for a written/digital ballot of the entire faculty. The ballot will be attached to a copy of the meeting's minutes via the faculty senate's webpage.

Ballots must be returned to the Secretary of The Faculty Senate and the vote counted and announced within 3 days of distribution of the ballot.

### **ARTICLE III - COMPOSITION, ELIGIBILITY, MODE OF ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

#### Section I: Composition

The Senate shall be composed of one faculty member from each academic department, University College, and the library. The University President and The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Senate.

Each Academic Department, University College, and the library shall be entitled to one (1) Senator each.

#### Section II: Eligibility for Membership

Persons who have been employed as academic faculty, University College faculty, and library personnel for three (3) regular academic years (six (6) semesters) shall be eligible for membership. Faculty holding administrative appointments are not eligible.

##### *Category I: Eligibility for Senate President*

Senators who have served for at least one (1) academic year (9 months) shall be eligible for nomination for the position of Senate President.

##### *Category II: Eligibility for Senate Officers*

Senators who have been selected or appointed by their academic areas shall be eligible for nomination for the position of Senate Officers.

#### Section III: Terms of Office

Senators from each academic department University College, and the library will be elected or appointed by their respective departments in even-numbered years during March of that year (2024, 2026, etc).

All members (*officers and senators*) shall serve for a term of **two (2) academic years** and the following summer sessions.

No members shall be eligible for immediate re-election or re-appointment after having served two (2) consecutive terms (4 years).

#### Section IV: Mode of Election

Election of all Senators shall take place during the March departmental faculty meetings. Senators should be nominated by departmental colleagues, and selected by acceptance (if only

one person is nominated) or by secret ballot (if multiple people are nominated). Any faculty who feels that he/she cannot serve fully and faithfully for the 2-year term on the Senate should decline nomination. Acceptance of nomination is deemed as a commitment to serve fully and faithfully after winning the election. If all nominations are declined, the Department Chair shall appoint a senator within their department. Department Chairs shall forward the names of their department's faculty senator to the President of the Faculty Senate seven days before the Faculty Senate Meeting held in April. The elected senator shall attend the Faculty Senate Meeting held in April.

## **ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION**

### Section I: Officers Of The Senate

The following officers shall be elected by the Senate: (a) Senate President, (b) Vice President, (c) Secretary, (d) Assistant Secretary, and (e) Parliamentarian.

### Section II: Duties Of Officers

The duties of the Faculty Senate's officers shall be inclusive of all full faculty meetings which will be held, if necessary, twice a semester –September, November, February, and April.

#### *A. President*

The Senate President shall perform the following duties: (1) act as spokesperson for the Senate; (2) preside over all meetings of the Senate; (3) call special meetings when necessary or at the request of a majority of Senators or any one of the faculty; and (4) act as liaison between Faculty Senate and Administration. The Senate President shall also receive a one-course load reduction as compensation for serving in this position.

#### *B. Vice-President*

The vice president shall preside over Senate meetings in the absence of the president. The Vice President shall solicit the faculty to develop a pool for prospective Faculty Senate committee appointments and Faculty Senate appointments to Shared Governance and University committees each spring; (2) select committee members for the coming year's Faculty Senate committee appointments, and (3) monitor equitable faculty member appointments to Faculty Senate, Shared Governance, and University committees.

#### *C. Secretary*

The Secretary shall perform the following duties: (1) act as archivist for the permanent records of the Senate; (2) keep accurate minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Senate, and (3) and update all facets of the Faculty Senate's

webpage.

*D. Assistant Secretary*

The Assistant Secretary shall perform all the duties of the Secretary in the absence of the Secretary. The assistant secretary shall also perform the following duties: (1) assist the vice president in the selection process of committee appointments by keeping accurate committee assignments and (2) forward records to the secretary for archiving.

*E. Parliamentarian*

The Parliamentarian shall maintain order and make sure that meetings are conducted according to Robert's Rule of Order.

*F. Senators*

Senators shall perform the following duties: (1) attend meetings of the Senate (2) in the event of an absence, ensure a department proxy is in attendance (3) communicate to the faculty senate their departmental concerns/issues, and (4) report matters of the university as discussed in the faculty senate meetings within their departmental meetings.

### Section III: Vacancies

If a senate officer position becomes vacant, the president of the Faculty Senate, in consultation with the members of the faculty senate and with the approval of the Faculty Senate, shall make interim appointments effective until the next annual election. At the next annual election, a senator or senators shall be elected for the vacant position(s).

### Section IV: Meetings

A. Faculty Senate Meetings

1. *Meeting times*

The Senate shall meet on the first Tuesday of each academic month at 11:00 am. Any faculty can request a called meeting by contacting the Senate President. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the faculty senate body shall constitute a quorum. Special meetings shall be called by the Senate President. Occasional conflicts (such as holidays or special University functions) may require rescheduling of Senate meetings by Senate resolution. The Faculty Senate shall also be afforded time to conduct faculty senate business during both the Fall and Spring Faculty Institutes.

2. *Agenda*

At least three days prior to any Faculty Senate meeting, the President shall have an agenda published and distributed to THE FACULTY SENATE. Any Senator may submit items for the agenda four (4) days before the Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty members may also submit items to a Faculty Senator in writing of an issue/concern that they feel needs to be addressed/investigated by the Faculty Senate. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Senator to submit this for inclusion on the Faculty Senate's meeting agenda.

B. Full Faculty Meetings

1. *Meeting times*

The Full Faculty of the University shall meet twice a semester, if necessary, in the months of September, November, February, and April at 11:00 am with the President of the Faculty Senate presiding. This meeting is open only to persons with full-time appointments as Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Instructor whose primary University responsibility is teaching as defined by the University's Office of Human Resources. Minutes of the meetings, excluding the names will be posted to the Faculty Senate's webpage promptly.

2. *Agenda*

At least three days before any Faculty Senate meeting, the President shall have an agenda published and distributed to THE FACULTY SENATE. Any Senator may submit items for the agenda four (4) days before the Faculty Senate meeting. Faculty members may also submit items to a Faculty Senator in writing of an issue/concern that they feel needs to be addressed/investigated by the Faculty Senate. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Senator to submit this for inclusion on the Faculty Senate's meeting agenda.

**ARTICLE V: Standing Committees of the Faculty**

The Faculty Senate supports Committees as detailed in the Faculty Handbook. During the fall semester, the Faculty Senate Vice-president shall distribute to each member of the University Faculty a list of University Shared Governance committees and those University committees. A brief statement as to the description of the committee is included in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty members are requested to return such a list, marking their preferences as to the committee(s) on which they would like to serve. Upon return of such expressions of preferences by the faculty, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in consultation with Academic Affairs prepares a roster of committees and faculty members willing to serve on them. The roster will be used to elect or appoint faculty for committee service. No department should have more than one (1) member per committee. If there are multiple representation preferences from a department on a committee, then the department will be asked to vote on who would be the representative for that

committee. If necessary, the Senate in collaboration with Academic Affairs will prepare and distribute a ballot to the faculty, which includes a deadline for casting votes. The Election results will be shared with the Faculty and the University President, who formally acknowledges committee members' election or appointment.

## **ARTICLE VI: Attendance**

### Section I: Presence/Absenteeism

Each Senator is expected to be present all scheduled Senate meetings and should notify the Senate President of an absence and, if possible, the name of their proxy. Senators accumulating four (4) absences (called meetings and excused absences not included) in one academic year shall NOT be eligible to serve out their term. Such Senators, therefore, shall be replaced. The respective Department Chair or Supervisor shall be informed in writing to send a replacement to serve out the term. Replacement of Senators shall be done by the respective Department Chair or Supervisor within thirty (30) days. The Senate President shall communicate to the Administration the Senate's intent to replace such Senators.

### Section II: Removal of Senators

A Senator may be removed from office for cause by a two-thirds vote of the faculty.

### Section III: Representation by Proxy.

In the event that a Senator may, because of extenuating circumstances and for good cause, be unable to attend the Senate meeting, the Senator may designate a faculty member from the same department as a representative. Written notice of such designation, if possible, should be provided to the Senate President before the appropriate meeting. This designated representative shall have voting privileges. Senators who send representatives shall be noted as "present by proxy" in Senate records.

## **ARTICLE VII: Amending The Constitution**

By a two-thirds vote of those voting, the Faculty may amend this constitution during the academic year either at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Full Faculty or at a special meeting of the Faculty Senate called, with at least fifteen days of written notice. The following sequence shall be followed in proposing amendments:

- A. An amendment(s) must be recommended by at least ten members of the University Faculty;
- B. An amendment(s) must be submitted, in writing, to the Faculty Senate for its consideration at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate;
- C. The amendment(s) must be voted upon by the Senate at its next regularly scheduled meeting;
- D. The amendment(s) must be submitted, in writing, to all members of the University Faculty, with the recommendation(s) of the Senate attached;

- E. The amendment(s) must be voted upon by the University Faculty. (An amendment so presented to the University Faculty may be amended from the floor at a University Faculty meeting by a majority vote of those in attendance, in accordance with regular parliamentary procedures, or by departmental vote through which the senator of that department will vote at the next faculty senate meeting.)
- F. The Constitution shall be considered ratified after an affirmative vote of the faculty and with the written approval of the University President.