

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

SENATE HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK.....	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY.....	2
OFFICERS.....	3
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.....	3
COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES.....	3
STUDENT REPRESENTATION.....	4
SENATE MEETINGS.....	4
I. SENATORS.....	4
A. Duties of Senators.....	4
B. Elections of Senators.....	5
II. COUNCILS.....	5
A. Duties of Councils.....	5
III. COUNCIL CHAIRS.....	8
A. Duties of Council Chairs.....	8
B. Election of Council Chairs.....	9
IV. SENATE OFFICERS.....	9
A. Duties of Senate Officers.....	9
B. Election of Senate Officers.....	9
V. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.....	9
APPENDIX A. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND LINKS.....	11
APPENDIX B. EXAMPLE OF A COVER PAGE FOR A BILL.....	12
THE SUBSEQUENT PAGES OR “RATIONALE” SHOULD INCLUDE THE RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION MENTIONED IN THE “GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF CURRICULAR PROPOSALS” IN THIS CASE. THE RATIONALE FOR A BILL SHOULD INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION WITHIN THE PROPOSING COUNCIL OR STANDING COMMITTEE, ANY ADDITIONAL MATTERS RELEVANT TO THE BILL RESEARCHED BY THE COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE, AND THE RESULTS OF THE VOTE.....	12

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

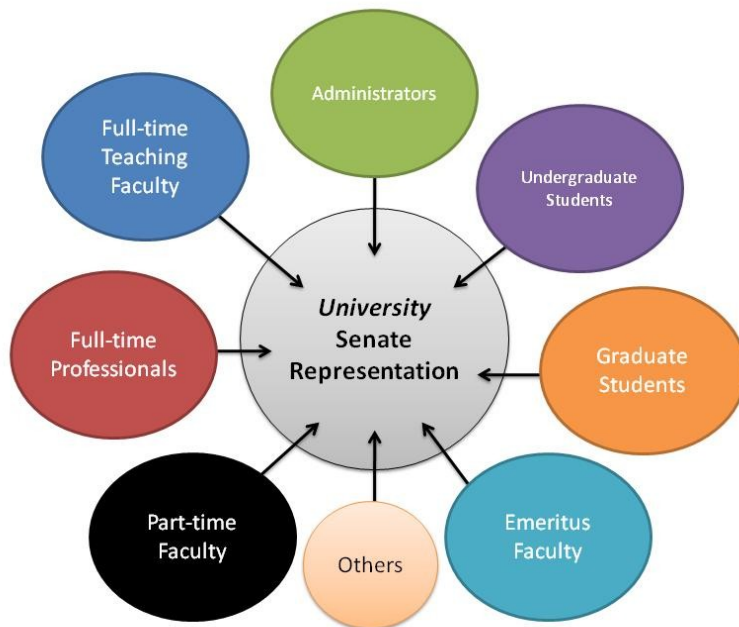
The University Senate—YOUR Senate—affects the life of everyone on campus. The Governance Council has developed this handbook to inform and more fully engage the University Community in the work of the Senate, as constituents, voters, and actual participants in the Senate itself or one of its many councils or committees. Our message is simple: Inform yourself about the Senate, and get involved!

This handbook was developed by the Governance Council to provide an overview of the responsibilities and operation of the Senate for the benefit of Senators and Faculty who might wish to run for a senate seat. This handbook also contains some guidelines which are not explicitly part of the Senate Charter. Further details are available in the University at Albany Faculty Bylaws and Charter of the University

Senate, which can be accessed via www.albany.edu/senate/bylaws_charter.htm. An index to the Charter and Bylaws is provided there.

INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

The voice of the Voting Faculty at the University at Albany is called the University Senate, since in addition to full-time Teaching Faculty and Professional Faculty (generally represented by UUP or eligible to be represented by UUP), the Senate and its councils provide for membership of administrators (generally Management Confidential staff), undergraduate and graduate students, part-time Faculty, Emeriti, and others. As with any representative body, the Senate and its bodies work best when its constituents familiarize themselves with how the governance processes work and, to the degree they are able, become involved in those processes.



The University Senate is the principal policy-forming body of the University (Bylaws, Article II, 1.1) It is advisory to the President of the University. The Senate's effectiveness derives from the right of the Faculty and students to be consulted on matters of major importance to the educational, research, and service missions of the University and to provide advice on such matters as spelled out more in detail in the Faculty Bylaws and Senate Charter. To carry out its role, the Senate critically relies on Faculty committed to the goals of the University and willing to participate in the governance of the University.

As noted in the Charter, Section III, "the Senate shall interpret the extent of the powers and responsibilities specified to itself in Article I Section 2.3 of the Faculty Bylaws," which state: "To discharge these responsibilities, the Faculty shall create a University Senate and shall delegate its power to that Senate, reserving to itself the powers specified in Article I, Section 5, Article IV and Article V" of the Faculty Bylaws. Any policy, practice, or condition within the University which in its judgment significantly affects the quality of the institution's legitimate functioning is a proper concern of the Faculty, and, hence, of the Senate. The Senate's rights and responsibilities are described in the Bylaws, Article I, 2.1-2.6, and in the Charter, Section III.

OFFICERS

The officers of the Senate shall be the Chair, Vice Chair, Immediate Past Chair and the Secretary. The Senate may designate additional officers. The term of the secretary shall be two years and of the other elected officers shall be one year.

The functions of Senate Officers are listed in Section IV of the Charter. The Officers and the Chairs of Councils and Standing Committees of the Senate serve on the Executive Committee of the Senate (described in Article II, Section 4 of the Faculty Bylaws and in Section VII of the Charter) and on the Committee on Council Nominations of the Governance Council.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is responsible for the general operation of the Senate including the responsibility to act on behalf of the entire Senate on urgent matters when it is impossible to convene the Senate and to address issues facing the University when it interprets those issues to fall under the Rights and Responsibilities of the Faculty.

The members are:

- The President of the University, ex officio;
- The Provost of the University, ex officio;
- The Chair of the Senate (who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee_), ex officio_;
- The immediate Past Chair of the Senate, ex officio;
- The Vice Chair of the Senate, ex officio;
- The Secretary of the Senate, ex officio;
- The Chairs of the Senate Councils, ex officio;
- The representatives to the SUNY Senate, ex officio;
- The President of the Graduate Student Organization, ex officio, or a graduate student Senator designated to serve for the year
- The President of the Student Association, ex officio, or the Chair of the Student Association Senate or another undergraduate student Senator designated to serve for the year.
- Other ex officio members as designated by the Senate.

COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Much of the business of the Senate occurs within its Councils and Committees. Councils may gather and disseminate information, act on matters for which authority has been delegated from the Senate, and recommend action in the form of bills and resolutions brought to the Senate.

Councils include:

- Governance Council
- University Planning and Policy Council
- Undergraduate Academic Council
- Graduate Academic Council
- Council on Research

- Council on Academic Assessment
- Council on Promotions and Continuing Appointments
- Council on Libraries, Information Systems and Computing
- University Life Council.

Section X of the Charter describes the charges of Senate standing committees and councils and the subcommittees within each council. Councils and Committees are comprised of both Senators and non-Senators. **Even if you are not a Senator, there is plenty of opportunity to participate in the Senate through the Councils and Committees.** The call for Senate participants goes out each spring, and is handled through an online participation form which can be found on the Senate website (Note: this link is only live between March and mid-May).

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The University Senate encourages the university administration to utilize the Governance Council to consult with student governments regarding the selection of student representatives for standing and ad hoc committees, panels, and similar bodies.

If there is reason to select student representatives independently, these selections should be in addition to at least one representative from student government. The name and contact information of those students should be reported to the student representatives on the Governance Council.

SENATE MEETINGS

Senate Meetings are typically held once a month and are open to anyone. While all may participate in discussions, only Senators may vote. Senate meeting schedules, agendas and minutes may be found at http://www.albany.edu/universitysenate/senate_agendas_minutes.htm. A member of the University community who wishes to address the Senate on an issue that is not part of the agenda, should contact the Senate Chair to request to be put on a future agenda (<http://www.albany.edu/senate/>). The Chair may consult with the Senate Executive Committee about whether the business at hand should be sent to a Council or Committee first before going to the Senate floor.

I. SENATORS

A. Duties of Senators

Each Senator holds membership on at least one Council. Senators may be assigned to committees within a Council or to one Council plus a Standing Committee outside that Council, such as the Committee on Ethics in Research and Scholarship (CERS) or the Committee on Academic Freedom, Freedom of Expression and Community Responsibility (CAFFECOR).

Senators are expected to attend all Senate meetings as well as those of any Council and Committee of which they are a member. Missing four Senate meetings in one academic year may cause a Senator to be removed. (Bylaws, Article II, Section 8) Missing four consecutive Council, Standing Committee or subcommittee meetings can result in removal from the given body (Charter, X.1.5.3, VIII.5.1).

Senators are expected to report Senate business back to their constituents.

The Senate's meeting schedule shall be posted as early as possible in the previous academic year. Normally, the Senate meets once per month on Mondays from 3:30-5:00. If the business of the meeting extends beyond 5:00 pm, a motion for extension must be made.

B. Elections of Senators

The Faculty Bylaws, Article II, Section 2 describes the election process. Most Senators are elected by the schools and colleges from the eligible Voting Faculty, the seats allotted in proportion to the numbers of Voting Faculty members within each school or college. Four full-time Teaching Faculty, four full-time Professional Faculty, and two Part-time faculty are elected Senators-at-large by the Voting Faculty as a whole.

The Executive Committee may nominate up to two Senators for one-year terms, subject to approval of the Senate. In cases where a Council is unable to elect a Senator as its Chair, and has elected one of its members as Chair who is not a Senator, the Executive Committee may nominate the chair-elect to serve as Senator, again subject to approval by the Senate. (Bylaws, Article II, Section 2.4)

All Senate terms run for two years, and elected Senators may not serve for more than three consecutive terms or more than seven consecutive years. The Governance Council oversees the election procedures.

According to the Faculty Bylaws, Article II, Section 8.1, "Election of Senators shall be presided over by the Governance Council of the Senate and completed no later than four full class weeks before the end of classes during the spring semester." All academic units elect their Senators during the spring semester, typically by the beginning of April. Senators begin their terms on 1 September and end them on 31 August. However, assignments of Senators to Councils and/or Standing Committees are made by the Committee on Council Nominations as soon as possible after the spring elections, and organizational meetings of the councils are typically held before September 1.

Senators who are on leave may be replaced, but only during the period of that leave. The process for replacing Senators is described in the Bylaws, Article II, Section 8.2. Senators may send a substitute to a Senate meeting. The substitute may speak and observe but not vote.

Fifteen Student Senators shall be elected according to the procedures in the Bylaws, Article II, Section 2.6. Those elections are governed by their constituent bodies, the Student Association and the Graduate Student Organization.

Representatives to the SUNY Faculty Senate are elected by the faculty as a whole. SUNY Faculty Senators serve three-year terms.

II. COUNCILS

A. Duties of Councils

Most of the business of the Senate takes place as the result of Council and Standing Committee deliberations. Bills and resolutions must be brought to the Senate Executive Committee, which sets the agenda for the subsequent Senate meeting. Executive Committee meetings take place two weeks before the Senate meeting, usually during the same 3:30-5:00 time slot reserved for Senate meetings.

1. Bills

Council Chairs, in consultation with their Councils, may bring bills and resolutions before the Senate via the Executive Committee.

Bills should be written in a way consistent with Senate procedures with a clear format beginning with:

1. A space in the upper right side listing a Bill number. The number is left blank until the Senate staff support person supplies it.
2. Bills should begin with headings indicating that the bill comes from the University Senate of the University at Albany, State University of New York.
3. The Bill should name the Council(s) and/or Standing Committee(s) from which it comes and the date.
4. Next, the bill should state a proposal. This is followed by "IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:" and then the proposal's contents can be listed.
5. Next is "That this proposal be forwarded to the President [or Interim President or Officer-in-Charge as appropriate] for Approval."
6. Next should be the actual content of the bill.
7. The RATIONALE should follow, which states the reasons the bill is being proposed.
8. There may be other documentation appended.

A fictitious example of a bill's cover page is provided in the Appendix B.

The role of the University Senate is an advisory one. Consequently, the President may refuse to sign any legislation that passes the Senate. Any individual who disagrees with the actions of the Senate remains free to express that opinion at any time.

Proponents of bills and resolutions are expected to research the appropriateness of the bill or resolution and to ascertain its information is accurate. It is especially important for curricular proposals to be carefully researched, particularly since many of them must be submitted outside the University for final approval. The following guidelines are suggested:

Guidelines for Submission of Curricular Proposals

To facilitate and expedite curricular proposals through the governance process, individuals submitting such proposals should adhere to the following criteria. All such proposals should be in the governance pipeline by the end of the Fall Semester; otherwise, governance cannot guarantee that the proposals will be acted upon during the current academic year. Proponents should keep in mind that new initiatives may have to be submitted to SUNY Central Administration and the Department of Education of the State of New York.

- Actions on new individual courses and deactivation or bulletin language changes regarding existing individual courses DO have to go through the governance process if the change could be reasonably construed as creating, eliminating or significantly changing the requirements of an academic program. Actions that do not meet that definition of reasonableness do NOT have to go through the governance process but it is always wise to check.

- Actions on programs or pilots of programs must go through the governance process and be approved by the Senate and then submitted to the President. Since the Senate retains the right to take up for its consideration any action taken by one of its councils or committees, if there is a question whether a proposal constitutes a “program,” it should be assumed to be so and passed on to the Senate Executive Committee for possible submission to the Senate.
- Proposals that originate from a school or college must first be submitted to the appropriate curriculum committee of that unit, unless there is no such committee. In that case, the proposal may be brought directly to the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC). Curricular proposals that involve both undergraduate and graduate study must be submitted to both UAC and GAC but may be submitted simultaneously. -
- Proposals that originate from more than one academic unit must be submitted to the appropriate committee within each unit. The appropriate administrators must sign off on each proposal.
- Undergraduate proposals that do not originate from a School or College must be submitted to the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee of UAC for eventual consideration by the UAC and the University Senate.
- The Dean of the unit must ultimately sign off on the proposal.
- It is expected that the proponents of new programs research the following before the initial submission of the proposal:
 1. whether comparable programs or precedents for such programs exist within the University at Albany
 2. whether comparable programs or precedents for such programs exist within the four University Centers of SUNY
 3. whether comparable programs or precedents for such programs exist within the SUNY system
 4. whether comparable programs or precedents for such programs exist within higher education in the United States, particularly among our peers or aspirational peer institutions
- Any proposal approved by a School or College, which may require new or additional resources must be submitted to the University Planning and Policy Council (UPPC). Proponents may and should submit such proposals to the appropriate Undergraduate and/or Graduate Academic Council(s) and the UPPC simultaneously.
- Proposals must not violate legislation of the State of New York including regulations by the New York State Department of Education, or contradict policies established by the Board of Trustees

and/or SUNY Central Administration, or the Bylaws of the Faculty of the University at Albany, State University of New York, or the Charter of the University Senate of the University at Albany.

- It is the responsibility of the UAC and/or GAC, as appropriate, to ensure that curricular proposals that are recommended for approval are consistent with all these guidelines. Any proposal that is deficient shall be returned to the proponents with a pertinent explanation and request to conform to the guidelines.

2. Resolutions

In the case of a resolution, the beginning of the document is the same up to the point where the bill would state the proposal. At that point, the resolution begins to list the customary “Whereas” clauses followed by the usual “Be it Resolved” clauses.

3. Amendments to the Senate Charter and the Faculty Bylaws

Proposed amendments to the Senate Charter shall be submitted to the SEC. If approved by a majority of the SEC, the proposal will then be brought to the Senate. Alternatively, any proposed amendment may be brought directly to the Senate for a vote by a petition of 10% of the senators. These procedures are described in Section IX of the Charter. The Senate Secretary is charged with circulating a Charter amendment to all Senators three weeks before the vote on the amendment is taken. This means that amendments are ordinarily put before the Senate but not voted on until the next Senate meeting.

The process for amending the Faculty Bylaws requires a vote by the Voting Faculty, as described in Article IV of the Bylaws. The proposal shall be submitted in writing to the Governance Council of the Senate.

III. COUNCIL CHAIRS

A. Duties of Council Chairs

Council Chairs shall provide council schedules and, if possible, agendas to the Senate Secretary to be posted at least one week in advance. Minutes shall be recorded and drafted by the appropriate support staff, and edited by the Council Chair. Minutes shall be presented to the council at its next meeting and posted once approved by the council. Council Chairs are expected to supply in advance of each meeting of the Senate Executive Committee and of the Senate a brief written summary report to the Secretary for inclusion in a summary of council activity to be available at the meeting. Council Chairs or a designee shall be available at those meetings to answer any questions about the written report or any other matter before the Council. The report shall distinguish between informational sections, reports of actions, and recommendations for action.

Council Chairs are responsible for ensuring that: councils meet on a regular basis, councils fulfill their charges in a timely manner, councils effectively balance their attention to routine business and broader policy issues, and council work engages council members to contribute fully and develop governance leadership. Council Chairs are encouraged to have a concise outline of procedures for their councils, procedures that are agreed to by the Council and are consistent with those of the Senate.

B. Election of Council Chairs

Unless otherwise specified, each Senate council shall elect a chair from among its eligible members. The election shall occur at an organizational meeting. An organizational meeting of each council shall be convened by the Vice Chair of the Senate or designee before September 1, but no sooner than 2 weeks after the completion of the election of Senators-at-large. As stated in Article II Section 6.3 of the Faculty Bylaws, if a council is unable to elect a chair from among its Senators, it may nominate its chair-elect to be appointed for a one-year term as a Senator by means of approval by the Senate. The nomination shall be sent to the Executive Committee, which presents the names to the Senate.

IV. SENATE OFFICERS

A. Duties of Senate Officers

Duties of individual Senate officers are specified in the Faculty Bylaws, Article II, Section 3. Officers of the Senate include the Chair, Vice Chair, Immediate Past Chair, and Secretary. The Chair of the Senate presides over meetings of the Executive Committee and the Senate and holds membership on the University Planning and Policy Council (UPPC). The Vice Chair chairs the Governance Council and serves as the Faculty Representative on the University Council, the local oversight body of the University described in the Policies of the Board of Trustees of SUNY. The Immediate Past Chair chairs the UPPC. The Secretary serves a two-year term and holds membership on the Governance Council. The Charter clarifies these duties in Sections X.1.1.1 (Governance Council), X.2.1.5 and 2.1.6 (University Planning and Policy Council). The terms of Senate officers begin on September 1 and go through August 31.

B. Election of Senate Officers

The composition of the Senate is specified by the Faculty Bylaws Article II Section 2. Council Chairs are elected by the individual councils. The Vice Chair (Chair-elect) of the Senate and the Secretary of the Senate are elected by the Senate as a whole. After a year as Vice Chair, that individual serves as Chair for the following year and Past Chair of the Senate and Chair of the UPPC for the year after that. The election of the Vice-Chair and Secretary (if an election is necessary) shall take place at or before the last Senate meeting of the academic year.

V. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

When rules of order are not otherwise specified, the University Senate and its bodies are expected to follow Parliamentary Procedure in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*. The Senate has an official Parliamentarian who is present at Senate meetings, but councils, standing committees and subcommittees do not. To participate in governance most effectively, and particularly to chair a council or committee, it will be helpful to know the basic elements of parliamentary procedure. The late Professor Ed Alfonsin of SUNY Potsdam, has provided a summary page and a list of common questions and answers to help campus governance bodies. These pages can be found here:

<http://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/Common-Parliamentary-Procedures.pdf>

It is expected that all participants in University governance have a common vested interest in the well-being and furtherance of the University, its scholarship and research, its integrity and reputation, its

mission, goals, and aspirations, and its students, faculty and other members of the University community. In order to protect the credibility of the Senate, its deliberations, its recommendations and its actions, it is important that any member of the Senate or of a Council or Committee who may feel that he or she has a special vested interest or even just the appearance of such, in an item before the Senate or a Council, (in other words, a potential conflict of interest), should disclose this special interest and generally should recuse herself or himself from discussing and voting on the matter. Any member of the Senate or Council/Committee may raise the issue of a real or apparent conflict of interest concerning any other member, including the chair or any ex-officio member. Unless the conflict of interest concerns the chair, the chair shall ensure that members with a real or apparent conflict of interest shall speak to that particular matter at the meeting only in answer to specific questions posed to them. If it is the chair who is perceived to have a real or apparent conflict of interest, the vice chair or another member of the body elected for that purpose shall assume the responsibilities of chair for any matters related to the item that may involve that conflict of interest. If the governance body is made aware of the possible appearance of a conflict of interest, the body may agree by a vote to the continued participation of the member in the deliberations, but record that member's vote as an abstention with cause.

APPENDIX A. Important Documents and Links

The Charter of the University Senate	http://www.albany.edu/universitysenate/bylaws_charter.htm
The University at Albany Faculty Bylaws	http://www.albany.edu/universitysenate/bylaws_charter.htm
An index to the Charter and Bylaws	http://www.albany.edu/universitysenate/bylaws_charter.htm
Parliamentary Procedures	http://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/Common-Parliamentary-Procedures.pdf

APPENDIX B. Example of a cover page for a bill.

Senate Bill No. __ - __

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: 5 July 2099

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM IN BYZANTINE STUDIES IT IS
HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached Proposal as recommended by the Undergraduate Academic Council.
2. That the proposed program begin become effective with the Fall 2100 Semester.
3. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

The subsequent pages or “Rationale” should include the research and documentation mentioned in the “Guidelines for Submission of Curricular Proposals” in this case. The Rationale for a Bill should include a summary of the discussion within the proposing Council or Standing Committee, any additional matters relevant to the Bill researched by the Council or Committee, and the results of the vote.