

Introduction to the Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate provides faculty and librarians at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a channel for participating in policy-making and governance of the campus. To function well, it needs active participation by librarians and faculty from all areas of campus.

Basis of the Faculty Senate's authority

Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws: Title XII, Section 75

[Basis of Existence and Governance]

Section 1. There shall be a University of Massachusetts consisting of campuses to be maintained at Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell, and Worcester, which shall continue as a public institution of higher learning within the system of public higher education and shall be governed by the board of trustees established herein.

[Delegation of Governance Powers]

Section 3A. The trustees may, except as to duties imposed or powers granted under sections two, three, four, and five, delegate their authority or any portion thereof to the president or other officers of the university whenever in their judgment such delegation may be necessary or desirable.

University Governance - Board of Trustees Document 73-098, paragraph I.B.1

The Board of Trustees recognizes that while it must exercise general authority over the University, certain components of the University, such as the President's Office, the campus administrations, and the representative and administrative governing bodies of the faculty and the students have, by virtue of interest, training, and experience, a special concern and competence in certain areas. Subject to precedents established by components on each campus and/or the restraints and procedures specified in their constitutions, these components shall have primary responsibility in their areas of special competence and concern. Whenever the phrase "primary responsibility" appears in this statement, it shall mean the capacity to initiate recommendations, after appropriate consultation, in accordance with the procedures specified in section II. D below. Such recommendations will be overruled only by written reasons stated in detail. While it in no way is intended to contravene the authority and participation of the Board of Trustees in governance, the following is a general statement of primary responsibility in the major areas of University life.

Faculty Areas of Primary Responsibility, Board of Trustees Document 73-098, paragraphs I.B. 2 and 3

ACADEMIC MATTERS: the faculty will exercise primary responsibility in such academic matters as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, admissions, libraries, and other aspects of University life which directly relate to the educational process.

FACULTY STATUS: the faculty will have primary responsibility for matters of faculty status, such as appointments, reappointments, promotions, tenure, and salary adjustments.

Organization of the Faculty Senate and Its Councils & Committees

The Faculty Senate (86 elected members; 20 ex-officio members)

Presiding Officer – runs Faculty Senate meetings

Secretary – formal spokesperson for the Faculty Senate

- maintains the flow of business, keeps the records,
- receives and forwards suggestions for agenda items to the Rules Committee
- keeps track of Senate and Council/Committee workflow
- answers questions regarding Senate actions and processes

Faculty Delegate and Associate Faculty Delegate to the Board of Trustees

- follow Board proceedings, speak for Faculty at Board and its committees as they permit; report to Faculty Senate on Board decisions and discussions

Rules Committee (9 members – the 4 officers already listed plus 5 elected from among the elected Senators)

- sets meeting agendas; assigns proposals for programs and policies to Councils or Committees;
- meets with, provides advice to central administration
- assesses campus situations and considers FS response

Nominating Committee – recommends faculty and librarians for membership on Councils and Committees

Councils and Committees directly involved in areas of primary faculty responsibility:

Academic Matters Council	evaluate proposals for new undergraduate courses, new or changed undergraduate programs, and policies regarding undergraduate academic conduct and programs
Academic Priorities Council	evaluate proposals for new or changed undergraduate and graduate programs and policies, particularly their place within the overall academic endeavor
General Education Council	proposes organization, goals, learning outcomes desired in the General Education part of the undergraduate curriculum; approves individual courses for Gen Ed designations (except Junior Year Writing); reviews designated courses every five years; monitors effectiveness of General Education program
Graduate Council	evaluate proposals for new graduate courses, new or changed graduate programs, and policies regarding graduate student academic conduct and programs
Program and Budget Council	considers budget implications of new or changed academic programs and assesses their feasibility; advises administration on operating and capital budgets;
Commonwealth Honors College Council	approves courses for Honors designation (Honors Colloquia attached to other courses are approved by CHC administrators); approves proposed changes to the CHC and departmental honors programs; provides general advice about the Honors Program, admission of students to CHC, and running of CHC

International Studies Council	recommends exchange agreements with other universities to the Faculty Senate; approves other programs of study abroad, including international travel part of UMass courses including such a component; advises International Programs Office; advise the administration regarding international and ethnic programs; coordinate internationalization efforts
Undergraduate Education Council	may be asked to provide a review of proposed policies; advises on undergraduate academic matters such as advising, New Students Orientation, promotion of excellent teaching, maintaining or improving the quality of the undergraduate experience

University Writing Committee	recommends policies for the writing program, both the first-year and Junior Year Writing components; approve courses for JYW designation, reviews designated courses every 5 years; evaluates the program and suggests changes as needed
Committee on Admissions and Records	deals with applications for readmission to the university and with appeals of suspensions or dismissals

Councils and Committees providing advice to the relevant senior administrator(s) in areas of primary administration responsibility:

Athletic Council	monitors Athletic Department activity; advises on all levels of athletic activity including intercollegiate sports and support for student-athletes, club sports, intramural competitions, and campus recreation center programs
Campus Physical Planning Council	advises on plans to construct buildings or other physical facilities that change the physical configuration of campus; advises on use of space inside buildings
Council on Public Engagement and Outreach	monitor and review campus activities involving public service or outreach; advise on promotion, accomplishment, and evaluation of such activities; provide liaison to UMass system level bodies concerned with public engagement and outreach
Health Council	advise on operation of existing health programs, propose modes of evaluating their effectiveness, recommend policies related to health needs of members of the UMass community
Information and Computer Technology Council	review and advise concerning ICT infrastructure, planning, priorities, and policies
Research Council	advises the administration on research-related matters and policies; awards internal research grants; advise Faculty Senate regarding establishment of new research centers and institutes
Research Library Council	advises Dean of Libraries on policies and operations; advises campus on financial priorities as affect the libraries; advise administration on budgets for fundraising activities

Status of Diversity Council	advise on all matters relating to diversity and historically underrepresented faculty, staff, and students – including recruitment and retention, pay or financial aid, programs addressing their particular needs
Status of Women Council	advise on all matters relating to women faculty, staff, and students including recruitment, retention, and pay; also regarding availability of day care on campus and programs addressing interruptions of career to raise a family, availability of part-time work.
Student Affairs and University Life Council	advise administration on non-academic aspects of student life on campus; advise Faculty Senate on matters in areas where it has authority to review policy
University Relations and Advancement Council	advises on activities of University Relations and University Advancement Offices, including fundraising, alumni affairs, university communications to outside audiences

University Press Committee	approves all publications of the press; recommends policies and modes of funding the press
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The Faculty Senate also names faculty members to serve on these bodies:

Arts Council	assists with selecting winners of internal grants for art projects and performances
Transportation and Parking Advisory Board	advises on operation of the campus's various transportation systems and policies relating to parking
Community/Police Advisory Board	provides recommendations on safety, police matters, police communications to the campus community to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs & Campus Life.

Faculty members and Librarians serving on Councils and Committees need not be members of the Faculty Senate. In fact, it would be impossible for the Faculty Senate to maintain a full complement of members on all Councils and Committees if their members had to be members of the Senate as well. Thus the Councils and Committees provide a way that individual faculty members and librarians can become involved in an aspect of campus governance in areas close to their own particular interests.

Most Councils meet once a month; their current schedules can be seen on Councils and Committees page of the Faculty Senate website (www.umass.edu/senate/councils-and-committees). Committees have varying schedules depending on their duties.

The Faculty Senate meets approximately once a month, from 3.30-5pm (or sometimes a bit later) on a Thursday afternoon.

Elected senators are chosen by their faculty or librarian peers through a system of districts that ensure participation from all areas of campus. Tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty and librarians on a half-time or more appointment, as well as faculty on a post-retirement appointment are eligible to vote in Faculty Senate elections and to serve as a senator.

Faculty Senate Election Districts

Faculty Senate election districts are defined to ensure representation from all parts of campus in rough proportion to the number of faculty or librarians in each major academic area. These are the current districts and the number of senators each can elect.

DISTRICT #1

Civil & Environmental Engineering; Mechanical & Industrial Engineering
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #2 Electrical & Computer Engineering; Chemical Engineering; Engineering Dean's Area

Lecturers
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #3

Languages, Literatures & Cultures
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #4

Philosophy; Linguistics; History
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #5

Music and Dance; Theater
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #6

Afro-American Studies; Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies; English
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #7

Art; Architecture; History of Art & Architecture; Judaic & Near Eastern Studies; Classics; HFA Dean's Area
Lecturers
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #8

Library
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #9

Management; Accounting; Finance; Operations & Information Management; Isenberg Dean's Area
Lecturers
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #10

Hospitality & Tourism Management; Marketing; Sport Management
(2 Senators)

DISTRICT #11

Biology; Microbiology
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #12

Psychological and Brain Sciences; CNS Dean's Area Lecturers
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #13

Polymer Science & Engineering; Chemistry; Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #14

Geosciences; Environmental Conservation; Water Resources
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #15

Mathematics & Statistics
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #16

Physics; Astronomy
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #17

Veterinary & Animal Sciences; Food Science; Stockbridge School of Agriculture; Cranberry Experiment Station
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #18

Computer and Information Sciences
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #19

Military Leadership; Aerospace Studies; Athletic Department Lecturers; Commonwealth Honors College, Civic Engagement & Service Learning; Center for Teaching and Faculty Development; Undergraduate Advising & Learning Community; Writing Programs; University Without Walls
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #20

Communication; Journalism; Anthropology; Archeological Services
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #21

Sociology (including Labor Center); Political Science (including Legal Studies); Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies; School of Public Policy
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #22

Economics/PERI; Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning (LARP); Resource Economics; Social Thought & Political Economy; SBS Dean's Area Lecturers
(4 Senators)

DISTRICT #23

Educational Policy, Research & Administration (EPRA); Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies (TECS)
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #24

Student Development; Education Dean's Area Lecturers
(2 Senators)

DISTRICT #25

Biostatistics & Epidemiology; Environmental Health Sciences, Health Promotion & Policy; Public Health
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #26

Nutrition; Kinesiology; Communication Disorders
(3 Senators)

DISTRICT #27

Nursing
(2 Senators)

Outline of a typical Faculty Senate Meeting

Address or presentation on a topic of campuswide concern

Announcements – opportunities for senior administrators, Senate officers, and representatives of the Graduate Student Senate, the Student Government Association, and the Massachusetts Society of Professors to inform the Faculty about new developments.

Questions – opportunities for members of the Faculty Senate to ask senior administrators or officers of the Senate about campus or Faculty Senate matters.

Course approvals – approval of new courses for addition to the permanent catalog on recommendation of the Academic Matters Council and the Graduate Council.

New Business, which can include

- approval of new degree programs (undergraduate majors, master's degree programs, doctoral programs), approval of revisions to existing programs as recommended by relevant Councils

- approval of changes to academic policies (e.g., General Education requirements, grading system, course repeat policy)
- discussion of matters noted in Council and Committee annual reports submitted at a particular meeting
- establishment of Senate and Joint Senate-Administration ad hoc committees and task forces for particular purposes
- adoption or endorsement of ad hoc committee proposals
- approval of membership of Councils and Committees
- approval of changes to the bylaws; formal proposal of amendments to the Faculty Senate constitution

Old Business – return to items postponed at previous meetings or to previously-adopted decisions for purposes of amendment

Faculty Senate meetings are conducted according to rules specified in the Bylaws and, where the Bylaws are silent, by *Robert's Rules of Order*. These are not as complicated as many people think, and the more complex procedural maneuvers they describe seldom arise in the course of Faculty Senate meetings. The texts of rules contained in the current (12th) edition of *Robert's Rules* and explanations of how to apply them are available on <http://www.robertsrules.org> and several parliamentarian's association websites.