UNO Website: Faculty Senate Constitution

UNO Faculty Senate University of Nebraska at Omaha

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THE CONSTITUTION
of the
FACULTY SENATE
of the
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA at OMAHA

PREAMBLE
We, the faculty of the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO),

In order to provide for a free dialogue between the faculty and the administration, and

In order to establish a means whereby matters of faculty interest and concern may be presented to the administration and the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, and

In order to formulate policies and procedures which are of university interest and concern, and

In order to provide a responsible and representative faculty voice in the recommendation of these policies,

Do hereby present this constitution through the chancellor to the president and the board of regents for ratification, establishing and providing for the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha to represent the faculty of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, hereafter called “the university,” in these matters.

ARTICLE I. RESPONSIBILITY
The faculty of the university, hereafter referred to as “the faculty,” has significant responsibilities in matters relating to formulation of university policies. To provide for the discharge of these responsibilities delegated to the faculty by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, hereafter referred to as “the board,” the faculty designates the senate to serve as its representative agency. The senate shall be guided in its deliberations by the established policies of the board, the interpretation of these policies by the chancellor of the university, the expressed interests of a responsible and professional faculty, and the ideals of academic freedom and shared governance.

ARTICLE II. DEFINITIONS.
Faculty. All fulltime UNO academic staff holding the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or equivalent ranks formally approved by the board shall be considered faculty and shall be eligible to vote for senators.

External Faculty. University of Nebraska faculty members whose primary appointment is at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), or University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) but whose workload assignment is fifty percent or more on the UNO campus shall be designated as “external faculty.”

Non-Collegiate Faculty. All other full-time academic staff holding faculty rank whose appointment does not fall within the definition of an academic college shall be designated “non-collegiate faculty” and shall be assigned to the College of Arts and Sciences for purposes of voting enfranchisement and representation in the faculty senate. If at any time the number of non-collegiate faculty should be such that they could be apportioned at least one senator, they will be assigned as a separate voting unit.

Colleges. An academic unit headed by a dean who has basic responsibility for the employment of faculty and the administration of curricula within a unified discipline or group of disciplines, shall be considered an academic college. Other academic units which utilize faculties composed primarily of persons holding faculty rank in the academic colleges of the university do not qualify as colleges under this definition. For purposes of this document, the University Library shall be considered an academic college.

ARTICLE III. ELECTION OF SENATORS.
The senate shall consist of not fewer than twenty-one faculty members elected from the colleges of the university in accordance with the procedures established in the bylaws. Each college of the university shall be represented by one senator for each ten fulltime faculty members or major fraction thereof. For example, thirty-four faculty members will be represented by three senators and thirty-five faculty members will be represented by four senators. At no time shall any college seat as many as one-half the elected senators. When the number of elected senators reaches thirty-five from UNO, the senate shall redesignate by simple majority vote the number of faculty members to be represented by each senator.

In addition, University of Nebraska faculty from UNL, UNK or UNMC, hereafter deemed “external faculty,” whose workload consists of at least
fifty percent conducted on the UNO campus, may nominate and elect without respect to universitv or college up to two voting representatives to the UNO faculty senate. The election of these external faculty senators shall be in addition to the senators from UNO as provided in the prior paragraph. The representation ratio of external faculty senators shall be the same as the representation ratio for senators from UNO, unless the UNO ratio would require more than two external faculty senators or unless the UNO ratio would not allow at least one external faculty senator. These external faculty senators may not become senate officers, senate standing committee chairs or vice chairs, nor may they chair any ad hoc senate committees. If an external faculty senator should change status such that his or her workload no longer constitutes at least fifty percent being performed at UNO, then he or she must resign from the senate. The seat shall be filled according to procedures provided in the bylaws. External faculty senators are subject to all other requirements and restrictions as described in the constitution and bylaws.

The apportionment of seats for senators from UNO shall be based on the UNO faculty roster in effect the first day of classes for the spring semester of each academic year. The chancellor of UNO shall provide the president of the senate with a current roster for this purpose and shall make all reasonable efforts to obtain faculty rosters from UNK, UNL, and UNMC for the election of external faculty senators.

No faculty member shall be eligible for election to the senate until twelve calendar months have elapsed since his/her initial contract became effective.

Those faculty members shall be eligible for election as senators who shall have attained professorial rank (assistant professor, associate professor, or professor) and who meet the employment requirement of the previous paragraph. In addition, faculty members in the rank of instructor who have completed three years of full-time employment with the university at the time of the election shall be eligible for election as senators. Tenure shall not be a requirement for service as a senator.

Terms of elected senators shall be three years. No faculty person shall serve as senator for consecutive terms but may be elected again following the lapse of one academic year.

Questions of eligibility of faculty members for service as elected senators, or for rights to vote for members of the senate, shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the senate, and such determination shall be considered final and binding.

An election of senators shall be held during the spring semester of each academic year as provided by the bylaws. All balloting results shall be printed in the agenda for the May senate meeting and subsequently distributed to the chancellor as provided in the bylaws. After election results have been approved, senators shall themselves elect the officers of the senate except for the president, who shall be elected as provided in Article IV of this constitution. A simple majority of votes eligible to be cast shall be sufficient to elect each officer.

Senators desiring to resign shall do so in writing, and resignations shall not be effective until they have been accepted by the Executive Committee.

Elected senators may be removed from office only by a three-fourths vote of the entire senate. The senator considered for removal shall not vote on this issue. A motion for removal shall not come to the floor of the senate until an investigation and report has been completed by the Executive Committee and presented to the senate.

Senate seats vacated by resignation, incapacity, or removal shall be filled according to procedures provided in the bylaws.

ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE SENATE

The officers of the senate shall consist of the president, the vice-president, and the secretary-treasurer, and, in the spring semester, the president-elect if there be one. The senate shall conduct its business through committees as described in this constitution and in the bylaws.

The president shall first serve as president-elect for a term beginning at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the spring semester, which will be followed by a regular one-year term as president beginning at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year. The president-elect shall be elected at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the fall semester from among the membership of the senate. The president may serve successive terms through re-election, in which case there will be no president-elect for that spring semester and no past-president until the incumbent president completes his or her final term.

The vice-president shall serve a term of one year, assuming office at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year. The vice-president shall be elected from among the membership of the senate. The person serving in this office may serve successive terms through re-election.

The secretary-treasurer shall serve a term of one year, assuming office at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the academic year. The secretary-treasurer shall be elected from among the membership of the senate. The person serving in this office may be re-elected for successive terms.

The president shall appoint a parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the senate.

The senate's presiding officer shall be the president. In the president's absence, presiding officer of the senate shall be the vice-president or, if the need should arise, as provided in the bylaws.

The senate shall hold at least one regular meeting at a stated time each month during the academic year. In the months of June and July, the Executive Committee and Cabinet (the chairs of the standing committees) shall meet in lieu of the senate and will attend to any matters of faculty interest and responsibility. All decisions taken by the Executive Committee and Cabinet under this grant of authority must be presented to the senate at its next regular meeting and a motion of approval voted upon.

In addition, special meetings may be convened at any time by the senate president's initiative and shall be convened by the president or, in the president's absence, the vice-president:

1. when requested by the chancellor;
2. when requested in writing by seven senators and submitted to the president;
3. when requested by written petition of at least ten percent of the faculty members and submitted to the president.

All meetings of the senate, except duly authorized executive sessions, shall be open to all interested parties, but they shall not be eligible to vote.

The Executive Committee shall prepare an agenda for each meeting of the senate and shall furnish copies of this agenda at least four days prior to the
meeting to appropriate members of the university. Petition by ten percent of the members of the faculty shall be sufficient to cause any matter to be placed on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting provided the petition is received by the president at least seven academic days before the meeting. No emergency matter may be withheld from discussion or action by the senate for reason of its not being placed on the prepared agenda.

Minutes of all senate meetings shall be taken by the secretary-treasurer or his/her designee. Copies of the minutes shall be distributed to the chancellor, to the chairperson of the board, to the library archivist, and to other appropriate members of the university. Minutes are public documents and shall be available in the senate office for consultation by any senator or any interested faculty member and elsewhere as provided in the bylaws. The secretary-treasurer shall also maintain a file of senate committee minutes and reports.

The president shall make at least one written report annually to the chancellor. This report will be made available to the university faculty in the senate office.

Meetings of the faculty of the university may be called by the president, or vice president, or upon petition to the president by thirty-three and one-third percent of the members of the faculty to review any action taken by the senate or its committees or to consider matters of general faculty concern.

Rules of procedure for the senate and its committees shall be set forth in the bylaws. Adoption of the bylaws or changes to the bylaws shall be by a simple majority vote of the entire senate membership.

A quorum of the senate shall consist of a simple majority of the elected senators.

The president shall prepare, in consultation with the appropriate university official, a budget request for transmittal to the chancellor for funds necessary to accomplish the purposes of the senate. The secretary-treasurer shall monitor the budget.

ARTICLE V. ORGANIZATION OF SENATE COMMITTEES.

Committees shall be established to accomplish the tasks of the senate. There shall be a permanent senate committee known as the Executive Committee and such other standing committees as provided in the bylaws.

Special committees and subcommittees of the senate may be established by the president, the permanent or standing committees, or the senate. Composition and responsibilities shall be as determined by the constituting body.

Meetings of the committees shall be open to the faculty, administration and staff unless otherwise provided in the bylaws of the board or relevant state statutes.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the president, the president-elect, the vice president, the secretary-treasurer, and such other members of the senate as provided in the bylaws. The vice-president shall chair the Executive Committee. The outgoing president shall continue to serve on the Executive Committee as past-president in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity through the last regularly scheduled meeting of the fall semester.

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for preparing the agenda for senate meetings as provided in Article IV. Questions about the eligibility of faculty members and senators for the privilege to vote or serve shall be decided by the Executive Committee. It shall coordinate the activities of standing and special committees, and provide liaison with the chancellor. It shall fulfill coordinating and liaison duties with other officers and units of the University of Nebraska, and may delegate such coordinating and liaison duties within the senate as appropriate. It shall review, coordinate, and discuss action by senate and university committees and as requested by other agencies of the university.

It shall review administrative action on senate and committee recommendations and rule upon questions of interpretation of the constitution and the bylaws.

Additional responsibilities may be assigned or delegated to the Executive Committee by the president or by simple majority vote of the senate.

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to make decisions in the name of the senate when immediacy demands such action and the senate is unable to assemble to consider the issue. All decisions taken under this grant of authority must be presented to the senate at its next regular meeting and a motion of approval voted upon.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS.

Amendments to the constitution may be initiated by written petition signed by twenty-one faculty members of the university as defined in Article II. Such petition shall contain a statement of the wording of the proposed amendment. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee and presented with a recommendation for approval or disapproval to the full membership of the senate. Petitions for amendment of the constitution must be presented to the Executive Committee at least thirty days before the recommendation of the Executive Committee is to be presented to the senate. Proposed amendments shall be voted upon by the senate and approved by two-thirds of the eligible voting members of the senate shall be necessary. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Approved amendments shall then be presented to the university faculty for ratification. Voting by the faculty members shall be by secret ballot. Amendments which are ratified by two-thirds of the faculty casting ballots shall go into effect thirty days after the completion of the vote. Amendments not receiving the necessary two-thirds vote of the faculty members casting ballots shall be considered defeated and shall not go into effect.

The board of regents, or its successor governing board, acting according to its regular procedures, shall retain the right to veto any amendment which has been ratified by the faculty.

Amendment of the bylaws of the senate shall be according to procedures established by the senate, and such procedures shall be enunciated in the bylaws.

The faculty senate by a two-thirds majority vote may establish a Constitutional Review Committee to evaluate the constitution and propose such changes as are deemed necessary to accomplish the purposes of the faculty. Recommended changes in the constitution must be submitted for approval by the faculty senate and ratification by vote of the university faculty in accord with procedures set forth in the first paragraph of this article.
ARTICLE VII. ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

This constitution shall be considered adopted by the faculty upon a two-thirds vote of the senate, submission of the constitution to a vote of the faculty of the university and approval by two-thirds of the faculty members casting ballots in a vote by secret ballot, transmittal of the approved constitution by the chancellor to the president of the University of Nebraska, and adoption of the constitution by the board, according to its own procedures.

- approved by the University Senate, October 11, 1972
- amended by the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, April 14, 1982
- amended by the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, April 11, 1990
- approved by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, February, 1991
- amended by the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, March, 1996
- approved by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, April 27, 1996
- amended by the Faculty Senate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, January 14, 1998
- approved by ballot vote the University of Nebraska at Omaha faculty at-large, February 6, 1998
- approved by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, May 16, 1998