

**FACULTY SENATE COUNCIL/COMMITTEE  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1. Council/committee organization includes:**

- a. Permanent and/or Advisory members.
- b. Ex Officio member (Executive Board Liaison, i.e., Faculty Senate president or his/her designee; other administrative office designees).
- c. Senate-elected faculty members (specific distribution required for some council/committees).
- d. Student members, undergraduate students appointed by the Western Student Association and graduate students appointed by the Graduate Student Association early in the fall semester.

**2. Council/committee structure:**

- a. **Elected Officers** – Each council/committee shall elect from its membership annually at least:
  - i. Chair – Provides organization of work, prepares agenda in coordination with the agenda setting committee, and presides at council/committee meetings.
  - ii. Vice Chair – Serves in the absence of chair and as assigned.
  - iii. Secretary – Records and prepares minutes.

**NOTE:** According to Article VI, Section 8, of the Faculty Senate bylaws, council/committee chairperson may be elected for a maximum of three consecutive one-year terms. After serving three consecutive terms, the person relinquishing the chairperson may not be elected again as chairperson of the council/committee for an interval of two years.

- b. Members – attend meetings, participate in deliberations, propose and vote on motions. They also serve on standing committees of the

council/committee, although non-members of the council/committees may be appointed as well.

***NOTE: It is the responsibility of the chairperson to orient new members. This should occur as soon as possible after the new member has been elected/appointed and begins attending meetings. In the case of student members, the chairperson should be especially sensitive to making them feel valued as fully contributing members. To that end, a mentor ought to be assigned to each student, not only to orient him/her, but to incorporate the student in the council/committee.***

- c. **Standing committees** – Each council/committee may establish standing committees as necessary to carry out its role statement and charges. The composition of standing committees is not restricted to council/committee members. However, in some cases, the composition is prescribed by University policies that have a direct bearing on the council/committee's authority, as in the case of specific University-level curriculum committees.
  - d. **Agenda setting committee** – Council/committees should establish an agenda setting committee comprised of the officers, Ex Officio member, and the pertinent administrator or his/her representative.
  - e. **Ad Hoc committees** – A council/committee may appoint special committees to perform specific tasks. An ad hoc committee automatically ceases to exist when its final report is issued. If a council/committee votes to delegate additional work to an ad hoc committee, it continues until the new assignment is completed and another report is submitted. The composition of an ad hoc committee is not restricted to council/committee members.
3. **Membership includes** – The composition of the council can be found in the Faculty Senate [Bylaws](#), Article VI: Councils, Sec.1,
- a. Includes at least 10-20 members
  - b. Including administrative representatives which align with the council's role

- c. 11 faculty members elected by the Senate
  - i. Three from Arts and Sciences-with representation from each division recommended (Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences and Mathematics)
  - ii. One from each of the other colleges
  - iii. One from unaffiliated units
  - iv. One representative-at-large
- d. The Faculty Senate president or Executive Board designee as an Ex Officio member
- e. One undergraduate student selected by the Western Student Association
- f. One graduate student selected by the Graduate Student Association.

**4. Council/committee duties:**

- a. Receive and carry out charges of the Faculty Senate Executive Board.
- b. Determine and carry out own agendas in context of the council/committee role statement.
- c. Periodically reconsider, review and rewrite, if necessary, role statement (submit to Executive Board for consideration).
- d. Periodically review structure and activities of standing committees and ad hoc committees and receive reports from them.
- e. Submit council/committee charge-based reports and policy recommendations to Executive Board for consideration.

**NOTE:** *Council/committees do not make policy. Council/committees make recommendations to the Faculty Senate Executive Board, which then makes recommendations to the administration for consideration to establish policy and/or procedures.*

- 5. Council/committee action** – Council/committee recommendations are submitted to the Executive Board in the form of a report or a [Memorandum of Action](#). The Executive Board may invite the council/committee chairperson to represent the report or MOA. Recommendations should be succinct and convey the specific action(s) a council/committee has endorsed. Draft MOAs must be submitted using the MOA [template](#) and should be sent via e-mail attachment to the Faculty Senate Office for distribution to the Executive Board.

**NOTE:** *Once an MOA receives a number information about the MOA may be found on the Faculty Senate [Memorandum of Action](#) website according to the year it was created. MOAs may also be [search](#) by keyword, title, subject, MOA number, council or committee, and year. Electronic versions of MOAs available on the Faculty Senate website date back to 2000, earlier MOAs have been archived with University Libraries, WMU Archives department.*

- 6. Council/committee minutes** – The [actions](#) and proceedings of each council/committee meeting shall be recorded in minutes.
- a. The secretary should prepare the minutes within at least 10 days before the council/committee's next meeting.
  - b. Ensuring the accuracy of the minutes is a duty the secretary cannot delegate.
  - c. A staff member may prepare the minutes under the secretary's direction, but cannot sign them.
  - d. If the secretary is absent
    - i. The council/committee chair should solicit a volunteer from the members present to take minutes.
    - ii. For virtual meetings, if a volunteer cannot be confirmed, the council/committee chair may use the record function in Webex in order to compile minutes following the meeting. The meeting recording will only be used to produce meeting minutes.

- e. Minutes should be sent via e-mail attachment to the Faculty Senate Office for distribution.

- 7. Council/committee additional materials** – A copy of additional materials/handouts that are distributed to council/committee members must also be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Office for its files (e.g., slides, reports, charts, etc.).
- 8. Council/committee annual review** – Each council/committee chairperson should assess progress in Feb./March to determine if action which required follow-up has been completed. This review must be provided using the year-end report [template](#) to the Executive Board by May 30 as well as to the new council/committee chairperson at her/his first meeting.

## COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE CHARGES

1. Charges are developed through the Executive Board review of council/committee year-end reports.
2. Charges are disseminated by the Faculty Senate President at the first fall council/committee meeting.
3. Standard [charges](#) for all councils/committees include:
  - a. Review the scope and description of the council's/committee's role statement to assess the effectiveness of the council's/committee's practices.
  - b. Annually review the draft year-end report.
  - c. Address continuing or outstanding issues or initiatives as directed.
4. The council/committee has the opportunity to add/revise/change charges by:
  - a. Discussion with the council of recommended change(s),
  - b. The council/committee directs the liaison to confer suggested change(s) to the Executive Board,
  - c. Recommended change(s) are approved/denied by the Executive Board.

## MEETINGS PROCEDURES AND PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICES

### Quorum:

- Before proceeding with the acceptance of the agenda, quorum must be observed and recorded in the minutes.
- The presiding officer must explicitly take a roll call to establish quorum of **voting** council/committee members.
- 51% of current voting members of a council/committee membership must be in attendance to establish quorum.
- Any vacant seats should be removed from the voting member total so that one more than half of the total is needed for quorum.
- On the council/committee [membership website](#) an **asterisk (\*)** in front of a member listed **indicates a non-voting member** and should not be counted in the 51% needed for quorum.

***Tip:** prepare an alphabetized list of all council/committee voting member to use when polling members votes on all motions.*

- At any time if quorum is broken (i.e., there are no longer enough voting council/committee members participating in the meeting) **action cannot** be taken, no further motions may be made. However, discussion may continue.
- If there are technical difficulties during a virtual council/committee meeting and members are dropped from the connection, they are considered having left the meeting and no longer count toward quorum. The minutes should indicate the name and time the member left the meeting.
- Late arrival or early exit of council/committee members must be recorded in the minutes with their name and the time entering or leaving the meeting.

### Conduct:

- If it is not clear who is speaking, members or guest should be asked to state their name before addressing the council/committee.

- The presiding officer should monitor participation to acknowledge who may make comments.
- Discussion should take place on a rotating basis.
- Council/committee members and guests are encouraged to raise their hand both electronically and physically so the presiding officer knows they would like to be recognized in order to address the council/committee.
- The presiding officer should facilitate the order of speakers.
- Motions must be clearly made and seconded with the identity of those making and seconding motions being recorded in the minutes. **Only voting council/committee members may make and/or second motions.**
- The presiding officer must call for a vote on any motion by asking for all council/committee voting members in favor to state “aye”, then ask for any that are opposed to state “nay” and finally ask for any that wish to abstain to state “abstain”. The count of those opposed and/or abstained must be recorded in the minutes as part of the motions action. (i.e., “with one opposed, and two abstentions, the motion carried.”)
- Voting may be conducted in a transparent fashion through a roll call or by secret ballot in writing.
  - If voting is conducted by secret ballot at an in-person meeting, paper ballots should be distributed, collected, and counted by the council/committee liaison/Ex Officio.
  - If voting is conducted by secret ballot at a virtual meeting, votes should be cast through a private chat message to the liaison/Ex Officio.
- If a council/committee member was not present at a meeting they must abstain from the motion to approve the minutes of that meeting.
- Following a vote, the presiding officer should clearly articulate the motion and the result.
- According to the [Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedures](#), a conflict of interest occurs when an individual has a personal, financial, or professional interest that may interfere with their ability to act impartially and in the best interest of the group. This could involve direct financial benefits, professional

advantages, or relationships that could unduly influence decision-making. To ensure transparency, fairness, and trust in the processes, please adhere to the following principles:

1. **Disclosure:** If a conflict of interest exists or may arise, it is the responsibility of the individual to disclose it promptly to the council/committee.
2. **Recusal:** If participation in discussion or voting may compromise impartiality, individuals should recuse themselves from that specific agenda item.
3. **Committee Oversight:** If there is uncertainty about whether a conflict exists, the committee may discuss and determine the appropriate course of action with Senate Parliamentarian [Decker Hains](#).

## TECHNOLOGY NOTES

### Meeting medium

- All virtual council/committee meetings have been established as a Webex meeting by the Faculty Senate Office.
- Any in-person council/committee meeting locations have been established and scheduled by the council/committee chair.
- Councils/committees should not convene in faculty personal Webex rooms.

### Process:

- Meeting notices will be distributed via email approximately one week prior to the meeting date. The meeting notice will include the Webex meeting link. The Webex links may also be found on the council/committee [schedule](#) page of the Faculty Senate website as well as on the [Faculty Senate Academic-Year Meeting Calendar](#).
- Council/committee Executive Board Ex Officios (liaison) or the presiding officer will open the Webex meeting room at least 5 to 15 minutes prior to the meeting start time.
- The presiding officer should call the meeting to order at the established start time.

### Start on Time!

For specifics on councils/committees view [Constitution](#) Article VIII and [Bylaws](#) Article VI

The Faculty Senate and its councils/committees use the [American Institute of Parliamentarians: Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure](#).

## FACULTY SENATE OFFICE PROCEDURES

The Faculty Senate Office is available to assist with clerical support requests **if given adequate lead time**. The office can only meet last-minute requests as time permits. Commonly asked questions can often be answered at the Faculty Senate [website](#).

### Agendas

Council/committee agendas should be **disseminated** to council/committee members **one week prior** to the scheduled meeting date. Therefore, requests for the Faculty Senate Office to prepare and distribute any materials for council/committee meetings should be received **10 business days before the date of the meeting**. All agendas should be sent via e-mail to [faculty-senate@wmich.edu](mailto:faculty-senate@wmich.edu).

### Minutes

Council/committee minutes are to be sent to the Faculty Senate Office within a reasonable time period after the date of the council/committee meeting, as the Faculty Senate Office staff reviews all meeting minutes prior to being sent to members with the agenda for the next meeting. The Faculty Senate Office facilitates distribution of these minutes. Submit drafts of minutes via e-mail to [faculty-senate@wmich.edu](mailto:faculty-senate@wmich.edu).

**In compliance with digital accessibility, agenda, minute, MOA, and report [templates](#) have been updated. Be sure to use the updated templates when preparing these documents.**

### Notices

Please notify the Faculty Senate Office of any change in location, date, time, or cancelations of council/committee meetings so that notification can be provided to the council/committee members as soon as possible and room arrangements confirmed. If the University closes on the day of any Faculty Senate meeting, that meeting is considered canceled. Again, as with agendas and minutes, we request adequate lead time to accomplish these tasks.

For specifics on councils/committees view [Constitution](#) Article VIII and [Bylaws](#) Article VI. The Faculty Senate and its councils/committees uses the *American Institute of Parliamentarians: Standard Code of [Parliamentary Procedure](#)*.

*All communication directed to Faculty Senate leadership, must be copied to the [Faculty Senate](#) Office as well.*

### **Memorandum of Action (MOA)**

If a council/committee determine a Memorandum of Action (MOA) is necessary to carry out its work, follow these procedures:

1. Notify the [Faculty Senate Office](#) in order to have a number assigned to the draft MOA.
2. Draft MOAs **must** be submitted using the MOA [template](#) and sent via email to the Faculty Senate Office for review.
3. The Faculty Senate Office will ensure Faculty Senate sanctioned language is applied, and return the MOA to the council/committee to accept suggested edits.
4. Once the council/committee has voted to approve the MOA it must once again be submitted via email to the [Faculty Senate Office](#) for consideration by the Executive Board.
5. When an Executive Board meeting date to receive the MOA has been determined, the council/committee chair will be invited to present the MOA to the Executive Board.
6. Following presentation of an MOA to the Executive Board, it will either:
  - Return the MOA to the council/committee with suggested revision(s) to improve clarity of the recommended action;
  - Postpone consideration of the MOA for further discussion at an upcoming Executive Board meeting;
  - Approve the MOA to move forward for consideration by the full Faculty Senate; or
  - Table the MOA for no further consideration.

7. Following Executive Board approval, the MOA will be scheduled to go before the full Faculty Senate at its next meeting date.
8. The council/committee chair will be invited to present the MOA to the Faculty Senate, which will either:
  - Return the MOA to the council/committee with suggested revision(s) to improve clarity of the recommended action;
  - Postpone consideration of the MOA for further discussion at an upcoming Faculty Senate meeting;
  - Approve the MOA to move forward for consideration by the University administration; or
  - Table the MOA for no further consideration.
9. Following approval by the Faculty Senate the MOA will be held for 30 days in accordance with Article III, Sec. 8 of the Faculty Senate [Constitution](#).
10. Once the 30-day hold has expired, the Faculty Senate Office electronically routes the MOA for signature of all approving bodies, including the Provost and Vice President for Academic affairs as well as the WMU President.
11. When the WMU President signs approval of the MOA it is considered active policy/procedures.
12. The Faculty Senate Office posts the signed MOA to the [website](#) and the searchable [database](#) for reference.
13. If the MOA is a revision of student catalog language the Registrar's office will implement the MOA for the upcoming fall semester.

## **FACULTY SENATE OFFICE STAFF**

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