

**I. Purpose**

The Faculty Senate (Senate) shall represent the views of the faculty on issues affecting the common purposes of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The faculty's role in the creation, understanding, and dissemination of knowledge is held in the highest esteem and will not be abridged. The Senate shall implement the faculty's participation in key aspects of academic governance by recruiting and nominating faculty; administering elections including elections to the Promotion and Tenure, Curriculum, and Planning and Resource committees, any standing and ad hoc committees, and other subsidiary bodies of the Senate as required; providing a forum for policy deliberations on matters of importance to the faculty; and advising the Provost as to faculty views in all matters relating to the principal missions of the Institute. Resolutions passed by the Senate shall help guide Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in scholarly activities and instruction, and important issues affecting the faculty in general will be presented to the faculty with recommendations for consideration and action.

**II. Membership**

**A. Personnel**

i. The Senate shall consist of voting representatives from the active tenured and tenure-track faculty and non-voting representatives from Professors of Practice and Lecturers, librarians and archivists and retired faculty, as well as any ex officio members. Persons holding an administrative position at or above the level of department chair or department head, or in direct report to a Provost or President, including but not limited to those having the title Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean, Provost, Associate Provost, Vice Provost, Vice President or President are not eligible to hold a Senate office except as listed below. If a person is appointed to a position having any such title while holding a Senate office, he or she shall resign from the Senate or delay accepting the administrative appointment. In addition, faculty members who are involved in litigation against the Institute are not eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate.

ii. The Faculty Senate shall consist of fourteen voting members and six non-voting members. The voting members will consist of the Faculty Senate officers (6) and two members from each of the three largest schools (Engineering, Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences, and Science) and one from each of the two smaller schools (Architecture and Lally School of Management), which may change as School sizes and/or student enrollments change; the non-voting members will consist of one representative each from the Professors of Practice and Lecturers on the Troy campus, Professors of Practice and Lecturers on the Hartford campus, the library, and retired faculty. The Provost or Provost's designee shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member.

**B. Voting Eligibility and Recognition**

i. Formal resolutions advanced to the Provost will be on the basis of an affirmative vote of the active tenured and tenure track faculty.

ii. The active tenured and tenure-track faculty of each school shall elect their own representatives to the Senate, and the members of standing committees of the Senate, except where specifically noted below. The election of Senate officers, who shall serve as at-large representatives to the Senate, shall be based on a vote of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty.

iii. The Senate explicitly recognizes: the right of the Professors of Practice and Lecturers on the Troy campus, Professors of Practice and Lecturers on the Hartford campus, librarians and archivists, and retired faculty to elect their own representatives to the Senate; the Senate's obligation to fully deliberate on any resolution advanced by these representatives, and the right of these five representatives to appeal directly to the Provost should the Senate reject or fail to adequately consider a resolution they put forward. Professors of Practice and Lectures participate in academic governance through departmental and School academic activities and structures as well as provided in this Constitution.

### **C. Term and Succession**

All members of the Senate with the exception of the officers will serve two-year terms, with half of the body elected one year and half the next. Each of the officers shall serve a three-year term, with the Vice President of the Senate to succeed to the position of President of the Senate in the second year, and the Chair of the Faculty in the third year; and the Recording Secretary of the Senate to succeed to the position of Secretary of the Senate in the second year, and the Secretary of the Faculty in the third year.

In the event that officers are unable to complete their term of office, the next officer in line shall immediately assume their responsibilities. The Faculty Senate may choose to hold a special election, appoint an eligible Senate member to fill the vacant office until the next general election, or leave the office vacant until the next general election.

In the event that any other Senator is unable to complete her or his term, the Senate may hold a special election or leave the position vacant until the next general election, which in either case shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term.

## **III. Structure**

The Faculty Senate shall maintain an Executive Committee, a Curriculum Committee, a Promotion and Tenure Committee, a Planning and Resources Committee, an Elections Committee, and a Faculty Committee on Honors. It also shall create other standing committees and ad hoc committees as deemed necessary. It is understood that decisions of the Curriculum Committee and Promotion and Tenure Committee are not subject to review by the Senate or general faculty except as noted below. Likewise, the Faculty Committee on Honors operates with delegated authority from the Senate, and its specific decisions do not require review by the Senate. All other Senate committees must submit any and all recommendations to the Senate for its review.

### **A. The Executive Committee**

i. **Composition.** The Executive Committee shall consist of the Senate's officers, namely the President of the Senate, the Vice President of the Senate, the Secretary of the Senate, the Recording Secretary of the Senate, the Chair of the Faculty, and the Secretary of the Faculty.

ii. **Eligibility.** All members of the Executive Committee must be members of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty.

iii. **Duties.** The Executive Committee shall plan and coordinate the business of the Faculty Senate, to include scheduling meetings, preparing the agendas for Senate meetings and general faculty meetings,

and inviting appropriate interested parties to attend these meetings. It shall be a major duty of the Senate officers to maintain robust communications with the administration. All matters of substance should be brought before the Senate for deliberation.

The Executive Committee shall also serve as a committee on committees. It shall create new standing and ad hoc committees, or discontinue the same, in response to the evolving needs of the Institute, and as subject to the approval of the Senate.

The Executive Committee shall meet regularly with the Provost to discuss possible new tasks for the Senate to undertake, and to receive guidance on issues raised by or reported to the Board of Trustees and Institute President. The Executive Committee shall work together with the Provost to develop solutions to issues raised by the faculty.

- a. Duties of the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall preside at meetings of the Faculty Senate. The president of the Senate shall only cast a vote on issues before the Senate in the case of a tie vote. The President of the Senate shall communicate to the Provost concerns and the actions of the faculty and the Senate shall provide a report on the Senate's finances and transactions during the year at the Spring general faculty meeting.
- b. Duties of the Vice President of the Senate. The Vice President of the Senate shall assume the duties of the President of the Senate when the President of the Senate is unable to do so. The Vice President of the Senate shall act as Parliamentarian for the Faculty Senate, and will also chair the Faculty Senate Elections Committee.
- c. Duties of the Secretary of the Senate. The Secretary of the Senate shall be responsible for maintaining all records of the Faculty Senate, and a record of all decisions made by the Senate and general faculty. The Secretary of the Senate also shall take and distribute the minutes of the general faculty meetings, and issue the announcements and agendas for general faculty meetings. Such correspondence shall be made available to the Provost.
- d. Duties of the Recording Secretary of the Senate. The Recording Secretary of the Senate shall take the minutes of the Faculty Senate meetings, issue the agenda for Senate meetings, and distribute the minutes to the general faculty.
- e. Duties of the Chair of the Faculty. The Chair of the Faculty shall preside at the general faculty meetings; provide a written report annually on the state of the Institute from the faculty perspective; and present the views of the Faculty to the Academic Deans and the President's cabinet as requested.
- f. Duties of the Secretary of the Faculty. The Secretary of the Faculty shall review the Faculty Handbook and Constitution annually, and recommend changes to the Senate; ensure effective communication and coordination between the Senate and its committees; maintain the faculty roll; and provide to the faculty an annual update on all Senate amendments and votes.

## **B. The Curriculum Committee**

The educational offerings of the faculty shall be of the highest quality, to inspire students, colleagues, and society in general toward the goals of lifetime learning and contributions to the common good. To

assure this quality, the Curriculum Committee shall take responsibility for the educational offerings of the faculty.

i. **Composition.** The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee shall consist of seven faculty members elected for three-year terms. There shall be five representatives from the active tenured and tenure-track faculty, with one representative from each School, and two at-large members who may be either active tenured or tenure-track faculty, or Professors of Practice or Lecturers and elected by the active tenured and tenure-track faculty, and Professors of Practice and Lecturers. There shall also be one representative from the Dean's office for each School, and two undergraduate student members, in good standing, and one graduate student member, in good standing, selected by the Student Senate. The Chair shall be a member of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty, and selected by the Committee from its elected members. Also, with the consent of the President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Dean of Undergraduate Education, the Dean of Graduate Education and the Registrar shall serve as ex officio non-voting members. The Registrar shall act as permanent Recording Secretary of the Curriculum Committee.

ii. **Duties.** The Curriculum Committee shall consider proposals for changes in courses of instruction, requirements for major in each subject, for new curricula, and changes or discontinuations in existing curricula. It shall determine that adequate provisions are made to inform faculty and students of any curricular changes and their consequences. The Committee shall consider proposals for changes in the Core Curriculum and make suitable recommendations to the faculty for action. The Committee shall encourage innovations in instruction and in pedagogical materials and media.

Following appropriate review and approval by the Senate and the faculty, recommendations of the Committee to approve, change or terminate programs shall be reported to the Provost for review and recommendation to the President of the Institute.

iii. **Responsibility to the Senate.** The Chair of the Curriculum Committee shall appear before the Faculty Senate at least once a year or as requested to report on any matters of importance.

### **C. The Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Attracting, developing, and maintaining high-quality faculty is essential to the common purposes of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

i. **Composition.** The Faculty Committee on Promotion and Tenure shall consist of eight Full Professors with Tenure serving three-year terms. There shall be one member from each School and two members at large to be elected by the active tenured and tenure-track faculty. The two at-large members cannot be from the same School. In addition, there shall be one member, a Full Professor with Tenure, who is elected annually by the Students during Grand Marshal Week. The Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall be selected by the members of the Committee.

ii. **Duties.** Duties of the Promotion and Tenure Committee and criteria for promotion are specified in the Faculty Handbook, which prescribes that all appointments of promotion and tenure are

recommended by the Provost and approved by the President of the Institute, and in the case of tenure, by the Board of Trustees.

iii. Responsibility to the Senate. The Chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall appear before the Faculty Senate at least once a year or as requested to report on any matters of importance.

#### **D. The Planning and Resources Committee**

In order to assure appropriate faculty involvement in the planning of the educational and research missions of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Planning and Resources committee shall participate in strategic planning and recommend new initiatives to achieve long term goals. Subject to the review and approval of the Senate, the Chair of the committee shall present the committee's recommendations for possible inclusion in the Provost's performance plan.

i. Composition. The Planning and Resources Committee shall consist of five members of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty, elected to three-year terms. There shall be one faculty member from each School. The Chair shall be selected by the members of the Committee. In addition, the Provost and up to four additional administrative representatives as chosen by the Provost shall serve as voting members of the committee.

ii. Duties. The Committee shall participate, in a manner determined by the Provost, in strategic academic planning, review proposals to approve new academic programs or to terminate existing academic programs that bear substantial impact on the Institute, and solicit new proposals from the faculty. The committee members shall be given access, once approved by the Institute President and the Provost, under provisions of confidentiality, to information within the academic portfolio required for informed participation in matters of academic priorities and strategy. Following timely review and approval by the Senate of the faculty, the recommendations of the Committee shall be advanced to the Provost for possible inclusion in the Provost's academic portfolio.

iii. Responsibility to the Senate. The Chair of the Planning and Resources Committee shall appear before the Faculty Senate at least once a year or as requested to report on any matters of importance.

#### **E. The Elections Committee**

i. Composition. The Elections Committee shall consist of six elected members of the Senate (one from each School, and one at large), along with the Vice President of the Senate, who shall chair the Elections Committee.

ii. Duties. The Elections Committee shall issue a public call for nominations and shall provide a slate of eligible faculty willing to run in the election for open positions on the Senate including its officers; the Curriculum, Promotion and Tenure, and Planning and Resources Committees; and any other standing committee and ad hoc committee deemed by the Senate to require elected versus appointed members.

Upon request, the Elections Committee shall also assist the Executive Committee in recruiting suitable candidates for election or appointment to any standing and ad hoc committees of the Senate.

Professors of Practice and Lecturers, librarians, archivists, and retired faculty may, at their discretion, ask the Elections Committee to administer the election of their representative to the Senate. The Elections Committee shall be responsible for seeing that all elections are completed fairly and in a timely fashion.

**F. Faculty Committee on Honors**

i. Composition. The Faculty Committee on Honors (FCH) shall consist of five active tenured and tenure-track faculty members who shall be appointed for staggered terms of three years each by majority vote of the Senate upon nomination by the Executive Committee. One member shall be selected from each of the five Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Schools: Architecture, Engineering, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Management, and Science. The members of the FCH shall elect the Chair of the FCH from among its members.

ii. Duties.

a. The Faculty Committee on Honors (FCH) shall, through the offices of the Rensselaer Provost, issue a public call for nominations, evaluate, and select candidates for specific honors. The FCH Chair shall communicate each selection to the Provost. The Provost will review and forward the selections to the President for approval.

Awards/Grants for which FCH are responsible include the following: The Early Career Award, the Jerome Fischbach '38 Faculty Travel Grant, and the William H. Wiley 1866 Distinguished Faculty Award.

b. The Faculty Committee on Honors (FCH), through the offices of the Provost, shall also evaluate, rank, and recommend candidates to the President for the following year's Commencement Speaker and Honorary Doctor's Degrees Candidates.

The FCH Chair shall communicate these rankings and recommendations to the Chair of the President's Committee on Honors (PCH). The FCH Chair will serve as a member of the PCH. The Chair of the Faculty Committee on Honors shall also appear before the Faculty Senate at least once a year or as requested by the Senate.

**G. Other Standing Committees**

Faculty governance is a complex issue, and it is important to maintain flexibility in the action of the governing body. The Faculty Senate shall maintain standing committees as it sees fit. Standing committees shall include at least one member of the Senate. These committees shall investigate issues that are assigned to such committees involving education, research, the role of the faculty, and other issues as they arise that are within the province of the Faculty Senate.

**H. Ad Hoc Senate Committees and Institute Committees**

Committees offer an efficient means of gathering information and conducting business on many issues. However, faculty time is valuable. Committees having insufficient power or reason for existence should not be formed, and committees having accomplished their business should cease to exist. The Executive Committee shall facilitate and coordinate elections and appointments to ad hoc committees of the

Senate, and when requested or generally delegated to do so, facilitate and coordinate faculty appointments to Institute committees created by the administration. The Executive Committee shall also conduct an annual review of all ad hoc committees. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Senate shall renew the charge for each ad hoc committee, or direct that it be disbanded.

#### **IV. Elections**

Election to the Senate and its committees shall be by ballot during the Grand Marshal Week in the Spring semester, if possible. For the purpose of voting, an eligible voter must maintain a campus email address (this does not apply to elections of the Senate representatives on behalf of non tenured and tenure-track faculty and other groups). The roll of eligible voters shall be maintained by the Secretary of the Faculty.

The Elections Committee shall send its slate of nominees to the faculty at least one week before the election. Further nominations may, up to 72 hours before the election, be offered to the Elections Committee in writing. If there is only one candidate listed for any Senate position, including positions within Senate committees, the ballot for that position shall be presented as a plebiscite so that votes can be cast both for and against the candidate. The highest ranking candidate shall be declared the winner in a contested election; a majority of the votes cast must be secured for a candidate to win a plebiscite.

The Elections Committee shall conduct the election and report the results to the Senate at the first Senate meeting after the polls are closed. The Senate shall, by a majority vote of the members present and voting, accept the results of the election. In case two or more candidates receive the same number of votes in the election, the Senate shall vote by secret ballot to break the tie. If the result of any contest in the election is not accepted by the Senate, the election to that contest shall be declared invalid, and the Elections Committee shall, at the earliest possible opportunity, conduct a supplementary election to fill the positions for which the election was invalidated.

All duly elected members of the Faculty Senate and its Committees assume office at the end of the last regular Senate meeting during the semester in which the election is ratified, with the exception of the members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, who shall take office at the beginning of the fall semester.

#### **V. Grievances**

The Faculty Senate shall not act as a grievance body. If general policy issues arise out of individual Faculty grievances, however, the Faculty Senate shall act in a constructive manner to assist Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute leadership in developing policies that minimize future grievances.

#### **VI. Policies, Rules, and Procedures**

The Faculty Senate shall initiate, study, and make recommendations for the benefit of the faculty and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Matters will be debated and refined by the Senate. Authority over all Senate business rests in the faculty, and major actions affecting the faculty shall be considered by the entire faculty at general faculty meetings. The Senate shall communicate its deliberations to the faculty through its Minutes. Resolutions of the Senate shall reflect the wishes of the faculty.

- A. The Faculty Senate shall conduct its business according to *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* (Sturgis, 1988).
- B. The President of the Senate shall call an open meeting of the Senate at least five times during the academic year. All formal action taken by the Senate shall take place at open meetings previously announced to the faculty.
- C. Two thirds of the active tenured and tenure-track members of the Senate shall constitute a quorum.
- D. Any member of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty, as well as Professors of Practice and Lecturers, librarians, archivists, and retired faculty, has the right to appear before the Senate at her or his request. The faculty member requesting the appearance may also request that it take place in closed session.
- E. A Senator or an Officer of the Senate can be recalled by a 2/3 vote of the faculty who would normally be eligible to vote for the position held by that Senator or Senate Officer. In order to initiate such a vote, a petition with signatures of at least 1/10 of the eligible faculty should be presented to the Senate. The recall election shall be conducted by the Elections Committee within three weeks of the submission of the petition.
- F. This Constitution may be amended by the following procedure. A Proposal for amendment must be circulated to the faculty over the signatures of at least 1/10 of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty at least thirty days before the general faculty meeting at which the proposal will be discussed. Voting shall be by mail ballot, conducted by the Secretary of the Senate. Only the active tenured and tenure-track faculty shall vote on constitutional amendments. Adoption of amendments requires a two-thirds majority of those voting and subsequent endorsement by the President and the Board of Trustees. No amendment to this Constitution shall be in disagreement with the Institute's Acts of Incorporation or the Institute by-laws.
- G. The Faculty Handbook shall be the Rules and Regulations of the faculty. The Handbook shall be reviewed annually. Handbook revisions require a majority vote of the Faculty Senate, approval of the Provost, and approval by the President and the Board of Trustees.

## **VII. General Faculty Meetings**

Issues of importance to the general faculty should be brought before the faculty at a general meeting. The Executive Committee shall call a general faculty meeting each Fall and Spring. An agenda for the meeting shall be prepared by the Executive Committee, with the advice of the Senate, and distributed to the faculty one week before the meeting. Each meeting shall include a report from the President of the Senate on Senate business. A quorum for the meetings shall consist of 1/6 of the active tenured and tenure-track faculty. Any resolution advanced to the Institute President and the Board of Trustees as a result of a vote conducted at a general faculty meeting shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of all active tenured and tenure-track faculty.

For the Fall general faculty meeting, the President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute shall be invited to speak. The Spring general faculty meeting shall include a report from the Provost. Minutes of the

general faculty meetings will be approved by the Faculty Senate for accuracy and distributed with the Faculty Senate minutes.

Issues of pressing importance can be brought before a special meeting of the general faculty. Special meetings of the faculty can be called by the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute President, the Provost, the Executive Committee of the Senate, by a majority vote of the Senate, or by petition from the general faculty with the signatures of 1/10 of the faculty.