

Guidelines for Systemwide Senate Committees

Overview

These guidelines provide basic information on systemwide committees, including the roles of the chair, members, Senate leaders, and committee consultants; conventions with respect to committee business; communications with divisional committee chairs, senior UCOP leaders, and the Regents; background on committee analysts and other systemwide staff; and various committee logistics.

1. Authority of Committees

A special or standing committee of the Assembly of the Academic Senate acts in accordance with its enabling Bylaw, and as outlined in [Senate Bylaw 40](#). Each committee is required to report its actions to its establishing agency. When the Assembly or the Academic Council refers a matter to a standing or special committee, that committee has an obligation to place the matter on its agenda and give it due consideration. However, neither the Assembly nor the Academic Council may set a committee's agenda or direct its deliberations. The Assembly retains the right to supersede, amend, or set aside the actions or recommendations of any of its committees.

2. Role of Systemwide Senate Leaders

The chair and vice chair of the Academic Senate are *ex officio* members of all systemwide special or standing Senate committees *except* the University Committee on Rules & Jurisdiction (UCR&J). They have voting rights on the Assembly, the Academic Council, and the University Committee on Committees (UCOC) only. In addition, these leaders serve as the Senate's representatives in all formal discussions with the President, senior administration, UC Regents, and state government officials. They are also faculty representatives to the Regents, serving as advisory members of Regents' standing committees and communicating the faculty perspective to the Board.

3. Committee Chair, Members, and Student Representatives

Committee Chair

The chair of a committee directs the committee's business in appropriate consultation with committee members and the Academic Council chair. With the assistance of the committee analyst, the chair identifies issues that fall within the committee's charge, initiates discussions, formulates proposals, and submits recommendations on behalf of the committee to the Academic Council. The chair works with the committee analyst to keep the Council chair informed about committee activities throughout the academic year and to provide timely committee responses to requests for review and comment on proposals and reports. Responses submitted by the committee chair to the Council chair should accurately reflect the character of the committee's discussion, its final consensus, and any minority opinion. Chairs of the eight standing Council committees are expected to attend Council meetings.

Committee Members

Committee members, including members of subcommittees and task forces established by standing committees, are expected to attend and participate in all meetings, carry out tasks as

assigned by the chair, and offer advice based on their experience and expertise. They have the right to request that items be placed on the committee agenda and timely consideration of those matters. By majority vote, members of a committee may also add or omit items from the agenda. Members act as liaisons between the systemwide committee and their divisional counterparts. Members are encouraged to brief their campus committee about discussions in the corresponding systemwide committee, and, in turn, to share information about campus issues with the systemwide committee.

Senate members holding an administrative position higher than department chair may not serve as members on special or standing committees of the Assembly of the Academic Senate, and department chairs may not serve on UCAP, UCAF or UCP&T ([Senate Bylaw 128.H](#)).

A committee member's appointment may be revoked per [Senate Bylaw 35.D.5](#).

Committee Alternates

Committee members who cannot attend a meeting should inform their local Senate office so that an alternate representative can be identified. Committee members may suggest an appropriate alternate to their Senate office but cannot informally "send someone" as a replacement. At the beginning of each academic year, members may ask their divisional Senate office to identify pre-approved alternates to ensure that their campus is always represented.

Student Representatives

The systemwide Office of Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs, in coordination with its campus counterparts, provides opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students to participate in deliberations of select Senate committees ([Senate Bylaw 128.E](#)). Interested students are appointed for one-year terms and are encouraged to solicit comments from their peers on student-related issues. Students are non-voting representatives of the committee. Student representatives typically are excluded from deliberations carried out in executive session but, by majority vote of the committee, may be invited to participate. Student representatives must maintain the confidentiality of committee discussions, may not distribute confidential materials, and must recuse themselves from any potential conflicts of interest.

Committee members, committee alternates, and student representatives who fail to respect the confidentiality of discussions and/or materials may be asked to leave the committee.

4. Committee Consultants and Guests

The systemwide Senate typically asks one or more Office of the President (UCOP) staff to serve as consultants on each of its committees. These individuals have expertise in the relevant areas of committee work and advise members on policy issues as needed. They are authorized by their department heads and approved by the committee chair and Council chair to consult with the committee on University matters. UCOP consultants (and occasional guests) are valuable resources for Senate committees. However, they are not required to attend every meeting or be present during the entire meeting.

UCOP consultants are responsible for any expense associated with meeting attendance. A committee chair may add or change a UCOP consultant by submitting an email request to the Academic Council chair. Approved requests are then submitted to the relevant UCOP department head. Finally, committees may ask consultants to leave a meeting for any reason.

5. Committee Analysts

Committee analysts serve as liaisons between the standing committee chairs and the Academic Council chair and vice chair, the systemwide executive director and assistant director, UCOP consultants, and other UCOP staff. The analysts keep abreast of issues that fall within the charge of their respective committees; suggest agenda items; draft agendas; recommend and schedule consultant sessions; record and draft meeting minutes; follow up on action items; write up committee recommendations, policy statements, and annual reports; and advise their committees on the proper vetting of proposals (as outlined in systemwide policy). Systemwide analysts also serve as liaisons to the analysts of corresponding divisional committees and maintain a listserv for the analysts to ask questions and share information. Divisional Senate offices are expected to inform the systemwide Senate about staffing changes.

6. Official Committee Communication

Communicating with the Regents

According to Regents Bylaws, the Academic Senate may only use a formal Memorial to address the Board of Regents directly on matters pertaining to the conduct and welfare of the University. Only the Senate chair and vice chair may contact individual Regents directly regarding committee or Senate business.

Communicating with UCOP Senior Management and UCOP Administrators

A committee may communicate with members of the UCOP senior management group or other UCOP administrators who are on its approved list of consultants. The committee may add consultants to this list or invite other UCOP staff to meetings as guests with the prior approval of the Council chair. Unless otherwise specified in the Senate Bylaws, committees usually convey advice to the President and other senior managers formally only through the Academic Council.

Communicating with Divisional Committee Chairs

Chairs of special or standing committees should communicate directly with one another and with their corresponding divisional committee chairs on policy matters. Formal requests for action, however, must go through the Council chair.

Communicating with the Media

A committee chair and/or member may be contacted by members of the press to comment on a developing news story or item of public interest being discussed by the committee. Before speaking to a reporter, committee members should contact the Council chair to coordinate communications. The Council chair may delegate to a committee member or members the authority to speak with reporters about a particular committee or policy issue.

Communicating with other Committees

Committee chairs are encouraged to collaborate with other committees on issues of overlapping interest or concern. Committee chairs should contact the Council chair to coordinate communications with UCRJ.

7. Committee Business

Systemwide Perspective

UC Academic Senate committees are encouraged to approach issues from a systemwide perspective and act in the best interest of the University as a whole. A range of information presented to committees as well as divisional deliberations shared by members inform committee discussions, votes, and recommendations. Members should refrain from advocating specifically for their individual campus in favor of collective considerations. They also should not unduly delay committee progress on issues due to lack of response or input from their respective campuses. Finally, for any recommendation that requires final action beyond the committee, members who disagree with the majority opinion may append a minority report.

Systemwide Senate Review Process

When the Academic Council chair receives a request for a Senate review, the item is posted to the Academic Senate's website with a requested due date. Each committee determines whether it wishes to opine. After comments are submitted, the Academic Council discusses the Senate division and committee responses and determines next steps. In most cases, the Council chair will prepare an official response to submit on behalf of the Academic Senate. All letters are posted on the "Reports and Recommendations" section of the systemwide Academic Senate website.

A committee may also request that the Academic Council initiate a systemwide review of a report, a proposed set of principles or recommendations, or another document created by a committee or one of its task forces that it believes would be of general interest to the faculty or have broad policy implications for the campuses and/or the Academic Senate.

Bylaw Change Request

A committee may request a revision to a systemwide Senate regulation or bylaw. Such changes normally require the approval of both the Academic Council and the Assembly, following a 90-day systemwide Senate review. The Council usually vets requests prior to their circulation for systemwide review. Prior to final Assembly consideration, UCRJ should opine on whether the proposed change is consistent with the Code of the Academic Senate.¹ A committee requesting Senate review of a proposed change to a regulation or bylaw should include a justification for the change and a redline clearly indicating proposed changes to the text.

Distribution of Agendas and Committee Documents

Distribution of committee agendas, draft minutes, and in-progress documents is done via email and is restricted to committee members (including *ex officio*), student representatives, approved consultants, and other specified agenda recipients. The committee chair, in consultation with the Council chair, must approve any exception to these distribution rules.

Minutes and Recordings of Meetings

Following a meeting, the committee analyst completes and submits to the committee chair a list of action items or set of draft minutes. These should be provided in a reasonable timeframe (typically within five business days) to move pending items forward and to prepare for the next meeting. The committee chair should review and correct draft minutes as soon as they are

¹ The Code of the Academic Senate comprises the Manual of the Academic Senate and the manuals of its Divisions. <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations>

available but no later than two weeks under normal circumstances. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to review the minutes and attest to their accuracy. Approval of the last meeting's minutes should be included as an action item on the next meeting agenda. In the case of a committee's final meeting for the academic year, the final meeting minutes may be approved via email by the committee members who attended the meeting. Analysts may record meetings and use other tools to aid in accurately drafting minutes. Recordings are routinely deleted and irretrievable once the meeting minutes are approved. Meeting participants are prohibited from using technology tools to record or transcribe meetings.

Conflict of Interest

Per Senate Bylaw 128.J, members of committees, subcommittees and task forces must be aware that professional judgments made in committee work may be compromised or appear to be compromised by a conflict of interest. Members who think they have a conflict of interest must inform the chair (or the vice chair if there is a potential conflict of interest on the part of the chair) thereof. Members who think another member has a conflict of interest should inform the chair (or the vice chair). The member with the potential conflict may choose to limit participation up to and including full recusal. Any party may consult the chair of the Academic Council for advice (or the vice chair if there is a potential conflict of interest on the part of the chair). In the absence of agreement between the member and the chair (or vice-chair) of the committee on the appropriate actions, the chair (or vice chair) of the committee shall inform the chair (or vice chair) of the Academic Council, who shall make the final determination as to what actions are appropriate.

Pre-Decisional Discussions & Confidentiality*

When pre-decisional discussions occur or confidential documents are circulated, the committee chair must ensure that members, consultants, guests, and student representatives understand the prohibition on sharing the information prematurely outside of the meeting. Adhering to this expectation is critical to ensuring that a committee's final decision or action is as thoroughly vetted as possible. All committee agendas, email correspondence, working papers, and resource documents are assumed to be privileged materials for the sole use of the intended recipients unless otherwise stated. Unless a document has already been circulated widely (e.g., a proposal or report undergoing systemwide review), any distribution to others is strictly prohibited. Committee chairs should be proactive in clarifying the confidential status of specific documents and discussions.

Executive Sessions*

Committee chairs are encouraged to designate time on each meeting agenda for closed ("executive") session to address confidential business of the committee. By majority vote, committees may call an executive session at any point during a meeting. Consultants, guests, and student representatives may participate in an executive session only by the express invitation of the committee chair. Proceedings of these sessions are not recorded or included in the minutes, although action items may be noted.

See the "Principles and Practices for Executive Session" at the end of this document for guidance about the use of executive session in meetings.

***A committee member who fails to respect the confidentiality of materials and/or discussions in general session or executive session may be asked to leave the committee.**

8. Subcommittees and Task Forces

Committees may allocate some of their approved meeting time for separate task force or subcommittee gatherings. Given additional costs, the formation of a subcommittee or task force that requires participants to meet in-person must be approved by the Academic Council chair. The committee chair should route the request through the executive director with the group's proposed charge and an estimate of the resources needed to support its work.

In accordance with [Senate Bylaw 128.I](#), a standing committee of the Assembly may appoint one or more subcommittees or task forces, but the University Committee on Committees (UCOC) must appoint all subcommittee or task force members who are not already members of any standing committee of the Assembly.

9. Systemwide Senate Office

The staff at the systemwide Senate office supports the Academic Council chair and vice chair and the systemwide committees. The Senate executive director and assistant director are the chief administrative officers of the Senate and the main policy consultants for the Assembly, the Academic Council, and special/standing committees. They lead the Senate staff in providing administrative and analytical support for the Senate chair and vice chair, and are responsible for oversight of the Senate budget. The systemwide Senate office ensures that committees have resources to function effectively. The Senate's executive assistant and committee assistant field questions on travel and expense reimbursement, maintain a database of faculty who have served at the system level, manage calendars for the Academic Council chair and vice chair, schedule meeting rooms, arrange for food and other logistics, resolve minor IT/email/phone problems for other staff members, and more.

10. Effective Partnerships Between Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and Analyst

At the start of the academic year, analysts and committee chairs should schedule an orientation call to review needs and expectations for the year, clarify how the analyst can be a partner to the chair, and ensure that communication preferences are clear and agreed upon (for example, communication over email versus phone or remote conference service). The conversation might be scheduled late in the academic year to include the outgoing committee chair to help clarify continuing business and priorities among outgoing and incoming leadership.

Committee chairs and analysts should schedule regular agenda planning calls between committee meetings, and/or a debriefing call after each meeting. Such conversations may also occur over email, according to the preference of the chair or vice chair; however, a phone or video call may be more effective.

The committee analyst should normally copy the committee vice chair when sending any correspondence or draft agendas to the chair. In addition, the committee chair and vice chair should include each other and the analyst on correspondence.

11. Logistics

Academic Senate Committee Meeting Schedule

A [schedule of meetings](#) for the Assembly, Academic Council, standing committees and task forces is posted on the Senate's website. Each committee is approved to meet a specified number of times during the academic year. For some committees, meetings are set on certain days of the month. Committee chairs may ask to change a meeting date that conflicts with previously scheduled engagements, and staff will try to accommodate these requests. Meetings are generally scheduled Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Meeting Venues and Logistics

Most meetings are held via videoconference. With some exceptions, in-person Senate meetings are held at UCOP in Oakland. Other local venues are used if space is unavailable at UCOP. Dietary and other special needs of committee members should be conveyed to the committee analyst.

Required in-Person Meeting Length

Per Academic Senate guidelines, in-person meetings must last a minimum of five hours to justify the significant cost of convening. Committee chairs should use videoconferencing or teleconferencing services for meetings of shorter duration and may also do so for meetings of longer duration. To meet policy requirements and to cover all agenda items, committees schedule working lunches.

Eliminating or Adding Meetings

Committees are not required to use all designated meeting dates. In consultation with the committee analyst, a committee chair may cancel a meeting if there is not sufficient business. When a decision is made to cancel a meeting, the analyst should immediately notify members, consultants, other participants, and the executive director. Committee chairs who wish to add one or more meetings to the approved number during the academic year must submit a written request through the executive director to the Council chair justifying the need for additional meeting(s).

Public Access

Meetings of Senate standing committees, special committees, task forces, and working groups are not subject to the California Education Code or Bagley Keene Act open meeting requirements and are therefore not required to be open to the public. Access to Senate committee meetings is restricted to appointed committee members, designated alternates, consultants, committee staff, and invited guests. Any Senate member may attend and speak at any meeting of the Assembly of the Academic Senate, in accordance with Bylaw 60.

Identifying Committee Leadership

In February, UCOC will begin to identify potential committee leaders for the next academic year. UCOC liaisons contact the committee chair and analyst for input into candidates and then contact potential vice chairs. Committee leaders should begin preparing in February to think about committee leadership for the following year. Committee chairs and vice chairs are usually confirmed in June.

Senate Travel, Expenses, and Reimbursement

The Academic Council does not have a travel/entertainment account. Please refer to the [Senate website](#) for details about University/Senate policy governing reimbursement.

Exceptional Costs /Unapproved Costs

The Senate will not reimburse non-standard expenses unless they have been explicitly pre-approved by the Senate executive director. If a committee believes it requires additional resources to fulfill its charge, the chair submits an estimate of additional funds needed and details on their intended use.

Contact Information:

Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200
Phone: (510) 987-9143

Systemwide Senate Website: <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

Staff Contact Information: <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/contact-us/>

Divisional Senate Offices: <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/resources/divisional-sites.html>

Principles & Practices for Executive Session

The following principles and associated practices provide a framework for confidential closed (“executive”) sessions during systemwide Academic Senate meetings. The aims are to establish a shared set of expectations for how executive sessions are conducted and to promote consistent implementation of executive session practices across Senate committees.

Executive sessions are held for the purposes of discussing and acting upon any Senate business that should remain confidential to the committee. This purpose must be understood in light of the fact that certain committee deliberations may require very careful treatment. All meeting participants must feel free to offer their perspectives, without concern that their comments will be reported or discovered beyond the committee’s discussion. Maintaining confidentiality of ongoing committee deliberations in executive session is critical to ensuring that a committee’s final decision or action is as thoroughly informed as possible.

A. Executive session is conducted according to several basic guidelines.

- Executive sessions are for committee members. Student representatives and consultants may participate in an executive session only by the express invitation of the committee chair.
- Executive sessions may be indicated on the committee’s agenda for that meeting or may be called at any point during a meeting by majority vote of the committee. Decisions or actions made in executive session are generally noted in the publicly available minutes of the meeting in which the session was held. No minutes are recorded for the discussion during executive session.
- The decision or action taken in executive session and supporting reasoning may be provided in related memoranda.
- Movement into and out of executive session is recorded in the minutes of the meeting in which the executive session was held.

B. Executive session invitation may be extended to non-voting members and consultants to promote the most informed decision or action.

- Committees explicitly evaluate and identify non-voting members and consultants to involve in discussions during executive session, taking into consideration the value of their contributions and the benefits that may result from their participation.
- Non-voting committee members and consultants may request information or clarification regarding the topic of executive sessions. Such requests are to be made in writing to the committee chair with a copy to the Senate committee analyst. Committees are under no obligation to provide information beyond what may have been communicated by the committee chair in open session.

C. Documents shared in relation to the executive session are confidential and not intended for further distribution.

- The committee chair evaluates the confidential nature of executive session materials on a case-by-case basis and in advance of the meeting during which the executive session is held.
- If the committee chair determines that executive session material may be further distributed, the chair will clearly communicate such to the voting committee members, as well as to non-voting members and consultants who have received invitations to join the executive session.

D. Executive sessions are not to be recorded.

- Depending on the circumstances for holding an executive session, the committee chair, in consultation with the Senate committee analyst, will determine whether an exception is warranted, and the discussion needs to be recorded. This includes audio or written recordings.
- On a meeting-to-meeting basis, the committee chair, in consultation with the Senate committee analyst, may elect to record a segment of an executive session for the purpose of drafting associated written correspondence.

Systemwide Senate Website Posting Policy

Adopted by the Academic Council July 21, 2004.

Amended September 29, 2010, and June 17, 2015.

Committees are required to post:

1. Simplified agendas. These include only the titles of agenda items.
 - Supporting documents may be posted at the discretion of the committee chair.
 - Explanatory agenda notes are not to be included.
2. Final, committee-approved minutes.
3. At its discretion, the committee may post final committee reports, resolutions, recommendations, etc. These include:
 - Documents that have been approved or officially received by the Academic Council (also available on the “Reports and Recommendations” page of the Senate website);
 - Documents that are under current systemwide review (also available on the “Issues Under Review” page of the Senate website); or
 - Documents that have been approved by the committee, but that have not been considered or endorsed by the Academic Council. Such documents must have a disclaimer attached (see below) that clearly refutes any endorsement by the Council.

Disclaimer Language:

This document has been approved by the University Committee on XXX. However, it *has not* been adopted by the Academic Council and yet may be subject to review by the Council. It *may not be cited* as representing the views of the Academic Senate.