

## Guidelines for Systemwide Senate Committees

### Overview

Senate review comprises a significant part of the faculty's role in shared governance. At the system level as at the campuses, active participation in this process by committees is one of the Academic Senate's chief obligations. These guidelines provide basic information on systemwide committees, including the roles of the chair, members, Senate leaders, and 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/Academic Council refers a matter to a special or standing committee, that committee has an obligation to place the matter on its agenda and give it due consideration. However the Assembly/Academic Council may not set the committee's agenda or direct its deliberations. The Assembly/Academic Council retains the right to supersede, amend, or set aside the actions or recommendations of any of its committees.<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Role of Systemwide Senate Leaders**

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate and the Academic Council are *ex officio* members of all systemwide special or standing Senate committees *except* UC 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, Regents, and state government officials. They are also faculty representatives to the UC Regents, serving as advisory members of Regents' standing committees and communicating the faculty perspective to the Board.

### **3. Committee Chair and Members**

#### Committee Chair

The chair directs the committee's business in appropriate consultation with committee members and the Academic Council Chair. With the assistance of the committee analyst, the

---

<sup>1</sup> For further clarification and exceptions, see [Legislative Ruling 8.95-B](#)

chair identifies issues that fall within the committee charge, initiates discussions, formulates proposals, and submits recommendations on behalf of the committee to the Academic Council. The chair, working with the committee analyst, also is responsible for keeping the Council Chair informed about committee activities throughout the academic year and for providing timely committee responses to requests for review and comment on proposals and reports. Responses submitted by the chair to Council should accurately reflect the character of the committee's discussion, its final consensus, and any minority opinion.

### 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 items be placed on the committee agenda and to expect timely consideration of those matters. By majority vote, members also may add or omit items from the agenda. Members act as liaisons between the systemwide committee and their divisional counterparts, communicating pertinent information between them and providing campus perspectives on systemwide issues.

*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](#)).*

### Committee Alternates

Committee members who cannot attend a meeting **must** inform their local Senate office so that an alternate representative can be named. 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 should ask their divisional Senate offices to identify pre-approved alternates to ensure that their campuses are always represented.

### Student Representatives

The systemwide Student Affairs office, 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. Student representatives typically are excluded from deliberations carried out in executive session but, by majority vote of the committee, may be invited to participate.

## **4. Consultants and Guests**

### Committee Consultants

The systemwide Senate typically asks one or more Office of the President (UCOP) staff to serve as committee 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 faculty members 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 course of each.

UCOP consultants are responsible for any expenses associated with meeting attendance. A committee may add or change a UCOP consultant by submitting an email request to the 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.

### Guests

Committee chairs, members, and consultants may not invite other UCOP staff or guests to a committee meeting without the prior approval of the Council Chair. The Senate will not reimburse expenses—including those for guests or consultants—unless they have been explicitly pre-approved by the Executive Director.

## **5. Official Committee Communication**

### Communicating with the Regents

According to Regents Bylaws, members of the faculty or Academic Senate may communicate with members of the Board of Regents **only** through the President. No committee or individual faculty member may contact Regents directly.

### Communicating with UCOP Senior Management and UCOP Administrators

Committees may communicate with members of the UCOP senior management group or other UCOP administrators who are on its approved list of consultants. They 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 Bylaws, committees convey formal advice to the President and other senior managers 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.

## **6. Committee Business**

UC Academic Senate committees should approach issues from a systemwide perspective and act in the best interest of the University as a whole. A range of information presented to these committees as well as divisional deliberations shared by members inform committee discussions, votes, and recommendations. Members should refrain from advocating specifically for their campus in favor of collective considerations. They also should not unduly retard 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.

### 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 a week—to move pending items forward and to prepare for the next committee meeting. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to review the minutes and attest to their accuracy.

Analysts digitally record meetings to aid in accurately drafting minutes. These recordings are kept for a limited period of time; committee chairs should review and correct draft minutes as soon as they are available.

### Executive Session and Confidentiality Issues

Committee chairs are encouraged to designate time on each meeting agenda for closed (“executive”) session. By majority vote, committees may call for 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. Proceedings of these sessions are not recorded or included in the minutes, although action items may be noted.

When confidential discussions occur or confidential documents are circulated, the committee chair must ensure members, consultants, guests, and student representatives understand that information is not to be shared with their constituents or anyone else outside of the meeting. All committee agendas, 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.

## **7. Sub-Committees and Task Forces**

Committees may allocate some of their approved meeting time to hold separate task force or subcommittee gatherings in-person or by teleconference. Given additional costs, 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 and should provide the group’s proposed charge as well as an estimate of the resources needed to support its work.

In accordance with [Senate Bylaw 128.J](#), 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.

## **8. Committee Analysts and Other Systemwide Senate Staff**

### Committee Analysts

Committee analysts serve as liaisons between the standing committee chairs and the Academic Council Chair, the Executive and Associate Directors, 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, contact, 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).

### Senate Support Staff

The Senate support staff manage a number of administrative functions for the office and systemwide committees. These include fielding questions on travel and expense reimbursement, maintaining a database of faculty who have served at the system level, handling calendars for the Council Chair and Vice Chair, scheduling meeting rooms, arranging for food and other logistics, resolving minor IT/email/phone problems for other staff members, and more.

### Executive Director and Associate Director

The Senate Executive Director and Associate 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 staff in providing administrative and analytical support for the Senate leadership and are responsible for oversight of the Senate budget. The Executive and Associate Directors work to ensure that committees have the resources required to function effectively.

## **9. Logistics**

### Academic Senate Committee Meeting Schedule

An updated [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 many, meetings are set on certain days of the month (e.g., Academic Council on fourth Wednesdays, BOARS on first Fridays, etc.). Committee chairs may ask to change some dates if they conflict 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.

### Required Meeting Length

Per UC policy, in-person meetings must last a minimum of five hours to justify the significant cost of convening. Committee chairs should use video or teleconferencing services for meetings of shorter duration. To meet policy requirements and to cover all agenda items, committees schedule working lunches.

### Meeting Venues and Logistics

With the exception of some meetings of the Assembly of the Academic Senate, all Senate meetings are held at UCOP locations in Oakland. Other local venues are used if space is unavailable at UCOP. Dietary and other special needs should be conveyed to the committee analyst.

### Eliminating or Adding Meetings

Committees are not required to use all of their designated meeting dates. In consultation with the committee analyst, a committee chair may cancel a meeting if there is not sufficient business to warrant convening. When that decision is made, the committee analyst should immediately notify members, consultants, other participants, and the Executive Director. If a committee chair wishes to add one or more meetings to the approved number during the academic year, s/he must submit a written request through the Executive Director to the Council Chair justifying the need for additional meeting(s).

### 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 expenses unless they have been explicitly pre-approved by the 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, 12<sup>th</sup> 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>

## **SYSTEMWIDE SENATE WEBSITE 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.