

A FACULTY COUNCIL PRIMER

Prepared for the 2006-2007 University of Texas at Austin Faculty Council
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Each year we welcome new members to Faculty Council who attend meetings and serve on University standing committees as Faculty Council members. Yet, there is no “orientation” that explains what Faculty Council is and what is expected of a member. The purpose of this document is to help orient all members to the nature of Faculty Council, its parts, its scope and tasks, and each member’s important role on Faculty Council. More detailed information can be found by navigating the sidebars and content contained on the Office of the General Faculty homepage (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>).

What Is Expected from You?

In general, accepting elected membership on the Faculty Council means that you agree to: 1) Attend once-a-month Faculty Council meetings, discussing and voting conscientiously; and 2) Serve conscientiously on at least one Faculty Council committee. The regular Faculty Council meetings occur on a Monday at 2:15p in Main 212. The following academic year’s schedule is posted each summer by the Faculty Council Office (http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2006-2007/meetings/FC_mtgs_2006-2007.html).

Since you are an elected member, selected by another group, it is suggested that you keep that group apprised of any actions or issues of Faculty Council. There is a great deal of information, from prior minutes to current motions on the floor, available on the Faculty Council website (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>) that can be of great assistance in understanding *your* Faculty Council.

Faculty Council Plays a Central Role in Faculty Governance

Faculty governance is important at The University of Texas at Austin. Simply stated, the Faculty Council is one of two governing bodies representing the faculty and faculty’s formal role in University governance. The other is the Graduate Assembly (see <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/ga/> for more information). Non-administrative faculty who hold membership on those bodies are elected by their respective colleges/schools or at large by the entire faculty, or they are continuing their service as an elected officer of the governing body (e.g., often the case for or Faculty Council chair or past chair, as their elected term may have expired).

What Is Faculty Council?

Faculty Council is the faculty governance group that is responsible evaluating all University of Texas at Austin undergraduate curricular changes and degree programs whereas the Graduate Assembly is responsible for these functions for the graduate curricula. This is why the Faculty Council will continue to be closely involved in all approvals involving the current process of undergraduate curricular change. The Faculty Council has the initial University-wide charge over the undergraduate curriculum at The University.

Many Faculty Council actions do require approval from the president and other parts of our educational system, such as the University of Texas System and/or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to be finalized. This is why your secretary issues the monthly Secretary’s Report and often reviews “legislative status” in her report each meeting (http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/pages/legislation_status.html).

Summarizing from <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/rules/ch1.III.a.html>, the Faculty Council recommends directly to the president. Faculty Council has authority over:

- All matters of educational policy at The University, except those given to Graduate Assembly,

- Establishing the procedures for involving faculty in developing educational policies for the entire University,
- Regulations dealing with student activities,
- Requirements for admission, honors or degrees granted at the University (except those governed by Graduate Assembly),
- Approval of degree candidates,
- Catalogue changes requiring approval by the Board of Regents (except those that Graduate Assembly governs), and
- Reports of special and standing committees (including General Faculty Standing Committees), except for the Rules Committee (who formally reports to the General Faculty <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2006-2007/standcom/A-6.html>, and is generally operationally represented by Faculty Council

Faculty Council Membership Composition (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/rules/ch1.III.c.html>)

All membership and officer terms begin (or end) the first day of classes in the Fall. There are several broad classifications of members on the Faculty Council:

- Elected Faculty Members with Vote
 - Twenty members elected by the General Faculty at-large (two year terms elected every odd year) — apportionment is to be half tenured and half non-tenured upon election.
 - Members by virtue of an elected office held: Always the Faculty Council secretary (*ex officio with vote*), Graduate Assembly chair (*ex officio with vote*) and probably the Faculty chair and past chair (true for 2006-07).
 - Members elected by the individual colleges and schools (the number is apportioned by the General Faculty secretary according to the rules).
- Administrative members *ex officio without vote*: president, executive vice president and provost, all vice presidents, registrar, all college/school deans, the dean of continuing education, director of general libraries, dean of students, and director of admissions.
- Seven student members with Vote: Three from Student Government, two from the Senate of College Councils, and two from the Graduate Student Assembly.
- Two staff members without Vote

General Faculty Standing Committees: Faculty Council's Active Participation

Faculty Council members are not the only faculty members on General Faculty Standing Committees, but they do have an active role in standing committee membership and are expected to hold membership on at least one. Nominations to Standing Committee membership from the Committee on Committees are from the General Faculty (who may or may not be Faculty Council members). There are three types of General Faculty Standing Committees as shown below (from <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2006-2007/standcom/standcom.html>):

- Type A: Faculty Affairs Committees
 - A-1: Committee of Counsel on Academic Freedom and Responsibility
 - A-2: Faculty Advisory Committee on Budgets
 - A-3: Faculty Committee on Committees
 - A-4: Faculty Grievance Committee
 - A-5: Faculty Welfare Committee
 - A-6: General Faculty Rules Committee
 - A-7: University of Texas Press Advisory Committee
- Type B: Student Services and Activities
 - B-1: Committee on Financial Aid to Students
 - B-2: Recreational Sports Committee
 - B-3: Committee on Student Affairs
- Type C: Institutional Policy or Governance

- C-1: Admissions and Registration Committee
- C-2: Calendar Committee
- C-3: Commencement and Academic Ceremonies Committee
- C-4: Educational Policy Committee
- C-5: Faculty Building Advisory Committee
- C-6: International Programs and Studies Committee
- C-7: University of Texas Libraries Committees
- C-8: Parking and Traffic Appeals Panel
- C-9: Parking and Traffic Policies Committee
- C-10: Recruitment and Retention Committee
- C-11: Research Policy Committee
- C-12: Responsibilities, Rights, and Welfare of Graduate Student Academic Employees Committee
- C-13: Information Technology Committee

The Process Behind Faculty Council Members' Standing Committee Involvement

After Faculty Council elections each Spring, Faculty Council members (who will be serving the following academic year) are asked by the Faculty Council Office to indicate what General Faculty Standing Committees they would like to serve on by providing a ranking of preferences. The chair elect of the Faculty Council will then go through these preferences and appoint two people to each committee to serve for one year. These are “unfettered” appointments made by the chair elect and do not require anyone else’s approval.

Each Spring the Committee on Committees will ask the General Faculty for nominations to serve on Standing Committees. The Committee on Committees will send five nominations for each committee forward to the Provost for his/her selection of standing committees. These Provost’s Office Standing Committee appointments are for two year terms. As of our October, 2006, Faculty Council vote, the chair elect is a non-voting *ex officio* member of the Committee on Committees, for synergy purposes.

Early each September, there will be a Faculty Council Standing Committee “round-up.” The chair elect of Faculty Council each Spring will ask a committee member to act as “convener” of that committee for this first meeting of the academic year. A date will be provided by the Faculty Council Office for a meeting in Main 212 of all committees, or the convener may schedule another time.

At the convening meeting, the committee is to elect a chair for the committee and discuss its initial work, with each member receiving a copy of the Standing Committee’s function (available for each committee from <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2006-2007/standcom/standcom.html>). Early in the Fall semester, each committee should elect a vice chair and in the Spring, their chair elect, for continuity purposes. The Committee chair should convey the election results to the Faculty Council Office.

The Faculty Council Executive Committee: Process and Focus

A great deal of planning occurs in the Faculty Council Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets once a month to discuss matters of importance to the Faculty Council and to plan the next meeting’s agenda. The Executive Committee and/or the Faculty Council chair also appoints or nominates (if the appointing person is the president or provost) faculty for various non-standing, *ad hoc*, or special committees. A good example is the Committee on Undergraduate Degree Program Review, which has auspices over curricular catalogue changes among other things).

Members of the Executive Committee are: the Faculty Council chair, the Faculty Council chair elect, the past chair of Faculty Council, the secretary of Faculty Council and General Faculty, the chair of the Graduate Assembly, and three members elected by the Faculty Council to serve on the Educational Policy Committee, the Faculty Welfare Committee, and the Faculty Advisory Committee on Budgets. With the exception of the secretary of the Faculty Council and General Faculty, who is to be elected each Fall, all members of the Executive Committee are holding positions elected by the Faculty Council’s voting

members each Spring. The Faculty Council Executive Committee announces a slate of two nominees for each position, which is generally voted on in the May Faculty Council meeting of each year. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

The Faculty Council Executive Committee “Plus”

In addition to the once-a-month Faculty Council Executive Committee meeting, Executive Committee members meet once-a-month with the upper administration, including the president, deputy to the president, provost, vice provost, and the vice president for institutional relationships and legal affairs. This meeting also covers current Faculty Council issues and future agendas, including the Executive Committee’s questions and updates about the status of legislation previously enacted by the Faculty Council.

Affiliations and Communications with Other Faculty Senates/Councils and UT System Institutions

Our Faculty Council is a member of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates, which meets in Austin for two days, once each long semester. The Faculty Council chair and the chair elect represent UT-Austin at that meeting. All member universities and colleges around the State having a Faculty Senate/Council provide a written and oral report about their institution and current issues being faced.

The Faculty Council chair and past chair are the UT-Austin faculty’s members on the UT System Faculty Advisory Committee. This is a two day meeting occurring several times each long semester. All parts of the UT System are represented, the nine universities and five medical branches. As with the Texas Council of Faculty Senates there are written and oral summary reports from each institution.