

To: Faculty Senate

From: **The Faculty Senate Committee on Constitution and Rules**
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Subject: Proposed Amendments to the Faculty Senate Rules and Bylaws and Current Faculty Senate Practices

The Faculty Senate (FS) Committee on Constitution and Rules unanimously recommends the following amendments to the FS Rules and Bylaws and current FS practices.

Issue 1: Definition and Scope of the Faculty Senate Minutes

The FS governing documents do not define what constitutes the official “minutes” of a FS meeting. In practice, the minutes have evolved into verbatim transcripts of the meeting. This approach is inconsistent with widely accepted academic governance standards, where minutes record actions taken and may summarize discussion, but do not attribute comments to individual speakers.

The current practice is also creating a significant workload burden. According to the FS President, the Senate Secretary spends approximately 15 hours per week preparing the minutes, which is half of the Secretary’s total workload. This includes circulating draft transcripts to all participants for verification and revising them accordingly. This time commitment limits the Secretary’s ability to perform essential duties such as drafting communications, scheduling meetings, assisting with election administration, working on FS website improvements and helping prepare FS meeting agendas. Notably, the Secretary no longer has sufficient time to attend FS Executive Committee meetings, a responsibility historically associated with the role.

Proposed Recommendations:

1) Adopt a standard minutes format without amending the Bylaws. The Committee recommends that the FS adopt a minutes format that records:

- Attendance
- Approval of previous minutes
- Adoption of the agenda
- A list of reports presented, including the report titles and presenter names
- The exact text of every motion made and seconded
- The action taken on each motion
- Vote results
- Any assignments or follow-up tasks
- Time of adjournment

The Senate Secretary should assist in producing the minutes under the supervision of the Senate Executive Secretary. Bylaws Article IV.1.D.2. already states that the Executive Secretary shall “*supervise the recording and distribution of the minutes of the regular Senate as well as special meetings of the Senate and the Executive Committee.*” Adopting this standard format will reduce the time required to prepare the minutes, allow the Secretary to resume essential

secretarial duties, and make it easier to locate and verify specific FS actions without searching through full meeting transcripts.

2) Post FS meeting recordings and transcripts after minutes are approved. The committee recommends that the FS meeting recording and the automatically generated Webex transcript be posted on the FS website as soon as the corresponding minutes have been approved. To improve usability, the Committee further recommends that the Senate Secretary mark the transcripts with the starting points of major presentations delivered during Senate meetings.

Issue 2: The Faculty Senate Log

Article VII of the Bylaws requires the Executive Secretary to maintain a “Faculty Senate Log” containing item number, title, origin and date of entry for each proposal (i.e., any action item submitted for FS consideration).

A search of the Senate office found no evidence that such a log has been maintained in recent years. In practice, the email records of the Senate President and Faculty Senate Executive Committee serve as the de facto tracking system, and items requiring action are placed directly on the Senate agenda.

Proposed Amendment:

The Committee recommends amending the Bylaws to remove references to the Faculty Senate Log. The Senate has operated effectively for years without a formal log, and eliminating unused structures reduces administrative burden and aligns the Bylaws with actual practice. The revised minutes format will provide a clear and accessible record of Senate actions. (See redline version below.)

Issue 3: The Calendar of Questions

The Bylaws require that the “Calendar of Questions” on the meeting agenda include log item number, title, origin, and committee assignment, due date, and eventual disposition and date of each item. In practice, the agenda includes only a simple list of items of business without these required fields.

If the Faculty Senate Log is eliminated, the Calendar of Questions becomes impossible to maintain because it relies on the Log for item numbering and tracking.

Proposed Amendment:

The Committee recommends amending the Bylaws to replace the “Calendar of Questions” on the agenda with the more standard “Old Business” and “New Business” sections used by most faculty senates. This change aligns the agenda with common governance practice and simplifies meeting preparation. Also proposed is the addition of a final category for the agenda, “Items from the Floor,” which aligns with current practice. (See redline version below.)

Proposed Bylaw Amendments:

Bylaws Article IV.1.D.5.

The Executive Secretary of the Senate shall: Act as a custodian of the minutes and other Senate materials by performing functions such as: calling the roll and tracking absences at Faculty Senate meetings ~~and maintaining the Faculty Senate Log and Calendar of Questions.~~

~~Bylaws Article VII. Log and Calendar of the Faculty Senate~~

~~Section 1. The Executive Secretary of the Senate shall maintain a record to be known as the Faculty Senate Log, consisting of all properly defined proposals presented for possible action by the Faculty Senate. Such proposals may originate from any university source, and must be presented in written form. The Log shall record an item number, title, origin and date of entry for each proposal.~~

~~Section 2. The Executive Secretary of the Senate also shall maintain a record to be known as the Faculty Senate Calendar of Questions, consisting of those log items submitted to the Faculty Senate by the Executive Committee for Senate consideration. The Calendar of Questions shall record the Log item number, title, origin, and committee assignment, due date, and eventual disposition and date of each item placed thereon.~~

Bylaws Article V. Meetings

Section 7. At regular meetings, the order of business shall be

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Executive Committee Report
4. Reports
5. ~~Calendar of Questions~~ Old Business
6. ~~Other~~ New Business
7. Items from the Floor