Constitution of the Faculty Senate

Preamble

ACCEPTED AS GIVEN THAT Faculty, being experts in their fields and pedagogy, thusly know best the needs, wants, programs, departments, divisions, and all other traditional academic aspects of a college or university, that the representatives of the several faculty shall constitute and be the composition of the Representative Senate of the Faculty of Texas A&M University-Texarkana. The Terms “Senate of the Faculty “, “Faculty Senate”, or “Senate” may be used interchangeably for all business conducted by the Representative Senate of the Faculty of Texas A&M University-Texarkana. This constitution is the expressed will of the Faculty and its Senate.

1.0 PURPOSE

As a deliberative body, the Faculty Senate serves as a forum where faculty members express their views on issues of concern. The Senate is a recommending body. All recommendations are forwarded to the President of the University. No Texas A&M University-Texarkana officer, body, or agent shall exercise control over the faculty senate, or senators, recommendations, requests, duties, obligations, or charges.

Given that Faculty, being experts in their fields and pedagogy, thusly know best the needs, wants, programs, departments, divisions, and all other academic aspects of a college or university, the weighted sentiments, resolutions, and recommendations of the Faculty as expressed through their representatives should and must be considered with utmost seriousness and gravity.

Senators are faculty representatives and, as such, they express the concerns of the faculty. Senators are not responsible nor shall be deemed liable for the issues brought forward in the senate forum.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SENATE

The Faculty Senate shall have responsibility for recommending policies and procedures with regard to all undergraduate and graduate academic programs, to all matters concerning university planning and budgeting, and to all matters of faculty welfare. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

2.1 Academic standards;
2.2 Requirements for undergraduate and graduate degree or certification programs;
2.3 New undergraduate and graduate courses and curricula;
2.4 Non-traditional means of earning course credits; evaluation guidelines for transfer credits from other post-secondary institutions and for credits from training programs or work experience;
2.5 Faculty workload, and faculty development;
Given that Faculty, being experts in their fields and pedagogy, thusly know best the needs, wants, programs, departments, divisions, and all other academic aspects of a college or university, Policy, Procedure, and Rule changes made without the advice and consent, or direct recommendation, resolution, or sentiment of the Faculty as expressed through their representatives should and must only address those areas, issues, and concerns of University operations not under the purview of this section.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Eligibility
All tenured and tenure-track faculty with full-time academic contracts, with the majority of preference members given to being tenured faculty, are eligible to be members unless they:
(A) are Deans;
(B) are one-half time or more administrators; or,
(C) resign by advising the President of the Senate in writing of his / her desire not to be a member. The term “full-time faculty” status shall also be defined as including librarians who have faculty rank.

3.2 Election of Senators
The total number of senators shall be no more than twenty-five percent of the total number of full-time, non-clinical faculty for the university, to be allocated per each constituent college thusly: two for the college, and one for every eight full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty member of that college (i.e., for the first sixteen faculty there will be one representative assigned, plus the two reserved for the college, for the seventeenth through the twenty-third two plus the two reserved for a total of, and so four, etc. th), who shall be elected by their respective colleges. The make-up of the representative body of the Faculty Senate shall consist of individuals that will serve three-year terms for no more than two consecutive terms; with two new faculty members one-third of the members being selected each year on a rotating basis; this shall be completed on a rotating basis so that both newly elected faculty members and returning faculty members will represent their respective colleges each year.

The President of the Faculty Senate shall call for election of new members of the representative body of the Faculty Senate during the month of April of each year. The President of the Faculty Senate shall be responsible for initiating college election of Faculty Senate Representatives each year.

The constituent colleges reserve the right to replace senators who are unable to perform their duties as senators for reasons including but not necessarily limited to the following-death, long-term illness, resignation or termination from the University, promotion or demotion to
ineligible status, or resignation from the Senate. The President of the Senate reserves the right to confirm such replacements, or if such are found by the President to be inappropriate, the President shall notify the constituent college in writing detailing constitutional or by-law specific justifications for refusal to confirm.

3.3 Executive Committee

3.3.1 Apportionment
The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall be comprised of the following officers: Faculty Senate President, Vice-President/President-Elect, and Secretary/Parliamentarian.

3.3.2 Terms of Office and Elections
The elected representatives shall make up the representative body of the Faculty Senate and shall, as soon as practical after the election of the representatives from each college, meet and nominate at least two members for the Office of Vice-President/President-Elect and two members for the office of Secretary/Parliamentarian.

The representative body of the Faculty Senate and the newly elected representatives will elect a new Faculty Senate President (previous President Elect) and Vice President/President elect at the first last meeting of the Spring semester. There is no limit to the number of terms served. The offices of the Secretary/Parliamentarian will be elected by the representative body of the Faculty Senate to serve a one-year term.

3.3.3 Duties of the Executive Committee
The Executive Committee constitutes the officers of the Senate directing all Senate activities with the authority to discuss all issues of concern to the faculty. However, any substantive rule issue must be brought before the representative body of the Faculty Senate.

4.0 MEETINGS OF THE SENATE AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

4.1 The Executive Committee shall meet regularly from September through December and February through May. The Senate President or any member of the Executive Committee may call a special meeting at other times, including June through August, or change the date of scheduled meetings.

4.2 The President of the Senate or a majority of members of the representative body of the Faculty Senate shall call meetings of the representative body of the Faculty Senate as needed to consider policy issues

5.0 OFFICERS OF THE SENATE

5.1 The President
The Faculty Senate President shall preside over all meetings of the Executive Committee. The Faculty Senate President shall also transmit to the President of A&M University-Texarkana all decisions, recommendations, and resolutions enacted by the
5.2 The Vice President/President-Elect
In the absence of the Faculty Senate President, the Vice President shall assume the duties of the presiding officer. The Vice President shall also agree to serve the following year as President of the Faculty Senate regardless of the term mandate. The Vice President is responsible for maintenance of the faculty senate web page.

5.3 The Secretary/Parliamentarian
The Secretary/Parliamentarian shall prepare and distribute an agenda three working days prior to each scheduled meeting, shall keep written minutes of each meeting, and shall distribute the minutes of the Executive Committee to the administration, faculty, and staff within seven days following the completion of each meeting. Additionally, the Secretary/Parliamentarian shall be responsible for ensuring all actions undertaken by the Senate shall comport firstly with Texas A&M University System Procedures and Policies, and secondly with this constitution. The Secretary/Parliamentarian shall assist the President, or the Presidents’ designated presiding officer, in conducting the business of meetings, and be responsible for interpreting the procedure of meetings, which shall follow Roberts Rules of Order and Faculty Senate By-Laws, customs, and norms.

5.4 Initial Election of Officers
The representative body of the Faculty Senate shall elect the officers of President, Vice-President, Secretary/Parliamentarian from those who are actively involved in the representative body of the Faculty Senate.

6.0 REPLACEMENT OF INACTIVE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
If a member of the Executive Committee misses two consecutive scheduled meetings or four scheduled meetings during a one-year period, the Executive Committee may remove the member by a three-fourths vote.

In such a case of removal or if a member resigns, the President of the Senate shall institute the proper procedures, according to the rules of apportionment, to replace the member before the next scheduled meeting.

7.0 PROCEDURES
7.1 All meetings of the representative body of the Faculty Senate and Executive Committee shall require written and signed notification of time, place, and agenda to the administration, faculty, and appropriate staff at least three days prior to the meeting.

7.2 All standing committees shall send the committee decisions/recommendations to each member of the faculty senate for review via email. Upon notification, all senate members have the right to object to a decision/recommendation of a standing committee within 5 business days.

7.2.1 If an objection is made by a member of the faculty senate the
decision/recommendation of the committee shall be placed on hold and will be presented as an action item during the next faculty senate meeting. For sensitive matters, the provost may request a called or special meeting of the faculty senate to consider action.

7.2.2 If there is no objection from members of the faculty senate the decision/recommendation will be sent to the Vice-President/VPAA.

7.32 Executive Committee Quorum: For purposes of formal action by the Executive Committee, a quorum shall be two-thirds of members. A majority of those present shall be required to adopt a motion.

7.43 Meetings of the Senate shall be open to any visitor except that, in cases where the privacy of an individual is likely to be at issue, the Senate may, by majority vote, restrict a meeting to the voting membership only.

7.54 Members of the faculty, administration, staff, or student body may request hearings before the Senate through the President of the Senate.

7.65 The Faculty Senate may require the presence of any member of the faculty, administration, staff, or student body to answer questions in formal hearings before the Senate.

8.0 STANDING COMMITTEES

8.1 The Executive Committee
The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary/Parliamentarian. Issues other than those specifically relegated to the undergraduate and graduate standing committees may be brought before the Executive Committee or before the representative body of the Faculty Senate as a whole. The Executive Committee shall appoint standing and ad hoc committees. The Executive Committee shall meet regularly with the university president to discuss matters of mutual concern and to propose resolution of problems and differences with the university administration.

Issues this committee will consider include those which faculty senate would normally address within regularly scheduled meetings. When decisions are needed between scheduled meetings the executive committee is authorized to make the decision on behalf of the faculty senate.

8.2 The Academic Affairs Advisory Council to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Committee
The Academic Affairs Advisory Council to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the Faculty Senate considers undergraduate and graduate academic issues involving policy, procedural, or philosophical concerns.

Issues this committee may consider include, but are not limited to:

8.2.1 Admissions requirements
8.2.2 Graduation requirements
8.2.3 Academic rules/procedures
8.2.4 Awarding of credit
8.2.5 Academic planning
8.2.6 Role and scope of the institution as it relates to academic or faculty concerns
8.2.7 Academic freedom
8.2.8 The order and form of university academic ceremonies (such as Convocation and Commencement) and exercises

The Academic Affairs Advisory Council to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs consists of one member of the Senate from each college who are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. The Academic Affairs Advisory Council to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs reports to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, which in turn, offers recommendations for consideration by the representative body of the Faculty Senate. On behalf of the faculty senate, the executive committee has the power to accept or reject any recommendations for the Academic Affairs Advisory Council to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Recommendations and decisions made by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate are sent to the President.

8.2 Curriculum Committee
The curriculum committee oversees proposed changes to University curriculum requiring external approval or the approval of more than one college.

8.3 Academic Standards
The academic standards committee oversees proposed changes to academic standards such as admission to the university.

8.4 Academic Assessment
The academic assessment committee oversees the University academic assessment policies and procedures.

8.5 Educational Technology
The educational technology committee oversees the University educational technology issues.

8.6 Academic Rules and Procedures

8.3.7 Faculty Status Committee
The Faculty Status Committee considers issues that affect the welfare of the faculty. Such concerns include, but are not limited to, the following

8.3.7.1 Faculty ethics
8.3.7.2 Faculty responsibilities
8.3.7.4-3 Faculty salaries
8.3.5 Faculty workload
8.3.6 Faculty evaluation
8.3.7 Faculty tenure, promotion, and tenure review
8.3.8 Rules and Regulations of non-tenure-track/tenured faculty
8.3.9 Guidelines for research
8.3.10 Retirement

The Faculty Status Committee of the Faculty Senate consists of one member of the Senate from each college who are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate. Committee members must be eligible for Senate membership. The Faculty Status Committee reports to the Faculty Senate. Recommendations by the Senate are sent to the President for action.

**8.4.8 The Committee for Faculty Research Enhancement and Professional Development (FRED)**

The Committee for Faculty Research Enhancement and Professional Development will receive, review, and recommend proposals each month that merit funding or other support. The President of the Faculty Senate appoints a chair of the FRED committee each year from current senators. The chair of the FRED committee is responsible for the selection of committee members. FRED committee members must be tenure-track or tenured faculty.

**9.0 Ad hoc committees** – The faculty senate may form adhoc committees as needed.

**9.1 INDEPENDENT COMMITTEES**

Faculty Senate committees may from time to time call upon the expertise of non-faculty senate personnel for input; these may be from faculty, staff, administration, or the student body. Such inputs will be of an advisory nature only.

**9.1 The Graduate Council**

The purpose of the graduate council is to advise the Dean as well as make decisions regarding issues related to graduate studies. It is imperative that shared governance be utilized to provide input, direction and consideration to the pressing issues that fall within this office. Issues under the purview of the Graduate Council include but are not limited to:

- Developing a more user-friendly approach to thesis completion for both students and faculty
- Developing guidelines for System-wide graduate faculty status
- Reconstituting institutional graduate faculty status
- Developing a plan for the fair and equitable dispersion of GA’s
- Creating a comprehensive marketing plan for all graduate programs
- Developing a formal ceremony to honor and reward faculty in the areas of research and scholarly activity
- Developing of a formal dissertation process.

The Council meets once per month with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Representation is sought from all three colleges, the faculty senate and at least one graduate-
student. Of course, non-council faculty staff and students are encouraged to attend every meeting. Meeting minutes will be posted online as well as shared with the Provost, College Deans, Faculty Senate and A3 Committee. 

10.0 REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES
Action taken by the Faculty Senate and Executive Committee shall be reported to the Vice-President/VPAA on the “Faculty Senate Recommendation” for the Vice-President/VPAA will report the information to the President. Additionally all academic recommendations must be submitted to the VPAA. At the end of each resolution passed by the Senate and / or the Executive Committee, there shall be a designated place for the signatures of the President of the Faculty Senate and the President, A&M University-Texarkana who will sign the resolution, indicating approval or disapproval, and if not approved, shall in writing provide rationale for disregarding the carefully considered, reasoned, and weighted advice and consent, direct recommendation, or sentiment of the Faculty; and the date of the action.

The President of the University shall notify the Faculty Senate by return of this signed and dated document of the approval or disapproval of all resolutions. Resolutions approved by the President of the University shall become an official statement of university rule or procedure. If a resolution requires action by the Board of Regents, it shall become official only upon approval by the Board of Regents.

The President of the University may set aside immediately any rule or procedure which in his / her opinion works against the welfare of the university. The President of the University shall inform the Faculty Senate of such action in writing, and in detail provide rationale for disregarding the carefully considered, reasoned, and weighted advice and consent, direct recommendation, resolution, or sentiment of the Faculty and its Senate.

11.0 AMENDMENT PROCEDURES
The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the Faculty Senate, officers excluded. Amendments to the constitution should proceed for the purpose of update and revision. The constitution, its amendments, and bylaws should be regularly reviewed.
Final Approval of this constitution will be sought by the Faculty on the 21st November 2014 and on the 24th of April 2015. This constitution is the amended one originating from 21st April 2008. It supplements TAMUSPolicy12.04 (amended).
As directed, Faculty Senate Sub-Committee.