

# CONSTITUTION

## Preamble

To promote the quality and continuous improvement of higher education at West Chester University and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to facilitate communication and shared governance among all segments of the university community, and to promote a positive campus climate for all, we, the faculty, do hereby subscribe to this Constitution of the Faculty Senate.

## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Faculty Senate of West Chester University.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSES AND DUTIES

### SECTION 1. Purposes

The purposes of this organization shall be: To provide the means for all faculty (union members and nonmembers) to initiate action on matters with which it is concerned and that lie outside the purview of the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF) collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and outside the purview of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC); to monitor campus climate and advocate for its improvement; to participate as an integral shared-governance body in the formulation, implementation, and review of institutional policies and procedures; and to build bridges of communication between and among other shared-governance bodies across the university.

### SECTION 2. Duties

Within the framework of rules, policies, and regulations set forth by the Board of Governors of the State System of Higher Education under Act 188 of 1982 (as amended), and the local Council of Trustees, the duties of this organization shall be:

- a. to study institutional and educational policies and procedures of the university and provide feedback and recommendations to the administration related to all matters concerning—but not limited to—faculty and student welfare;
- b. to advise the President—or their designee, as applicable—in the composition of search and screening committees for all upper-level administrative personnel across the university when vacancies exist;
- c. to participate in the search and screening committees for a President when a vacancy exists;
- d. to interview final candidates for all upper-level administrative positions across the university;
- e. to serve as a channel of communication between the faculty and the administration, the faculty and other shared-governance groups, and the faculty and the Council of Trustees;
- f. to seek means for sustaining the quality and continuing improvement of all aspects of academic and professional performance;
- g. to examine all matters under consideration with the intention of promoting the welfare and best interests of the University and with regard to its total educational objectives;
- h. to promote the general welfare of faculty, students, and other university constituents;
- i. to foster and support academic freedom and other fundamental rights and responsibilities of faculty;
- j. to acknowledge each recommendation or request following completion of its consideration.

Members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee will regularly meet and engage in ongoing communication with the President and the Executive Vice President and Provost during the regular academic year, as well as at other times as needed and mutually agreed. The Faculty Senate will submit adopted recommendations and proposals to the administration, or other appropriate body as applicable. In the event that the administration does not accept a recommendation adopted by the Senate, the Senate Executive Committee will make all reasonable efforts to establish a mutually agreeable course of action.

## **ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1: Composition of Senate and Eligibility of Senators**

Senate membership shall be open to full-time Academic faculty as defined by the most-recent Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Senate shall be composed of twenty-four

members elected at-large, two constituency members elected from each college or school primarily composed of classroom faculty, and two constituency members elected from the Counseling Center, University College, and University Libraries, with no more than one member from any one of these three divisions.

### **SECTION 3: Term of Office**

The term of office shall be three years, with approximately one-third of the membership elected each year. If an at-large Senate seat becomes vacant before the expiration of a term, it shall be filled by the person receiving the next-highest number of votes in the preceding general election. If a college/school or division seat becomes vacant, it shall be filled with a special college/school or division election.

## **ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATION**

### **SECTION 1: Officers**

#### **A. Composition**

The officers shall consist of the President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary elected from and by the membership of the Senate at the final meeting for the academic year, following the seating of new members.

#### **B. Terms of Office**

The term of office is one year. Officers may run for and, if elected, serve for more than one term.

### **SECTION 2. Duties of Officers**

#### **A. President**

Presidential duties will include but not be restricted to:

1. Serving as chief executive officer of the Senate, as well as its representative before other bodies and the community.
2. Chairing the Executive Committee.

3. Transmitting to appropriate individuals and bodies a written statement of the actions and recommendations of the Senate.
4. Appointing chairpersons to ad-hoc committees with the consent of the Executive Committee.
5. Representing the Senate at meetings of the University's Council of Trustees.
6. Publicizing all meetings.
7. Preparing the agenda for meetings of the Assembly (with input from the Executive Committee or others as deemed appropriate).
8. Distributing copies of the minutes of all regular meetings, along with the current agenda to all members of the Senate at least 48 hours prior to the next meeting.
9. Charging, after consultation with the Executive Committee, the Senate committees with duties and responsibilities at the beginning of each academic year and periodically as the need arises.
10. Serving on the University Shared Governance Committee and/or any similar shared-governance groups, whether permanent or temporary.
11. Communicating with all faculty any items of general concern, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.
12. Designating an appropriate proxy for any of the above duties if unable to perform them fully or properly.

#### **B. Vice President**

Vice Presidential duties will include but not be restricted to:

1. Acting as chief executive officer of the Senate in the President's absence or inability to complete the term.
2. Assisting and consulting with the President on issues relevant to the Assembly.
3. Chairing the Membership and Elections Committee.

#### **C. Recording Secretary**

The Recording Secretary's duties will include but not be restricted to:

1. Keeping the minutes (including a record of attendance) of all regular meetings of the Senate.
2. Keeping the minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee if the minutes are deemed necessary by that committee.

3. Distributing copies of the minutes to the President as soon as feasible after the meeting.

#### **D. Corresponding Secretary**

The Corresponding Secretary's duties will include but not be restricted to:

1. Transferring important documents of the Senate (including the minutes of regular meetings) to the Senate website.
2. Ensuring the completeness of Senate records on the Senate website.
3. Chairing the Communications Committee.

#### **E. Past-President**

Duties of the Past-President will include but not be restricted to:

1. Serving as a source of continuity between outgoing and new Senate administrations.
2. Acting as advisor to the President and Executive Committee with respect to Senate history, contacts and procedures.

### **SECTION 3. Committees and Liaisons**

#### **A. Executive Committee**

##### **1. Composition**

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the four elected officers, the immediate Past-President (if still a senator), and two members of the Senate elected by the membership. The Executive Committee may invite the immediate Past-President, if no longer a senator, to participate in an advisory capacity without a vote, as well as any previous Senate President who is a current senator.

##### **2. Duties**

Duties and responsibilities of the Executive Committee shall be, inter alia, to advise the President in matters of importance related to the Senate, to assist the President in the preparation of meeting agendas, and to

recommend to the University President the composition of search committees for administrative positions.

## **B. Standing Committees**

The following standing committees will consist of members of the Senate responsible for performing the duties described in the charge submitted to them each year by the President. Each committee chair shall submit to the President no later than 24 hours before each regular meeting of the Assembly a report that includes the names of all participating committee members and that details the committee's activities since the last report and any other pertinent information for dissemination.

### **1. Membership and Elections Committee**

The duties and responsibilities of the committee include (but are not limited to): conducting elections at intervals mandated in this Constitution, announcing election results, maintaining accurate and current membership lists, keeping pertinent membership data in order (the type of Senate seat held by each senator, as well as their term's end and contact information), maintaining a roster of designated Senate proxies, and developing procedures that promote participation in the Senate.

### **2. Communications Committee**

The duties and responsibilities of the Communications Committee include (but are not limited to): overseeing the publication of materials designed to familiarize the University community with the Senate's purposes and activities, ensuring that all information and records published on the Senate website are accurate and current, and fostering communication between the Senate and the University community.

### **3. Faculty Welfare Committee**

The duties and responsibilities of the Faculty Welfare Committee include (but are not limited to): investigating matters relevant to the welfare and/or ethical conduct of the University faculty, promoting discussion and resolution of matters of such concern in meetings of the Assembly, and proposing to the Executive Committee matters of such concern to raise with administrators, APSCUF leaders, and/or appropriate others.

**4. Student Welfare Committee**

The duties and responsibilities of the Student Welfare Committee include (but are not limited to): investigating and providing recommendations regarding matters relevant to the welfare of students, maintaining regular communication with the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association to exchange information about matters of such concern, and proposing to the Executive Committee matters of such concern to raise with administrators and/or appropriate others.

**5. Research and Creative Activity Committee**

The duties and responsibilities of the Research and Creative Activity Committee shall include (but are not limited to): investigating matters relevant to the research and creative activities conducted by University faculty, promoting discussion and suggesting recommendations regarding matters of such concern in meetings of the Assembly, maintaining regular communication with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to exchange information about matters of such concern, and proposing to the Executive Committee matters of such concern to raise with administrators, APSCUF leaders, and/or appropriate others.

**C. Ad-Hoc Committees**

Ad-hoc committees may be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee or may be nominated by the Senate for the purpose of expediting temporary business.

**D. Liaisons**

Members of Senate may be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee to represent this body on one or more other University committees or groups for a time and purpose deemed mutually beneficial.

## **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1. Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Senate shall be scheduled three times in each of the fall and spring semesters, ideally in the months of September, October, November, February, March, and April. Their times and dates, which are subject to change by the Executive Committee, shall be published in or before September. In addition, an Open Forum with administrative leaders will be scheduled each fall and spring semester and will carry the same expectations for member attendance and record-keeping as regular meetings.

A standing invitation to participate in the discussions of the Senate is extended to the President and Vice Presidents of the University, President of Student Government, and a representative of the bargaining agent. Nonmembers may be invited for the same purpose whenever an agenda item is relevant to them. Regular Senate meetings are open to all West Chester University faculty.

## **SECTION 2. Special Meetings**

A special meeting of the Senate may be called at a designated time by the Executive Committee, or by a petition signed by at least one-third of the total Senate membership, or by a petition signed by at least ten percent of the total membership of full-time Academic faculty as defined by the most recent Collective Bargaining Agreement.

# **ARTICLE VI. TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS**

## **SECTION 1. Initiation of Action**

The Executive Committee shall prepare the agenda based on suggestions for agenda items from members of the faculty, administration, and/or Council of Trustees.

Proposed agenda items, if sponsored by at least five members of the Senate, must be placed on the agenda provided they were received in writing by the President at least two weeks before the regular meeting.

## **SECTION 2: Nature of Sessions**

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of one-half of the members of the Senate. In the case of short-term or extended absence, the senator should name a proxy from the eligible faculty in the constituency represented and notify the Senate President. Decisions shall be by majority vote of the members in attendance after full discussion and free debate except where Robert's Rules of Order require otherwise. A

roll-call vote on any question must be taken if a motion calling for such a vote is approved by one-fifth of the membership present.

## **ARTICLE VII. ELECTIONS**

### **SECTION 1: Membership and Elections Committee**

It shall be the responsibility of the Membership and Elections Committee to prepare and distribute all pertinent election information at least one week before voting commences; to supervise all elections, including the creation and distribution of the ballot, as well as the quantification of results; and to announce the outcome of all elections.

### **SECTION 2: Elections Procedures**

Elections shall be held every spring. The election ballot shall list the names of all eligible faculty who express interest in being candidates according to the procedures and deadline set by the Membership and Elections Committee, and the ballot shall be generated and distributed under the purview of the Vice President, in accordance with their roles as chair of the Membership and Elections Committee. The candidates who receive the greatest number of votes in the election will be named to the respective Senate seats.

### **SECTION 3: Eligibility for Voting**

All those, and only those, who are eligible for membership in the Faculty Senate are eligible to vote in the election of Senators.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

### **SECTION 1: Proposed Amendments**

Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the faculty for ratification upon approval of the Faculty Senate or twenty-five percent of faculty signing a petition for said purpose.

## **SECTION 2: Notification of Amendments**

Notices of the time, manner, and place for voting on proposed amendments to the Constitution must be announced, and the text of the proposed amendments must be circulated at least one week prior to the referendum.

## **SECTION 3: Ratification of Amendments**

Ratification of amendments shall require two-thirds of the votes cast by faculty eligible for membership in the Senate.

## **SECTION 4: Approval of Amendments**

All ratified amendments shall be submitted to the administration for their information and published on the Senate website.

# **ARTICLE IX: RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall be the governing rules of this Senate, except where those rules are altered by this Constitution and bylaws.