

University Senate of Humboldt State University Constitution

PREAMBLE

The University Senate of Humboldt State University, also called the Senate, is a deliberative body comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators working together to support the educational mission of Humboldt State University and committed to the principles of shared governance. The Senate is charged with formulating, evaluating, and recommending policies to the University President. In service of those duties, the Senate encourages input from throughout the University community and works in collaboration with the University President to ensure that Humboldt State University responds to current and future challenges and maintains and furthers its position as a collection of students and professionals fostering an open and productive learning environment.

“Shall” or “shall not” shall indicate prescription or prohibition; “may” shall indicate option or ability; “should” shall indicate advice or suggestion.

1.0 Purpose and Authority

The purpose of the University Senate is to draw from the collective wisdom of the members of the University community in order to formulate, evaluate, and recommend policies that advance the mission of Humboldt State. The Senate shall be the University’s primary policy recommending body. The Senate shall have the authority to act for the faculty on matters within the scope of the faculty when the action is approved by a majority vote.

2.0 Duties

- 2.1 The Senate shall consider policies with respect to the general welfare of the university. It shall review established policies, consider new policies, and study matters of concern to the University community.
- 2.2 It shall formulate educational policy, including admissions, curricula, and criteria for the granting of degrees. It shall analyze established and proposed policies of instruction and consider variations in policy in exceptional cases.
- 2.3 It shall advise the President in the selection of administrative personnel and assist in the selection of future Presidents.
- 2.4 It shall maintain open lines of communication between the faculty, staff, students and administration. Senators shall distribute information to and solicit input from the group(s) for which they serve as delegate.
- 2.5 It shall appoint members of Senate Standing and *Ad hoc* committees and Campus committees through the Appointments and Elections Committee. It

shall establish rules and procedures for Senate committees and shall establish procedures for the Senate.

- 2.6 The ultimate authority to recommend approval of candidates for graduation shall reside with the tenure-line faculty. Only members of the Senate who are elected as tenure-line faculty shall vote in the matter of approving the list of candidates for graduation.
- 2.7 The Senate shall hold the authority for censure of its members. The Senate shall follow procedures specified in the *Bylaws*

3.0 Calendar

The Senate year shall begin on June 1.

4.0 Membership

4.1 Elected Members:

4.10 **Chair:** One (1) General Faculty member who has completed at least three years of employment and will be in-residence during the term of office shall be elected by a vote of the General Faculty At-large.

4.11 **Tenure-Line Instructional Faculty Delegates:** Eleven (11) Faculty Senators shall be apportioned as follows:

4.111 Two (2) Tenure-line Instructional-unit faculty from each of the three instructional units shall be elected by a vote of the Tenure-line faculty within each instructional unit.

4.112 Two (2) Tenure-line Non-instructional temporary and tenure-line faculty (coaches, counselors, librarians) from delegates from non-instructional units shall be elected by a vote of the Tenure-line Non-instructional unit faculty in non-instructional units (coaches, counselors, librarians)

4.113 Three (3) Tenure-line faculty from any instructional or non-instructional unit shall be elected by a vote of the Tenure-line faculty.

4.12 **Non-Tenure Instructional Faculty Delegates:** Three (3) Lecturer faculty with a time base averaging at least .40 of full-time shall be elected by a vote of the Lecturer faculty.

4.13 **Representatives to the ASCSU (Statewide Academic Senate):** Two (2)

Full-time Tenure-line faculty shall be elected by a vote of the General Faculty At-large.

- 4.14 **Staff Delegates:** Three (3) non-Management Personnel Plan (MPP) staff shall be elected by Staff Council.

4.2 **Terms of Office and Term Limits**

- 4.21 The term of office for the Senate Chair shall be two years. The term of office for all other elected members shall be three years.
- 4.22 An elected member shall serve no more than two consecutive complete terms with the exception of the Representatives to the ASCSU who may serve more than two consecutive terms. Service for a partial term or for terms served as an ex-officio member shall not be included in this calculation. So far as feasible, Senate terms shall be arranged so that approximately one-third of the membership is elected annually.
- 4.23 The outgoing chair of the University Senate, if in good standing, and if not serving in another elected, ex-officio, or interim ex-officio position may serve as an ex-officio member for one year subsequent to the completion of the Chair’s term.

4.3 **Ex-Officio Members:** The ex-officio members of the Senate shall be as follows:

- University President
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Vice President for Administrative Affairs
- Chair, Integrated Curriculum Committee
- Immediate Past Chair of the Senate (One-year term)
- Delegate, HSU Chapter, California Faculty Association
- Delegate, HSU Labor Council
- President, Associated Students
- Executive Director, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

4.4 **Additional Members:** Additional members of the Senate include:

- Two (2) student delegates from the Associated Students
- One (1) any retired annuitant who is a member of HSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association.

4.5 **Interim Members:**

4.51 Elected members who temporarily vacate their elected Senate seat to serve in an ex-officio membership position shall be referred to as “Interim Ex-Officio” members. Interim Ex-Officio members may serve one semester or less and still retreat to their elected Senate seat without standing for re-election (as long as the term limit has not been reached by the end of the semester). Time served as an Interim Ex-Officio member will still be counted toward the term limits for the elected seat. If the Interim Ex-Officio member will serve longer than one semester, their elected seat will become vacant and will be filled by election in accordance with the Senate *Bylaws*.

4.52 Persons who have been appointed to fill a temporary vacancy in an elected Senate position shall be referred to as “Interim Elected” members. Interim Elected members shall be appointed through the Appointments and Election Committee. The Committee shall solicit nominations from the electorate for the Senate seat that is being temporarily vacated and forward its recommendation to the Senate for approval. Any person so appointed shall serve as an Interim Elected member until such time as the originally elected member returns to their elected Senate seat or until the end of the semester, whichever comes first. Time served as an Interim Elected member shall be counted as a partial term of service in accordance with section 4.21.

4.6 **Voting and Procedural Rights:** All members of the Senate shall have full procedural rights. All members of the Senate, with the exception of the University President shall have full voting rights.

4.7 **Vacancies:** Vacancies in Senate membership shall be filled in a manner prescribed in the *Bylaws*.

4.8 **Recall of Senators:** Any elected member of the University Senate may be recalled following the procedures established in the governing documents of the electorate. If no procedures exist, those established in the *Bylaws* may be followed.

5.0 Officers and Parliamentarian

5.1 The Chair of the Senate shall be an elected member of the General Faculty. The Chair of the Senate shall serve ex-officio as the Presiding Officer of the General Faculty. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Senate and may call special meetings of the Senate

5.12 The Chair of the Senate shall also chair the Senate Executive Committee.

- 5.13 The Chair of the Senate shall represent the Senate at University functions and carry out other duties as necessary to the shared governance responsibilities of the Senate.
- 5.14 The Chair of the Senate shall generally direct the work of the Senate Office.
- 5.2 The Vice Chair of the Senate shall be an elected faculty delegate of the Senate and shall be elected annually to a one-year term of office by the members of the Senate. The Vice Chair of the Senate shall preside as the Chair of the Senate in the absence of the Chair. Should the Chair be unable to fulfill the duties of the office, the Vice Chair shall serve as Chair until such time as the General Faculty elect a new Chair. The Vice Chair of the Senate shall also serve as Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee. The Vice Chair of the University Senate shall serve ex-officio as the Second Officer of the General Faculty.
- 5.3 The Third Officer of the Senate shall be an elected faculty member of Senate and shall be elected annually to a one-year term of office by the members of Senate. The Third Officer shall preside as the Chair of the Senate in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair and shall serve as Chair of the Academic Policies Committee.
- 5.4 Vacancies: Should any officer of the Senate be unable to serve the full term to which elected, a special Senate election shall be held to choose a replacement for the remainder of the term.
- 5.5 The Parliamentarian, who need not be an elected member of the Senate, shall be appointed annually by the Senate Executive Committee. The Parliamentarian, shall advise the presiding officer on parliamentary issues and shall serve on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

6.0 Meetings and Quorum

- 6.1 The Senate shall ordinarily meet for its regular meeting every two weeks during the academic year.
 - 6.11 The agenda of each regular meeting shall be distributed to the members of the Senate and posted to the Senate website at least three academic workdays before the meeting.
 - 6.12 Documents related to action items on the agenda shall be distributed to the members of the Senate and posted to the Senate website at least three academic workdays before the meeting. If such documentation is not distributed by the deadline, no action shall be taken on the item other than discussion and amendments thereto. This rule may be

- suspended by a two-thirds majority (except for amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws).
- 6.13 Documents related to announcements, reports and discussion items shall be distributed to Senators and posted to the Senate website at least one academic workday before the meeting. If such documentation is not distributed by the deadline, a hardcopy may be distributed to all members of the Senate during the meeting. Such documents shall be posted to the Senate website as an attachment to the relevant agenda item as soon as possible after the meeting.
- 6.14 At the discretion of the Chair, certain communications received by the Chair may be distributed to members of the Senate at any time prior to or during the meeting. These communications shall be posted to the Senate website as soon as possible after the meeting.
- 6.15 All departments and offices of the University shall be notified when the agenda and documents related to the agenda have been posted.
- 6.2 Special meetings of the Senate may be called at the discretion of the Senate Chair or upon receiving a written petition of at least ten percent of the Senate membership.
- 6.21 The agenda of a special meeting, including meeting time and location, shall be distributed to members of the Senate and posted on the Senate website at least three academic workdays prior to the meeting, unless the Chair with the concurrence of a majority of the Executive Committee, decides that the urgency of the circumstances do not permit the required notice.
- 6.22 Documents related to any items on the agenda at a special meeting shall be distributed to the members of the Senate and posted to the Senate website at least three academic workdays before the meeting. If such documentation cannot be distributed by the deadline, no discussion, amendments thereto or action shall be taken on the item. This rule may be suspended by a two-thirds majority (except for amendments to the *Constitution or Bylaws*).
- 6.23 Any action taken at a special meeting shall require an absolute majority of the Senate. Vacant seats will not be considered when calculating an absolute majority.
- 6.3 The minutes of both regular and special meetings shall be posted on the Senate website following approval by the Senate.

- 6.4 Two thirds of the Senate shall constitute a quorum for regular or special meetings. Vacant seats shall not be considered when calculating quorum.
- 6.41 If a senator is unable to attend, a proxy may be appointed in accordance with the Bylaws. The proxy shall be counted toward quorum.
- 6.42 A senator present for a portion of a meeting shall be recorded as present for the entire meeting.
- 6.43 The members present at a duly called or held meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to conduct business until the time stated for adjournment in the call of the meeting, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave less than a quorum.
- 6.5 Faculty Session**
- 6.51 A faculty session of the Senate shall be comprised of all faculty members of the senate. Its function shall be to express the collective voice of the faculty or to execute faculty responsibilities such as the approval of the graduation list or other responsibilities specific to the faculty such as changes to Appendix J in the Faculty Handbook. It may make determinations regarding any issue specific to faculty responsibilities. Only faculty senators may vote during a faculty session.
- 6.52 A faculty session shall be convened upon a majority vote of the Faculty Senators or by a majority vote by the Senate Executive Committee.
- 6.53 Persons not members of the Senate who are attending a meeting may be granted the privilege of the floor by unanimous consent of the Senate or by being yielded the floor by a member of the Senate.
- 6.54 A faculty session may hold an executive session with only faculty members in attendance by two-thirds majority vote of those Faculty delegates present at the Senate session.
- 6.55 A faculty session shall be terminated either by a two-thirds majority vote of the convened session or by an advance stipulation.
- 6.56 When the faculty session has concluded its business or when the session has been terminated by advance stipulation, its actions shall be reported to the full Senate. All actions of the faculty session shall be included in the minutes of the Senate.

7.0 Committees of the Senate

- 7.1 The Senate shall establish Standing and other *Ad hoc* or *pro tempore* Committees as provided for in the *Bylaws*.
- 7.2 The Senate may also appoint members to Campus Committees as provided for in the *Bylaws*

7.3 Vacancies

- 7.3 The position of any faculty representative on the University Senate, university committees, campus auxiliary governing boards, or state organizations shall become vacant when they (a) resign from the position, (b) fail to meet the eligibility requirements for membership in the General Faculty; or (c) go on leave, for more than one semester.
- 7.31 The Senate Office shall report circumstances constituting a vacancy to the University Senate Appointments and Elections Committee, which shall recommend appointments to serve until the next regular election. When the vacancy is on the Appointments and Elections Committee, the Senate Executive Committee shall recommend appointments to serve until the next regular election. All such appointments are subject to the approval of a faculty session of the University Senate.

8.0 Bylaws

- 8.1 The Senate shall be responsible for constructing and maintaining its own rules of operating procedure known as the *Bylaws and Rules of Procedure of the University Senate of Humboldt State University*.

9.0 Amendments

- 9.1 Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be recommended by a majority vote of the Senate after having been presented at a previous regular meeting. Proposed amendments must be recommended by the end of the 11th week of instruction during the semester in which they are to be ratified.
- 9.2 Senate-recommended amendments shall then be forwarded to the General Faculty, Associated Students, and Staff Council for a ratification vote. Associated Students and Staff Council must receive the proposed amendments in time to have two regularly scheduled meetings left in the semester to deliberate.

- 9.3 Proposed amendments shall be adopted if approved by a simple majority of the General Faculty and approval by either Associated Students or Staff Council. If any electorate does not vote on the proposed amendments by the end of the semester, that electorate will be considered to have abstained from the vote.
- 9.4 Amendments to update names and titles, correct grammatical or typographical errors, or to make other non-substantive corrections to the University Senate Constitution and Bylaws, and the General Faculty Constitution may be initiated by the Chair of the University Senate. Any such updates shall be presented to the University Senate as an agenda item at its next regular meeting. The University Senate shall affirm by an absolute two-thirds majority vote any such updates. Any updates not approved by the Senate shall not be adopted.

10.0 Interpretation

- 10.1 Requests for interpretation of Senate actions, Senate-approved documents and Senate governing documents must be initiated by at least two voting members of the Senate.
- 10.2 Requests for interpretation shall be forwarded to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee which will formulate a written interpretation.
- 10.3 The written interpretation shall be placed on the Senate agenda as an action item within one month of the date of request. The interpretation shall be considered binding unless rejected by a majority of the Senate.

Document History:

PASSED - University Senate, 2/24/2015
APPROVED - General Faculty, 3/31/2015
APPROVED – Staff Council, 4/14/2015
APPROVED – Associated Students, 4/16/2015
Amended: 05/2016
Amended: 02/2017
Amended: 09/2017
Amended: 11/2018
Amended: 11/2020
Amended: 05/2021