

UNL FACULTY SENATE HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Welcome to the Faculty Senate**
- 2. The Mission of the UNL Faculty Senate**
- 3. Structure of the Faculty Senate**
 - 3.A Faculty Senate Districts**
 - 3.B Faculty Senate Executive Committee**
 - 3.B.1 Faculty Senate President**
 - 3.B.2 Faculty Senate President-Elect**
 - 3.B.3 Faculty Senate Past President**
 - 3.B.4 Faculty Senate Secretary**
 - 3.B.5 Executive Committee Members**
 - 3.C Faculty Senate Committees**
- 4. Meetings of the Faculty Senate**
- 5. Participation: How to be an Influential Senator**
- 6. Resources for Senators**
 - 6.A Faculty Senate Webpage**
 - 6.B Faculty Senate Office**
- 7. Responsibilities**

APPENDIX A: RULES OF ORDER OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

1. WELCOME TO THE FACULTY SENATE

On behalf of the UNL Faculty Senate, I would like to welcome you as a new Senator...

After you have gotten your bearings, we invite you to participate in faculty governance. A university must have faculty voice. In a time when external forces threaten to confuse and blur the academic mission of the land-grant institution, this faculty is more important than ever.

Faculty governance is imperative to the operation and functioning of the University, particularly as the University deals with recurrent budget constraints and changes. Your service and input on issues is highly valued and we sincerely appreciate your time and efforts towards shared faculty governance.

Historically, universities have felt the push and pull of societal changes, political changes, and scientific and artistic advancement. The ever-increasing pace of change results in a growing need for shared faculty governance that assures faculty and student rights are maintained and advanced.

Shared governance in higher education is conceptualized as a partnership between administration, faculty, and students which results in shared responsibility, authority, equity, and accountability for decision making and the operational responses of those decisions. Faculty Senate serves as the faculty branch of shared governance and is essential for this principle. At UNL we have a rich history of shared governance led by a faculty senate that is in partnership with the administration and student government to assure a strong institution which advances knowledge and the arts, while educating the people of the state of Nebraska and beyond.

Our mission as a land grant institution, is large and bold. We have a trifold mission to engage in teaching, research, and extension of our knowledge to the state, nation and world. This can only be accomplished when faculty share in the responsibility to assure fair and equitable governing of the institution.

Please feel free to contact the Faculty Senate Office if you have any questions, concerns, or issues you wish the Executive Committee or the Faculty Senate to address. Information and Faculty Senate documents relating to Senate policies and resolutions can be found on the Faculty Senate website <https://facultysenate.unl.edu/>

President, UNL Faculty Senate

2. THE MISSION OF THE UNL FACULTY SENATE

The mission of the UNL Faculty Senate is to actively work with all levels of university governance to formulate and implement educational policy, specifically:

- To create a productive and rewarding academic environment for faculty and students.

To protect academic freedom defined as the ability of faculty to pursue, present and discuss independent and scholarly research, and the creation of works of the visual and the performing arts by means of shared governance, to ensure that faculty have a role in providing input in issues that directly affect faculty including but not limited to program development, reduction or redirection, academic policies, educational standards, curricula, and academic regulations. At a meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Lester Goodchild and Ann Marie LoPrieno presented a paper on effective faculty senates.* This was a national study that examined characteristics of academic senates that were nominated by officers of the American Association of University Professors as having a reputation for effective work. The University of Nebraska's Faculty Senate was singled out as one of the nation's most effective.

The UNL Faculty Senate is comprised of elected faculty members from the Academic Assembly (as defined in the [UNL Faculty Senate Bylaws](#)). The elected faculty members represent their department, unit, or college from across UNL. The Faculty Senate Executive committee, a smaller group elected from among the senate, coordinates the mission of the senate. The senate has numerous committees which it oversees to gather information and implement action. An important characteristic of the UNL Faculty Senate is that we hold frequent interactions with the administration. The Chancellor communicates openly to the Faculty Senate at the monthly senate meetings and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate meets with members of the administration at least once a month, the end result is that there are effective functioning channels of communication.

The Faculty Senate has created many of the organizational policies that shape the university. These appear in various policy documents, many of which are accessible on the Senate website. Additionally, interested faculty can keep up with issues being debated by looking at the minutes of the [Faculty Senate Executive Committee](#) and the [Faculty Senate](#), which are posted on the Senate website. We encourage you to make faculty in your department, especially new faculty, aware of these resources by sending updates to the faculty you represent frequently.

*Goodchild, L. & LoPriemo A. (2001). Effective faculty senates: Exploring administrative and faculty collaborations. Paper presented at the American educational Research Association, Seattle, WA April 10, 2014.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The UNL Faculty Senate is comprised of elected members who represent their department/unit. Each department/unit is considered a Senate district and currently there are 63 districts. The number of Senate representatives from a district are based on the following: those departments/units with five or more members shall have one seat, those with more than twenty-five shall have two seats and those over fifty shall have three seats. Colleges not subdivided into academic departments and Nebraska Extension supervisory units are treated as a single department. Faculty cannot belong to more than one district. It is the goal of the senate to assure all faculty, as defined in the Academic Assembly are represented within the organization.

3.A. Faculty Senate Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall be composed of the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, the Secretary and nine ordinary members. The ordinary members, who serve staggered terms of three years, must be members of the Senate at the time of their election. They shall be elected by the members of the Senate at the last April meeting. Any member of the Executive Committee whose term as an elected member of the Senate has expired shall become an ex-officio voting member of the Senate until the term on the Executive Committee expires. No more than four members of the Executive Committee can be from one college or IANR. At least one member must be an Extension Educator, at least one member must be a non-tenure track faculty member other than an Extension Educator, and at least one member must be a tenure track/tenured faculty member, if qualified nominees are available.

The Executive Committee meets every Tuesday from 2:30 to 4.30 pm during the academic year. When the meeting coincides with the monthly Faculty Senate meeting, the Executive Committee meeting follows immediately after the end of the Faculty Senate meeting. The Committee meets at the same time every other week during the summer. The Committee meets at least once a month with the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor, and the Vice Chancellor of IANR. The Committee occasionally meets with other administrators, the ASUN President, and others who request to speak to the Committee.

3.B. Faculty Senate Officers

3.B.1 Faculty Senate President

Duties of the President. The President shall be the chief representative of the UNL Assembly to the Campus and System Administrations, the Board of Regents and the State. In addition to those specified in sections 3.1.3.2, 3.1.3.3, and 3.1.6 of the UNL Bylaws, the President shall serve as the chair of all meetings of the Executive Committee. They determine the agendas for the larger Senate meetings in consultation with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors and the Executive Committee. They assure that motions of the Senate that require response are brought promptly to the attention of the appropriate administrators or committees, and that the responses are reported back to the Senate as expeditiously as possible. The President deals with any matter of importance to the faculty. The President may delegate duties to the officers or other suitable faculty members and may establish ad hoc committees in consultation with the Executive Committee.

3.B.3 Faculty Senate President-Elect

In the absence of the President, the President-Elect shall assume the duties of the President. The President-Elect shall serve as a non-voting member of the Faculty Compensation and Advisory Committee and may serve on other Committees at the request of the President.

3.B.4 Faculty Senate Secretary

Duties of the Secretary. The Secretary of the Senate edits the Faculty Senate minutes and the Executive Committee minutes as written by the Coordinator of Faculty Governance. The Secretary assists the President in conducting the Senate meetings recording and monitoring voting on resolutions and Senate elections. In the absence of the Coordinator, the Secretary will take the minutes of the meetings and prepare them for the Senate and Executive Committee.

3.B.5 Faculty Senate Past President

Duties of the Past President. The Past President serves on the Executive Committee and provides consultation to the President and President-Elect. The Past President also serves as the Chair of the Senate Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee and serves as the President's Designee on the Committee on Committees and may serve on other committees at the request of the President.

3.B.6 Executive Committee

Duties of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall act for the faculty between meetings of the Senate and the Assembly. The Executive Committee shall meet with the Chancellor of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at least twice per month, except that one of these meetings may be waived by mutual consent if the Chancellor appears and answers questions at the regular meeting of the Senate for that month. The Executive Committee shall advise and otherwise assist the Chancellor in carrying out all the duties and administrative functions specified in Section 2.8.1 and 2.8.2 of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The Executive Committee shall report to the Senate about such meetings and receive instructions from the Senate concerning the position of the faculty relating to the operations of the University. The Executive Committee shall also meet with the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at least monthly and shall advise and otherwise assist the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer in carrying out the duties and functions specified in Section 1.5.1 of the Bylaws of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Executive committees shall meet with the Vice Chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at least monthly, and shall advise and otherwise assist the Vice Chancellor in carrying out the duties and functions specified in these Bylaws of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, particularly with regard to academic matters, items affecting the relationship of IANR with other academic units, and concerns affecting academic personnel within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

3.C Faculty Senate Committees

The UNL Faculty Senate is distinguished by several characteristics. We have an extensive committee structure. There is no important area of campus activity uninformed by members who sit on the various committees of the Faculty Senate. This is our most

important means of bringing faculty perspectives to the decision-making table. Many committees are advisory. The work of these committees leads to better decisions, and often serves to improve the academic environment for faculty.

Faculty members are appointed by the Faculty Senate President after receiving recommendations from the Committee on Committees. Usually there are representatives from ASUN and the Graduate Student Assembly on the committees and some committees can also include representatives from UAAD and UNOPA. Faculty members are appointed by the Faculty Senate, unless the committee syllabus calls for elected faculty members, and members typically serve a three-year term. A complete list of the Senate and campus-wide committees can be found at [Faculty Senate List of Campus Committees](#).

Each committee is structured according to their charge. Committees are charged to recommend actions or resolutions as needed to the President to improve university policies and procedures.

Ad hoc committees and Task Forces are intended to be limited in term. These committees may meet for a month, semester, or year. They will submit a formal report and/or recommendation(s) to the President and may report their findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or the Senate.

Standing committees are intended to carry out essential ongoing consultation and oversight duties of the faculty. Standing committees typically meet monthly or as needed throughout the academic or calendar year. Standing committees have ongoing responsibilities that will be reported yearly to the Senate as actions taken. Standing committees may also produce formal reports, recommendations, or propose resolutions in order to improve committee function or as relates to improved university policies and procedures. Standing committees will submit a formal annual report to the President and to the Senate, may meet with the Executive Committee, and may bring issues to the Senate as needed.

Committee Chairs are responsible for convening meetings, setting the agenda, prioritizing tasks, moderating meetings, taking notes and minutes, and reporting to the President. The Chair may delegate responsibilities to committee Members as needed. For larger standing committees, the Chair may form subcommittees to manage tasks. The Chair will also report findings, recommendations, and proposed resolutions to the Executive Committee and to the Senate. For Chairs of standing committees, the Chair will submit a formal annual report to the Senate.

Committee members are responsible for attending meetings as scheduled, providing discussion and consultation during meetings, and carrying out duties of the committee which include drafting reports, recommendations, and resolutions. Members may be called upon to carry out the delegated duties of the Chair as needed.

4. MEETINGS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

The Senate shall have nine regular monthly meetings during the academic year. The week prior to the Senate meeting the agenda and accompanying materials needed for the meeting

will be sent to the Senators. The terms of elected members and officers commence and terminate at the last meeting of the academic year.

In order to be engaged and impactful in the faculty governance process, Senators are very strongly encouraged to be physically present at once-a-month meetings. The “visual” impact of our administration on seeing a fully engaged faculty is of utmost importance. If a Senator cannot be physically present due to extenuating circumstances or needing to travel a great distance (>50 miles), Zoom attendance is available. Senators participating by Zoom must have their camera on at all times.

Special meetings of the Faculty Senate may be called with seven days’ notice by the President of the Faculty Senate, the Chancellor, any ten elected members of the Senate or any fifty members of the Assembly. The President shall preside at all meetings. **Elected members of the Senate who miss more than three meetings in a Senate year may be removed from membership of the Senate by action of the Secretary with the approval of the President.**

5. HOW TO BE AN INFLUENTIAL SENATOR

- **Raise issues to the Senate.**
Senators can raise concerns at the Faculty Senate meetings or can contact any member of the Executive Committee to have an issue placed on the Senate agenda.
- **Communicate with constituents about the work of the Senate.**
Ask to give a report of the Senate meeting(s) at departmental meetings.
Distribute Faculty Senate and Executive Committee minutes to your constituents.
- **Gather feedback from constituents on issues that need to be voted on by the Faculty Senate.**
- **When coming to the microphone to speak at the Faculty Senate meetings please state your name and department.**
- **Come to meetings and actively participate in discussions.**

6. FACULTY SENATE RESOURCES

6.A [Faculty Senate Webpage](#)

The Faculty Senate has a website which provides information pertaining to the Faculty Senate’s operations including meeting schedule, list of members, minutes of the Senate meetings, the Senate Bylaws, and the Senate Rules. The website includes information on the Senate Executive Committee including the list of members, minutes of the Executive Committee meetings, list of Past President and Past Secretaries. The Senate provides several awards to outstanding individuals including the James A. Lake Academic Freedom Award and the Louise Pound-George Howard Distinguished Career Award.

Information on Faculty Committees can also be found on the Senate website. Faculty

Senate policies and documents and other faculty resources can be found on the website.

6.B Faculty Senate Office Services

- 1) Committee rosters, responsibilities, and procedures - The Senate Office maintains current and historical files of Senate and University-wide committees. In addition, the office offers information on how to contact committee chairs and members.
- 2) University and System bylaws and policies - We compile a comprehensive collection of these items for reference.
- 3) Historical files— From 1973 to the current, the Faculty Senate Office has files detailing the important issues of the day.
- 4) Faculty Senate Activities – We have information on activities, including membership, procedures, meetings, Convocations grant applications, the Academic Freedom Award, and the Pound Howard.
- 5) Information Accessibility— The Faculty Senate website includes Senate policies, Faculty Governance bylaws, Executive Committee and Faculty Senate meeting minutes, the roster of current Faculty Senate members, the roster of the Executive Committee members, as well as links to other campus sites.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SENATORS

Prior to their first meeting, Senators should read the [Faculty Senate Bylaws](#) and the [Faculty Senate Rules](#) to become familiar with the proceedings. Senators should also review the agenda and the accompanying material for each meeting and be prepared should they have any questions they wish to raise. If a Senator plans to present a motion to the Senate, it must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Senate.

APPENDIX A

RULES OF ORDER OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

(Revised April 1, 2014)

Preamble: The following Rules of Order of the Faculty Senate are designed to:

1. Allow for the full and free discussion of all issues appropriately brought before the Faculty Senate.
2. Encourage consultation between senators and the members of the Academic Assembly whom they represent.
3. Allow the Senate to act in a timely manner on the issues before it.

1. Basic Procedural Rules of the Faculty Senate

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of Faculty Senate meetings except insofar as they are superseded by the Bylaws of the Board of Regents, the Bylaws of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the following rules of order.

2. Introduction of Motions and Timing of Their Consideration

A motion may be moved by any senator or by a committee of the Faculty Senate. Following the presentation of a report by an officer or committee, one or more motions to carry out recommendations related to the report may be introduced. Motions brought forward by a committee of the Senate require no second from the floor.

When a principal motion has been moved and seconded, the presiding officer shall clearly state the motion and open the floor for debate. The member who made the motion will generally have the right to speak first in debate. To facilitate consultation with colleagues, motions brought and debated before the Senate at a given meeting will then be placed on the agenda of the following meeting, with or without amendment, and may be voted on at that meeting.

If, however, the presiding officer determines that the nature of the motion is sufficiently urgent as to require immediate action, the presiding officer may declare, before debate begins, the motion an emergency motion thus allowing the vote to be taken at the meeting in which the motion is offered. Any member wishing to challenge the ruling of the chair must do so immediately before debate begins and, if seconded the body shall vote on whether the decision of the chair shall be sustained. A two-thirds vote sustains the decision of the chair.

Additionally, any member of the Senate may move that a motion be given emergency status. Members wishing to offer a motion as an emergency motion must ask that it be considered as such when their motion is made. If seconded the body can, with a two-thirds vote, accept the original motion as an emergency motion. Likewise, any member may move that emergency status be given to a motion just offered. In either case, the motion to assign emergency status must be made before debate begins on the original motion.

The presumption, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, shall be that elections and motions for commendation of an individual or group shall have action at the meeting in which they are made, whereas motions concerning senate policy are presumed to not require immediate action in the absence of countervailing facts.

3. Reconsideration

A motion to reconsider a vote must be made at the meeting at which the original vote was taken. The reconsideration shall occur as the next item of business at the meeting, unless a motion to postpone the reconsideration to a definite time is passed by the Senate. Should the motion to reconsider be neither voted upon nor postponed by vote at that meeting prior to adjournment, the motion to reconsider shall be deemed to have failed.

4. Rearrangement of the Agenda by the Presiding Officer

The presiding officer shall have the right to deviate from the published agenda of the Senate to facilitate the reception of reports by an administrator or committee, or to otherwise assist the Senate. Such deviation from the agenda shall be subject to appeal, which appeal shall require a simple majority of the voting members to approve.

5. Conduct of Elections of Officers and the Executive Committee

Nominations for President Elect, for Secretary, and for the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall be solicited by the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees shall strive to obtain at least two nominations for each office. All nominations received by the Committee on Committees shall be forwarded to the President up until three weeks prior to the last regular meeting of the Senate. The nominations shall be forwarded without being ranked. Nominations from any member of the UNL Assembly may also be directly forwarded to the President up until three weeks prior to the last regular meeting of the academic year. Nominations shall be considered only with the consent of the individual nominated.

Two weeks in advance of that Senate meeting, a list of candidates (all valid nominees) for these positions shall be sent to all senators, along with biographical materials submitted by the candidates. The Senate Executive Committee may set reasonable limits on the length of this material.

At the last regular meeting of the Senate, the first order of business shall be the election for the President Elect of the Senate, followed immediately by the election of the Secretary of the Senate. Each candidate will be allowed to make a statement to the Senate if she/he so chooses. The Senate will then proceed to a vote, which will be by secret ballot unless there is only one candidate and no objection to a voice vote. On the initial ballot for these offices, a candidate must be chosen on a majority of the ballots cast to be elected. The valid ballots will be counted, and if someone is elected, the winner is announced to the Senate. If no candidate receives a majority of the ballots cast, a run-off will be held between the two candidates receiving the most votes. If the result of any ballot is a tie, additional ballots shall be held, as needed, until a candidate has been elected.

At the last regular meeting, election of the Executive Committee shall follow immediately upon announcement of the results of the elections for President Elect and Secretary. Each candidate will then be allowed to make a statement to the Senate if she/he so chooses. The Senate will then proceed to a vote, which will be by secret ballot. The valid ballots will be counted and the winners announced to the Senate. The candidates receiving the largest numbers of votes shall be elected. In the case that there are terms of different length to be filled, the candidates receiving the most votes will fill the seats with the longest terms. Additional ballots, as needed, shall resolve ties.

In the event that a special election is needed for the President Elect, Secretary, or a member of the Executive Committee, voting procedures applicable to the office will be followed. The Executive Committee will publicly solicit nominations from the current Senate membership and forward all valid nominations for a vote by the full Senate. The Executive Committee shall strive to obtain at least two nominations for all offices. The election(s) will be held at the next meeting of the Senate, if the nominations can be included with the call to the meeting.

Upon a permanent vacancy of the Presidency, the President Elect, shall assume the duties of the President (Bylaw 3.3.11C). If such a vacancy occurs prior to the regular November Senate meeting, the President Elect shall become the President of the Senate for the remainder of their term and an election for a new President Elect must be held according to the special election procedures outlined above.

6. Quorum

A quorum for the making of or action on motions of any sort other than a motion to adjourn shall consist of a majority of the voting members of the Senate. Any member noticing the apparent absence of a quorum can make a point of order to that effect. The Senate may continue to receive reports and discuss business before it so long as at least one quarter of the voting members are present.

7. Writing of Motions

On the request of anyone (1) senator, a principal or subsidiary motion shall not be voted upon unless submitted in written form to the secretary, who shall read the motion to the senate before the close of debate on the motion. If the senator who initiated the motion does not submit the motion in writing within five (5) minutes, or such longer time as may be granted by the Senate, the motion shall be regarded as withdrawn.

8. Proxies

On any motion or election before the senate, votes by proxy shall not be allowed.

9. Presentation of Written Material

The author or authors must be identified in all written material presented or distributed in the Faculty Senate.

10.0 Electronic Communications

The Secretary of the Senate shall maintain a list of the e-mail addresses of all members of the Senate. Any communication required to be sent to members of the Senate may be sent by e-mail or other electronic communication.

- A. The Secretary of the Senate shall maintain an unmoderated electronic discussion list for the members of the Senate. This list shall be used by senators and the Senate Coordinator only for discussions related to their Senate duties. Any senator shall be removed from this list upon his or her request.
- B. The Secretary of the Senate shall maintain an unmoderated electronic discussion list for the members of the Senate Executive Committee. This list shall be used by members of the Executive Committee and the Senate Coordinator only for discussions related to their Executive Committee duties, and when matters of urgency arise, the Senate Executive Committee, at the request of the Senate President, shall vote on issues that need expedite reaction from said Committee.
- C. The President of the Senate, or the Senate Executive Committee by majority vote at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee, or by email consultation of the Senate Executive Committee, after determining that the matter is of an emergency nature and should be acted on prior to the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting, may order that a motion be presented to the Senate by e-mail or other electronic communication. The communication containing the motion shall specify the deadline for voting on the motion, which deadline shall be at least three calendar days after the e-mail is sent. Members of the Senate may vote either by e-mail or in writing, but votes must be received by the deadline to be counted. The usual rules shall apply in determining a quorum and the vote required for adoption.
- D. At the next Senate meeting following a vote by e-mail, any member of the Senate including a member who voted against the motion, may move to reconsider the e-mail vote. Except as provided in this paragraph, the usual rules concerning reconsideration shall apply.

11. Faculty Senate Meeting Postponement or Cancellation

Postponement or cancellation of a meeting can occur only if one of the following is met:

- A. Regularly scheduled classes are cancelled on the day of the meeting by the appropriate UNL authority.

- B. The President of the Senate gives notice of cancellation. Such notice shall be given 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting when feasible and shall include justification for the cancellation.
- C. Declaration of a campus emergency by the appropriate UNL authority.