Welcome to the Senate!

- About once a month, on scores of college and university campuses around the United States, dozens or hundreds of people mill into the auditorium, resigned to the fact that it’s going to be a while. There is gavel-pounding. There is heated debate over comma vs. semicolon usage in biology department literature. The institution’s president is barraged with questions. And, yes, there are PowerPoint presentations.

- Welcome to your average faculty senate meeting.

Vision for the University Senate*

The University Senate will be seen by the Michigan Tech community as a respected, relevant and independent representative body that leads by promoting faculty and staff interests in the shared governance of the University. Its actions will support the University mission, the day-to-day professional activities of faculty and staff. The University Senate is an active partner in University decisions affecting academic and administrative affairs.

Strategies to support our University Senate Vision

• Provide oversight of academic quality by promoting a rigorous and relevant curriculum with attractive and innovative degree programs that best serve students and society.
• Serve as the legislative authority for academic policies and educational guidelines that encourage and ensure student learning.
• Promote ethical behavior, professional discourse, and mutual respect among all members of the University community.
• Ensure that academic freedom and tenure is encouraged and protected in all forms.
• Provide a source of advice and support for the University administration and Board of Trustees by making recommendations regarding faculty and professional staff issues, University finances, compensation, and the workplace environment.

*Draft 9/18
The “A” list: Matters of Academic Policy and Procedures

The Senate has the responsibility and authority to review and establish policy and procedures in these areas:

- All curricular matters, including establishment, dissolution, and changes in degree programs.
- Requirements for certificates and academic degrees.
- Regulations regarding attendance, examinations, grading, scholastic standing, probation, and honors.
- Teaching quality and the evaluation of teaching.
- All matters pertaining to the academic calendar.
- The appointment, promotion, tenure, dismissal, and leaves of the academic faculty.
- Criteria for positions that are to be accorded academic rank.
- Academic freedom: rights and responsibilities.
- Regulations concerning the awarding of honorary degrees.
- Procedures for the selection of Deans and Department Chairs.
- Requirements and criteria for unit charters for each academic department.
- Other areas under authority as may be granted by the Board of Trustees, the University President, or their designated representative.
Formulation of Academic Policy*

*Proposed flowchart
Role of the University Senate

The “B” list: Other matters of Policy and Procedures

The Senate has the responsibility to review, make recommendations, initiate, and participate in the formulation of policy and procedures in these areas:

- Fringe benefits.
- Institutional priorities.
- Allocation and utilization of the university's human, fiscal, and physical resources.
- The J.R. Van Pelt Library, computing facilities, audiovisual support, E.R. Lauren Bookstore, Seaman Museum, etc. as they affect scholarly, instructional, and research activities.
- Admission standards and procedures.
- Student financial aid.
- Selection of the University President, the Provost, and other major university-wide administrators.
- Administrative procedures and organizational structure.
- The evaluation of administrators.
- All areas of student affairs not mentioned specifically above, including their effect on the educational process and on academic achievement.
University Senate meetings serve several functions

- To **take action** in our role as the chief advocate for faculty and professional staff, and use our granted authority on academic policy and shared governance matters.
- To provide **faculty and professional staff feedback** to the administration, university committees, and the Board of Trustees when they request it.
- To **inform** our constituents about current university activities, plans, and policy changes.
- There are three main categories of meeting agenda items: **reports**, **informational items**, and **action items**.
  - Each item is allotted approximately 10-15 minutes on the agenda. This time may be extended with appropriate motions or requests to the chair.
  - **Reports** are provided at each meeting by the Senate president, standing committees, and *ad hoc* committees as needed.
  - **Information items** are points of business that require feedback from Senate, but **no action**. Documents are provided beforehand, and Senators may gain feedback from constituents.
How to have productive University Senate meetings

• The attendees should be engaged and participate in the process.

• Learn and use Robert’s rules
  • We will post a short “cheat sheet’ on the senate website.
  • Some exceptions are provided in the Senate by-laws

• Allow as many people as possible to provide input.
  • Avoid one or two people monopolizing the discussion
  • Balance the discussion
  • Recognition of visitors by chair when appropriate

• Senators should be prepared for the meetings.
  • Read the materials provided in advance.
  • Review presentations.
  • Prepare your questions, support or objections in advance

• Understand the impact of a Senate proposal or motion.

• Presenters should submit their materials in advance if possible.
  • Posted on the senate website or embedded links in the agenda.
  • Presenters should state what they expect from the senate, or what questions they want answered
  • Establish the type of feedback or input they are seeking.

• Committees must be functioning and effective for the senate meetings to work.

• Address time-critical issues first.
  • Policies exist for emergency proposals.

• People’s evenings are valuable, stay on schedule if at all possible!
Introduction to Senate procedure - proposals

- **Action Items** require the Senate to perform an approval action, either on a proposal, policy, or resolution. Action items are discussed at two meetings & discussion and debate should be relevant to the pending motion.
  - Listed under **New Business** at the first meeting, background on the topic is provided and initial discussion occurs. Debate is not necessary, but afterwards Senators seek feedback from their constituents.
  - At the 2nd meeting this **Action Item** returns as **Old Business** with **motion to accept**, followed by debate, and a final vote.

- The result of this 2nd meeting will be to:
  - Accept the proposal/policy/resolution, which can then be voted up or down.
  - Send proposal/policy/resolution back to home committee for revision and resubmission.
  - Motions can be modified via amendments by Senators.
  - Amendments are voted on separately prior to the vote on the original motion.

Time extension, tabling, or referral to committee is only used if clearly necessary.
Introduction to Senate procedure – Suggested guidance for discussion and debate

- Senators or guests wishing to speak must be recognized by the chair.
- Senators then state their names for the record, and then ask a question or make a comment.
- Senators are allowed one follow-up question or comment per recognition. (No one should monopolize the conversation.)
- A senator will not be recognized again until everyone else who wishes to speak has had the opportunity.
- Once senator discussion concludes, comments may be taken from the guests (aside from points of clarification or direct queries).
- All discussions with senators or guests should be collegial and not devolve into arguments. (or the chair may call a point of order)
- A Point of Order (noting improper parliamentary procedure) can be employed when:
  - A speaker is interrupted or a comment is made without chair or guest recognition
  - An action item is debated without an active motion
  - A discussion or debate has moved off-topic
  - A speaker has exceeded the question/comment and follow-up limit
  - A voting/parliamentary sequence is done out of order

Remember we are being recorded for posterity!
We have a lot to do this year, so we need effective meetings!

There are many important things we should address. Some examples include:

• Enhanced visibility and influence for the senate.
• New academic program additions/deletions.
• Role in administrative searches. (CFO, etc.)
• A new campus-wide code of conduct and appropriate behavior on campus.
• Faculty handbook edits/harmonization with senate and university policies.
• Lecturer/research track sabbaticals.
• Tenure-track-like librarian appointments
• Ownership/copyright of on-line materials.
• On-line course, summer, and overload compensation.
• Increasing faculty numbers
• Role of adjunct faculty.
• Examine the pressures of “platform” tuition on students to take too many credits.
• Teaching evaluations: bias, “trolling”, correct questions, other evaluations
• Compensation – salary equity, health benefits, retirement contributions.
• Educational technology use/allocation across campus.
• Parking and larger transportation issues.
• Homelessness and hunger across the campus.
So what do you think?