

University Senate Handbook

Michigan Technological University



**Michigan
Technological**
University

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Senate Handbook

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Senate Overview

Foreword

Welcome to the University Senate! The University Senate represents faculty and professional staff as an active partner in the shared governance of the University. The Senate is vested with the responsibility and authority to review and establish policy in a number of areas, particularly with regard to matters of academic, curricular, research, and professional staff policy and procedures. Additionally, the Senate has the responsibility and authority to initiate, review, and make recommendations on a range of policies and procedures that impact our constituents, such as fringe benefits, institutional priorities, and the selection and evaluation of University-wide administrators.

Importantly, the Senate is the voice of faculty and professional staff on campus and works to promote their needs. However, many of those needs are not particular to faculty and professional staff; therefore, the University Senate is ultimately a body that represents the broader needs of the University community. As such, the Senate cannot divorce itself from what is happening within our campus community and in larger society. The work of the Senate is affected by what is happening around us, and we necessarily must be responsive to the evolving needs of our community. Thus, the Senate serves as a critical forum for identifying, discussing, and addressing any matters that affect our campus community. Of course, this work is not done by the Senate alone. Signifying the strength of strong shared governance at this University, the Senate works with the Board of Trustees, the University Administration, and the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Governments, along with other units across campus, to ensure that the evolving needs of faculty, staff, students, and the University are continually addressed.

Higher education is fundamentally about building critical thinking skills and knowledge expertise, as well as the production and dissemination of new knowledge; but it is also about challenging ourselves to recognize the personal and social responsibility we all share within our community and broader society. As a Senate, we can promote our mission to educate by: approaching academic policy and procedures thoughtfully and critically; supporting targeted initiatives to promote the health of our community by continually improving the quality of education at Michigan Tech; supporting an improved work/life balance and greater social awareness; and ensuring equity in our campus community for all. Continued attention to these issues is important to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our University community.

For this reason, the Senate cannot be a reactive body. It is not enough to simply do the work that is brought before us. We need to continue to anticipate what is and what will be needed by the University community—not only under our current circumstances, but also recognizing that the Senate must have the broader vision to work for the future. Coordinating with the University Administration and other entities across campus to work toward our goals is critical. The Senate can utilize its knowledge, expertise, and ability to create policy to move these initiatives forward. In addition to responding to issues brought before the Senate, we should actively work to create

initiatives, policies, and procedures that will build a strong, resilient campus community supportive for all.

Toward this end, these four core principles guide the work of the Senate:

1. Be proactive with an emphasis on strategic action.
2. Be a full and active partner in a system of strong shared governance.
3. Identify and address gaps in current policies and procedures.
4. Promote initiatives, policies, and procedures that complement University strategic goals and build overall resiliency by strengthening our campus community.

The Senate Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to help you navigate your duties as a Senator or Alternate in representing your constituents. This handbook will review the vision and purview of the Senate, along with its history; provide an introduction to our constituents and the roles of officers, Senators, and Alternates; and give you an overview of the standing committees of the Senate and the work you will do as a member of this body.

Senate Vision

The Vision Statement of the Senate as adopted in [Proposal 1-19](#) states: “The University Senate will be regarded 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 support the University mission and 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.” The strategies to support this vision are:

- “Promote and oversee a rigorous and relevant curriculum with valued and innovative degree programs that best serve students and society.
- Serve as the legislative authority for academic policies and educational guidelines that encourage and support 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 policies, University finances, compensation and benefits, and the workplace environment.
- Provide recommendations for programs that provide opportunities for personal and professional growth for members of the campus community.”

History of the Faculty/Staff Senate

The first official meeting of the Senate was in the 1958-59 academic year. The composition of the Senate then was department elected faculty, at-large elected faculty, and two ex-officio

groups of department heads and administrators. The first professional staff Senate units were listed on the roll call sheet for the 1993-94 academic year. From there, the Senate grew to include more professional staff members and now represents all non-unionized, non-student staff, but welcomes input from voices across campus.

Purview of the Senate

The Senate has the **responsibility** and **authority** to review and establish policy and procedures in these areas (A-list items):

- Academic Policy and Procedure
 - 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 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.
- Matters of Research Policy and Procedures
 - All issues and performance other than the allocation and distribution of resources.
- Other Matters of Policy and Procedure
 - Internal function of the Senate, including Bylaws, committee structure, etc.
 - Other areas under authority as may be granted by the Board of Trustees, the University President, or their designated representative.

The Senate has the responsibility to review, **make recommendations, initiate, and participate in the formulation** of policy and procedures in these areas (B-list items):

- Academic Policy and Procedure
 - Academic organization, including the establishment or elimination of schools, colleges, or departments, and the reorganization of the academic structure.
- Matters of Research Policy and Procedures
 - Allocation and distribution of unrestricted funds made available to the University for discretionary allocation in support of research or scholarly work.
- Matters of Policy and Procedures Concerning Professional Staff

- All issues of concern only to professional staff.
- Other Matters of Policy and Procedure
 - Fringe benefits.
 - Institutional priorities.
 - Allocation and utilization of the University's human, fiscal, and physical resources.
 - The J. R. Van Pelt and John and Ruanne Opie Library, computing facilities, audiovisual support, E. R. Lauren Bookstore, A. E. Seaman Mineral 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.

Constituents

“Constituent of the Senate” refers to the individuals who are represented by the University Senate. Defined broadly in Senate Constitution II.B.a., “University Senate constituents are University professional staff and faculty who are employed full time for a minimum of 9 months per year, unless otherwise excluded because of major administrative functions. Full time is defined as a minimum of 30 hours per week.” Unionized or union represented staff are not Senate constituents. Academic unit and professional staff unit elections are to be conducted in April of each year (see Annual Senate Timeline below), but the Senate officers and Administrative Assistant will work throughout the year as needed to fill vacancies.

Roles of Officers and the Senate Executive Committee

The President, Vice President, and Secretary are responsible for the daily activities of the Senate, including committee assignments, the acceptance of proposals and resolutions, the setting of meeting agendas, and communication with the University Administration and other units on campus. All officers of the Senate must be serving Senators or Alternates. The President and the Secretary are tenured faculty members, and the Vice President must be from a non-academic unit. It is the job of the President to preside over Senate and Senate Executive Committee meetings. The Vice President will preside over those meetings in the absence of the President. The Secretary is responsible for performing roll call and for recording the minutes and notes for Senate meetings.

All Senate officers serve on the Senate Executive Committee, with the President serving as the chair of the committee. In addition to the officers, the committee is composed of the chairs or co-chairs of each of the 10 Senate standing committees. Together, the Executive Committee

works to identify the objectives and broader agenda of the Senate by fostering dialogue among the officers and chairs of the standing committees. In this capacity, the Executive Committee provides support and guidance for members as a forum for sharing information, voicing concerns, providing feedback, and offering advice on matters related to the work of the Senate. The Executive Committee is also responsible for representing and coordinating with the Board of Trustees on behalf of the Senate.

The Executive Committee is responsible for determining the appropriate committee for the assignment of proposals and resolutions or moving documents to the whole Senate as appropriate. The Executive Committee shall not initiate any proposal or resolution except in relation to its own function as a steering committee as defined in the Bylaws. The Executive Committee can initiate proposals and/or resolutions that clearly do not fit within the charge of a particular Senate standing committee, matters related to the broader work and functioning of the Senate, the creation of certain ad hoc committees, or Sense of the Senate resolutions proposed on behalf of the membership of the Executive Committee. The committee is also responsible for determining the voting classification of each proposal that comes before the Senate. The Executive Committee meets in the weeks alternate of Senate meetings.

Non-voting Members

The Senate has four official non-voting liaison members from Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government, Staff Council, and Graduate Faculty Council. Although they cannot vote on proposals, these official non-voting members are encouraged to share their opinions on Senate business just like any other Senate member.

Your Role as a Senator

As a Senator, you have three main duties:

1. Act as the voice of your constituents during Senate meetings. (Voting, motions to amend, and voicing constituent concerns or feedback are all examples of this.)
2. Be an active member on one or more Senate standing committees.
3. Communicate the business of the Senate to your constituency

Senators may optionally serve as representatives of the Senate on University Committees. These positions are appointed or elected, depending on the particular committee.

Communication Expectations for Senators

Senators are responsible for making their constituents aware of Senate business. Many will forward out meeting agendas, meeting minutes and recordings, or other updates as they deem relevant. Others may create biweekly or monthly email updates to consolidate the information they deem most important or may provide updates at regular unit meetings, such as department meetings. Speak with your constituents to get a sense of what they find most beneficial or check in with your predecessor to see how they previously communicated information to constituents.

As a Senator, you are also responsible for communicating with your Alternate. In order for this person to take your place if you are unavailable, they must have an understanding of what is happening in the Senate and how your constituents feel about it, and be able to express those opinions during the meeting. Communicate regularly about Senate happenings and touch base regularly on your schedules to ensure one of you is able to attend each meeting.

While you are responsible for keeping your unit informed, your constituents should also have the opportunity to offer feedback and suggestions to you. It can be helpful at the beginning of the year to establish a system or structure that allows for a continuous flow of information. Some options include: an existing or newly created unit email list for dissemination of information; a Google form linked in every update email; a place on a departmental or unit meeting agenda to discuss Senate business; and scheduled open forums to discuss issues of concern.

Your Role as an Alternate

As an Alternate, you have two main duties:

1. Attend Senate meetings in the absence of the Senator, acting as the voice of your constituents.
2. Be an active member on one or more Senate standing committees.

Alternates may sit on the same Senate standing committee as the Senator from their unit, but it may be in your unit's best interest for the Senator and Alternate to sit on different committees.

As is the case with Senators, Alternates may optionally serve as representatives of the Senate on University Committees. These positions are appointed or elected, depending on the situation.

Communication Expectations for Alternates

It is expected that you, as an Alternate, will stay in contact with your Senator concerning schedules and availability to ensure that there is always a representative from your unit present during University Senate meetings. Additionally, it is your obligation to stay up to date on Senate business for any meetings which you did not attend.

The Senator should share constituent feedback and concerns with you prior to University Senate meetings that you plan to attend in their place.

Senate Communication and Decorum

It is important to be mindful of the way that we engage with each other in the Senate. Senate work relies on healthy, constructive debate within and outside the Senate involving issues that concern our institution and campus community. These discussions must be grounded in respect for the varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives that each individual brings to the conversation. Personal attacks, disregard for dissenting opinions, and general discourteousness do not encourage healthy debate and have no place in Senate meetings. Mutual respect, collegiality, and openness in communication must guide our work. Please remember that at the

end of the day, we are all colleagues and we are all working to improve Michigan Tech and our campus community.

Should you experience problems with fellow members of the Senate or with a constituent related to Senate matters, please contact the Senate President or another Senate officer. You may also reach out to the Office of Institutional Equity or Human Resources, who, depending on the nature of the issue, will either intervene on your behalf or, with your permission, will reach out to the Senate officers (anonymously if you choose) to address your particular concerns.

Senate Standing Committees

The majority of Senate work is done by our 10 standing committees. Every Senator and Alternate is expected to participate on one of these committees (or on an ad hoc committee). Committee assignments occur at the beginning of each academic year. Only Senators and Alternates may serve as voting members on a committee, although non-Senate members may serve in a non-voting, *ex officio* capacity subject to the approval of the committee. Authority for responsibilities assigned to the standing committees are derived generally from the Constitution and Bylaws.

At the beginning of the Senate term, Senators and Alternates will indicate which committees they would like to serve on for the term. Service on an individual committee is not dictated by expertise in a particular area; however, it can be helpful to serve on a committee that you are familiar with or passionate about. Senators' preferences and personal backgrounds are considered when making committee assignments. The officers will do their best to accommodate requests, but will make assignments as necessary. If a Senator or Alternate has no preference, they will be assigned to a standing committee based on need. Senate officers will draft a preliminary list of committee assignments and circulate the list to the Senate no less than 10 days before the first meeting of the Senate in the fall semester.

At the first meeting of each committee, members will elect a committee chair or co-chairs. The chair or co-chairs are chosen from among the Senators and Alternates by the members of the committee. Given the types of issues likely to come before a committee, members are strongly encouraged to consider whether tenure might be an asset in electing a chair. Chairs or co-chairs are expected to organize meetings and communications among their committees as appropriate to the work of the committee. Committee chairs or co-chairs serve on the Senate Executive Committee, which meets in weeks alternate of Senate meetings. Standing committee business is regularly reported by the chair(s) during Executive Committee meetings and during committee reports given at each Senate meeting. Committee members are also expected to take any comments received regarding a proposal being put forward by the committee and work on potential modifications to the proposal prior to the next Senate meeting.

Our standing committees are listed in the next section, where they are paired with an overview of their purview.

Academic and Instructional Policy Committee

The Academic and Instructional Policy Committee promotes policies and procedures that support the academic and curricular matters of the University. Academic matters addressed by the committee include: rights and responsibilities related to academic freedom; appointment, promotion, tenure, dismissal, and leaves of the academic faculty; the criteria for positions to be accorded academic rank; and teaching quality and the evaluation of teaching. The committee is also concerned with curricular matters, including regulations regarding attendance, examinations, grading, scholastic standing, probation, and honors, as well as all matters pertaining to the academic calendar.

Administrative Policy Committee

The Administrative Policy Committee develops administrative procedures and organizational structure. The committee also conducts evaluations of administrators and the University Senate, and organizes the selection process for the University President, the Provost, and other major University-wide administrators.

Committee for Promoting and Facilitating Equity and Understanding

The Committee for Promoting and Facilitating Equity and Understanding (CPFEU) identifies, reviews, and responds to issues faced by the campus community by: reviewing institutional policies; offering proactive responses and solutions to issues that arise; addressing the culture for each group of campus stakeholders and constituents; and advocating for meaningful, impactful, and sustainable diversity, equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging (DEIS) initiatives. It also assists the Senate in holding the institution accountable. The CPFEU (in conjunction with the [MTU Strategic Plan](#)) seeks to serve faculty and staff constituencies by promoting equity, inclusiveness, and collegiality through openness, engagement, mutual respect, and understanding of diverse perspectives to ensure a supportive environment for all members of the University community.

Curricular Policy Committee

The Curricular Policy Committee is responsible for curricular matters, including the establishment and dissolution of and changes to degree programs. To fulfill its responsibilities, the committee provides support to academic units related to degree programs and certificates, and ultimately reviews policies related to academic program proposals before they are presented to the Senate. The committee works closely with the Registrar and the Director of Academic Accreditation and Compliance, who serve as *ex officio* members of the committee, to ensure that proposals for degree programs are thoroughly vetted and are in alignment with existing programs, regulations, and accreditation requirements.

Elections Committee

The Elections Committee is responsible for ensuring fair and impartial elections related to positions on the University Senate, as well as Senate representation on University-wide

committees. The committee is responsible for: conducting Senate elections, including the nomination and election of at-large positions; providing a slate for the election of Senate officers; and the ballot initiatives. The committee also assists Senate officers with soliciting nominees for Senate representation on ad hoc committees and University standing committees.

Finance and Institutional Planning Committee

The Finance and Institutional Planning Committee provides responsible oversight of the University Senate budget and ensures that University Senate constituents are kept informed on issues related to the charges of the committee: institutional priorities related to the allocation and utilization of University fiscal, human, and physical resources; student financial aid matters; and admission procedures and general admission standards. The committee also reviews the fiscal resources tied to new programs under review by the Curricular Policy Committee.

Fringe Benefits Committee

The Fringe Benefits Committee initiates, reviews, researches, and makes recommendations pertaining to benefits-related issues in order to enhance the recruitment, retention, career satisfaction, and healthy work-life balance of University staff and faculty.

Information Technology Committee

The Information Technology Committee deals with all issues related to the same that come before the Senate. The committee is concerned with the creation of policies and procedures related to information technology in support of research and scholarly work, as well as the allocation and distribution of unrestricted University funds and human and physical resources to that end.

Professional Staff Policy Committee

The Professional Staff Policy Committee serves as the representative voice for professional staff. The committee supports staff members in the realization of their full potential at the University, and advances University excellence through its efforts. The committee works to: foster closer cooperation and exchange between professional staff and other campus members; serve as a forum for discussion of common employment concerns; and provide a formal channel to communicate common concerns to the Senate and University officials.

Research Policy Committee

The Research Policy Committee initiates, researches, reviews, and makes recommendations on the formulation of policy and procedures related to all areas of research and research performance, other than the allocation and distribution of resources. The committee does review, make recommendations, initiate, and participate in the formulation of policy and procedures related to the allocation and distribution of unrestricted funds made available to the University for discretionary support of research or scholarly work.

Ad hoc Committees

Occasionally business does not fall within the purview of a specific standing committee. In these instances, an ad hoc committee is formed. The creation and approval of ad hoc committees are outlined in the Senate Bylaws (see section F).

Senate Meeting Process/Overview

The Friday before a Senate meeting, the agenda will be made available on the Senate website and emailed out to Senators and Alternates. A Senate agenda can be amended at the beginning of the meeting and must be approved by the Senate before the meeting can begin. Previous meeting agendas can be found on the Senate website under [Agendas and Minutes](#).

Since at least 2012-13, the Senate has met on alternating Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. during the academic year.

The length of a Senate meeting is heavily dependent on the number of items the agenda holds, but can also depend on the amount of discussion each item generates on the Senate floor. It is typical for meetings to last between 1.5 and 2.5 hours; however, because the length of meetings can depend on the amount of discussion from the Senate floor, meeting length can be unpredictable. Since meeting length is unpredictable, it is advised that you do not make other plans on evenings when the Senate meets.

The usual deadline to add items to the agenda prior to distribution is the Friday before the meeting at 4 p.m. Items can be added to the agenda at the start of a meeting, but such additions require a motion to amend the agenda and a vote from the Senate to approve the amendment. It is recommended that you send agenda items to the Senate Assistant prior to the deadline. This also allows Senate members and constituents to review agenda items and prepare questions or statements for the meeting.

The process and order of Senate meetings typically follow Robert's Rules of Order. [This Robert's Rules reference sheet](#) should help give you an understanding of the most common motions or points made during Senate meetings.

Proposals and Resolutions

The process for bringing forward a proposal or resolution is defined in the [Senate Bylaws](#) under section M. A proposal or resolution can be drafted by any individual or group on campus but must be submitted to the Senate floor by a Senator, a Senate committee, or the University President or their designee. The Senate website has a [proposal template](#) that you can download to edit and use in drafting your proposal or resolution.

A finalized draft can be submitted to the Senate officers by email at senate-office-l@mtu.edu. This email will begin the Senate process. Once received, the officers will assign a number to the document, and the name and number of the proposal or resolution will be placed on the Senate website under the [Proposals by Academic Year](#) page. Next, the proposal or resolution will be assigned to a Senate standing committee at the next Executive Committee meeting. This

committee will be in charge of vetting the proposal or resolution and preparing it to be submitted to the full Senate. If a standing committee has been assigned a proposal or resolution and has not submitted it to the full Senate by the sixth subsequent meeting, it will be automatically placed on the agenda for that next full Senate meeting. In general, proposals and resolutions are considered new business at the first meeting they are introduced; at the subsequent meeting, they will be considered unfinished business and will be voted upon.

Proposals

The process for academic proposals (prior to their Senate introduction) can vary depending on the type of new academic program being proposed. Note that there are different requirements for proposals for new degree programs, accelerated master's degrees, graduate certificates, certificates, minors, concentrations, focus areas, and shelving and eliminating programs. A detailed chart with more information on these processes can be found on the [Provost's website](#).

You are welcome to make amendments to proposals. This process can take place during a Senate meeting when the proposal is listed as unfinished business on the Senate agenda. When an item is listed as new business, amendments from the Senate floor are not allowed. Amendments can be made by the proposers before the proposal comes forward as unfinished business, and the proposers' amended version will be linked on that agenda if possible. If you have comments or proposed amendments to any proposal, you are strongly encouraged to email the proposers and make suggestions or ask questions before the Senate meeting where this proposal comes to a vote. Making amendments before a proposal comes up as unfinished business saves time at that Senate meeting.

After a proposal has been approved by the Senate, a memo regarding each approved proposal is submitted to the President. Once a reply is received, it is placed on the Senate website. If the proposal is approved by the University Administration, the actions requested within the proposal can be taken. The University President will have three months, not including the time from the end of the spring semester of one academic year to the fall semester of the next. If the University President does not respond within the three-month period, the proposal will be deemed approved. Proposals for new undergraduate and graduate degree programs require additional approval from the Board of Trustees and the State of Michigan before they can be implemented.

Resolutions

A resolution is a non-actionable sense of the Senate recommendation to the upper University Administration/greater campus community. Its purpose is to convey the Senate's stance on a given topic. The submission of a resolution is similar to any other proposal in that it should be submitted by email to the Senate officers at senate-office-1@mtu.edu. If applicable, the resolution will be assigned to a Senate standing committee. Resolutions will also require a two-thirds majority vote to be approved by the Senate. Nothing included in a resolution should require approval from the University Administration. Resolutions are submitted to the University Administration after approval as an informational item and do not require a response.

Emergency Proposals and Resolutions

Emergency proposals or resolutions have a slightly different process. Emergency classifications of proposals or resolutions are used to have an item expeditiously approved by the Senate and are not to be used frivolously. These proposals must be submitted to senate-office-l@mtu.edu a minimum of 12 hours before a Senate meeting. The emergency proposal or resolution will then be added to the Senate website and emailed to the Senate members for their consideration.

Emergency proposals or resolutions require a two-thirds majority vote to be added to the agenda as unfinished business (with a vote occurring at the same meeting). If an emergency proposal or resolution does not receive the two-thirds majority for approval, it will be considered failed—as any other proposal not receiving a vote of approval would be.

Overview of the Proposal/Resolution Process at a Senate Meeting

1. After going through the formal submission process, a proposal or resolution is ready to come to the full Senate and is placed on the [Senate website](#) and added to the meeting agenda as new business.
2. On the agenda, the voting units for the proposal or resolution will be designated as full Senate, academic, or professional staff, as described below in the section on voting.
3. At the Senate meeting, under new business, the proposing individual or committee will be called on to introduce the proposal or resolution.
4. This introduction will be recognized as a motion to accept, and once seconded, the proposal or resolution can be discussed on the floor.
5. At this point, anyone can raise their hands to offer comments or ask questions about the proposal or resolution.
6. The discussion of the proposal or resolution is usually limited to 10 minutes.
7. As new business, subsidiary motions (e.g., to amend, refer, etc.) are not allowed.
8. During the time between meetings, the proposers (usually a Senate committee) can make amendments to the proposal or resolution. You are encouraged to reach out to the proposing committee if you have amendments, comments, or questions relating to the proposal or resolution that were not addressed at the previous Senate meeting.
9. If any amendments are made to the proposal or resolution after its introduction as new business and prior to distribution of the agenda for the next Senate meeting, the amended proposal or resolution will be linked to the agenda for the next meeting. If no amendments were made, the original version will be linked to the agenda.
10. The proposal is now listed as unfinished business on the Senate agenda.
11. When the proposal comes up under unfinished business at the Senate meeting, the proposers will be asked to briefly reintroduce it and will let the Senate know if any modifications have been made since the last meeting.
12. After a motion to accept the proposal or resolution has been made and seconded, the floor is open for discussion—and a variety of motions may be made at this time (for more information on these motions, you can check the link to the [Robert's Rules reference sheet](#)). These motions might include:
 - a. Motion to lay on the table

- b. Motion to postpone indefinitely
- c. Motion to postpone until...
- d. Motion to limit or extend debate
- e. Motion to adopt or accept

As an example, we will say that a motion was made to lay a proposal or resolution on the table. This ends debate on the item, and a vote on the motion, needing a majority to pass, is taken.

- a. If the motion is approved, the proposal or resolution is tabled.
 - b. Being tabled, this proposal or resolution can be taken off the table later on in the meeting or, more commonly, will be picked back up at the next Senate meeting.
 - c. If the proposal or resolution is not removed from the table during this Senate meeting, it is placed on the agenda for the next meeting as unfinished business.
 - d. Before discussing the proposal or resolution once it has come up as an agenda item, a motion to remove it from the table must be made. If it is not removed from the floor during this meeting, it will be considered dead and will need to go through the introductory process again if the proposers want to continue with it.
 - e. Once a motion to remove a proposal or resolution from the table is made and approved, discussion of the proposal or resolution can resume and motions can be made, including all of the subsidiary motions listed previously.
13. Once a motion to close discussion on the proposal or resolution is made and seconded, a vote to approve the motion is taken.
14. A motion to vote is then made and will be seconded. Once seconded, a vote to approve the item is taken (see *Voting*).

Voting and Elections

Voting

Voting units, or which Senators are asked to vote on a proposal or resolution, are listed on the top of each proposal or resolution and on the agenda. If the voting unit is academic, this means only Senators or Alternates from faculty or academic units are able to vote. If the voting unit is all or full Senate, this means every Senate unit is able to vote. If the voting unit is professional staff, this means only Senators or Alternates from professional staff units are able to vote. Despite the voting units, every Senate member is encouraged to participate in the discussion of the proposal. Whether you are able to vote or not, your input is valuable to the conversation.

In the Senate, voting usually takes place one of three ways:

1. Common voice vote. This is where the chair will call for those in favor of the item to say "aye," those opposed to say "nay," and those abstaining say "abstain." This type of vote is the default and is used unless a Senate member calls for one of the other voting methods.

2. Roll call vote. If this is called, the Secretary will go down the roll list and ask each Senate unit how they would like to vote.
3. Secret ballot vote. Based on the Senate Bylaws (section J.b.), calling for this type of vote supersedes both a voice and roll call vote. The secret ballot vote can be hosted electronically by the Senate Assistant or in person through the use of i-clickers (provided at the meeting).

Elections

Senate-run elections—with certain procedural exceptions for the election officers (see below)—are conducted using electronically delivered ballots (see Senate Bylaws, section K). The Senate Assistant will establish and maintain a [Senate Voter Information page](#) on the Senate website where the following information will be posted: office or seat to be filled and dates of term; candidate name, title, Senate representation unit, and department or unit as commonly known; biographical information as supplied by the candidate; and a statement of reasons for running for office or a seat and verifiable qualifications as supplied by the candidate.

For officer elections, nominations are solicited electronically following the announcement to expect an email ballot at the last meeting in March. Nominees are then confirmed internally before the first meeting in April, during which nominees are presented and a final call is made for nominees from the floor. After nominees have been confirmed, each has the opportunity to make a speech at that meeting to the current and newly elected Senators and Alternates prior to voting. Candidate information for Senate officers will also be available on the [Senate Voter Information page](#). The electronic ballot to select the officers is then sent out to the current or new Senator of each unit. Results are announced at the last meeting in April and new officers begin their duties July 1.

Annual Senate Timeline

August

- Committee selection or assignment
- A schedule of dates for every Senate meeting in the coming year is made available

September

- Senate meetings, Executive Committee, and Senate standing committee meetings begin with the start of the academic year
- Senate budget approval (retroactive for current year)

January

- Budget hearing to set the next academic year's budget

February

- Senate's annual evaluation of the University President is sent out (typically week five of the spring semester)

March

- Senators and Alternates with expiring terms are notified
- Academic units hold internal elections to select their Senator and Alternate if their Senator or Alternate have expiring terms
- Professional staff unit nomination and election processes are held by the Senate Assistant and Elections Committee for units with Senators and Alternates who have expiring terms
- Nominations for officer positions are solicited for the next academic year

April

- Officer candidates present to the Senate
- Officer elections are held
- Introduce Senate budget to full Senate at last Senate meeting of the year

Conclusion

The Senate is an essential partner in shared governance, an amplifying voice for the needs of faculty and staff, and a place for the issues facing our campus community to be addressed.

We hope this handbook has provided you with a basic understanding of the purpose, functions, and procedures that constitute the work done by this body. If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Senate officers.

Let us once again welcome you to the University Senate! We are happy you are here and look forward to working together to better the university community we all work and live in.