

**Commission on Faculty Affairs**

**RESOLUTION TO AMEND ARTICLE IV AND CLARIFY OTHER SECTIONS OF THE FACULTY SENATE CONSTITUTION**

**CFA 2023-2024D**

Draft Notice Sent to University Council Cabinet	February 9, 2024
First Reading by Commission on Faculty Affairs	February 23, 2024
Approval by Commission on Faculty Affairs	March 22, 2024
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Approval by Faculty Senate	March 29, 2024
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Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	February 28, 2024
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Waived Right to Comment	March 29, 2024
Undergraduate Student Senate Waived Right to Comment	March 29, 2024
First Reading, University Council	April 22, 2024
Approved, University Council	Date
Approved, President	Date
Effective Date	Upon Approval

**WHEREAS**, Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution defines the faculty types who are eligible for membership in the Faculty Senate and the principles of their representation; and

**WHEREAS**, the university organizational structure includes faculty outside the college faculty who are not currently represented in the Faculty Senate; and

**WHEREAS**, the provisions for electing alternate senators require additional clarification; and

**WHEREAS**, the current number of prescribed faculty senators does not allow for equitable representation and therefore requires a mechanism for adjustment; and

**WHEREAS**, additional clarifications are necessary throughout the Faculty Senate Constitution to ensure internal consistency and consistency with other governing documents;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Faculty Senate Constitution be revised per the following changes **noted below in red**.

## Proposed changes to Article III of the Faculty Senate Constitution

In accordance with Article VII of the University Council Constitution, the functions of the Faculty Senate are as follows:

~~“The Faculty Senate shall be representative of the faculty as prescribed in chapter one of The Faculty Handbook and have the authority and responsibility to act on their behalf through legislative recommendations concerning academic policies and regulations, educational standards, curricula, methods of instruction, faculty status, matters of equity and diversity that affect the faculty environment, and the working conditions of faculty, among other topics.”~~

“The Faculty Senate shall be representative of the faculty as defined in chapter one of the Faculty Handbook and have the authority and responsibility to act on their behalf through legislative recommendations concerning academic policies and regulations; educational standards, curricula, and methods of instruction; faculty status; matters of equity and diversity that affect faculty; and the working conditions of faculty. Assigned commissions: Faculty Affairs (CFA), Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP), Research (COR), and Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP).”

*[Note: The change to Article III simply reflects the current language in the University Council Constitution.]*

## Proposed changes to Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution

### Article IV. Membership

#### Section 1. Composition

The Faculty Senate consists of ~~400~~ elected faculty members as determined and apportioned by the processes outlined in ~~Article II of~~ the Faculty Senate ~~B~~bylaws. Except as noted in the bylaws, the majority of senators are elected by and represent the interests of their ~~unit~~ ~~respective constituencies~~ (e.g., department, ~~or~~ school, ~~or~~ institute).

#### Section 2. Eligibility

Faculty members who hold ~~full-time and continuing departmental~~ appointments in the ~~following tracks~~ academic colleges and University Libraries and defined in the Faculty Senate bylaws are eligible for election to the Faculty Senate: tenured and tenure-track, collegiate, clinical, professor of practice, and instructor (the college faculty); continued appointment and continued-appointment track (University Libraries and ~~E~~extension faculty); ~~and tenured track, tenure-track, tenured-to-title track, tenure-to-title track, secondary, adjunct, clinical preceptor, and instructor (the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine faculty).~~ Additionally, research faculty, including those on restricted appointments, are eligible for election: research professor, research associate, ~~and~~

research scientist, and postdoctoral associate. ~~(the research faculty); and tenured track, tenure-track, tenured-to-title track, tenure-to-title track, secondary, adjunct, clinical preceptor, and instructor (the VTCSOM faculty).~~ Qualified faculty members who currently hold primary appointments in administrative positions at the college or university level or within the University Libraries and faculty members studying for a degree at the university are ineligible for election to the Faculty Senate or to vote in Faculty Senate elections.

Because of their instructional, research, and service expectations, University Libraries faculty who hold a continued appointment or are on the continued appointment-track, though classified as A/P faculty, are eligible to be members of the Faculty Senate. All other A/P faculty with instructional or research responsibilities, such as Extension agents, project associates, or instructors in the University Libraries, are eligible to serve in the A/P Faculty Senate.

Interpretations of these eligibility requirements are provided in the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

### **Section 3. Principles of Representation**

Insofar as possible, each senator shall represent an equal number of faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership. The faculty of each department and college shall should be represented by at least one senator, with exceptions as defined in the bylaws. Additional representation details are prescribed in the bylaws. The Faculty Senate Cabinet, upon recommendation of the operations officer, shall may annually adjust annually the number of faculty senators, as-prescribed in accordance with procedures outlined in the ~~Faculty Senate B~~bylaws.

### **Section 4. Nominations and Elections**

Eligibility to vote in the election of senators is limited to those eligible for membership ~~under as prescribed in Article IV of~~ in accordance with this constitution and its accompanying bylaws, ~~Section 2 (see above).~~ Nominations and elections are made as prescribed in the bylaws, which include including the timing of elections.

### **Section 5. Term of Membership and Vacancies**

Senators are elected for a term of three years, or until their successor is elected, and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in ~~Article II, Section 5 of~~ the bylaws. Senators serve until their successors take office. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled as prescribed in the bylaws.

### **Section 6. Elected Alternates**

~~The Faculty Senate permits a~~ Each department, college, the University Libraries, and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine ~~to~~ should elect at least one alternate senator and may elect additional alternate senators equal to the number of senators it elects. Alternate senators ~~who~~ may attend any Faculty Senate meetings, but ~~and~~ are only allowed vote ~~in the absence of~~ when the senator for whom they serve as alternate is absent.

## **Proposed changes to Article V of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

### **Article V. Officers of the Faculty Senate**

#### **Section 1. Officer Titles and Duties**

The Faculty Senate shall have a president, vice president, and operations officer elected by members of the Faculty Senate from elected senators. The previous president serves as the immediate past president. The president may appoint a parliamentarian from elected senators.

##### **a. President**

The duties of the president include representing the faculty as the main point of contact and **primary advocate for faculty** to external entities including the Board of Visitors and the administration, **presiding** at all meetings of the Faculty Senate and cabinet, and **performing** duties prescribed in **this** constitution and **its accompanying** bylaws. Due to the demands of the office, the president is ineligible for membership on commissions or university standing committees, unless **required by the role or when** policy designates *ex officio* appointment, ~~as is the case with the Commencement Committee.~~

##### **b. Vice President**

The duties of the vice president include assisting and supporting the president and acting in their absence, monitoring the activities of the Faculty Senate commissions and the external standing committees, and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws. Though not required, the vice president typically chairs the Commission on Faculty Affairs.

##### **c. Operations Officer**

The duties of the operations officer include organizing all **Faculty** Senate operations, monitoring internal standing committees and work groups, organizing the election of faculty members to the **Faculty** Senate, and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws.

##### **d. Immediate Past President**

The duties of the immediate past president include advising the president; organizing the election of the Faculty Senate officers ~~and other senate elections~~; and performing other duties as prescribed in the bylaws.

**e. Parliamentarian (optional)**

The duties of the parliamentarian include advising the Faculty Senate on the application of the rules of order.

**Section 2. Nomination and Election of Officers**

The Faculty Senate cabinet shall nominate a slate of officers and nominees for other senate elections. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Faculty Senate. The time and manner of election of officers are prescribed in the bylaws.

**Section 3. Term of Office and Vacancies**

Officers are elected for a term of one year or until their successor is elected and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in the bylaws. The beginning and ending dates of the terms of office are prescribed in the bylaws. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled in the same manner as are full terms.

**Proposed changes to Article VI of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

**Article VI. The Faculty Senate Cabinet**

**Section 1. Membership and Functions**

The members of the Faculty Senate Cabinet are the officers of the Faculty Senate and one senator from each college ~~and~~, the University Libraries, ~~and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine~~. An officer may serve as their college's representative on the cabinet, provided ~~that~~ they are elected in that capacity by senators from their college. Given the variability of faculty experience in shared governance, the president of the Faculty Senate may also appoint up to two non-voting advisors to the cabinet.

The functions of the cabinet are to serve as the executive ~~committee~~ **body** of the Faculty Senate, to which it is responsible and to which it reports regularly on the disposition of matters submitted to it; to act on behalf of the Faculty Senate between Senate meetings; and to discharge duties in accordance with ~~the Faculty Senate Constitution and B~~ **this constitution and its accompanying** bylaws.

**Section 2. Nomination and Election of Faculty Senate Cabinet Members**

Cabinet members who are not Faculty Senate officers are elected by caucus of the senators ~~of~~ **from** their respective colleges ~~or the University Libraries~~. The time and manner of election of officers are prescribed in the bylaws.

### **Section 3. Term of Office and Vacancies**

Cabinet members are elected for a term of one year, or until their successor is elected, and are eligible for re-election as prescribed in the bylaws. Vacancies in unexpired terms are filled in the same manner as full terms.

### **Proposed changes to Article VII of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

#### **Article VII. The Commissions of the Faculty Senate**

All policy recommendations of the Faculty Senate must first be advanced and approved by one of its commissions before they are voted on by the Senate. The commissions of the Faculty Senate are the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA), the Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP), the Commission on Research (COR), and the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies (CUSP).

Though senate commissions are part of senates, their charges and membership are maintained within the University Council Constitution and cannot be altered directly by the senates. Charges of senate commissions are defined in ~~Article VIII of~~ the University Council Constitution and repeated here for convenience.

The chairs of the Faculty Senate Commissions ~~are~~**will be** senators elected or appointed as prescribed in the bylaws.

### **Proposed changes to Article IX of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

#### **Article IX. Faculty Senate Representation on the University Council Cabinet, University Council, Senate and University Commissions, University Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, and the Faculty Senate of Virginia**

##### **Section 1. Principles of Representation**

Recognizing the importance of democratic processes, representation of the Faculty Senate within the various bodies of shared governance shall be determined by election, except for *ex officio* appointments or appointments made at the prerogative of the president or cabinet. Faculty Senate representatives shall keep in mind that the prime function of such bodies is policy making and that the implementation of policies and programs is properly the responsibility of administrators. In all cases, Faculty Senate members or Faculty Senate representatives who serve on shared governance bodies are expected to represent the position of the Faculty Senate in the formulation of policy; to inform the Faculty Senate of pertinent matters to be considered and of actions taken; and to bring matters of Faculty Senate concern before the body.

##### **Section 2. Faculty Senate Representation on the University Council Cabinet**

The president of the Faculty Senate shall serve as an *ex officio* member and co-chair of the University Council Cabinet. The president of the Faculty Senate, with the advice of the Faculty Senate Cabinet and the confirmation of the Faculty Senate, ~~shall~~ **may** appoint two additional Faculty Senate members to the University Council Cabinet. While preference shall be given to the vice president and the immediate past president, experience in shared governance should be a significant factor in the selection. Term of membership (one-year) is prescribed in ~~Article VI, Section 4 of~~ the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reappointment is prescribed in ~~Article II, Section 5 of~~ the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

### **Section 3. Faculty Representation on the University Council**

Faculty Senate representation on the University Council shall include the president, vice president, and immediate past president, who serve as *ex officio* members, and one senator from each college, who are elected by the Senate. Term of membership (three-years) and the procedure to fill vacancies in unexpired terms are prescribed in ~~Article IV, Section 3 of~~ the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reelection is prescribed in ~~Article II, Section 5 of~~ the Faculty Senate Bylaws. If the office of immediate past president is vacant, the operations officer will serve in their stead.

### **Section 4. Faculty Senate Representation on Senate and University Commissions**

The Faculty Senate holds membership on ~~Faculty Senate and~~ university commissions as prescribed in ~~Article VII of~~ the University Council ~~B~~ylaws. The Faculty Senate Commissions are also listed in ~~Article VII of~~ the Faculty Senate Constitution ~~for convenience~~. The commissions of the other senates are the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs (CAPFA), the Commission on Graduate and Professional and Student Affairs (CGPSA), the Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs (CSPA), and the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs (CUSA). The university commissions are the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) and the Commission on Outreach and International Affairs (COIA). Term of membership and the procedure to fill vacancies in unexpired terms are prescribed in ~~Article VIII, Section 5 of~~ the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reelection is prescribed in ~~Article II, Section 5 of~~ the Faculty Senate Bylaws.

### **Section 5. Faculty Representation on University Standing and ~~Ad-Hoc Other Committees~~**

The Faculty Senate representatives on university standing and ~~ad-hoc other~~ committees are nominated ~~by the Faculty Senate~~ and appointed ~~by the president of the university~~ in accordance with the provisions of the University Council Constitution and Bylaws. ~~Nominations are requested on behalf of the president by the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance. Term of membership on university standing committees (three-years) and the procedure to fill vacancies in unexpired terms are prescribed in Article IX, Section 3 of the University Council Constitution. Eligibility for reappointment is prescribed in Article II, Section 5 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws.~~



## **Section 6. Faculty Representation on the Faculty Senate of Virginia**

The Virginia Tech Faculty Senate holds membership on the Faculty Senate of Virginia. The terms, functions, and duties of this representation are prescribed in the **Faculty Senate** ~~b~~Bylaws.

### **Proposed changes to Article X of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

#### **Article X. Meetings and Procedures**

##### **Section 1. Regular Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

The Senate shall hold at least five regular plenary meetings each fall and spring semester and other meetings as prescribed in the **Faculty Senate** ~~b~~Bylaws.

##### **Section 2. Special Plenary Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Special plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate may be called by the presiding officers at any time, including June, July, and August, upon recommendation of the cabinet. Requests for special meetings may be made as prescribed in the **Faculty Senate** bylaws.

##### **Section 3. Open Forum Meetings of the Faculty Senate**

Open forum meetings may be called to provide an opportunity for all segments of the university to express their views on an issue of general concern. Such meetings are called as prescribed in the **Faculty Senate** bylaws.

##### **Section 4. ~~Cabinet~~ Meetings of the Faculty Senate Cabinet**

Regular meetings of the cabinet shall be held at least once each month from September through May. Special meetings of the cabinet may be called at any time by the presiding officer.

##### **Section 5. ~~General Faculty~~ Meetings of the General Faculty**

~~In consultation with the other senates, t~~The Faculty Senate may call a meeting of the general faculty.

##### **Section 6. ~~Standing Committee~~ Meetings of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

Each standing committee meets as frequently as required to fulfill its responsibilities. The presiding officer prepares the agenda and distributes it to all members prior to each meeting.



## Section 7. Quorum

~~Fifty percent plus one~~ A simple majority of the total membership of the ~~convening body~~ Faculty Senate, excluding non-voting members and vacant positions, shall constitute a quorum for all meetings of the Faculty Senate, ~~the Faculty Senate Cabinet, or the Faculty Senate commissions, and the Faculty Senate standing committees, except with the exception of~~ open forum meetings where no quorum is required. ~~For establishing quorum, any alternate senator attending in the place of an elected senator is counted toward the simple majority.~~ In the absence of a quorum, a meeting can be held but no votes taken or decisions reached, except votes on motions to obtain a quorum or to adjourn the meeting.

## Section 8. Faculty Attendance

Faculty members eligible for election to the Faculty Senate may attend but not vote in regular and special plenary meetings of the Faculty Senate.

## Section 9. Guests

Any Virginia Tech faculty member, employee, or student may attend plenary and open forum meetings of the Faculty Senate as a guest, with the understanding that guests:

- May participate in discussions if and when recognized by the chair but cannot vote or make motions for consideration.
- Will treat participants in shared governance with respect and in accordance with the expectations for decorum outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- May be removed from a meeting by the request of any member and a majority vote of the members in attendance.
- May not displace a regular member of the body when seating/space is limited.

Members of the public who wish to attend Faculty Senate meetings should contact the president of the Faculty Senate.

## Section 10. Parliamentary Procedure

The parliamentary rules used by the University Council, subject to special rules as may be adopted by the Faculty Senate, shall govern the procedures of the Faculty Senate, the ~~Faculty Senate Cabinet~~, the Faculty Senate commissions, and ~~the Faculty Senate~~ standing committees.

## Section 11. Voting on Faculty Senate Commission Resolutions and Other Matters

All resolutions advanced to the Faculty Senate by the Faculty Senate commissions ~~must have first and second readings and be voted on by the Senate follow the process defined in the University Council Bylaws~~, either by means of a consent agenda or by actual vote. Faculty Senate votes will be carried out via the same software used by the University

Council. In accordance with ~~Article XI, Section 5 of~~ the University Council Constitution, ~~Faculty Senate~~ votes on resolutions are by recorded ballot. ~~The Faculty Senate shall determine the voting procedure on all other matters. nature of voting on all other matters shall be determined by the Faculty Senate as a whole.~~

## **Proposed changes to Article XI of the Faculty Senate Constitution**

### **Article XI. Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution and/or Bylaws**

#### **Section 1. Development**

Amendments to the constitution and/or bylaws may be developed by whatever means the Faculty Senate deems appropriate.

Amendments to the constitution require **the approval of a resolution by the** Commission on Faculty Affairs **resolution**; amendments to the bylaws do not.

One-fifth of faculty eligible for election to the Faculty Senate may petition the president of the university to convene a meeting of faculty eligible for election to the Faculty Senate to make changes to the ~~Faculty Senate C~~constitution.

#### **Section 2: Approval of Amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution**

Amendments to the constitution become effective upon the following sequence of actions:

- a. An affirmative majority vote by the ~~CFA~~ **Commission on Faculty Affairs**.
- b. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- c. An affirmative vote in the University Council of the majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- d. Approval by the president of the university.

#### **Section 3. Approval of Amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws**

Amendments to the ~~Faculty Senate~~ bylaws become effective upon an affirmative **majority** vote of ~~the majority of~~ the senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached, and requires no further approval.

#### **Section 4. Notice of Proposal**

Notice of proposal to amend the ~~Faculty Senate c~~Constitution and/or ~~b~~Bylaws shall be given in the Faculty Senate agenda and considered at no fewer than two meetings of the Faculty Senate prior to voting. A vote may be taken on an amendment at the second meeting. The proposed amendment shall be distributed with the agenda.

**2023-2024 Officers & Committee Chairs****President:**

Janice Austin  
Graduate School

**Vice President:**

Stephanie Trout  
Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

Jennifer Jones  
Agriculture and Life Sciences

**Parliamentarian:**

Chad Proudfoot  
Extension

**Immediate Past President:**

Holli Gardner Drewry  
TLOS

**Communications Committee Chair:**

Enrique Noyola  
Human Resources

**Elections and Nominations****Committee Co-Chairs:**

Leanna Blevins  
Health Sciences & Technology

Scott Weimer

VT Roanoke Center

**Policies and Issues Committee Chair**

Nikki Connors  
Analytics and Institutional Research

**February 28, 2024****To:** Vice President of Policy and Governance**From:** A/P Faculty Senate Policies and Issues Committee

The A/P Faculty Senate Policies and Issues Committee has reviewed and approves/endorse the Commission on Faculty Affairs Resolution 2023-24D to Amend the Provisions for Membership and Elections in the Faculty Senate Constitution.

We received the following feedback from senators for your consideration:

There is not enough specificity in terms of how representation is decided and adjusted for me to vote to approve. With adequate specificity, I would vote to approve. For example: 1. The addition of "institute" to the definition of "unit" in Section 1 is not reflected in the principles of representation in Section 3, where it states that at least one senator should be elected from each college or department, but it does not state anything about institutes. Do they get a senator too? 2. The principles of representation in Section 3 are overly vague, stating first and foremost that "Insofar as possible, each senator shall represent an equal number of faculty members eligible for Faculty Senate membership" but how this should happen is not defined with enough specificity. The language states "The faculty of each department and college shall be represented by at least one senator" and it goes on to state that the officers of the senate "may adjust the number of faculty senators annually" but there is no mention of the process that should be used to determine these adjustments or how to handle units that are large vs small. 3. In Section 3, it is stated that at least one senator should be elected from each "college or department" but this seems like two entirely different groups, and not specific enough of a definition. For example, if each college elects at least one senator, that's different than each department electing them. If there are differences between how colleges choose to decide representation (some electing from the college, others electing from the department level) then I think this should be specified in this section as context.

We have no further comment.