Orientation for New Senators and Committee Chairs

The University Senate is the academic governing body of the University, and is made up of faculty, staff, administration, and student members. Most of its work is done in the 17 standing committees, which report to the full Senate at least once a year. The Senate is empowered to approve new curricula (courses as well as programs of study), and to recommend faculty for promotion, as well as recommend faculty for emeritus status, but for the most part functions in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor. At times various of its committees might be called on to function as grievance bodies, e.g., the Committee on Appointment and Promotions in a case where a person wished to appeal a particular promotion or tenure decision, or the Committee on Academic Freedom, Tenure and Professional Ethics in cases dealing with academic freedom.

Procedure for Senate Meetings

The Chair of the Agenda Committee serves as presiding officer at all meetings**.** As presiding officer, his/her main role is to conduct meetings of the full Senate according to guidelines set down in the bylaws, referring to *Robert's Rules of Order* on matters of procedure.

The full Senate meets monthly, and the Agenda Committee meets two weeks beforehand (except in January) to conduct its regular business and to approve the agenda. The Agenda Committee's role is, in part, to provide guidance to the standing and ad hoc committees, and to ensure the orderly process of the work of the Senate. It also consults with committees having problems with membership, scheduling meetings, setting agendas, or any other problems.

At its monthly meetings, the Senate hears reports from various committees, considers any motions or resolutions proposed by committees or individual senators, and approves changes in the curriculum as reported by the Committee on Curricula.

At the beginning of the meeting, the previous meeting's minutes are approved by acclamation. The chairperson of the Agenda Committee then makes the committee's report. Reports of standing committees follow, according to the day's agenda.

Committee reports presented at meetings of the full Senate are sent to senators prior to the meeting, along with the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting, thus ensuring the widest possible information of senators, as well as time for review of materials in the packet. **Except in the case of an emergency or some unusual situation, reports and motions are not distributed at the door.**

Each year at the October meeting a summary of the work of the previous year's Senate is distributed to all senators for their information. Also at the October meeting, any recommendations for faculty promotion or emeritus status not received by the Committee on Appointment and Promotions in time for the April meeting are acted on.

If there is a committee **motion** on the agenda, the chair of the committee offers it after making the committee's report. No second is necessary if the motion comes from a committee. The Chair then states the question, and it is put before the body for discussion. Any changes in the text of the motion made after it has been put before the body for discussion are made in the form of **amendments.**

In the case of individual motions, a "friendly amendment" is possible, but only during the time after the motion has been made and seconded, but before it has been put before the body for discussion. The "friendly amendment" must be agreeable to the maker of the motion as well as the seconder. "Friendly amendments" cannot be made to a committee motion since they would require agreement by the entire committee. **Amendments** to motions are made by a vote of the body, and voting on a proposed amendment takes precedence over a vote on the main motion. After being recognized by the Chair, the one proposing the amendment would state the wording of his/her amendment. After it is seconded, the Chair then puts it before the body for consideration. The amendment itself must be voted for or against before consideration of the main motion resumes. (See also pp. 6-7 of the Senate bylaws.)

Point of Order. When a senator wishes to question an interpretation or a matter of procedure, she/he stands up and requests a "point of order".

Quorum. At meetings of the Senate, one third of the members [i.e., 65] constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business.

Standing Committees

There are 17 standing committees of the Senate: Academic Affairs; Student Life; Administrative Operations; Appointment and Promotions; Academic Freedom, Tenure and Professional Ethics; Budget and Fiscal Affairs; Instruction; Curricula; Academic Research and Creative Development; Library; Computing Services; Honorary Degrees; Diversity; Athletic Policy; Women's Concerns; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Concerns.

The committee charges are outlined in the bylaws, which were last revised during the 2011-12 session of the University Senate. It is the responsibility of each committee to keep the Agenda Committee informed of its activities, any problems in membership that arise, and to report to the full Senate at least once a year. The normal term of service on a committee is two years, with an additional two years unless the member requests a different assignment. You needn't be a member of the Senate to continue your service on a committee. ***N.B.: A chair's term of service ends when s/he is replaced***.

The **Senate Committee on Curricula** reviews all proposals from the colleges for new curricula or changes in the curriculum made by the colleges, and then submits a report of these to the Senate for approval. The committee's main role is one of overseeing the curriculum of the University, and making sure that the changes and additions approved by the colleges fit into the University's curriculum as a whole. In the case of new programs of study, the New York State Education Department also reviews new materials to ensure excellence in and access to programs statewide.

Office of the University Senate

The Office of the University Senate is supported by an Administrative Specialist who is responsible to maintain all records of the Senate and its committees and for preparing and maintaining all communications including meeting calendars, agendas, and related committee reports.

The Senate Administrative Specialist drafts the agenda for approval by the Agenda Committee Chair and coordinates reports from committee chairs for consideration at Senate meetings. She also works with the Subcommittee on Nominations, and Senate committees each spring and reconstitutes them when necessary (including the Agenda Committee ballot), as well as providing historical background, continuity, and advice to new committee chairs.

At the end of each academic year, the Senate Administrative Specialist produces a summary report of Senate action for distribution to the Board of Trustees May meeting.