



## **Faculty Senate Constitution**

(Approved by Board of Trustees, January 1979)

### **Article I: Purpose**

The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to formulate, review and give advice on policies and other matters of concern to the University.

### **Article II: Membership in the faculty**

For purposes of Senate membership and representation, the faculty is defined as Board of Trustees-appointed personnel with academic rank. This includes Faculty Specialists as well as traditionally ranked faculty. Faculty who hold exclusively adjunct positions are not included.

### **Article III: Powers and functions of the senate**

**Sec. 1.** The Senate shall have the authority to study and recommend action or policy in the general areas for which councils are provided in Article VIII of this constitution. The Senate also shall have authority to review actions of or proposals from other bodies or individuals for the purpose of formulating Senate recommendations. All matters proposed by faculty committees or councils, by individual faculty members or by the administration of the University shall be considered by the Senate if placed on its agenda. The Executive Board shall place all recommendations from Senate councils (which must include a suggested implementation timetable), other than curricular improvements, on the agenda for debate and approval. The agenda of the Senate shall be proposed by the Executive Board and determined by the Senate.

**Sec. 2.** The Senate shall represent the faculty in all matters affecting the welfare of the faculty excluding only those areas reserved to the collective bargaining agent.

**Sec. 3.** The Senate shall have authority to elect members of the councils, in accordance with the provisions of Article VI, Sec. 1, of the bylaws.

**Sec. 4.** The Senate shall establish such committees as it deems necessary to carry out its functions.

**Sec. 5.** The Senate shall have authority to provide for the custody of Senate funds and other properties, to accept contributions thereto, and to expend Senate funds for purposes of general faculty interest and concern.

**Sec. 6.** The Senate shall have authority to determine an annual budget of the Senate and to assess Senate fees, as prescribed in the bylaws.

**Sec. 7.** Meetings of the faculty may be called by the Senate, as well as by the president of the University.

**Sec. 8.** All actions and decisions of the Senate in matters affecting institutional policy will be held for thirty days or until the next regular Senate meeting, whichever occurs first. If any



Senator files a written objection with the Executive Board within the waiting period, then the recommendation will be placed on the agenda of the next Senate meeting for reconsideration. Recommendations may only be called for reconsideration one time. If the Senate at either a first consideration or reconsideration does not approve a recommendation, the Senate or the Executive Board may return it to the appropriate council for reformulation. If no written objection to an approved recommendation is received within the waiting period or if a reconsidered recommendation is approved, the recommendation will be forwarded, with the suggested implementation timetable, to the appropriate administrative officer and the president of the University for approval and implementation.

In the event that a policy should need to be implemented prior to the close of the waiting period, the Senate may vote to suspend this rule. Such a suspension would require a two-thirds vote in the affirmative.

## **Article IV: Membership of the senate**

**Sec. 1.** The Senate shall consist of ex officio, appointed and elected members as follows:

- **Ex officio:** the president of the University, the provost, the chair of each Senate council and all past presidents of the Faculty Senate. For purposes of determining a quorum for any meeting of the Senate, the absence or presence of past presidents of the Senate shall not be counted.
- **Appointed:** four of the officers of the administration, appointed by the president of the University for a term of one year each, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws. Appointed members of the Senate need not hold academic rank.
- **Elected:**
  1. Representatives-at-large: nine representatives-at-large elected by the eligible voters of the faculty for a term of three years each, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws.
  2. Departmental representatives: representatives elected for three-year terms by and from faculty members of each University department, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws. Substitutes for departmental representatives may be provided for in the bylaws.
  3. The president and vice president and other officers of the Senate.
  4. Former faculty members who have retired as emeriti of WMU, selected by the Emeriti Council in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws (Article I, Sec.7). Three emeriti will serve staggered three-year terms, with full membership and voting privileges in the Senate.



**Sec. 2.** University units eligible to elect departmental representatives to the Senate shall include:

- All regular instructional departments.
- All University service units with affiliated faculty, notably the University Libraries and Sindecuse Health Center Counseling Services.
- Any group of six or more faculty members who do not have affiliation, and who do not have a primary affiliation with a unit that has an elected Senator, and who are designated by the Executive Board as a unit for purposes of Senate representation.

**Sec. 3.** The formula for apportioning representation to the departments shall be as follows:

- Each department shall be entitled to at least one representative. Each department with more than twenty faculty members shall be entitled to one additional representative for each additional twenty members or major fraction thereof.

**Sec. 4.** The total membership of a department to be used as a basis for representation shall be determined as follows: To the number of full-time faculty members assigned to the department there shall be added the number of full-time equivalent positions resulting from combining the teaching load or equivalent University service of faculty members (as defined in Article II of this constitution) who devote less than full time to that department. Adjunct and non-board appointed faculty shall not be counted in the apportionment formula for departmental representation.

**Sec. 5.** Faculty members with the exception of the University President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, Associate Provosts, and Deans, may vote in departmental elections of Senate representatives or be elected from the department to which they devote the major part of their time. In any case where there is doubt regarding to which department a faculty member belongs, such doubt shall be resolved by the Executive Board.

**Sec. 6.** When a department reaches a total membership that may entitle it to additional representation, the department should so notify the Senate Executive Board. The Board shall investigate the claim and if it is valid, provide for the additional representation at the next preliminary departmental election. If a department's membership decreases sufficiently to reduce its Senate representation, the reduction shall be accomplished by omission of the next regular election of a representative from that department.

**Sec. 7.** Only persons who are considered members of the faculty under Article II of this constitution shall be eligible to vote in the election of Senate representatives and to be nominated for membership in the Senate.

**Sec. 8.** If an elected representative is absent without substitution for more than two consecutive meetings of the Senate, or more than four meetings of the Senate without substitution during the Senate year, his or her seat shall be declared vacant.



**Sec. 9.** All vacancies in Senate membership shall be filled in accordance with the procedure established in the bylaws.

## **Article V: Officers and their election**

**Sec. 1.** The officers of the Senate shall be as follows: president, vice president, the directors and the immediate past president.

**Sec. 2.** No officer of the Faculty Senate shall also serve as chair, vice chair, or secretary of an Faculty Senate council, standing or ad hoc committee except as specifically provided for in the bylaws or in the event of a vacancy where a meeting to elect a new chair is called for, and then he/she shall serve solely to open the meeting and direct the election of a new chair.

**Sec. 3.** Eligibility for election as president or vice president shall be restricted to elected members who have served for at least one year in any preceding Senates.

**Sec. 4.** Eligibility for election to any Senate office other than president or vice president shall be restricted to past presidents of the Senate, past council chairs who served at least one year in that role, and elected members of the current Senate or of past Senates who have served for at least one year. Those holding academic rank while also serving as unit chairs/directors or assistant/associate deans may stand for election to any Senate office other than president or vice president as long as they also meet all other qualifications. No others holding Board of Trustee administrative positions shall be eligible for election.

**Sec. 5.** The term of office for any Senate officer, except the immediate past president, shall be two years or until his or her successor shall have been chosen and qualified. The term of office for the immediate past president shall be one year. The president and vice president are not eligible for a second sequential term to the same office. Except for the immediate past president, other Senate officers may be eligible for sequential terms to the same office, but no individual may serve as an officer of the Senate for more than six consecutive years. After serving six consecutive years, a Senate officer may not be elected to the same office again for an interval of at least one calendar year.

**Sec. 6.** The president and the vice president of the Senate shall be elected by vote of the faculty from a list of two candidates for each office nominated by the Senate, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws. The directors shall be elected by the members of the Senate, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws.

**Sec. 7.** The University president, provost and appointed members of the Senate shall not be eligible as officers, but they shall have all other rights of elected members.

**Sec. 8.** The duties of all officers shall be those ordinarily assigned to their offices and such additional duties as are described in this constitution and its bylaws.



**Sec. 9.** Vacancies in any office of the Senate shall be filled by the Senate in accordance with the procedures established in the bylaws.

## **Article VI: Meetings**

**Sec. 1.** The Senate shall hold regularly scheduled meetings in October, November, December, February, March and April.

**Sec. 2.** The Senate may be called into a special meeting by the Executive Board, in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws.

## **Article VII, Part 1: Executive board**

**Sec. 1.** The Executive Board shall consist of the officers of the Senate. The president of the Senate shall be the chairperson of the Executive Board.

**Sec. 2.** The Executive Board shall present an agenda to the Senate for its approval or modification at the opening of each session. It shall have the right to place on the agenda any action by any of the Senate councils provided for in Article VIII of this constitution, provided that the chairperson of that council shall have been notified of such intention in a timely manner after receipt by the Executive Board of the appropriate minutes and Memorandum of Action (MOA) from that council. It shall report or recommend to the Senate the disposition of all matters submitted to it by members of the faculty or of the University administration. Those matters which it does not submit to the entire Senate it shall assign to the appropriate committee or council for consideration.

**Sec. 3.** The Executive Board shall carry out Senate decisions and directives, act as liaison with the administration and other segments of the University community, and serve as an interim committee of the Senate with power to act on behalf of the Senate when such action is required. It shall also have the power to call special meetings of the Senate, as provided in Article VI, Sec. 2 of this constitution.

**Sec. 4.** Decisions made by the Executive Board shall be subject to review by the Senate, which shall be notified of all such decisions through the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board.

**Sec. 5.** The Executive Board shall review the structure of the Senate at least every five years and shall recommend to the Senate any modifications deemed prudent or necessary. These recommendations shall take the form of proposed amendments to this constitution and to the bylaws and their approval shall follow procedures established in Article IX of the constitution and Article XII of the bylaws.

## **Article VII, Part 2: Standing committees**

**Sec. 1.** The Faculty Senate will have standing committees, in addition to the councils described in Article VIII. The councils themselves may also have standing committees.



**Sec. 2.** The standing committees of the Senate shall include a Senate Executive Board and such other standing committees as are provided for in Article VII of the bylaws.

**Sec. 3.** Members of all standing committees other than the Senate Executive Board shall serve for three- year terms, with as near as possible to one-third of them to be appointed each year. A vacancy on a standing committee shall be filled as provided in Article VII, Sec. 3 of the bylaws.

**Sec. 4.** At least 51 percent of the membership in any Senate standing committee or council standing committee shall be faculty members as defined in Article II.

## **Article VIII: Councils**

**Sec. 1.** The following councils shall be established: Academic and Information Technology, Campus Planning and Finance, Graduate Studies, International Education, Research Policies, and Undergraduate Studies.

**Sec. 2.** Each council shall have authority to consider matters of policy in its area and to take action on such matters subject to the limitations prescribed in this constitution and bylaws and to the approval of the president of the University. Councils normally should restrict their activities to matters of University policy or matters of University-wide significance. Jurisdictional questions will be resolved by the Executive Board subject to Senate review. Each council shall develop a role statement describing the range of concerns and nature of matters of primary importance to it. Council role statements are subject to review and approval by the Senate Executive Board.

**Sec. 3.** Except under extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the chairperson of the council, no council shall take final action on any significant issue during the same meeting at which that issue is originally introduced.

**Sec. 4.** At least 10 business days before its next meeting, each council shall submit a copy of its minutes to each member of the Senate. Upon receipt of the minutes as well as a Memorandum of Action (MOA) conveying the recommendation of the council, the Executive Board shall act in accordance with Article VII, Part 1, Sec. 2, of this constitution. If the Executive Board does not notify the chairperson of the appropriate council in a timely manner as prescribed in Article VII, Part 1, Sec. 2, of this constitution of its intention to place a council decision on the agenda of the Senate, then that council may submit its decision to the president of the University. If a council decision is placed on the agenda of the Senate, then the action of the Senate on such decision shall prevail, subject to the approval of the president of the University.

**Sec. 5.** The size and composition of the councils shall be restricted as follows:

- At least 60 percent of the membership of each council shall be elected faculty members. If an increase in non-elected members occurs, the number of elected faculty members shall be increased to maintain that majority. Elected faculty members shall be chosen in accordance with the procedures established in the bylaws.





- Within the two restrictions previously stated in this section, membership in any council may be increased beyond the minimum size specified in Article VI of the bylaws by action of the Senate. Each non-elected member of a council shall be empowered to designate an alternate for any meeting or meetings of the council. An elected member of a council who will be unable to attend a meeting or series of meetings of the council may designate an alternate of his or her choice from his or her respective college. Any duly designated alternates shall have full rights and privileges of council members. If an elected member of a council is absent without substitution from more than two consecutive regular meetings of that council, his or her seat shall be declared vacant.

**Sec. 6.** Each of the councils provided in Sec. 1 of this Article shall establish and prescribe the functions of such committees as it may consider necessary. These committees shall be directly responsible to their parent councils.

**Sec. 7.** Faculty members elected by the Faculty Senate to membership on the councils shall serve for three-year terms, with as near as possible to one-third of them to be elected each year. Student members selected for membership on the above councils shall serve one-year terms. Elected-faculty vacancies on councils shall be filled by the Faculty Senate in accordance with the procedure established in the bylaws. Student vacancies on councils shall be filled by the Western Student Association or Graduate Student Association as appropriate. The Faculty Senate president, or his/her designee from the executive board, shall be an ex officio member of each council.

**Sec. 8.** Councils shall hold regularly scheduled meetings at least in September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May.

## **Article IX: Amendments**

**Sec. 1.** An amendment to this constitution may be proposed at any regular meeting of the Senate by a majority vote of the membership, provided a copy of the proposed amendment has been presented to each member in attendance at the immediately preceding regular meeting.

**Sec. 2.** Any amendment proposed by the Senate shall be submitted to a vote of the faculty. Each faculty member shall be notified at least two weeks in advance of such a vote and at the time be furnished with a copy of the proposed amendment.

**Sec. 3.** An amendment to this constitution shall become effective upon approval by a majority of the members of the faculty voting on the proposed amendment, by the president of the University, and by the Board of Trustees of the University.

## **Article X: Ratification**

**Sec. 1.** This constitution and bylaws, after approval by a majority of the membership of the Faculty Senate, shall be submitted to the faculty at a regular or special election. The Senate shall provide each member of the faculty with a copy of this constitution and bylaws at least thirty days before the election.



**Sec. 2.** This constitution and bylaws shall be considered ratified upon approval by a majority of the members of the faculty, by the president of the University, and by the Board of Trustees of the University.

Amendments:

Article II: 2014

Article III: 1999, 2002 and 2007

Article IV: 1981, 1984, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2014, and 2021

Article V: 1998, 1999, 2001, 2005, 2014, and 2021

Article VI: 1999 and 2014

Article VII: 1986, 1996, 1999 and 2014

Article VIII: 1980, 1986, 1987, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2014, and 2021

Article IX: deleted 1996

Article X: 1980, and renumbered IX, 1996

Article XI: renumbered X, 1996

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