

William Paterson University  
Faculty Senate  
Senator Information Packet

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## Introduction

Congratulations on your election to the University Faculty Senate. We are grateful for your willingness to serve and contribute to shared governance at our institution.

This Senator Information Packet is designed to provide you with a clear overview of your responsibilities, the structure and processes of the Senate, and the resources available to help you fulfill your role effectively. We encourage you to review it carefully and refer back to it throughout your term.

Thank you for joining us in this important work. We look forward to your engagement and perspective in the year ahead.

## Purpose

This Senator Information Packet serves as a practical guide to help you navigate your responsibilities as a member of the Faculty Senate. Inside, you will find an overview of core

senator duties, expectations for meeting attendance, and guidance on designating proxy representatives when necessary. The packet also introduces the fundamentals of parliamentary procedures to ensure meetings run efficiently and fairly.

In addition, it outlines the essential role the Senate plays in shared governance, providing context for how your contributions support collaboration, transparency, and informed decision-making across the university. This resource is intended to support you throughout your term and to help you participate confidently and effectively in Senate work.

## Senator Responsibilities

- Attendance
  - Meeting Attendance- Senators are required to attend all Senate meetings. Senators are required to attend in-person, unless the meeting has been changed to an online venue. Senators who miss more than Three (3) meetings without designating a Proxy or Five (5) meetings with designating a Proxy during an academic year will lose membership within the senate and be ineligible for reelection for the unexpired term.
  - Proxy Attendance- If a Senator is unable to attend in-person, they must find an alternate to attend in their place and inform the Senate Chair of their chosen Proxy prior to the meeting. Proxy must be a member of the same constituency as the Senator.
  - Voting- Senators not attending in-person meetings, or attending meetings virtually when the meeting is held in-person are not entitled to vote and are marked absent.
- Reading Meeting Packets- Senators are responsible for attending Senate meetings prepared to conduct the business of the Senate. This requires them to read the Senate Packets prior to Senate meetings. Packets are posted at least 7 days prior to scheduled Senate meetings.
- Reporting to your Constituency- Senators are responsible for reporting Senate activities to their constituencies.
- Familiarity with Parliamentary Procedures- Senators should be versed in Parliamentary Procedures and understand rules and procedures to actively participate in Senate business.
- Constituency representation- Senators are responsible for bringing the voice of their constituency to the Senate.

## Senate Role in Shared Governance

It is important to understand the Faculty Senate's role in Shared Governance in order to properly execute your responsibilities as a Senator. As Constituted, the Faculty Senate is primarily a recommending body. The specific Functions and Role of the Senate are outlined in the Faculty Senate Constitution, specifically Art. IV Functions. There are two important terms to understand in terms of Senate Functions; "Recommend" and "Participate". These are defined in the "Terms" section of this document, but they outline the specific role the Senate plays in matters of Shared Governance.

- Curricular Role in Shared Governance
  - The primary function of the Faculty Senate is related to the University Curriculum. The senate has a formal Role in the Recommendation process of the academic curriculum.
- Advisory Role in University Governance
  - The Senate has a broad stroke in terms of its Advisory role. As outlined the Senate can advise and recommend policies on any matter of university concern. BUT this does not mean the Senate has an active Role as a recommending body for every policy developed or enacted at the institution. In some cases, the Senate's role is only participatory.
- Excluded areas of Senate participation- The Senate Constitution outlines that the Senate may NOT formulate policies for consideration related to matters of negotiated terms or conditions of employment.

## Governance & Elections Council Support

The Governance & Elections Council is charged to "delineate the role of the Faculty Senate in Shared Governance" (Fac Senate Bylaws Art II, Sec.II.8.b.1). The Council is available to support Senators in understanding the governance structure of the Senate, and provide guidance on the Senate's role in Shared Governance.

## Governing Documents & Links

**Constitution-** <https://www.wpunj.edu/senate/constitution.html>

**Bylaws-** <https://www.wpunj.edu/senate/senate-by-laws.html>

**Parliamentary Procedures** <https://www.wpunj.edu/senate/Senate-Constitution-Bylaws/Parliamentary%20Procedure%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>

Faculty Senate Website <https://www.wpunj.edu/senate/>

## Terms & Definitions

**Ad-Hoc Committee-** Bodies created by the Senate to carry out very specific charges within a very short time. Ad-Hoc Committees are limited to the duration of the Senate term which they were created, but can be extended by the newly elected Senate. Faculty Senate Bylaws Art. II Sec. III

**Constituency-** an area whose voters elect a representative to a legislative body. Constituencies are outlined in Art I. of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

**Councils-** Standing bodies created by the Senate to assist the Senate to carry out its functions. Council structures and roles are outlined in the Faculty Senate Bylaws Art.II. Sec.II

**Ex-Officio (Voting & Non-voting)-**From the Latin “by virtue of the office”. Members of the Faculty Senate or Faculty Senate Councils, who are members of the body via their respective roles at the institution. Ex-Officio members can be voting or non-voting members as outlined within the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

**Members-** Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Faculty Librarians, Professional staff who have been elected as representatives to the Faculty Senate by their constituency.

**Participate (Senate role)-** to be actively involved in the process. The functions of the Faculty Senate are outlined in Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

**Proxy-** An individual designated to represent a Senator during an absence. Proxy representatives hold the same rights and privileges as elected members of the Senate during their service as a Proxy and must be a member of the same constituency of the Senator. See Article I Sec.II.3b.v Faculty Senate Bylaws.

**Quorum-** Minimum number of members required to conduct business. The Senate requires an absolute majority of “voting members” present to have a quorum.

**Recommend (Senate role)-** formally advises or proposes a course of action to the appropriate decision-making authority. In matters of curriculum, the Faculty Senate is a required step in the process. The functions of the Faculty Senate are outlined in Article IV of the Faculty Senate Constitution.

**Robert’s Rules-** a set of outlined procedures for the conducting of meetings. Unless otherwise superseded by the Faculty Senate Constitution or Bylaws, Senate

meetings are conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. A Parliamentarian is often chosen from within the Senate or as an Ex-Officio non-voting member to advise the chair on parliamentary rules and procedures.

**SEC- Senate Executive Committee-** Consists of Six (6) members of the Senate, elected by the Senate Body. Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Three (3) At-Large. See Cons Art IV. Executive Committee.

**Shared Governance-** refers to the joint responsibility of faculty, administrations, and governing boards to govern colleges and universities ([AAUP- What is Shared Governance?](#)). The Senate is delineated with a role in certain areas of University governance and is prohibited from recommending or participating in certain areas of university governance. These areas can be found in the Faculty Senate Constitution Article IV. In brief, the Senate has an advisory role (recommend or participate) in all matters of university concern EXCEPT those dealing with matters of negotiated terms and conditions of employment which are prohibited by the Constitution.