



FACULTY GOVERNANCE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

~AN INVITATION~

1. Why should I participate in faculty governance?

The university is a living organism made up of many complex, interdependent systems. We are all essential members of one body. The more each of us knows about how the university works, the more effectively we can collaborate to make SPU an intellectually creative and spiritually dynamic space where everyone—students, faculty, staff and administration—will thrive. Here are some of the benefits of robust participation in faculty governance.

- **Holistic Institutional Awareness.** Being involved in governance helps faculty understand how the many different systems that constitute the university are intricately connected in support of our academic and spiritual mission. This understanding is the first step in imagining how the systems might become even more effective and how we might capitalize on the resources we have.
- **Silo Prevention.** Service in governance exposes faculty to how different departments and disciplines function on campus and within their guilds; it helps us understand the different learning opportunities each discipline offers, as well as the different resources faculty need to conduct their work.
- **Colleague Connections.** As the silos break down and faculty get to know more of their colleagues personally, there are increased opportunities for research collaboration, pedagogical enrichment and innovation, cross-disciplinary inspiration, and friendship.
- **Adaptive Problem Solving.** With a greater exposure to diverse experiences and perspectives, there is much greater potential for faculty to come up with creative solutions to conflicts and challenges that arise from within the university as well as from outside it.
- **Empowerment through Shared Governance.** Participating in governance gives faculty a more direct line of communication with university leadership, including the Deans, the Provost, the President, and the Board of Trustees. Faculty governance is one of the most effective ways to enact substantive change across the university.

~OPPORTUNITIES & EXPECTATIONS~

2. What are the different ways I can get involved in faculty governance?

- Familiarize yourself with the Faculty Bylaws and parliamentary procedure (See #4 & #13 below).
- Attend Faculty Senate, read the relevant materials, and participate in discussion (#13-14).
- Read the quarterly Board of Trustees reports (#21-22).
- Bring your questions, concerns and bright ideas to your Faculty Council Representative (#8)
- Serve on a faculty committee (#20).
- Serve on Faculty Council (#11).
- Run for Faculty Chair (#6)
- Read up on the topic of [shared governance](#) at the American Association of University Professors website.

3. What are SPU's expectations for participating in faculty governance?

- “All regular faculty are expected to attend department, school, and University faculty meetings. Regular faculty are also expected participate, from time to time, in the shared governance of the University by serving on Faculty Council, faculty committees, and task forces at the various levels of the University—department, school, faculty, and campus-wide. In light of the unique challenges faced by faculty newly hired to the tenure-track, they are not required or expected to serve on campus-wide faculty committees or task forces prior to pre-tenure review.” ([Faculty Employment Handbook](#), 6.6.1)

4. Where can I find detailed information about governance at SPU?

- SPU's "[The Gateway](#)" web page, hosted by the Provost's office, gathers several links essential for keeping up with the work of both faculty governance and administration. You can get to the Gateway from the Provost home or from the "Faculty & Staff" tab at mySPU.
- The **Faculty Governance Constitution**, commonly referred to as the "[Faculty Bylaws](#)," is technically part of the Faculty Employment Handbook but is set up as a separate document. Click on "Faculty & Employee Handbooks" at The Gateway. All parenthetical citations in this FAQ refer to the Bylaws unless otherwise noted.
- The latest version of this **Faculty Governance FAQ** can be found at the Gateway under "Faculty Council & Senate Materials."

~FACULTY CHAIR~

5. What are the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Chair? (Art. B-I, Sec. 3, C; Art. B-II, Sec. 1, B)

- Prepare substantive agendas and preside at meetings of Faculty Council and Faculty Senate; proofread and distribute minutes of Council and Senate meetings.
- Represent the Faculty on the President's Staff and to other bodies. The Chair functions as the voice of the faculty and a liaison between the faculty and 1) the board, 2) senior leadership, and 3) faculty governance committees.
- Report to the Board of Trustees at each quarterly board meeting.
- Convene and monitor the activities of standing faculty committees.
- Ensure that all activities of Council, committees, and Senate are communicated to the appropriate parties (faculty, President, Provost).
- Serve as ombudsperson when a faculty member is accused of an action that could lead to discipline or dismissal.

6. How can I serve as Faculty Chair?

- Each spring the Faculty Chair and Council solicit nominations for faculty governance positions that will be open the following year. Each Faculty Chair serves for three years—one year as Chair-Elect, one as Faculty Chair, and one as Immediate Past Chair. Let the Chair know of your interest in running for the Chair-Elect position.
- Faculty Chairs are always happy to talk about their experiences; you can find a list of past chairs at “Faculty Council & Senate Materials” on the Gateway.
- Faculty Chairs are granted course-release time for their second year of service.

~FACULTY COUNCIL~

7. What does Faculty Council do?

Faculty Council serves as the Executive Committee and the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate (Art. III, Sec. 4.; Art. B-II., Sec. 3, C) and is charged to

- Assist the Chair in setting the Senate agenda
- Nominate faculty to committees and to the offices of Chair-Elect, chair of Faculty Affairs and chair of Admissions, Advising, and Retention; make interim appointments; appoint a Parliamentarian.
- Maintain liaisons between faculty committees and Senate; recommend faculty responses to issues not addressed by committees; create *ad hoc* committees as needed.

- Recommend to Senate changes in faculty and all-University structures and procedures as appropriate.
- Negotiate annual goals for all faculty committees, with Provost and the Deans.
- Recommend and review policy implementation concerning campus and student life
- Monitor revisions of the Faculty Handbook, Constitution & Bylaws.

8. Who is my representative on Faculty Council?

- Each school has an elected representative on Council, along with the chairs of most faculty standing committees. See "[Faculty Committee Members & Materials](#)" on the Gateway.

9. Where can I find Faculty Council agendas and minutes?

- See "[Faculty Council & Senate Materials](#)" on the Gateway.

10. How do I get something on the Council agenda?

- Contact your Council representative.
- Contact the Faculty Chair directly.

11. How can I serve on Council?

- School representatives are typically nominated by each school dean. Let your dean know that you are interested in serving on Council. School representatives serve 2 years on Council.
- Faculty elected to the Faculty Chair position serve three years on Council.
- You can also serve on Council by serving as chair for one of the following committees: Admissions, Advising & Retention; Assessment; Diversity; Faculty Affairs; Graduate Curriculum; Undergraduate Curriculum. Committee chairs serve on council for the length of their term as chairs (one or two years, depending on committee).

~FACULTY SENATE~

12. What is the role of Faculty Senate at SPU?

Faculty Senate consists of all faculty members at SPU (not just representatives). It is "the corporate voice of the Faculty in governance" (Art. III, Sec. 6). Our **primary responsibility** (subject to approval by the President) is to

- Recommend and implement policy and practice for curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction; research; faculty status, evaluation, promotion and tenure; and student life matters related to education (Art I).

Faculty Senate also has a **shared responsibility** (along with other components of the university and subject to approval by the President) to

- Develop policy regarding student affairs; business affairs; public affairs; long-range planning; and intercollegiate athletics.

Faculty Senate is also charged to

- Provide meaningful and informed advice on any changes to the University's basic academic structure proposed by the President. (Art. III, Sec. 7)
- Elect the Senate officers (Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair), Council members, and standing faculty committee members. (Art. III.3.)
- Approve changes to the Faculty Handbook proposed by Council or standing faculty committees.
- Approve faculty constitutional amendments. (Art. V)

Faculty Senate has also traditionally been a place where colleagues

- Hold conversational debate about specific opportunities and challenges facing the university.
- Hear updates from faculty governance leaders and administrators.

13. How can I participate in Senate discussions and debates?

- Senate discussions are governed by the latest Robert's Rules of Order, and a Parliamentarian is appointed by the Faculty Chair each year with the advice and consent of Faculty Council (Art. B-II, Sec. 1, G). For a general guide to the rules, see "**Parliamentary Procedure 101**" in "[Faculty Council & Senate Materials](#)" on the Gateway.

14. Who can vote in Faculty Senate?

- All members of the faculty may vote (Art. III, Sec. 6). Faculty members are defined as the President, full-time and continuing part-time faculty, librarians, associates of the faculty who have been granted voting privileges by Senate, and the following administrators: Provost, Deans, Dean of Students, University Librarian (see Art. II Sec. 1 and 2).
- If you are an associate of the faculty and you would like to gain voting privileges, see Art. B-II, Sec. 1, A ("Membership") for the nomination procedure. Associates are defined as emeriti, part-time instructors, visiting faculty, and administrative officers or professional staff who are not already defined as members.

15. Where can I find Faculty Senate agendas and minutes?

- Go to "[Faculty Council & Senate Materials](#)" on the Gateway.

16. How do I get something on the Senate agenda?

The Faculty Chair determines the agenda, assisted by Council and subject to Provost approval. You can propose Senate agenda items in multiple ways:

- Contact your Council representative.
- Contact the Faculty Chair.
- Propose agenda items through Faculty Council, as either a faculty standing committee or any group of ten faculty members. (Art. B-II, Sec. 1, F)

17. How do I call a special meeting of Faculty Senate?

- If a pressing Senate issue arises outside of the regularly scheduled Senate meetings for the year, a special meeting of Senate may be called by the President, the Provost, or the Chair of the Faculty upon written request of at least 15 Senate members. (Art. B-II, Sec. 1, D)
- A "Faculty Forum" may be convened apart from the regular Senate schedule to discuss issues of primary or shared responsibility, although no official business or official votes can be conducted in a forum. Any standing or *ad hoc* committee, or any group of six or more faculty, may request permission from Council to hold a Forum. (Art. B-II, Sec. 1, H)

~FACULTY COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES~

18. Where can I find a list of current faculty committee members?

- Go to "[Faculty Committee Members & Materials](#)" on the Gateway.

19. Where can I find information about the responsibilities and current activities of various faculty committees?

- For descriptions of committee responsibilities, see Art. B-II, Sec. 6 "Committee Structure" in the [Faculty Bylaws](#). Several committees have also posted their committee charge on their Sharepoint site, accessible through the "[Faculty Committee Members & Materials](#)" button on the Gateway.
- When you click on the name of a committee in the list of members, you will be directed to a site that contains that committee's past and current agendas, minutes, reports and other materials. The work of some committees (such as Faculty Status) and some task forces is restricted.

20. How can I serve on a committee?

- Each spring the Faculty Chair will solicit nominations for various open committee positions. You can also check the Faculty Committee Member list on the Gateway to see whose terms are expiring and where the vacancies will be. Let the chair know of your interest for a particular position.
- To get an understanding of the purposes, current projects and time commitment for a specific committee you are interested in, contact the committee chair.

~BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORTS~

21. Why should I read the Board of Trustees Reports that the President alludes to every quarter?

- The Board reports are prepared by administrators in charge of every area of the university, including admissions, enrollment/marketing, academic affairs, inclusive excellence, budget and finance, facilities, student life and ministries, and advancement. The board report provides the most comprehensive cross-section of the state of the university. All the different areas and systems of the university are interconnected, and the more informed faculty are about what is happening in each area, the better equipped we will be to further SPU's mission both inside and outside the classroom.

22. Where can I find past Board of Trustees Reports?

- Go to "[Board of Trustees Reports](#)" on the Gateway.