



“SO YOU’VE DECIDED TO BECOME A FACULTY SENATOR”

THE FULLERTON COLLEGE FACULTY SENATE, A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

Like many institutions of self-rule, the FC Faculty Senate has a written Constitution and Bylaws, which every Senator should read at least once in their lifetime.¹ But even these farsighted and capacious documents do not contain everything a Senator needs to know about serving on the Senate. Aside from the written rules there are procedures, customs, habits, and idiosyncrasies. What follows is an attempt to document them accurately. The Senate is a collective effort and so is this document. We welcome editorial comments or suggestions.

Meetings

The Senate meets twice a month on the first and third Thursdays. Occasionally, a month will have a fifth Thursday. The Senate does not *have* to meet on the fifth Thursday but it *might* decide to meet then. The advantage of meeting on the fifth Thursday is that it avoids going three long weeks between meetings. The disadvantage of meeting on the fifth Thursday is that it means having meetings on back-to-back weeks (since the Thursday after the fifth Thursday will always be a first Thursday).

Meetings begin at 3:00P and the plan is always to end the meeting at 5:00P—plan subject to change.

The Senate meets in Room 1246 in the southwest corner of the 1200 Building. Room 1246 is also known as “The Faculty Lounge,” although historians can find no evidence of faculty members engaging in any activity in this room that would qualify as “lounging.” Room 1246 features such amenities as the Kitchen, the Wall of Presidents, the Faculty Senate Office and Beverage Fridge, and fun chairs with rollers. The Faculty Senate neither encourages nor condones wagering on chair races.

Senate meetings have a long tradition of self-catering. In other words, Senators sign up on a rotation to bring food and beverages, which helps the Senate maintain a quorum from 3:00P to 5:00P.

¹ <http://facultysenate.fullcoll.edu/bylaws-and-constitution/>

When you arrive at a Senate meeting, please initial next to your name on the attendance sheet on the credenza. When you sign in, it helps the secretary record your presence in the minutes. Should you be mistakenly marked absent you can correct the record before the Senate approves the minutes at the next meeting. If you really were absent but somehow got credit for attending the last meeting then just keep quiet and maybe nobody will notice.

The Senate Executives

Sitting on the north side of Room 1246, below the wall of photos of past Senate presidents, are the Senate Executives, a.k.a. the “Senate Execs.” Execs consist of the president, treasurer, curriculum chair, and secretary. The fifth member of the Execs varies by year. One year it will be the president-elect. The next year it will be the past-president. It’s useful to think of the hyphenated presidents as vice-presidents. They fill in for the president when they are absent, attend most of the same College and District meetings as the president, and run the elections portion of Senate meetings. Each hyphenated president used to be, or is about to become, the unhyphenated president. It rotates like this:

- Year 1: president₁ + past-president (who was president last year)**
- Year 2: president₁ + president-elect (The past-president is now out of office.)**
- Year 3: president₂ (formerly president-elect) + past president (formerly president)**
- Year 4: president₂ + newly-elected president-elect**

It’s a little bit confusing. Each person who gets elected president is basically signing up for a four-year gig: one year as president-elect, two years as president, one year as past president.

The job descriptions of the Execs are self-explanatory. The president presides over Senate meetings and attends lots of other meetings. The curriculum chair runs the Curriculum Committee and reports to the District and the Board of Trustees. The treasurer keeps track of the Senate budget and the food and drink schedule. The secretary records, makes, and distributes the agenda, the minutes, and other information items. Senate Exec elections are held every spring and are open to any full-time faculty member. For generations, parents have inspired their children by telling them, “Someday, maybe you will become the Fullerton College Faculty Senate President.”

Senate Execs attend Senate meetings every first and third (and the odd fifth) Thursday. On the second and fourth Thursday they meet as a group to set the agenda for the following week’s Senate meeting. Then they meet with the College President’s Staff to discuss issues.

The Other People in the Room

There is at least one Senator representing each academic Division on campus, no matter how small. Divisions with more full-time faculty members have more Senators representing them, counting by fifteens. So, when a Division gets at least 16 full-time

faculty members, it gets a second Senate rep. When it reaches 31, it gets a third. When it reaches 46, a fourth; 61, a fifth; 76, a sixth. And that's as big as we've gotten so far. There are also five at-large Senators (from any division) and two part-time faculty Senators (also from any division). The Senate Constitution limits the total number of Senators from any one division to six, including regular, at-large, and part-time reps. Associated Students also have reps on the Faculty Senate. Add that all up and you will observe about 40 Senators "lounging" in the Faculty Lounge twice a month.

Also in the room are usually some guests and interested parties, such as College administrators, managers, faculty members, classified professionals, students, and members of the public. The agenda goes out three days in advance of each Senate meeting. Many people read the agenda and decide they want to attend the Senate meeting. Maybe they heard someone is bringing cookies.

The Agenda

As mentioned above, the Execs set the agenda one week before each meeting of the full Senate. Anyone can suggest an agenda item, but the Execs finalize the agenda. The secretary emails and posts the agenda on the Monday before a Thursday meeting.² If you like having a paper copy of the agenda, then please print one. The Execs are trying to reduce paper use. There might also be some additional readings sent out in advance of the Thursday meeting. Execs attempt to get these to Senators in a timely fashion. It is homework, but it will make the meeting run more efficiently if all Senators read the material—and perhaps discuss action items with their constituents—before the meeting begins.

Parliamentary procedure

Officially, the Execs run meetings according to the gold standard meeting-holding bible since 1876, *Robert's Rules of Order*. In reality, the Execs are often learning *Robert's Rules* as they go along, so please expect Senate meetings to veer into brief discussions of what-happens-next or what-did-we-just-do. At the very least, the Execs seek approvals of the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda of the current meeting. This makes Senate meetings at least nominally legitimate. If you are hoping for a master class in parliamentary procedure, please consult Volume III of Robert Caro's engrossing biography of Lyndon Johnson.³

That said, Execs will make a good faith effort to run meetings in a democratic, collegial spirit. The purpose of following parliamentary procedure is to make sure that the Senate conducts business fairly and openly, that everyone has a chance to speak, and that mistakes are usually fixable. If the Execs sometimes run roughshod over

² By state law, the agenda must be published by 3:00P on Monday. This is due to California's 1953 Brown Act, a "sunshine law" that requires public agencies to hold public meetings. Interestingly, the Brown Act was not named after Gov. Edmund "Pat" Brown (1959-67), nor after Gov. Jerry Brown (1975-83, 2011-19), nor after Assembly Speaker Willie Brown (1980-95), but after Assembly Member Ralph Milton Brown (1943-61) of the 30th State Assembly District—Salinas Valley and environs. Who knew?

³ Robert Caro, *Master of the Senate: The Years of Lyndon Johnson, Vol. III* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).

centuries of Anglo-American common law, then please be assured that it is usually by accident. Senate Execs appreciate it when Senators remind them of proper procedures during meetings, as long as they are not too snarky about it.⁴

Public comments

Fullerton College Faculty Senate meetings fall under the Brown Act, so they are open to the public. Anyone may speak during the public comments period as long as they keep it under three minutes.

Reports

It is a confounding aspect of modern life that a chunk of every meeting is devoted to talking about what happened at other meetings.⁵ The president tells senators about what happened at the various District, College, and State Academic Senate meetings that they recently attended. Their job is to draw attention to items therein that faculty members might want to notice or discuss.

The curriculum chair reports on recent Curriculum Committee developments (and especially deadlines). The treasurer rules the budget and the food and beverage schedule with an iron fist. As needed, chairs of Senate committees may also give reports to the Senate, and sometimes ask the Senate to decide an issue.

At each meeting there are also brief reports from the faculty's collective bargaining units, United Faculty (UF) and Adjunct Faculty United (AdFac).

Elections

The Senate's first job is to elect itself. Senators serve two-year terms. Regular Senators represent academic divisions. The Senate Bylaws and Constitution lay out a full procedure for sending out secret ballots to all full-time faculty members of each division, then tabulating and publishing the result. In practice, this procedure has usually not been necessary. Divisions have developed their own internal systems for electing their reps.⁶ (The systems may involve a certain amount of begging and pleading for volunteers to step forward.) So far, this method of Senator-election has proven non-controversial. Should controversy arise, the Execs can fall back on the secret ballot procedures outlined in Senate scriptures.

There are also two Senate seats for part-time faculty. Just like Senate division reps, they serve two-year terms, staggered so that they overlap. Each fall there is one

⁴ There is a Grandfather Clause to this statement. Former Senate President Joe Carrithers is allowed to be as snarky as he likes when pointing out the Senate Execs' procedural errors.

⁵ This is probably an unavoidable efficiency, since no one person can attend *every* meeting. But still, the mind reels.

⁶ For obvious reasons this system of internal deliberation among division faculty is not how at-large Senators are elected, since they can come from any division and are meant to represent all faculty and not just their own divisions. To get on the ballot, a candidate for at-large Senator must gather at least 10 signatures from full-time faculty members. All of the full-time faculty then vote by paper ballot.

open seat for a part-time Senator.⁷ The Execs will send out a call for candidates. Candidates will submit a written statement for Senators to read. The savvy candidate will attend a Senate meeting to give a brief speech. The Senate then votes by paper ballot at the first October meeting.

Like any self-respecting deliberative body, the Senate has lots of committees. It is the Senate's job to elect faculty members to serve on all college committees. Some of these committees have one faculty rep from each academic division. Just like in the paragraph before last, the Bylaws and Constitution describe a cumbersome process for electing committee reps, but Senators much prefer to allow divisions to deliberate internally, then inform the Senate of their nominee. Usually, one nominee per division appears on the ballot and the Senate affirms the choice of the division faculty.

So, are we done with elections? Not a by long shot. In addition to the Senate committees, there are several committees that report to the President's Advisory Council (PAC) and they all have faculty reps elected by the Senate. Wait, there's more! The District has committees, too. On some District committees, the Faculty Senate president and hyphenated president represent the Fullerton College faculty. The curriculum chair represents FC faculty on the District Curriculum Coordinating Committee. But there are also a few committees with seats open to faculty reps elected by the Senate.

To sum up, each Senate meeting has a lot of elections on the ballot. Bring a pen. However, the Senate approved a procedure in spring of 2019 to expedite the election process and to help ensure that seats on College committees are filled. The procedure is as follows: Positions on Senate committees become "At-large" after two elections have occurred without any nominees.

Unfinished Business

As the name implies, if an item appears on the agenda under Unfinished Business, then it has been carried over from a previous Senate meeting (either because it was in the process of being considered when the last meeting adjourned, or because we ran out of time and could not get to the item in a previous meeting). Execs are usually eager to have the Senate discuss and decide Unfinished Business items so that they do not pile up.

New Business

As the name implies, these items are appearing on the agenda for the first time, or at least for the first time in a long while. The Execs make the list of New Business items one week before the full Senate meeting. Suggestions for these items come from the Execs' own judgment, the College President's Staff, and from anyone else who gets their suggestion to the Execs at least three days in advance of the full Senate meeting, i.e., the Monday 3:00P Brown Act deadline.

⁷ Or two. Sometimes, a part-time instructor becomes a full-time instructor in the middle of his or her term as Senator. The Senate elects a replacement part-time faculty member to serve out the term of the departing rep.

Senators discuss new business items one at a time and take action on each item (or move to postpone the item to another meeting). When the Senate acts, it must be by majority vote of a quorum of senators (50% +1). The action will appear in the minutes, which, again, Senators will have a chance to review and approve before the next meeting. According to the Brown Act, the ballots have to reflect which Senators voted yea, voted nay, or abstained.

Between meetings

Although official Senate actions can only take place at Senate meetings, Senators are allowed and encouraged to talk to each other between meetings. Senate Execs frequently meet with faculty members to address issues and hear concerns. All Senators should inform their constituents of the latest Senate news and solicit input from their colleagues. Most divisions have regular meetings and each one should include a time for Senators to inform their division colleagues about current issues before the Senate. If your division is not in the habit of making this part of regular division meetings, kindly request that it start doing so. Also, as a representative of your division, make yourself available to your division colleagues who are serving on College and District committees. They may be discussing issues and making decisions that your division faculty members are dying to hear about. Please encourage those committee members to join you in making regular reports at division meetings, or at the very least, keeping the division faculty members informed via email.

*** WARNING: This paragraph contains an abrupt shift in tone. The period of time between meetings is really **one of the most important aspects of being a Senator**. At least 90% of all problems that erupt on campus start, or are made much worse, by poor communication. How many times have you heard this? “When was that decided? Why wasn’t I informed? Where did I put my pitchfork?” Even though we all possess advanced degrees attesting to our superior communication skills, this is still a large college with a large faculty. Faculty need to be informed early and often. Please assist in this effort by keeping your division colleagues apprised of what the Senate is discussing and what it may soon be deciding. This also applies to any committees you might be serving on.

Senators should inform their division faculty when there are vacancies on the Senate or on a committee. As described above, Senate elections rely on divisions to put qualified nominees (or, sometimes, *anyone with a pulse who is willing to serve*) on the ballot, so please encourage your divisional colleagues to pay attention to filling vacancies. Also remember that a negative consequence to leaving a seat vacant is that it will eventually revert to an at-large seat, meaning your division just lost a rep on the Senate or on a Senate committee.

You will know that the next Senate meeting is getting closer when you begin to receive emails from the secretary and the hyphenated president informing you of the upcoming agenda, the unapproved minutes, and the elections ballot. The tension and excitement build and build until finally it is 3:00P Thursday and the president’s gavel has banged the Senate meeting into session. That sound means it is time to enjoy a beverage and a snack. It is time to lounge in the Faculty Lounge.

Glossary and Abbreviations Guide

Senate Execs are often too busy to say entire words, so they rely on an acronym-heavy shorthand to bewilder novices. Fear not. With a little study and practice you can learn the ways of these people and speak the lingo.

ACCJC	Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
AdFac	Adjunct Faculty United, union for part-time NOCCCD faculty members
AS	Associated Students of Fullerton College
ASCCC	Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (in Sacramento)
BOT	Board of Trustees, 2 nd /4 th Tue, 5:30P, Anaheim Campus
CBF	Council on Budget and Facilities, 2 nd Mon, 2:00P, Anaheim Campus
CSEA	California School Employees Assn., union for classified professionals
CSLOs	Course-level Student Learning Outcomes
CTE	Career/Technical Education
DCC	District Coordinating Council, 4 th Mon 2:00P, Anaheim Campus
DCCC	District Curriculum Coordinating Comm., 2 nd Fri, 1:30P, Anaheim Campus
DE	Distance Education (on-line and hybrid classes)
DEAC	Distance Education Advisory Committee (pronounced DEE-ACK)
DEMAC	District Enrollment Management Advisory Committee
EEOAC	Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee
FTEF	Full-Time Equivalent Faculty member
FTES	Full-Time Equivalent Student
GP	Guided Pathways
IECC	Institutional Effectiveness Coordinating Council, 3 rd Mon, 3:30P, Anaheim
IEPI	Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative
IREC	Institutional Research and Effectiveness Committee
ISLOs	Institutional Student Learning Outcomes
LLRISPS	Library/Learning Resources, Instructional Support Programs and Services (Back in the day, this division was known by the quaint name “the Library.”)
PAC	President’s Advisory Council, 2 nd /4 th Wed 2:00P
PBSC	Planning & Budget Steering Committee (part of PAC), 1 st /3 rd Wed 2:00P
PSLOs	Program-level Student Learning Outcomes
SEAC	Student Equity and Achievement Committee (pronounced SEE-ACK)
SSSP	Student Success and Support Program
SWI	Strong Workforce Initiative
UF	United Faculty, union for full-time NOCCCD faculty members
WSCH	Weekly Student Contact Hour