



## **Lamar Institute of Technology**

### **Charter and Bylaws of the Faculty Senate**

#### **I. Charter of the Faculty Senate**

##### **A. Purpose and Scope**

1. The Faculty Senate of LIT shall serve as the official body responsible for ascertaining and relaying the advice and opinions of faculty, including providing information concerning the faculty opinions and recommendations to LIT administration on matters related to the general welfare of LIT.
2. Senate deliberation and/or recommendations may result from either a request for advice and opinions by the administration or from a request by a member of the faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate shall represent the entire faculty of the College and may make recommendations to the appropriate official on any matters it considers to be of concern to the welfare of the faculty.
3. A Faculty Senate is advisory only and may not be delegated the final decision-making authority on any matter.
4. The Faculty Senate shall adopt rules for establishing a quorum.
5. The Faculty Senate may not issue any statement or publish a report using LIT's seal, trademark, or resources funded by LIT on any matter not directly related to the senate's duties to advise LIT's administration.
6. The Faculty Senate operates within the framework of shared governance, as defined in Texas law. Shared governance structures may not be used to obstruct, delay, or undermine necessary institutional reforms or serve as a mechanism for advancing ideological or political agendas.
7. Under Texas law, the provisions of Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110 (relating to state agency advisory committees) do not apply to a faculty senate established by the TSUS Board of Regents.

#### **II. Senate election procedure**

- ##### **A. The Faculty Senate shall be organized as an advisory body (council) to the administration and may not be delegated the final decision-making authority on any matter.**
1. The President will appoint one faculty member from each academic department.
    - a. The faculty members appointed by the President may serve up to six consecutive one-year terms and then may only be reappointed after the second anniversary of the last day of the faculty member's most recent term.
    - b. Service on the Faculty Senate is an additional duty of the faculty member's employment. Members of the Faculty Senate are not entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses for their role as members unless the expense is on behalf of and approved by LIT.
    - c. The presiding officer shall preside over meetings of the Faculty Senate and represent the Faculty Senate in official communications with LIT and system administration.
    - d. Only faculty members may be members of the Faculty Senate.

- e. Faculty Senate shall establish a process or guidelines for member elections.
- f. Faculty Senate shall establish a process for filling a mid-term vacancy for an elected member.
- g. Faculty Senate shall establish roles/duties for the other officers.
- 2. Faculty Senate membership is limited to not more than 60 members with at least two representatives from each academic department consisting of: one member appointed by the President and the remaining member elected by a vote of the faculty of the member's respective department.
  - a. A member of the Faculty Senate elected by a vote of the faculty serves a two-year term, staggered in a manner that allows approximately half of the elected members to be elected each year, and may only be reelected after the second anniversary of the last day of the member's most recent term.
  - b. For departments with fewer than two (2) full-time faculty members, consideration will be given to ensure equitable and appropriate departmental representation.
  - c. In cases where all of the faculty members of a single department decline to self-nominate to serve in the Faculty Senate, the Provost will appoint a faculty member to serve as that department's representative.
- 3. Removal of a member of the Faculty Senate:
  - a. A faculty member serving on the Faculty Senate may be immediately removed from the Faculty Senate for:
    - i. Failing to conduct the members' responsibilities within the Faculty Senate's parameters,
    - ii. Failing to attend Faculty Senate meetings, or
    - iii. Engaging in other similar misconduct.
  - b. A member of the Faculty Senate may be removed on recommendation of the LIT's Provost and approval by the President.
- III. Initiative and Referendum
  - A. Twenty percent of the voting faculty may petition the Faculty Senate to place a specific proposal on its agenda. The Faculty Senate shall give full consideration to such proposals and, if appropriate, may forward recommendations to the President or administration. Any faculty-wide vote conducted under this process shall be advisory in nature and nonbinding, serving only to inform the President and/or administration of the Faculty Senate's recommendations.
- IV. Structure and Organization
  - A. Voting Faculty
    - 1. The voting faculty shall consist of all full-time faculty who have completed at least one academic year, excluding individuals whose administrative assignments warrant half-time or more of release time, and also excluding Academic Department Chairs and all other administrators above that level. The eligible voters shall constitute the voting faculty.
  - B. Eligibility for Membership
    - 1. All members of the voting faculty shall be eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate.
  - C. Bylaws of the Faculty Senate – included for faculty information only and not part of LIT's policy.
  - D. Meetings

1. The Faculty Senate shall conduct meetings at which a quorum is present in a location and manner that is open to the public and in accordance with procedures established by LIT policy.
2. The Faculty Senate must post on LIT's website, at a URL designated by LIT, not later than the seventh day before a Faculty Senate meeting: (1) an agenda for the meeting with sufficient detail to indicate the items that are to be discussed or that will be subject to a vote; and (2) any curriculum proposals reviewed by the Faculty Senate that will be discussed or voted on at the meeting. Final curriculum decisions follow LIT's established curriculum development process and does not require approval by the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate shall broadcast over the Internet, at a URL designated by LIT, live video and audio of each Faculty Senate meeting if more than fifty percent of the members are in attendance. The Faculty Senate shall adopt rules for establishing a quorum.
3. Bylaws may be adopted or amended by majority vote but must be proposed at the meeting prior to the vote.
  - a. The Faculty Senate shall determine a regular meeting place, hour, and day for its monthly meetings. Meetings are scheduled once per month, September through May, on a date and at a time set by a majority of the voting member of the Senate.
4. Minutes of the Faculty Senate shall be sent to all LIT faculty and administrators.
5. The Faculty Senate shall meet at other times on the request of the President or on the written request of at least three members of the Faculty Senate.
- E. In accordance with HB 37 guidelines, the following shall be made available to the public on LIT's website not later than the seventh day before a meeting of the Faculty Senate:
  1. An agenda for the meeting with sufficient detail to indicate the items that are to be discussed or that will be subject to a vote; and
  2. Any curriculum proposals reviewed by the Faculty Senate that will be discussed or voted on at the meeting.
- F. The names of the members in attendance must be recorded at a meeting in which the Faculty Senate conducts business related to:
  1. A vote of no confidence regarding a LIT or System administrator; or
  2. Policies related to curriculum and academic standards.
- G. This section may not be construed to limit a faculty member from exercising the faculty member's right to freedom of association protected by the United States Constitution or Texas Constitution.
- H. The Senate President may appoint Senate committees on particular matter related to the welfare of LIT.
- I. The President or a majority of the Faculty Senate may call special meetings at other times, including summers, or change the date of scheduled meetings.
  1. A quorum will consist of a simple majority of the voting members of the Faculty Senate.
  2. Any visiting Faculty Senate representatives of Lamar University, Lamar State College Port Arthur, and Lamar State College Orange shall have the right to speak from the floor but not to vote.
- J. Officers
  1. The Faculty Senate Officers shall consist of a President, a Vice President, and Secretary, all of whom shall be appointed by the President.

2. Eligible voters will elect Senators for the upcoming fall semester if a term has expired or has been vacated from their corresponding department. Voting shall be by secret ballot. (The department with the exiting “elected” senator does need to vote on a replacement).
  3. Faculty Senators elected by their colleagues shall be chosen by secret ballot within each department when a term has expired or a vacancy occurs. This process applies only to the faculty-elected members from each department. The additional Senate member from each department shall be appointed by the President, in accordance with statute.
  4. Faculty elected senators will be voted on in the Fall semester prior to the first meeting.
- K. Duties of Officers
1. The Faculty Senate President shall preside at all meetings, appoint committees, and serve as the official representative of the Faculty Senate in situations where such representation is necessary or desirable. With the Vice President and the Secretary, the Faculty Senate President shall set priorities for the monthly agenda. The Vice President shall carry out all duties of the Faculty Senate President in the event the Faculty Senate President is absent.
  2. The Secretary shall write and distribute minutes and announcements, be responsible for general correspondence, and be custodial of all Senate records, policies, and proceedings. In the absence of both a Faculty Senate President and Vice President, the Secretary shall preside as interim Faculty Senate President until a Faculty Senate President is appointed. The Secretary shall issue the call for election of faculty elected Senate members shall receive results of the elections.
- L. Agenda. An agenda for each regular meeting shall be established and distributed or made available to Faculty Senate members as far in advance as possible but not less than seven days in advance of the proposed date of the regular meeting. New business not included on the agenda for a Faculty Senate meeting may be introduced at the Faculty Senate meeting, but no action shall be taken on the matter until a later meeting. A formal agenda is not necessary when a special meeting for emergency discussion and action is called.
- M. Voting. Each Senator, including the officers, shall have one vote. Senators shall be regarded as either present or absent; there shall be no substitutes and no proxies. A quorum shall be a simple majority.
- N. Procedures. In all circumstances not covered by the Charter or the Bylaws, Sturgis’ Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure shall prevail.
- O. No decision-making authority in hiring. A faculty member who does not serve in an administrative leadership position at LIT may not have final decision-making authority on the hiring of an individual for any faculty or administrative leadership position at LIT.