

Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws

(Effective 2025-2026 with BOG approvals 2015-2025)

Preamble

In order to promote the general welfare of the Missouri State University-West Plains community, to effect communication within the faculty, and between the faculty and the administration, the students, the alumni and the Board of Governors; and in order to provide a means of collective action of the faculty in dealing with matters of concern to the faculty, including matters of curriculum, this Constitution of the Faculty governance is affirmed.

Article I: Creation of the Faculty Senate

Faculty governance at Missouri State University-West Plains shall be defined to include the creation of the Faculty Senate.

Article II: Purpose of the Faculty Senate

The function of the Faculty Senate shall be to handle curricular items, to provide a forum for the discussion of the faculty concerns, and to communicate these concerns to the university community.

Article III: Powers of the Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate shall have the power to establish policy in the areas of authority assigned to the faculty in the bylaws of the Board of Governors and for such other areas or problems as may be assigned to it by the chancellor or the Board of Governors. The Faculty Senate shall have the power to initiate action in such curricular and non-curricular matters as it deems fit, or in such matters as are brought to its attention by one or more members of the faculty. Every Senate action is subject to challenge by individuals of the faculty and subject to final approval by the chancellor and, when necessary, by the Board of Governors.

Article IV: Membership of the Faculty Senate

Each person currently teaching a course for Missouri State University-West Plains is welcome to attend the meetings of the Faculty Senate, unless the voting members decide to have a closed session. Ranked faculty and lecturers have voting privileges. In addition, the per-course faculty may elect one voting representative. One representative of the Student Government Association shall serve as an ex-officio member. A chairperson, chairperson-elect and secretary serve as the officers of the Senate. Several standing committees have been established by the Faculty Senate. (See bylaws of the Faculty Senate.)

Article V: Officers of the Faculty Senate

The officers of the Faculty Senate shall consist of the chairperson, the chairperson-elect, and the secretary.

Article VI: Meetings of the Faculty Senate

During the regular academic year, the Faculty Senate shall be scheduled to meet bimonthly or as the Chancellor or Senate chairperson deems necessary.

Article VII: Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern meetings of the Faculty Senate and established committees of the Faculty Senate in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the bylaws.

Article VIII: Amendment of Constitution

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by two-thirds of the Faculty Senate. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson thirty (30) days prior to their being voted upon. The date set by the Faculty Senate to vote on such proposed amendment(s) shall be the earliest practical date to occur during a regular school semester.

Voting shall be by secret ballot conducted through electronic means. The Faculty Senate Chair (or Secretary) will distribute within two (2) school days an electronic link to the voting members of the Faculty Senate. The voting members will then have six (6) school days to submit their electronic ballot. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will determine and convey the results.

An affirmative vote equal to three-fourths of the Faculty Senate members shall be necessary to make a proposed amendment part of this constitution.

Bylaws

Article I: Faculty Senate

Section 1: Membership of Faculty Senate

Each person currently teaching a course for Missouri State University-West Plains is welcome to attend the meetings of the Faculty Senate, unless the voting members decide to have a closed session. Ranked faculty and lecturers have voting privileges. In addition, the per-course faculty may elect one voting representative. One representative of the Student Government Association shall serve as an ex-officio member. A chairperson, chairperson-elect and secretary serve as the officers of the Senate. Several standing committees have been established by the Faculty Senate.

1. *The Per-Course Faculty Senate Representative shall:*
 - a. Attend meetings of the Faculty Senate.
 - b. Represent the needs of the per-course faculty to the Faculty Senate.
 - c. Keep the per-course informed of Faculty Senate matters via monthly correspondences.
 - d. Serve on at least one Faculty Senate Standing Committee.
2. *The Student Government Faculty Senate Representative shall:*
 - a. Attend meetings of the faculty senate.
 - b. Represent the needs of the students to the Faculty Senate.
 - c. Keep the Student Government Association informed of Faculty Senate matters.

Section 2: Election of Officers of Faculty Senate

1. *Annual General Election of Officers of Faculty Senate* The annual general election of officers shall be conducted at the May meeting. Nominations for chairperson-elect and Secretary shall be submitted on or before April 15.
2. *Voting in Annual General Election*
 - a. Method of voting. Voted ballots may be returned to the secretary prior to the vote at the May meeting. If there are more than two candidates for an office, voting shall be by secret ballot conducted through electronic means. The Faculty Senate Chair (or Secretary) will distribute within two (2) school days an electronic link to the voting members of the Faculty Senate. The voting members will then have six (6) school days to submit their electronic ballot.
 - b. Counting Ballots. The current Faculty Senate Executive Committee shall count the ballots and report the results of the election to the assembled body.
 - c. Ties in Election. In the case of a tie, a run-off election will occur at the May meeting.
3. *Terms of Service*
 - a. The chairperson-elect shall become chairperson after serving a one-year term.
 - b. The secretary shall serve a one-year term and shall be eligible to serve two consecutive terms but following the second term shall not be eligible to serve until after the lapse of an intervening year.
4. *Removal of Executive Committee from office* the removal of a Chair, Chair-Elect, or Secretary of the Faculty Senate from office is initiated by submitting a petition signed by at least 25% of the voting Faculty Senate membership; at that time the issue shall be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate session. The office will become vacant if a two-thirds

vote approves the motion to remove the officer and such votes account for at least a majority of the voting senate.

5. *Filling Vacancies of Officers*

- a. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of chairperson, the chairperson-elect shall become chairperson.
- b. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of chairperson-elect, the Faculty Senate shall elect a new chairperson-elect at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate. Notification of the pending election shall be made as a part of the agenda for the meeting.
- c. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of secretary, the Faculty Senate shall elect a new Secretary at the next meeting of the Faculty Senate. Notification of the pending election shall be made as part of the agenda for the meeting.

6. *Time for Taking Office* Newly elected officers of the Faculty Senate shall take office following the Spring Commencement.

7. *Election of Student Representative* The representative of the Student Government Association (SGA) shall be chosen in a manner deemed appropriate by the SGA.

8. *Term of Service for Student Representative* The student representative shall serve a one-year term but may serve two (2) consecutive terms.

9. *Election of Per-Course Representative* At the beginning of the fall semester, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) will ask each division to nominate at least one per-course instructor to serve as the per-course representative to Faculty Senate. Nominations will be due to the FSEC by September 1. The FSEC will then interview all nominees and make the final selection. There shall be no limit to the number of terms this representative may serve.

Section 3: Duties of the Officers of the Faculty Senate

1. *The Chairperson of the Faculty Senate*

- a. Shall preside at all meetings of the Faculty Senate.
- b. Shall supervise the functioning of the Faculty Senate and its established committees.
- c. Shall prepare an agenda for each meeting of the Faculty Senate.
- d. Shall appoint the chairpersons and members of the Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate.
- e. Shall organize and appoint ad hoc committees as necessary.
- f. Shall represent the faculty to the administration and to the Board of Governors.
- g. Shall be an ex-officio member of all faculty committees.
- h. Shall receive a 3 credit-hour course reduction during the fall and spring semesters of their term. (2022)

2. *The Chairperson-elect of the Faculty Senate*

- a. Shall preside at meetings of the Faculty Senate, in the absence of the Chairperson.
- b. Shall assist in supervision of the working of the Faculty Senate in such manner as directed by the Faculty Senate or by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate.
- c. May be appointed to be chairperson of a standing committee or ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate.

3. The Past-Chairperson of the Faculty Senate (2022)

- a. Shall ensure implementation of business approved by Faculty Senate (and Administration and Board of Governors) during their tenure as faculty chair. This includes updating and distributing the Faculty Handbook, Constitution and Bylaws with the revisions as approved by the Administration and Board of Governors at the June meeting following term as Chairperson.
- b. Shall represent the faculty to the Board of Governors at the June meeting following term as Chairperson.
- c. Shall be a voting member of the Faculty Senate and may be appointed to be a chairperson of a standing committee or ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate.

4. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

- a. Shall serve as secretary of the Faculty Senate.
- b. Shall preside at meetings of the Faculty Senate in the absence of both the chairperson and the chairperson-elect of the Faculty Senate.
- c. Shall keep accurate minutes of the faculty meetings including the recording of motions and the votes thereon.
- d. Shall publish for the faculty the minutes of the faculty meetings.
- e. Shall publish for the faculty a synopsis of Senate actions and of curricular matters forwarded to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.
- f. Shall supervise elections of Faculty Senate officers.
- g. Shall be a voting member of the Faculty Senate.

5. The Executive Council The elected officers of the Faculty Senate shall serve as the Executive Council of the Faculty Senate. The duties of this council shall include:

- a. Participating in the curricular process as described in Article II, Section 4.
- b. Advising the chairperson of the Faculty Senate in preparing the agenda for meetings of the Faculty Senate.
- c. Assisting in the supervision of the working of the Faculty Senate in such manner as directed by the Faculty Senate or by the chairperson.
- d. Preparing, revising, and supervising the use of forms in the faculty governance process.
- e. Providing a forum to facilitate communication between the Faculty Senate and the administration.
- f. Appointing either a member of the Executive Council or a member of the Faculty Senate to serve as Parliamentarian. (2019)

Section 4: Meetings of the Faculty Senate

1. *Schedule* In addition to the organizational meeting of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate shall be scheduled to meet at least once a month during the academic year at a time and place fixed by the Faculty Senate. A specific Faculty Senate meeting may be omitted if agenda items do not justify a meeting. The Faculty Senate shall meet at other times (including the summer session) upon the call of the chairperson or a chairperson-designate, upon the written request to the chairperson of a simple majority of the voting members of the Faculty Senate, or upon the written request of the chancellor or the Board of Governors. The chairperson shall schedule a requested meeting within five (5) school days after receipt of the request.

2. Attendance

All full-time faculty members are expected to regularly attend and actively participate in meetings of the Faculty Senate as well as the committees to which they are appointed. Faculty members unable to attend meetings for an entire semester (or longer) must notify the Faculty Senate Secretary, their Dean and the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, prior to the start of the semester, so that they will not be counted in the calculation of quorum.

If extenuating/emergency circumstances prevent physical attendance from a specific Faculty Senate meeting and reasonable prior notice is given, faculty members may request the Faculty Senate Chair to provide an electronic/remote conferencing arrangement.

Any accommodations or modifications for attendance due to a disability must be approved through the process managed by the Deputy Compliance Officer. Participation via electronic/remote conferencing can be made available if this is an approved accommodation. For more information on workplace accommodations, please contact DeputyComplianceOfficer@missouristate.edu.

Unless the faculty vote to move to a closed session, meetings of the Faculty Senate and its established committees are open to members of the Board of Governors, the Administration, the Faculty, Staff, student body, and others by invitation of the chairperson.

3. Quorum The minimum number of voting members of the faculty Senate who must be present at a properly called meeting to conduct business shall be most of the current eligible voting faculty membership. See section 1.5 of the Faculty Handbook for the definition of voting members. The office of Academic Affairs will supply the Faculty Senate Chair with the official number of voting members by August 15th.

4. Time

- a. The time, the date, and the place of all meetings of the Faculty Senate and its established committees shall be announced by written notice at least three days prior to the meeting.
- b. The announcements of all meetings of Faculty Senate bodies shall be made through the office of Academic Affairs.

5. Agenda

- a. A Faculty Senate meeting agenda shall be sent to each member of the Faculty Senate, the academic dean, and the chancellor at least three days prior to the meeting. The agenda may be amended at the Faculty Senate meeting by the approval of a simple majority of the voting members present. Once approved, a two-thirds vote of the voting members present will be required to make any change to the agenda. (2019)
- b. Any proposal to be voted on at a Faculty Senate meeting shall be submitted to each Senator at least ten days prior to the meeting in which it is on the agenda. Proposals, if possible, should be presented in written form. It is also desirable for proposals and resolutions to be developed and perfected by one of the Faculty Senate's Standing Committees prior to being presented to the Faculty Senate.
- c. Proposals for Faculty Senate action which have not been previously distributed as part of the agenda may be considered at Faculty Senate meetings in one of two ways:
 1. with an approving vote of two-thirds of the entire Faculty Senate; or

2. with a simple majority vote of the voting members present, the proposal(s) may be tabled for a vote to be held during a special Faculty Senate Meeting within 10 to 14 days. The Faculty Senate Secretary will notify all voting members of the day and time of this special meeting and will supply the proposal(s) in writing.

This does not change the procedure for approving amendments to bylaws as described in Article III of these bylaws. (2019)

d. The agenda of all Faculty Senate standing committees shall be submitted to the chairperson at the time a request for publication of an announcement of the meeting is made.

6. Voting

a. Any member of the Faculty Senate may move for a roll call or ballot vote, and if that motion is supported by twenty percent (20%) of the voting members present, the vote by the designated method (roll call or ballot) shall be taken. If a ballot vote is called for, the Faculty Senate Secretary will distribute within two (2) school days an electronic link to the voting members of the Faculty Senate. The voting members will then have six (6) school days to submit their electronic ballot. The Faculty Senate Secretary will determine and convey the results.

b. Any non-faculty member, including administrators with or without faculty rank, attending a meeting of the Faculty Senate, or any established committee of the Faculty Senate may speak with the consent of the chairperson of the group involved. These persons shall have no vote.

7. Minutes

a. The Faculty Senate Chairperson shall send copies of the unapproved minutes of the Faculty Senate to the Faculty and the administration with the agenda of the next meeting. This report must contain a record of the actions approved by the Faculty Senate as well as approved resolutions and committee reports. The minutes shall be available to all interested parties.

b. The chairperson of each Faculty Senate committee shall forward copies of agendas, minutes, or other committee documents to the Faculty Senate Chairperson and/or Secretary to be placed in the electronic file kept by Faculty Senate. These documents shall be available to all interested parties.

Section 5: Actions and Resolutions of Faculty Senate

1. *Actions*, as perfected and passed by the Faculty Senate, represent the collective reasoning of the faculty through its governance process as to policies and procedures to be followed by the University and are communicated to the administration for approval and implementation.

a. The secretary shall forward any Senate action to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs who shall, within ten (10) calendar days, forward the action to the Chancellor with recommendation to approve or not approve.

b. The chancellor shall, within twenty (20) calendar days after receipt of the Action, report to the Faculty Senate chairperson a decision to:

- i. Approve and implement at the appropriate time.
 - ii. Request an extension of sixty (60) calendar days to gather additional information prior to making the final decision. Said decision shall be forwarded to the Faculty Senate chairperson within ten (10) calendar days after the sixty (60) day extension period expires.
 - iii. Reject, stating reasons and/or recommending changes.
- c. The Faculty Senate, upon receipt of a Senate action rejected by the chancellor may:
 - i. Direct the chairperson of the Faculty Senate to place the rejected action on the agenda for the next Senate meeting for deliberation and initiation of action as herein stated.
 - ii. Approve by a simple majority a revision of the action and submit the revised version of the action to the academic dean who, in turn, shall forward it to the chancellor, with recommendation.
 - iii. Support the initial Senate action by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members and request that the Faculty Senate chairperson present the action directly to the Board of Governors for consideration and action.
 - iv. Direct the chairperson of the Faculty Senate to discontinue consideration of the action.
- 2. *Resolutions passed by the Faculty Senate* state the collective reasoning of the Faculty Senate on specific issues and shall be forwarded for information to the appropriate administrators.
- 3. *Faculty Senate Reports to the Board of Governors* may include:
 - a. Reports on current Faculty Senate activities including Senate actions or Committee studies.
 - b. Resolutions passed by the Faculty Senate.
 - c. Senate actions that have been rejected twice by the chancellor and once by the president of the University but have subsequently passed a two-thirds Faculty Senate vote.
 - d. Senate actions not acted upon by the chancellor.
- 4. *Items to be Presented to the Board of Governors* Items shall be submitted by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and the Chancellor at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors.

Section 6: Committees of the Faculty Senate

- 1. Standing Committees
 - a. *Curriculum Committee* shall meet monthly to review curricular proposals (e.g., course (2019), certificate, or program additions, revisions, or deletions) and submit recommended proposals to the Faculty Senate. Membership shall consist of ranked faculty members as appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate and ad hoc members to include the Registrar and Coordinator of Student Services Systems (2019). In addition, the Student Government Association will be invited to appoint a non-voting student representative.
 - b. *Faculty Evaluation Committee* shall discharge the following duties:
 - i. Annually review all policies, procedures, and instruments for evaluation of faculty and submit recommended changes to the Faculty Senate.
 - ii. Set dates for student evaluations of faculty and advisors (in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs). (2019)

Membership shall consist of ranked faculty members as appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate. In addition, the Student Government Association will be invited to appoint a non-voting student representative.

- c. *Assessment Committee* shall work with campus constituencies to (2019) :
- i. Develop and maintain assessment process to evaluate student learning at the course, program, and institutional level.
 - ii. Inform and cooperate with the Curriculum Committee on all assessment processes and report to the full Faculty Senate.
 - iii. Guide and administer the Academic Program Review process each semester with the assistance of the Academic Affairs Office.
 - iv. Monitors programs for financial viability and work with administration in program review budget inquiries.
 - v. Collect and evaluate graduate assessment data.
 - vi. Document and share assessment data with campus constituents, each year.

Voting membership shall consist of ranked faculty members, as appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate. Additional members shall include the following:

- i. Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
- ii. Testing Coordinator
- iii. Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs
- iv. A member of the Student Government Association

d. *Faculty Handbook Revision Committee* shall ensure the Faculty Handbook reflects the policies and procedures as agreed to by the Faculty Senate and approved by the administration and Board of Governors.

Membership shall consist of ranked faculty members as appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate. In addition, the Student Government Association will be invited to appoint a non-voting student representative.

e. *Public Affairs Committee* shall create and/or promote events, activities, and related programs on our campus with the goal to promote ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement. (2019) Membership shall consist of ranked faculty members as appointed by the chairperson of the Faculty Senate. In addition, the Student Government Association will be invited to appoint a non-voting student representative.

2. *Ad Hoc Committees* to carry on the work of the Faculty Senate, ad hoc committees may be organized from time to time on the initiative of the chairperson or as directed by the Faculty Senate.

a. Purpose

Upon activation of a specific committee, the chairperson of the Faculty Senate shall prepare a specific charge for the committee and include the form and timing of the response requested.

b. Membership appointed by the chairperson.

c. Reporting of Committees

The chairperson of each Faculty Senate Committee shall report directly to the chairperson of the Faculty Senate, and, normally, the chairperson of the committee shall

present a committee report when it is on the agenda for a meeting of the Faculty Senate.

3. *Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs* shall be appointed by the Faculty Senate Chair. Chairs may serve indefinitely, but at the beginning of each academic year, the incoming Faculty Senate Chair has the option to appoint a new chair. (2019) The chairs of standing committees may request an equivalent 3-credit hour teaching load reduction during the academic year in which they serve. Each chair in consultation with their Department Chair and Dean shall decide how to distribute the teaching load reduction over the academic year. (2022)

Article II: Curricular Process

Section 1: Responsibility for Curricular Matters

The responsibility for curricular matters at Missouri State University-West Plains is assigned to the Faculty Senate of Missouri State University-West Plains by the Board of Governors. Faculty action in curricular matters is subject to approval and implementation by the academic dean, the chancellor and where necessary by the Board of Governors. The Curriculum Committee meets the third week (2019) of each month when classes are in session unless holidays pre-empt it or an additional meeting is needed.

Section 2: Structures in Curricular Process

Curricular matters shall be acted upon by the Curriculum Committee. Proposals originate with ranked faculty who have curricular responsibility for the course, certificate, or program under consideration. Proposals move from that faculty member to the department chair for initial approval. If approved, they are forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for consideration no later than 5 pm on the second Friday of the month. (2019)

Section 3: Responsibility of the Secretary of the Faculty Senate

The secretary of the Faculty Senate shall work with the Faculty Senate Chair and the Curriculum Committee Chair to ensure that approved curricular proposals progress through the electronic process. Additionally, the secretary will ensure that minutes of the Curriculum Committee are attached to the appropriate Faculty Senate Minutes.

Section 4: Responsibility of Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate

The Executive Committee shall have authority to recommend to the Faculty Senate new curricular programs or alterations (including deletion or addition) to existing courses or programs which have been proposed by the Curriculum Committee.

Section 5: Responsibility of Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate shall consider and act only on those curricular proposals acted upon by the Curriculum Committee.

Section 6: Responsibility of Administration

All curricular actions approved by the Faculty Senate or through its established bodies shall be forwarded to the academic dean by the secretary.

Article III: Amendment of Bylaws

Amendments of the bylaws may be proposed by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate or upon petition of most of the voting members of the Faculty Senate. Such proposed amendments shall be submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee thirty (30) days prior to being voted upon. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Ballots shall be prepared and distributed by the Secretary. An affirmative vote equal to a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of the Faculty Senate shall be necessary to make a proposed amendment part of these bylaws.