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## SENATE COMMITTEE OPERATING GUIDELINES

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### INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out key principles and general guidelines for Senate committee operations, except where specifically provided for in a committee's terms of reference.

The Senate will establish such Standing Committees as it determines necessary from time to time and may create ad hoc committees or working groups to address specific or time-limited projects.

### PRINCIPLES

The primary purpose of committees is to allow for focused discussion and concentration in key areas of Senate responsibility and to advise, assist and support the Senate in carrying out its work. Committees may also be asked to advise university leadership and administration on certain matters.

Committees generally review, monitor and recommend matters and policies for deliberation and decision-making by the Senate. Each committee is accountable to the Senate. While not bound by committee recommendations, the Senate considers the detailed review undertaken by committees and their recommendations and advice.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE/MANDATES

The Senate establishes terms of reference for each Senate committee and may delegate specified powers, responsibilities and decisions. Senate committees will aim to review their corresponding terms of reference annually or at least every two or three years.

### MEMBERSHIP

Each Committee will have at least five members, and may have ex officio members, unless otherwise specified in the Committee's terms of reference.

Committee members serve two-year terms, except:

- Student Senators, who serve one-year terms; and
- Executive Committee members, who serve one-year terms.

Elections are confirmed annually by the Senate based on recommendations from the Senate Nominations Committee.

## **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Committee chairs work collaboratively with committee members and the designated administrative lead(s) of the committee to fulfill the committee's mandate.

Committee chairs:

- Help to ensure the Committee operates within its approved terms of reference
- Work with the University Secretariat, academic leadership and others to promote alignment of the committee's work with the Senate's responsibilities and core objectives of the University
- Lead and preside over committee meetings
- Encourage participation by all committee members, promote full consideration of issues, balanced discussion and understanding of issues
- Provide and support reporting on the committee's activities to the Senate
- Perform additional specific responsibilities that may be assigned to a committee chair in a committee mandate or a governance policy

## **RESOURCES**

Each Committee is supported by a designated staff resource, which will be provided for in a committee's terms of reference. Additional staff support and resources will be assigned accordingly.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **General**

An annual schedule of Senate and Senate Committee meetings will be established. Generally, committees meet as often as necessary to carry out their responsibilities and at least quarterly. On occasion, meeting dates may be changed, and additional meetings called at short notice. Any changes to meeting dates will be communicated to members in advance.

Senate Committees may hold joint meetings, particularly where there may be shared areas of responsibility. Joint meetings may be determined by Committee chairs, and in consultation with the University Secretary, Senate Administrative Coordinator, Chair of Senate, and Vice Chair of Senate.

### **Workplans**

As much as possible, Committees will aim to organize their work, meetings, and responsibilities according to an annual workplan which may consist of regularly recurring activities and other identified priorities for a given year.

### **Agenda**

Draft agendas are prepared by the designated staff resource in consultation with the committee chair, who approves the agenda for distribution to committee members. The Senate Chair, the Vice President, Academic + Provost, and academic leadership may also be consulted. The University Secretariat may also assist with the agenda setting process.

Agendas may be revised before or at the start of a committee meeting, with the agreement of the committee members.

### **Meeting Materials**

Committee meeting materials should be read in advance of meetings.

All materials submitted for committee consideration become part of the official Senate record and will be maintained by the University Secretariat.

### **Meeting Logistics**

Committee meetings may be held in person, entirely by video or teleconference, or in a hybrid format.

Members attending virtually are considered present and counted toward quorum.

### **Attendance and Observers**

[This section is currently in abeyance, effective December 10, 2025, pending completion of review by Senate Governance Committee.]

Committee meetings are attended by committee members and the designated committee resource(s).

The committee chair, in consultation with the designated committee resource(s) may invite guests to attend all or part of a meeting to assist with or inform committee discussions.

### **Meeting Procedures**

The following sets out general procedures for committee meetings, unless otherwise specified in the committee's mandate:

- Quorum is a majority of committee members/or voting members as set out in a committee terms of reference
- Only committee members who are voting members may move, second, and vote on motions
- Resolutions or matters arising at a meeting are decided by a simple majority of votes from members present and entitled to vote, unless a different threshold is required

### **Minutes**

Minutes are required for all committee meetings.

Approved minutes of committee meetings are the official record of committee deliberations and decisions.

Minutes include the date, time, and location of the meeting; attendance of committee members and any guests; a summary of the discussion; and a record of formal actions, recommendations, and resolutions. Opinions or views expressed during committee discussions are not typically recorded.

The committee chair receives draft minutes for review. Minutes are generally approved at the next committee meeting or by electronic/email vote when necessary.

### **Senate Reports**

As much as practicable, at each Senate meeting, committee chairs will provide a verbal or written report summarizing:

- The committee's recent activities since the last Senate meeting/report
- Items presented for Senate discussion, consideration and/or approval
- Upcoming matters on the committee's agenda/workplan

Reports, whether written or verbal, should be clear, focused, and provide the Senate with relevant updates on the committee's work.

Committees periodically provide recommendations to the Senate related to their respective mandates. Recommendations should also be clear and focused, providing an analysis of the information, alternatives considered, potential risks, and alignment with the Senate's role, and broader University academic and strategic priorities (for example, as may be set out in strategic documents such as a strategic plan, academic plan/s, research plan/s and other plans).

While the Senate is not bound by committee recommendations, it operates on the principle that committees assist in conducting the Senate's work efficiently and effectively.

### **EXTERNAL ADVISORS**

Committees may consult external advisors and experts on matters within their mandate, as deemed appropriate by the Senate. Any related expenses will require advance approval of Senate and/or the University Secretariat, as applicable.