

**ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY SENATE**

**CONSTITUTION**

[August 2017]

**ARTICLE I. PREAMBLE**

We, the faculty of Roger Williams University, in order to affirm and promote strong faculty governance and ensure faculty participation in university affairs, hereby establish this constitution of the Roger Williams University Faculty Senate.

To this end:

- (1) The Faculty Senate may take up any matter that it judges to be in the professional interests of the RWU faculty.
  
- (2) Proposals, resolutions and recommendations of the Faculty Senate shall be brought to the attention of the RWU President, Provost, appropriate dean, or other members of the University administration, as the matter requires. They shall be requested to respond to the Senate in reasonable time. The Senate Executive Committee shall report regularly to the Senate on such responses.

**ARTICLE II. COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE**

The Faculty Senate shall comprise tenure-track and tenured faculty, and lecturers (hereafter “faculty”) elected by faculty for two-year terms as herein provided. In addition, each school and division, as enumerated below, shall have one Senate representative for each ten faculty within the school or division. Notwithstanding this requirement, each school or division shall have at least one representative. The recognized schools and divisions are:

School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation  
School of Continuing Studies  
FCAS School of Humanities, Arts, and Education  
FCAS School of Social and Natural Sciences  
School of Engineering, Computing and Construction Management  
Gabelli School of Business  
School of Justice Studies  
Division of Librarians and Counsellors

The Senate may, by majority vote: (1) withdraw recognition if a school or division is eliminated, or has no faculty assigned to it, or is merged with another school or division; (2) recognize a newly established school or division; (3) change faculty representation on the standing committees in response to organizational changes.

### **ARTICLE III. ELECTION OF SENATORS**

(1) Election of Senators shall take place within the schools and divisions by April 1. Their two-year terms shall begin July 1, and shall end June 30 two years hence. Elections of Senators shall be staggered so that one half of the membership is elected each year. A vacancy arising during a Senator's term of office shall be filled by an election in the school or division wherein the vacancy arose, or if a Senator-at-large, then by a general election. Elections shall be run by the Elections Committee.

(2) Senators representing a school or division shall hold appointments in that school or division. Faculty holding joint appointments shall represent only the school or division in which they do the majority of their teaching.

(3) The President shall convene the newly elected Senate on or before May 15. At that meeting, nominations shall be made for all Senate leadership positions, including President, Vice Presidents and Recording Secretary, and committee chairs. Senators nominated may make statements to the Senate at that time or by email preceding the election. By May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate Elections Committee shall conduct an election by e-ballot.

### **ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### (1) Officers

The officers of the Senate shall be the President, the Vice President for University Matters, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Recording Secretary.

(A) The President shall convene and preside over Senate meetings. In his or her absence, a Vice President shall preside. He or she shall not serve more than three consecutive terms. He or she may communicate directly with the Chair of the RWU Board of Trustees, such communications to be as needed and as instructed by the Senate or the Executive Committee.

(B) The Vice President for University Matters shall act as parliamentarian, and shall serve as liaison between the Executive Committee and standing committees whose primary duties include matters relating to diversity, faculty development, university life, and governance.

(C) The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall serve as liaison between the Executive Committee the standing committees whose primary duties include curriculum, academic standards and policies, and admissions and enrolment.

(D) The Recording Secretary shall coordinate communications for the Senate, including: (a) overseeing publication and distribution of minutes and reports; (b) maintaining Senate records, including the progress of proposed amendments; (c) overseeing the preparation and publication of the Senate calendar; and (d) maintaining a list of Senate motions awaiting resolution.

Officers shall be elected from among the members of the Senate and shall serve one-year terms beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

## (2) Executive Committee

(A) The officers shall comprise the Executive Committee.

(B) The Executive Committee shall prepare Senate agendas and minutes, which shall be published to the Senate and the faculty.

(C) The Executive Committee shall meet with the RWU President and the Provost, normally within ten days of a Senate meeting, to consult on Senate actions and to request cooperation in implementing those actions. The Executive Committee shall report to the Senate on these meetings either at the next regular Senate meeting, or by publishing minutes of the meetings, or both.

(D) The Executive Committee may take such actions as it determines to be necessary to take before the next regular Senate meeting. It shall report such actions to the Senate within three work days. The Executive Committee shall not take such actions unless in its judgment the actions cannot feasibly be delayed until the Senate meeting. It shall explain this to the Senate.

(E) When the RWU President or Provost requests that the Senate select faculty for various special committees, the Executive Committee may, but only if time presses, select such members on its own initiative and promptly report this to the Senate; or, it may request that the Senate select such members at a regular meeting. The selection shall normally be by election.

## **ARTICLE V. MEETINGS**

(1) The Senate shall hold regular meetings once each month from September through May, except January. Notice of date, time and place shall be sent to the RWU President and Provost and shall be published to all faculty. Special or emergency meetings may be called by the President or by 20% of the Senate membership.

(2) Meetings shall be open to all members of the university community, unless the Senate by majority vote calls the Senate into executive session, during which session only Senators may attend. The President may, at his or her discretion, place a vote to go into executive session on the agenda when another Senator has so requested before the meeting. That an executive session was held shall be recorded in the published Senate minutes, and shall include the general subject on which the executive session was held.

(3) Senate meetings shall proceed, and its business conducted, under the latest edition of *Roberts' Rules of Order*.

(4) 60% of Senators shall constitute a quorum for meeting, without which a meeting may not be held. A majority of Senators present and voting shall carry a motion or resolution, except when provided otherwise herein or in *Roberts' Rules*. Only Senators present at a meeting may vote. Proxy voting and substitutes are prohibited. Voting shall normally be by voice, except that the presiding officer may call for a show of hands and ask that the count be recorded. A vote shall be by ballot (closed) when any member so requests. Elections to offices and positions may be by electronic means. Motions and resolutions, however, shall be voted upon by Senators present at meetings, in the manner herein provided.

(5) Any Senator may introduce an agenda item or a motion. Senators introducing motions shall be so identified on agendas and in minutes. The Executive Committee may introduce agenda items or motions on its own initiative or at the request of the RWU President or Provost. Discussion on an item shall normally extend no more than ten minutes except by a ruling of the presiding officer, or by a motion extending debate for an additional ten minutes.

(6) Senators' attendance at meetings shall be recorded in the minutes. When a Senator has been absent at three regular meetings in one year, the Senator's seat shall be declared vacant.

(7) The Executive Committee shall prepare and publish an agenda no later than five work days before a Senate meeting (subject to updates as needed), and minutes within ten work days following a meeting. Minutes are subject to Senate review and amendment at the succeeding Senate meeting.

(8) The Executive Committee, or the Senate by majority vote, may call meetings of the all RWU full-time faculty (a "caucus"). Notice and agenda for such a meeting shall be published at least ten work days in advance of the meeting. The President shall preside at a caucus.

## **ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES**

(1) The Senate may create committees to conduct Senate business. Committees existing when this constitution is ratified shall continue to exist. Proposals to create or dissolve committees shall be published to the university faculty, normally through the Senate agenda, no less than one

week before the Senate votes on creation or dissolution. Committees shall be either permanent (“standing”) or ad hoc (“select”).

(A) *Permanent committees* shall continue in existence unless and until dissolved. Dissolution of a permanent committee shall be by majority vote of the Senate at two consecutive meetings.

Membership of permanent committees shall comprise one faculty member from each school and division. Committee members shall be elected to one-year terms. Chairs of permanent committees shall be Senators, and shall be elected annually by majority vote of the Senate. After a committee chair is elected, he or she shall proceed promptly to fill the empty committee seats, normally through electronic elections.

(B) *Ad hoc committees* shall be created either (1) for a time certain, or (2) to undertake specific tasks. Ad hoc committees shall continue in existence only (1) for the time designated, or (2) until the Senate has determined that the committee has accomplished its task, or (3) until the Senate has determined that the committee cannot or should not accomplish the task. After such time or upon such determination, the ad hoc committee shall be considered dissolved unless the Senate decides otherwise.

Membership and chairs of ad hoc committees shall be as the Senate determines.

(4) Committees shall develop and publish their policies and procedures. They shall publish agendas and minutes to all faculty promptly. The Senate shall review such minutes and acknowledge their acceptance at the next regular meeting of the Senate. Such acknowledgement normally validates decisions of a committee, and no decision or action of a committee is valid unless (1) it is published in its minutes and (2) it is subject to Senate review at a Senate meeting. The committee, however, may introduce a motion seeking a Senate vote on any decision it has reported to the Senate, in order to affirm or reinforce the decision. Any Senator may place a committee decision on the Senate agenda for discussion or vote.

## **ARTICLE VII. BYLAWS**

The Senate may create bylaws in support of the provisions of this Constitution, provided that no bylaw conflicts with any provision herein. The bylaws shall be created, and once created, amended, by a majority vote of Senate members present.

## **ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS**

An amendment to this constitution shall require (1) a two-thirds vote of Senate members present, and then (2) a majority vote of the university faculty, which vote may be electronic. Proposals to amend shall be published to the faculty at least five workdays before the Senate meeting and shall be placed on the Senate agenda.

**ARTICLE IX. RATIFICATION.**

This constitution shall take effect either upon ratification, or as soon thereafter as the Senate determines is most feasible.

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**Approved by the Senate: May 3, 2017**

**Ratified by the faculty: August 29, 2017**