

Faculty Senate Orientation

Welcome to new senators. This orientation briefly summarizes the role of the Senate and our normal operating procedures. In the interests of conservation, we have not distributed a voluminous briefing packet, because everything is readily available on the Faculty Senate web page, easily accessible from the Dean of the Faculties' page.

The FSU Constitution states:

The Faculty Senate shall be the basic legislative body of the University.

1. It shall formulate measures for the maintenance of a comprehensive educational policy and for the maximum utilization of the intellectual resources of the University.
2. It shall determine and define University-wide policies on academic matters, including Liberal Studies policy, admission, grading standards, and the requirements within which the several degrees may be granted.
3. As the elected body of the General Faculty, the Senate may also formulate its opinion upon any subject of interest to the University and adopt resolutions thereon.

Those words mean that you, as members of the Faculty Senate, are ultimately responsible for being the voice of the General Faculty, and also for ensuring the University's academic integrity and quality in terms of its students and their education here.

Please note the Agenda for the April 22 first meeting of the 2009-10 Faculty Senate. It has two items, numbers 3 and 4, which only occur once a year, at the first meeting in April. Otherwise, the form of the agenda never changes; after approval of minutes and agenda, there will be the report of the steering committee, usually delivered by its Vice-Chair, then reports of Standing Committees, when they either have something to report or an action they want the Senate to take; then any Special Order items, and then the self-explanatory items that follow.

The first meeting in April begins with election of the Senate President. This election always takes place with nominations invited from the floor and then the election, presided over by the member who has been President of the old Senate. The President's term is co-terminus with the Senate's, so the new President takes over immediately following the election. The President of the Senate is automatically a Trustee of the University, and also serves on many other boards and committees by virtue of the office, including the Foundation Board, the Athletic Committee, and the Council of Deans.

The next item is the election of the steering committee, which consists of seven members with staggered terms representing at least four Colleges, and which the senate President chairs. The steering committee meets weekly during the academic year, including monthly meetings with the University President and Provost; sets the agenda for the full Faculty Senate meetings; is the gatekeeper for proposals from other Senate committees; acts on behalf of the Senate between meetings; and advises the Senate President. It also proposes nominations for membership of Senate committees to the Senate, and proposes the names of faculty

candidates for membership on those University committees that it is requested or mandated to nominate members of, or that it thinks should have faculty representation. The steering committee elects its vice-chair itself, and the vice-chair prepares and delivers the report of the steering committee at each full Senate meeting.

One of the items you will receive at the first Senate meeting is a list of Senate standing committees, with an invitation to volunteer to serve on one of them, or nominate a colleague. The work of the faculty Senate is almost all in practice done by these standing committees, they then bring any actions that require full Senate approval to the full Senate, and report on their other activities to the full Senate at least once a year. Many of them are quite demanding of time and effort, but it is on these committees that one learns about the scope of faculty governance at Florida State University, and about the diversity and complexity of the University as a whole. Please, choose one or more that interests you and return the form to the Faculty Senate Coordinator, Melissa Crawford.