GSW Faculty Senate Handbook

GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY

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Bylaws of the Faculty Senate
Georgia Southwestern State University

Mission

The Georgia Southwestern State University Faculty Senate, along with the administrators of the university, is tasked with the duty of maintaining and improving academic standards and promoting the general success of the university. It is the highest faculty governance body at Georgia Southwestern State University. It also coordinates activities among the various college faculties as well as those that involve both the administration and faculty of the university.

The senate shall function as the official representative of the faculty in regard to all matters of significance to the faculty or any other matters which the administration brings before it. It shall also function in an advisory capacity directly to the president of the university.

In keeping with the mission of Georgia Southwestern State University, the purpose of the senate is to encourage academic excellence in teaching, service, and scholarship through the free exchange of ideas among the faculty, students, and staff of Georgia Southwestern State University. As such, the duties of the senate will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- To study, discuss, and recommend institutional objectives, policies, and procedures;
- To represent and advocate the concerns of the faculty;
- To be consulted as either a whole body or in appropriate committees on all policies, proposals, and problems of faculty concern, including such matters as the creation of new colleges, new campuses, and new departments;
- To maintain communication between the faculty and the administration;
- To make recommendations to the president as to the development, welfare, and morale of the faculty;
- To conduct research and review on matters of importance to the faculty and the general welfare of the university, including forming and charging committees;
- To maintain communication with Academic Affairs and the president's cabinet;
- To review and introduce changes in policy;
- To review and recommend university action with regard to changes in the world of higher education;
- To foster a cooperative spirit within university governance;
- • To strive to protect academic freedom, the faculty appointment and promotion processes, the tenure system, to promote fair pay and opportunities for advancement among faculty, and encourage excellence, inclusivity, and diversity within the faculty, student body, and university as a whole.
- To create, reconstruct, abolish, and oversee standing and ad-hoc faculty committees.

Meetings

The senate shall meet at least three times during each of the fall and spring terms. Such regular meetings shall be scheduled in advance to the extent possible. The senate president may, at this officer's discretion, convene additional special or emergency meetings. Additionally, the senate president should consider a written request for a special meeting from any of the following to be obligatory: a) a majority of voting senate members; b) the university president; and/or c) the university provost. Such a written request must specify the agenda item(s) for the meeting.

A majority of voting senate members shall constitute a quorum. While discussion may take place, business may not be conducted in the absence of a quorum unless a two-thirds majority of those present determines that an emergency condition exists.

The senate shall institute *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* to conduct business. Motions to suspend the rules require a two-thirds majority for adoption.

Voting

A majority of the votes cast is sufficient for the adoption of any motion that is in order, except for any which require a two-thirds vote. A plurality never adopts a motion nor elects anyone to office. The senate president may vote for, against, or choose to remain in abstention on any motions in which one additional vote alters the outcome.

Members who cannot be in attendance may not vote by proxy, but may choose to send a representative from their college in their stead. The elected member must inform the senate president of their representative's identity in advance of the meeting.

In the case of an emergency meeting which does not convene a quorum but must nevertheless conduct business, a two-thirds majority in favor is required to adopt a motion.

Voting outside of a regular meeting—for example by email—should be reserved for special circumstances, such as when a meeting does not make quorum. Two-thirds of the senate membership must respond to such votes for the outcome to be considered valid.

Membership

Membership to the faculty senate shall consist of fifteen representative faculty members and two ex-officio members.

The president of the university and the university provost/associate vice president for Academic Affairs shall serve as ex-officio members, with full voting privileges.

The fifteen faculty representatives shall be drawn from the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Computing, Education, and Nursing and Health Sciences in proportion to the faculty size of each college. Reapportionment shall be performed as needed every two years, with the representative counts for the following August being calculated based on the anticipated August faculty as of March 31st. For apportionment purposes, Vice-Presidents and Deans are not generally included in the faculty count.

Distribution of senators shall be determined according to the following algorithm.

1. Determine the faculty-to-representative ratio
   a. RepRatio = Number of faculty per senate representative
   b. FacTotal = total faculty across all colleges
   c. RepRatio = FacTotal/15
2. Assign any small colleges 1 representative
   a. IF (FacCollegeX < RepRatio), assign 1 rep
3. Distribute the remaining available representatives (AvailReps) to the remaining colleges

a. RepsCollegeY = (FacCollegeY/FacTotal)AvailReps
b. Based on the above calculation, colleges will be rounded to the nearest whole representative.
    i. If rounding leads to 14 representatives, the college closest to rounding up, rather than down, will be rounded up
    ii. If rounding leads to 16 representatives, the college closest to rounding down, rather than up, will be rounded down

Representative selection procedures within colleges are left to the discretion of college deans, but are recommended to be democratic.

Any full-time member of the corps of instruction holding academic rank shall be eligible to serve on the faculty senate. Administrators such as deans are not eligible representatives unless the college to be represented has only three or fewer faculty.

The term of service shall be two years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. After two consecutive terms, members are eligible for election again after two years out of service.

Officers

Positions and Duties: The officers of the faculty senate shall be the president, vice president, and secretary.

1. President: The president of the faculty senate shall preside at meetings of the senate and shall be responsible for preparing meeting agendas and distributing agenda materials no later than five days preceding any senate meeting. The president has unilateral authority to call meetings of the faculty senate, provided that–barring emergency conditions--sufficient notice of three days be given to all senators, and a reasonable attempt to accommodate members' schedules is made. The president shall also serve as the point person for communication between administration and the faculty senate on issues related to its charge, as well as between faculty senate and senate committee chairs, and will communicate relevant information from this communication to the senate as necessary. The senate president—or other faculty member approved by senate vote should the president decline the appointment—shall serve as the university representative to the University System of Georgia Faculty Counsil.
2. Vice President: The vice president shall preside over the faculty senate meetings in the absence of the president, and shall serve as president if, for any reason, the president becomes unable to serve. The vice president is encouraged to coordinate with the senate president in preparation for succeeding—if elected—to the presidency.
3. Secretary: The secretary shall keep minutes and records of all proceedings of the senate, as described in the documentation section of these bylaws, and shall provide these minutes to the president no later than 10 days after a faculty senate meeting, or sooner if requested by the president. The secretary will also submit the faculty senate minutes to the library.
4. Past President: The past president (i.e. the outgoing president) shall serve on the executive committee and shall advise the president and other officers on past practices, best practices, and general administration. If the past president is not also an elected member of the Senate, they will serve on the Senate as a non-voting member with otherwise equal rights of participation.

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Past President shall constitute an Executive Committee for strategic planning, crisis management, and internal consultation regarding time-sensitive or legally sensitive matters.

Elections: Officers shall be elected before the conclusion of the spring semester prior to the academic year in which they will officially serve. This will typically be the final spring meeting of the faculty senate that year; however, only senate members of the following academic year will be eligible to vote. Prior to these elections, all voting members (i.e. faculty senators for the next academic year) will be forwarded a copy of the duties and responsibilities of each officer position by the current secretary, as well as the faculty senate's election procedures.

1. President: The vote for president will be based on an "up-or-down" vote for the vice president to assume the office of president during the following year. If a majority declines to elect the vice president to the position of president—or the vice president for any reason cannot or is unwilling to serve—the nomination and election process will align with the procedures in the following section.
2. Officer elections: At least seven days prior to officer elections, the current president will contact all members of the next academic year's faculty senate to solicit nominations for vice president, secretary, and—if necessary—president. It is recommended, but not required, that nominees for the vice president have at least two years left on their senate term, whereas all members are eligible to serve as secretary. If, after five days of soliciting nominations, no members have been nominated for a position—and formally agreed to the nomination—the existing president will construct a ballot for those positions of at least three eligible members, each from a different college, and with preference for members entering their second-or-later year on the senate, and this will be the official ballot. If there is no majority vote for any candidate among votes cast, then a runoff including the top two candidates will determine the position.

Senate and officer transitions occur officially after the conclusion of the academic year on May 31. However, the period following the Spring General Faculty meeting should be approached as a transitional period with incoming officers being included on all relevant officer correspondence, meetings, and planning sessions. During this period, outgoing officers are expected to prepare incoming officers to assume their positions.

Committees

The faculty senate shall establish and have general oversight of standing and ad hoc committees of the university faculty. The university president shall appoint the members of the standing committees after considering the recommendations of the faculty senate, and committee members shall elect a chair. All standing committees are required to record agendas and minutes in accordance with the Georgia Open Meeting Act, and consistent with the requirements listed in the 'Documentation' section below. Standing committees shall report to the faculty senate at the general faculty meeting at the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters, and proir to each meeting shall submit a single report consisting of all committee agendas and minutes for that semester to the senate secretary. All ad hoc committees and subcommittees created by the faculty senate shall report to the faculty senate in accordance with its charge, and at the request of the president.

Bylaws

The bylaws of the faculty senate become effective when approved by a vote of at least two thirds of the members elected to serve on the Georgia Southwestern State University Faculty Senate. Any amendments initiating changes to the faculty handbook only become effective upon approval by full-faculty vote. The bylaws may be amended during any regular meeting of the faculty senate, provided that the proposed amendment was submitted in writing at least one week prior to the regularly-scheduled meeting at which it will be on the agenda. Approval of amendments requires a two-thirds vote. These bylaws and any amendment shall be effective upon approval.

Documentation

The secretary shall record the minutes of the faculty senate meeting and include the following:

1. Names of each faculty senator present in the meeting
2. Date, time, and location of the meeting
3. Description of each motion or other proposal made
4. Record of who made and seconded each motion
5. Record of all votes and abstentions
6. Any proxy at the meeting and the name of the senator they were attending for

Additionally, the secretary will forward a copy of the minutes to the library for archival purposes, and the president and secretary will coordinate to ensure that senate agendas and minutes are forwarded to the GSW website operator in a timely manner for public posting. At the conclusion of each semester, at the time of the general faculty meeting, the Secretary shall request documentation from each standing committee of all agendas and minutes from that semester in a single chronological file, and shall forward these documents to the GSW website operator for public posting.

A majority of the members of the faculty shall constitute a quorum of the University faculty.

ARTICLE IV

Faculty Organization

Section 1. Introductory Statement

To serve its recognized purposes, the University faculty elects the Faculty Senate and uses a committee system as follows: Committee on Academic Affairs, Committee on Business and Finance, Committee on Faculty Affairs, Committee on Graduate Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness Committee, Institutional Review Board, Instructional Technology Advisory Committee, Committee on Student Affairs, Faculty Development Committee, University Promotion and Tenure Committee, and Global Engagement and High Impact Practices Committee.

Section 2. The Faculty Senate

Purpose. [1]The purpose of the Faculty Senate shall be to constitute a body representative of the faculty, to advise the University on matters relative to the life of the University, and to facilitate the work of the faculty. It shall be representative of the faculty and may act on behalf of the faculty in specific areas when so authorized by the faculty. The Senate will serve as the Standing Faculty Committee on Committees and make recommendations on committee appointments to the President.

Officers. [2]A member of the Faculty Senate shall preside as the President of the Senate. The President and the Recording Secretary of the Senate will be elected annually by a quorum of members of the Faculty Senate by the end of the Spring Semester to serve for the following academic year. The President of the University and the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs will serve as ex-officio members of the Faculty Senate.

Senate Membership. Any full-time member of the corps of instruction holding academic rank shall be eligible for election to the Faculty Senate. The President and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be full voting members of the Faculty Senate. There will be fourteen members elected by the faculty of each academic unit and the Faculty of the Library. The number to be elected by each unit is as follows: Arts and Sciences, seven senators; Business Administration, two senators; Computer and Information Sciences, one senator; Education, two senators; Library, one senator; and Nursing, one senator.

Term of Office. The term of office of an elected member will be two years. An elected member may succeed himself or herself for one term. Upon completion of the second term, he/she must wait two years to be eligible for reelection. The terms of senators shall be ordered so that no more than one half of the terms shall expire on any one year.

[1] Approved by GSW Faculty 11/30/07 and BOR 6/11/08
[2] Approved by GSW Faculty 11/30/07 and BOR 6/11/08

Section 3. The Committees

The President shall appoint the members of the Standing Committees after considering the recommendations of the Faculty Senate, and committee members shall elect a chair. A committee shall normally have no more than fourteen faculty members in addition to students and ex-officio members. The membership of committees shall reflect the senate representative groups as closely as possible. The Standing Committees shall report to the faculty in an advisory capacity.

To ensure continuity and stability of committees, members will be appointed for at least a two-year term. Chairs should be chosen from faculty members who have previously served on the committee.

Section 4. <u>Function and Composition of the Standing Committees</u>

<u>Committee on Academic Affairs.</u> Committee on Academic Affairs. The committee approves substantive change to curriculum, reviews and advises on academic policies, reviews general education assessment reports, and oversees academic advising. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the University Registrar, and the Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance are ex-officio members of this committee. The Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance is a non-voting member of the committee.

The committee shall:

- Approve all substantive changes to the curriculum, including addition, revision and deletion of courses, and addition, revision, and deletion of academic programs.
- Periodically review the institution's academic policies, and make recommendations for changes to the administration, as well as making recommendations to the faculty on the addition, revision, and deletion of academic policies.
- Review General Education Assessment Reports annually, and make recommendations for improvement, when appropriate.
- Assess and make recommendations for improving the institution's academic advisement.

This committee has two standing subcommittees: academic policies and academic advisement. The Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance is a standing member of the academic advisement subcommittee.

[1]**<u>Institutional Effectiveness Committee.</u>** The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) coordinates with the Faculty Senate to establish and assess institutional priorities for strategic planning and budgeting. The IEC is organized into two standing subcommittees on Strategic Planning and Assessment, and Academic and Support Unit Assessment. The subcommittees review data and make recommendations on these issues to the entire IEC. In addition, the IEC may form Task Forces designed to complete specific tasks within a limited time frame. The IEC is made up of 19 members representing all areas of the university as follows:

- Representative appointed by Director of Athletics
- Representative appointed by the Vice President for Business and Finance
- Representative appointed by the Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Representative appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs
- Student Representative appointed by the Office of Student Affairs
- Student Representative appointed by the Student Government Association
- Representative appointed by the Staff Senate
- Two Representatives from the College of Arts and Sciences appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from the School of Computing and Mathematics appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from the School of Business appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from the School of Education appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from the School of Nursing appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from the Library appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative from Graduate Programs appointed by Faculty Senate
- Representative appointed by Director of the Rosalynn Carter Institute
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, ex officio

- Director of Institutional Research, ex officio
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, ex officio

Representatives serve for a term of three years, with the exception of student appointments which last one year. One third of the representatives, again excepting students, rotate off every year, although serving multiple consecutive terms is not prohibited. The entire IEC must meet at least three times annually, but may meet more often when conditions warrant. The meeting schedules of the IEC's subcommittees and task forces are determined by the subcommittees and task forces.

[1]Approved by GSW Faculty 12/5/2008 and BOR 3/17/2009

Institutional Review Board. This standing committee shall review all research at Georgia Southwestern State University that involves human subjects. Faculty and community members shall constitute the committee. Federal guidelines must be followed by the IRB (45 CFR 46). The committee shall ensure the following:

That research is conducted in an ethical manner.

That risks to subjects are minimized.

That selection of subjects is equitable.

That subjects are fully informed about their involvement in research projects.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.

[2]Instructional Technology Advisory Committee. The committee shall provide a functional link and liaison between the faculty, administration, and Information and Instructional Technology department (ITT). The committee shall annually review the current status of campus-wide instructional technology and advise IIT on efficient methods of implementing and maintaining current instructional technologies. The committee will consist of a [3]minimum of two (2) full-time faculty members from the College of Arts and Sciences, and a [3]minimum of one (1) from each of the other schools. The Chief Information Officer, the Instructional Technology-Coordinator, and the Computer Lab Support Manager (or designee) shall serve as ex-officio members.

In its specific task, the committee shall be responsible for the following:

Review the expenditure of funds from the Student Technology Fee. Make recommendations to the CIO and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for the disbursement of Student Technology Fee funds.
Review and recommend technology used to support distance learning and web-based instruction.

Conduct campus-wide instructional technology assessments and update the Instructional Technology Plan.

Review and prioritize Faculty Instructional Technology grant requests.

Review faculty technology training.

[2]Approved by GSW Faculty 05/01/2015
[3]Approved by GSW Faculty 04/28/2017

[2]**Committee on Student Affairs.** This committee shall cooperate with and advise the Vice President of Student Affairs regarding policies related to the general welfare of the student body. The Vice President of Student Affairs and the Director of Student Life shall serve as ex-officio members of this committee. Two student representatives from the Student Government Association shall also be members. The Chair of the committee on Student Affairs, with the advice and consent of the committee, may invite or appoint others to become standing or select ex-officio members, and may request the attendance of a student organization faculty advisor and/or a student organization representative to attend committee hearings and meetings where the business of their respective organizations are being reviewed and/or discussed. In specific tasks, the committee shall:

Consider and review all student organization petitions for recognition, all new and revised student organization constitutions, and communicate committee recommendations to the Director of Student Life.

Be concerned with and review policies and programs designed to promote and improve the quality of student publications and, consistent with the authority and duties set forth in "Section IV: University Policies" of the Faculty Handbook, including evaluation and oversight of the following student media organizations: Sou'Wester, Hurricane Watch, and Sirocco. The committee can call for changes of editors if a publication is in violation of university policy.

Be concerned with and review the enforcement of rules and regulations related to student conduct, recommend appropriate action to the President in all judicial/disciplinary cases referred to it by the University President.

Be receptive to hearing the concerns of student groups or individuals who have not other apparent venue to present their concerns, and to communicate those concerns through appropriate channels.

Collect and/or assess data on the campus climate for students on a yearly basis. This can be original data or that collected by other units on campus. The results will be presented to the faculty senate.

Be concerned with and review policies and programs designed to promote and improve all aspects of student academic performance; career and personal development; campus living; student mentorship; diversity; equity; and inclusion on campus; and the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of each student.

[2]Approved by Student Affairs Committee 11/01/10 and GSW Faculty on 12/03/10

Committee on Faculty Affairs. The committee shall be concerned with the general welfare and development of the faculty. It shall cooperate with the Grants officer, the Provost and Vice president for Academic Affairs, and the Faculty Senate in determining policies and procedures related to the general welfare of the faculty. The Vice president for Academic Affairs shall be an ex-officio member of this committee. In its specific tasks, the committee shall:

Be concerned with the improvement of faculty welfare, be responsible for recommendations regarding the maintenance and improvement of faculty fringe benefit programs, and shall make recommendations on general faculty welfare matters to the Faculty Senate and faculty.

Assist in the establishment of guidelines for the recruitment, selection, retention, and professional development of faculty members.

In cooperation with the Grants Officer, assist in making available to the faculty information regarding grants for professional and personal development.

Assist in the establishment of guidelines for the evaluation of faculty members.

Committee on Business and Finance. The committee shall cooperate with the Vice President for Business and Finance in determining policies related to the business and general relations of the University constituencies. The Vice President for Business and Finance shall be an ex-officio member of this committee. In its specific tasks, the committee shall:

Encourage proper utilization of the University's financial resources and provide faculty perspective on this matter.

Be concerned with operations of the auxiliary enterprises such as the bookstore, student center, dining facilities, and postal services.

Assist in the planning, development, and expansion of the physical facilities, and be concerned with the aesthetic appearance of the campus as well as the development of the instructional facilities.

Assist in the development and implementation of policies and procedures relating to maintaining the security of the campus, and the enforcement of the safety and traffic regulations.

Committee on Graduate Affairs. The committee shall be generally concerned with the quality of instruction and the development of curriculum and instructional facilities of the University in relation to graduate programs. The Director of Graduate Studies, the Director of Library Services and the Deans of the Schools, which offer graduate degree programs, shall be ex-officio members of the committee. All members of Graduate Affairs must have graduate faculty status.

The committee shall:

Establish and monitor policy for graduate programs.

Review and forward to the faculty governance system all changes in policy for graduate programs and all proposals for modification, addition or deletion of graduate degree programs and concentrations.

Serve graduate students in the same role as the Academic Affairs Committee serves undergraduate students.

Insure that proposals relating to graduate teacher education are reviewed by the Teacher Education Committee before taking action.

Establish policies and monitor administration of programs for the funding, recruitment, selection, assignment, employment and evaluation of graduate assistantships.

[3] **Faculty Development Committee.** The Faculty Development Committee will oversee University efforts on Faculty Development. The committee will advise the administration of grants related to Faculty Development and review the various faculty development grant proposals. It will also advise on programs for Faculty Development. The committee will confer with the faculty and the administration to effectively advise on how to better support faculty development and suggest ways in which the faculty development program may be improved. At least once each fiscal year, preferably at the end of the spring semester, the Faculty Development Committee will request a summary from the GSW Provost on all funding and appropriations related to the Faculty Development Account, and will provide written feedback to the Provost where appropriate.

[3] **University Promotion and Tenure Committee**. The University Promotion and Tenure committee will review portfolios for promotion and tenure at the University level. It will also set standards for the organization of promotion and tenure portfolios. The institution-wide Committee will be composed of tenured faculty preferably of professor rank, elected to two-year terms by the faculty of each school. There will be two members from the School of Arts and Sciences and one from each of the other schools. The Institution-wide committee will make a written recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval or disapproval of each case under consideration.

[3] **Global Engagement and High Impact Practices Committee.** The Global Engagement and High Impact Practices Committee will oversee University efforts on high impact practices, global engagement, and cultural diversity and inclusion. The committee will cooperate with faculty and administrators to ensure that students receive equitable access to high impact learning practices and have opportunities to engage with a diversity of experiences, beliefs, and views.
The committee will:

- Advise the administration of grants related to high impact practices (HIPS) and review the various high impact practice grant proposals.
- Serve as HIPS liaisons from across campus-help identify courses that should have a HIP status and promote participation in this process.
- Review W2W proposals and make recommendations regarding W2W offerings to ensure that programs align with the principles of the University's diversity statement.
- Make recommendations for W2W credit amounts based on event type and length (e.g., 2-week long study abroad trip vs. 1-hour presentation).
- Work with Director of Experiential Learning and International Students Coordinator to help plan and coordinate international-themed events (e.g., international guest speakers, International Education Week events, Taste of the World).
- Make recommendations for course load and faculty compensation for internships, study abroad, domestic study away, service-learning projects, first-year seminars, and supervised undergraduate student research.

[3] Approved by the GSW Faculty on May 11, 2022

Section 5. Academic Schools and College

The academic schools and college are administrative subdivisions of the University established for the purpose of giving instructions in one or more of the well-organized fields of study. A school or college may be further subdivided into departments. The faculty or corps of instruction of a school or college shall consist of all full-time professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and senior lecturers, and any teachers or personnel with such other titles as may be approved by the Board of Regents. Full-time research and extension personnel and duly certified librarians will be included in the corps of instruction on the basis of comparable training.

Section 6. Academic Deans

Appointment. The Academic Deans shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Chancellor and the Board of Regents and shall hold office at the pleasure of the President. The dean shall report to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and have responsibility for planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the overall operation of the division, and for the quality of faculty performance.

1. Planning responsibility shall consist of setting feasible operational goals determined by joint efforts of the faculty congruent with university and system policies. Goals shall contain cost effective short-range and long-range objectives set within given human and financial budgetary limitations. Plans shall include meeting all external accreditation criteria required of each degree program.

2. Organizational responsibility shall consist of orderly development of methods and processes to facilitate program, curricula, and faculty development. The development and growth of these areas shall be congruent with faculty, institutional, student, community, and regional needs. A positive and progressive organizational climate, designed to promote professional growth and development of both students and faculty, shall be a major goal.
3. Directing responsibilities shall consist of establishing administrative procedures and routines to insure that all division data are promptly and accurately collected and transmitted via written and

Faculty Senate Best Practices and Calendar

(Last updated July 2024)

Officer Best Practices

President

On Agendas

- By rule agendas and all agenda items must be distributed to the senate no later than five days preceding any senate meeting. This may require communicating the Senate's meeting schedule to all committee chairs, to allow them to schedule their meetings appropriately.
- Email all committee chairs 3-5 days in advance of the agenda due date (or 8-10 days in advance of the Senate meeting) to confirm that all agenda items have been received by the Senate, and to solicit any straggling agenda items.
- As a courtesy, email the President and Provost 3-5 days in advance of the agenda due date (or 8-10 days in advance of the Senate meeting) to solicit agenda items.
- Once the agenda is complete: (a) email the final agenda to the web content strategist for posting on the Senate webpage; (b) email the final agenda to faculty@gsw.edu as an attachment. Include in the email body information about the availability of public address sign-up (requests to appear at public address must be received 48-hours in advance, and must include the topic). If for some reason 48-hours advance notice for Public Address sign-up becomes unreasonable, the Senate President should consider waiving the 48-hour requirement and announcing a new deadline; (c) post a physical copy of the meeting agenda outside the door of the meeting location at least 48 hours in advance of the meetings (to ensure OMA compliance).
- Make all meeting documents available to all Senators (including the GSW President and Provost) at least five days in advance of the meeting. This can be done by attaching a zip folder with all documents to an all-Senate email, and/or by posting all documents in a designated meeting folder in the S:. Placing all meeting documents in the S: is highly recommended, as it established a continuous record of Senate activity and makes historical records easy to find. **To prevent loss of historical records, all Senate Presidents should back up ALL S: files on their own computer.**

- <u>On Academic Affairs Agenda Items</u>: The following language is in the GSW Handbook concerning which items to and do not need Senate approval:
    - *Some proposals must be submitted to the Faculty Senate and a General Faculty meeting for approval. a. Proposals that must go to the Faculty Senate and the Faculty include new programs, substantive program changes, establishment of or substantive revision in policies, and all changes in the Core Curriculum, Physical Education requirements, and UNIV 1000. b. Proposals that do not need to go to the Faculty Senate include new courses, course revisions, minor program revisions (as a change in major elective choices), and minor policy changes. For example, the establishment of a policy to allow CLEP credit and the establishment of passing scores for all accepted tests would need approval of the Senate and Faculty, while a proposal to change some passing scores would not. c. The Committee may decide to submit other items to the Faculty Senate based on such factors as the nature of the change, or number of students affected.*

<u>On Scheduling Meetings</u>

- At least three senate meetings per semester are required. Once a semester schedule has been established, make sure these dates are publicly posted on the Senate website by contacting the web content strategist.
- It is important that the President and Provost be able to attend. When setting up the Senate's schedule, speak to each of their assistants to establish when they are available. Note that ex-officio members are *voting* members of the Senate, and should have the same access to Senate documents as faculty members.

<u>On Meeting Procedures</u>

- The Public Address portion is considered an "open forum" – speakers can be limited in the amount of time to speak according to published rules, but generally cannot be censored for content-related reasons during their speech. In other words, once someone starts talking during public address, they cannot be censored for content except in the most egregious of circumstances (e.g. if the manner of presentation is disruptive of proceedings), although they cannot run over the allotted time.

- The public is generally not allowed to speak outside of the scheduled public address, unless they have been recognized by the chair, ideally in advance of the meeting or the opening of the meeting, to be speaking for informational purposes (e.g., someone from a committee discussing a committee proposal). Selective engagement with non-senate members outside of the designated public address time can lead to accusations of bias or unfairness in the access granted to a public forum, a potential First/Fourteenth Amendment problem.

On Posting Minutes and Summaries

- A "summary" is the same thing as "unapproved" minutes. The Georgia Open Meetings Act requires that both summaries and minutes be available and/or posted in a timely manner. As best practice, at the conclusion of each Senate meeting, two documents should be forwarded to the web content strategist for posting: (1) a copy of the "unapproved" minutes of the meeting which just took place, labeled as such; (2) a copy of any "approved" minutes at the last Senate meeting, which should now replace the "unapproved" version on the website. Thus, for example, after the April Senate meeting, the web content strategist would need to post the "unapproved" minutes of the April meeting, and the "approved" minutes of the March meeting (which would replace the "unapproved" ones). This process should happen within a week of any Senate meeting.

On the General Faculty Meeting

- A General Faculty meeting is scheduled at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. Generally speaking, and absent a reading day on the calendar, the afternoon of the first day of finals week has become the customary day for this meeting; and all else equal, the earlier in finals week that it is scheduled, the better, since faculty may be leaving campus. In addition, scheduling the General Faculty meeting later in the day tends to be better because it overlaps with fewer classes. But it is important, *as early in the semester as possible*, to consult the President's and Provost's secretaries to ensure that a General Faculty meeting time can be scheduled at which both of them can attend, and to adjust plans accordingly.

- Consult all the Faculty Senate minutes from earlier in the semester to populate the General Faculty meeting agenda; double check with the President and Provost for additional agenda items.
- Once the agenda is set, gather the agenda itself and all supporting documents for all agenda items, and combine them all together, in one single file, in the order in which they appear on the agenda. Email this file to Cheri Paradise, to all faculty at faculty@gsw.edu, and to the website director to post on the General Faculty website as soon as possible. Best practice will be to distribute this agenda at least five calendar days before the meeting.
- Within one-week of the General Faculty meeting, two documents should be forwarded to the web content strategist for posting: (1) a copy of the "unapproved" minutes of the meeting which just took place, labeled as such; (2) a copy of any "approved" minutes at the last General Faculty meeting, which should now replace the "unapproved" version on the website.
- The Senate President should coordinate with the Provost's assistant (Cheri Paradise) on the processing of Handbook changes. After each General Faculty meeting, forward the Provost's assistant (Cheri Paradise) and copy of the meeting minutes, with a promise to provide an updated version of the Faculty Handbook no later than May 31 When complete, forward two copies – one clean copy with all changes incorporated; and one with all changes tracked. The President should keep these on file.

Secretary

On Dynamic Forms

- The Secretary will receive a lot of dynamic forms to sign, mostly from Academic Affairs. If the issue is one that requires Senate approval (e.g. new programs, curriculum changes, course deactivations), the form should not be signed until approved by the Senate. If the issue does NOT require Senate approval (see discussion of Academic Affairs Agenda items above), the form can be signed when received, unless the Secretary notes any procedural issues. Any questions regarding if and when a Dynamic Form should be signed should be forwarded to the Associate VPAA (Bryan Davis) and Senate President in a cc'd email.

Past-President

- Cc the President on all communication with administrators.
- Maintain all records from year of service as President, and transfer whatever historical materials are relevant.

Calendar Reminders

June

- All officer positions turnover on June 1. On June 1 the Senate Past-President should email the GSW President to communicate the transition to a new Senate President and formally establish this new line of communication.
- The Senate President and Past-President meet to discuss outstanding Senate or committee business for the summer and/or the next academic year. The outgoing President should transfer important files to the new President as necessary.
- The Past-President should email the chair of the USG Faculty Council to inform them of a change of membership, in most cases to the new Senate President (Senate President cc'd) to the email.
- The Senate Executive Committee should meet with the GSW President on at least one occasion to debrief on the previous year and discuss possible working plans for next year.
- The President or Secretary will make sure that all Spring committee agendas and minutes (the ones gathered in May) are properly posted at the Senate webpage.
- If the Executive Committee has not already created a working draft of the following year's committee assignments, it is recommended to start the process now, as the President will need a draft no later than mid-to-late July. Before starting, ask the Provost's assistant (Cheri Paradise) for an excel file listing all full-time teaching faculty.

July

- The Senate President should touch base with the GSW Provost about Southwestern week, in case meetings need to be scheduled or coordinated. In some instances, carryover policies from the Spring may require Senate action in August.
- The Executive Committee (or its delegate, presumably the President) should present a final draft of recommended committee assignments to the GSW President for review. Before doing so, ask the Provost's assistant (Cheri Paradise) for any recent faculty hires (or retires), and update accordingly. By rule, the GSW President is responsible for the final decision on committee assignments.

August

- After receiving final list of committee assignments from the President, the Senate President should: (a) request a summary of changes by the President, if not already provided and (b) request from the relevant IT specialist that access to all Senate S: folders be aligned with new committee membership.
- The Senate President or Secretary should contact the GSW web content strategist to update Senate names and contact information on the GSW webpage.
- The Senate should meet during Southwestern week to set a starting working agenda and determine how the fall meeting schedule will be established. Once established, the President or Secretary should contact the web content strategist to post dates on the Senate webpage.

September

October

- No later than mid-October, the Senate President should consult with the President's and Provost's assistants to establish viable General Faculty meeting dates. Set the date, and email the information to all faculty at faculty@gsw.edu.

November

- On Nov. 1 or thereabouts, the Senate President should reach out to all committee chairs with a reminder about the Senate's November meeting date to ensure that everything that needs to be addressed by semester's end can be addressed.
- Senate President should prepare the General Faculty agenda, with the agenda and all supporting documents distributed to all faculty no later than 5 days before the scheduled meeting date, and the agenda posted on the General Faculty webpage.

December

- Hold General Faculty Meeting
- At the time of the general faculty meeting, the Secretary shall request documentation from each standing committee of all agendas and minutes from that semester in a single chronological file, and shall forward these documents to the GSW website operator for public posting.
- The Senate schedule for Spring should be determined prior to the end of December and published on the Senate webpage. Note that the April Senate meeting should be rather late in the month (although no more than one week in advance of the May General Faculty meeting) to accommodate all committee recommendations and to facilitate the election of Senate officers.
- Senate President should follow-up with Assistant to the Provost about updating the Faculty Handbook in light of the General Faculty meeting.

January

- The President or Secretary will make sure that all Fall committee agendas and minutes (the ones gathered in December) are properly posted at the Senate webpage.

February

March

April

- On April 1 or thereabouts, the Senate President should reach out to all committee chairs with a reminder about the Senate's April meeting date to ensure that everything that needs to be addressed by semester's end can be addressed.
- **Prepare for Senate elections:**
    - (1) Determine whether the Senate must be reapportioned in accordance with its Bylaws (the last reapportionment was at the end of the 2023-24 year, making the end of 2025-26 the next required checkup on this);
    - (2) Determine how many open positions there are in each college, and then inform each Dean on April 1 that the Senate needs the names of "x" number of new Senators from their college no later than April 14.
    - (3) On April 15 (or earlier), the President should solicit officer recommendations for the next year's Senate, and invite incoming Senators to the next Senate meeting
    - (4) Conduct Senate officer elections at the April Senate meeting

May

- Hold General Faculty meeting
- No later than the first week of May, the Senate President or Secretary should email survey to faculty regarding committee preferences for the following year.
- At the time of the general faculty meeting, the Secretary shall request documentation from each standing committee of all agendas and minutes from that semester in a single chronological file, and shall forward these documents to the GSW website operator for public posting.
- To prepare for officer turnover, the future President should shadow the current Senate President and be cc'd on all relevant correspondence.
- Senate President should follow-up with Assistant to the Provost about updating the Faculty Handbook in light of the General Faculty meeting.

ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until…"	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that…"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table…"	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to…"	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider…"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

NOTE: Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to")* ... and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'.* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed, say 'Nay'*. (Pause for response.) *Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and* ... (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.
- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that _________."

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words ________."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words ________."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, _________, and adding in their place the following words ________."

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until ________."

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.
- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.
- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

A mostion that kills a main motion without a formal vote on it

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

Guidelines for Senate Subcommittee Chairs

1. **General Guidelines:** It is best practice (and legal practice) to:
   (a) Conduct committee meetings in person;
   (b) Post agendas of these meetings several days in advance; and
   (c) Post minutes of these meetings in a timely manner.

2. **Georgia Open Meetings Act (OMA) Compliance:** The following rules regarding agency committee meetings, including ours, are in the OMA as follows:

On Defining Meetings:

(3)(A) 'Meeting' means:
(i) The gathering of a quorum of the members of the governing body of an agency at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the agency is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon; or
(ii) The gathering of a quorum of any committee of the members of the governing body of an agency or a quorum of any committee created by the governing body at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the committee is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon.

[…]

On Open Meeting Requirements

(b)(1) Except as otherwise provided by law, all meetings shall be open to the public. All votes at any meeting shall be taken in public after due notice of the meeting and compliance with the posting and agenda requirements of this chapter.
(2) Any resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or other official action of an agency adopted, taken, or made at a meeting which is not open to the public as required by this chapter shall not be binding.

[…]

On Schedules, Agendas, and Minutes

(d)(1) Every agency subject to this chapter shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of regular meetings of the agency. Such information shall be available to the general public and a notice containing such information shall be posted at least one week in advance and maintained in a conspicuous place available to the public at the regular place of an agency or committee meeting subject to this chapter as well as on the agency's website, if any.

[…]

(e)(1) Prior to any meeting, the agency or committee holding such meeting shall make available an agenda of all matters expected to come before the agency or committee at such meeting. The agenda shall be available upon request and shall be posted at the meeting site as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible,

[…]

(2)(A) A summary of the subjects acted on and those members present at a meeting of any agency shall be written and made available to the public for inspection within two business days of the adjournment of a meeting.
(B) The regular minutes of a meeting subject to this chapter shall he promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection once approved as official by the agency or its committee, but in no case later than immediately following its next regular meeting;

Discussion and Implications: Faculty Senate subcommittees are meetings of a government ‘agency,’ as defined in the OMA. They exist by virtue of the University Statute; and related to this, the Faculty Senate itself, to whom the subcommittees report, is authorized by BOR 3.2.3 Faculty Meetings, Rules, and Regulations, which states that the Senate may “Provide committees as may be required,” and that, “All meetings should comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the Georgia Open Records Acts and Georgia Open Meetings Act.”

In theory, then, all subcommittee business, along with Faculty Senate business, should be conducted in an open meeting, with publicly available agendas and minutes as indicated above.

3. Practical Guidelines: To borrow a cliché, we do not want the perfect to be the enemy of the good. We recognize that, currently, there are practical limitations to achieving complete legal compliance for all subcommittees as stated above. However, in the short term, and as an act of good faith, we would like to begin this year with the following internal expectations, which are less rigorous but achieve much in the same spirit:

i. **Wherever possible, all committee meetings should be held in person.** Georgia law technically permits agency meetings to be held virtually only under particular emergency circumstances that can be found in the Georgia Open Meetings Act. It has long been a practice of some subcommittees to meet and conduct business virtually or via email. Please do this only under grave necessity.

ii. **All committee meetings, whether in-person or virtual, should have a recorded agenda and minutes.** At the end of each semester, the Senate Secretary or President will request a single file containing all of these in chronological order, and will post them in a public place. Please note that all minutes, at minimum, should have the following information:
1. Names of each member present in the meeting
2. Description of each motion or other proposal made
3. Record of who made and seconded each motion
4. Record of all votes and abstentions
5. Any proxy at the meeting and the name of the member they were attending for

iii. **Where decisions are made without a formal meeting, e.g. via online correspondence or vote:** The Secretary or Chair should maintain formal records of all substantive decisions or votes that were made by the committee over email. The record should include at minimum the period of time when emails were gathered, the decision that was made, and any additional documentation relating to that decision (see guidelines for minutes above).

Note: One problem with online decision-making, generally speaking, is that committees are making public decisions in a manner that is not open to the public. The process is not "open" physically via a meeting, and is also not open in terms of transparent public agendas, records and documentation. Physical (or online) meetings with posted agendas and discoverable minutes are far more transparent, and align more closely with the spirit of open meetings and records laws; whereas the lack of procedural documentation of email polls can be extremely problematic in circumstances where, say, there is a protest over why a student organization was or was not approved by Student Affairs; or where there is a request for disclosure regarding FDG spending recommendations, including when and how those recommendations were made. One can imagine other scenarios in which committee decisions conducted by email impact directly the spending of public funds, and all this must be open and transparent.

We appreciate sincerely everyone's efforts to collectively align our faculty governance institutions on these standards. It is going to make us a better and more impactful institution. If you have any concerns about what to do, how to do it, how to facilitate it, or anything else, please reach out to the Senate President and Secretary, who are here to help.

3.2.3 Faculty Meetings, Rules, and Regulations

The faculty council, senate, assembly, or other comparable governance body at all USG institutions shall meet and shall appoint a secretary who shall keep a record of the proceedings. All meetings should comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the Georgia Open Records Act and Georgia Open Meetings Act.

The faculty or the council, senate, assembly, or other comparable faculty governance body at an USG institution, shall, subject to the approval of the President of the institution:

1. Make statutes, rules, and regulations for its governance;
2. Provide committees as may be required;
3. Make statutes, rules, and regulations for students regarding admission, suspension, expulsion, classes, courses of study, the learning environment, and requirements for graduation; and,
4. Make regulations necessary or proper for the maintenance of high educational standards.

A copy of each institution's statutes, rules, and regulations made by the faculty shall be filed with the Chancellor and shall be published, implemented, and disseminated in accordance with SACSCOC regulations. The faculty shall have primary responsibility for those aspects of student life that relate to the educational process, subject to the approval of the President of the institution.

3.2.3.1 University System of Georgia Faculty Council

The University System of Georgia Faculty Council (USGFC) shall provide a faculty voice on academic and educational matters and Board of Regents' policies related to the profession, including but not limited to tenure and promotion, academic freedom, and post-tenure review. The USGFC shall be mindful and respectful of matters that are more appropriately handled at the institutional level but may make recommendations that have University System level impact or implications.

Membership of the USGFC shall be comprised of one voting representative from each USG institution who is a member of that institution's faculty and selected by a process determined by the faculty or faculty body of that institution. A copy of each institution's process to determine its USGFC representative shall be maintained at the institution level and provided to the University System Office upon demand. The organization and governance of the USGFC shall be implemented according to policies and procedures established by the membership of the USGFC in the USGFC by-laws in consultation with and approved by the Chancellor or the Chancellor’s designee.

Nothing in this policy or the USGFC by-laws shall supersede the authority and responsibilities of institutional presidents provided by Board of Regents’ Policy. With respect to matters specific to their institutions, institution presidents remain the official medium of communication between their institutional faculties and the Chancellor.

The Open Meetings Act

50-14-1.

(a) As used in this chapter, the term:

(1) 'Agency' means:

(A) Every state department, agency, board, bureau, office, commission, public corporation, and authority,

(B) Every county, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision of this state;

(C) Every department, agency, board, bureau, office, commission, authority, or similar body of each such county, municipal corporation, or other political subdivision of the state;

(D) Every city, county, regional, or other authority established pursuant to the laws of this state; and

(E) Any nonprofit organization to which there is a direct allocation of tax funds made by the governing body of any agency as defined in this paragraph which constitutes more than 33 1/3 percent of the funds from all sources of such organization; provided, however, that this subparagraph shall not include hospitals, nursing homes, dispensers of pharmaceutical products, or any other type organization, person, or firm furnishing medical or health services to a citizen for which they receive reimbursement from the state whether directly or indirectly; nor shall this term include a subagency or affiliate of such a nonprofit organization from or through which the allocation of tax funds is made.

(2) 'Executive session' means a portion of a meeting lawfully closed to the public.

(3)(A) 'Meeting' means:

(i) The gathering of a quorum of the members of the governing body of an agency at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the agency is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon; or

(ii) The gathering of a quorum of any committee of the members of the governing body of an agency or a quorum of any committee created by the governing body at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the committee is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon.

(B) 'Meeting' shall not include:

(i) The gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body or committee for the purpose of making inspections of physical facilities or property under the jurisdiction of such agency at which no other official business of the agency is to be discussed or official action is to be taken;

(ii) The gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body or committee for the purpose of attending state-wide, multijurisdictional, or regional meetings to participate in seminars or courses of training on matters related to the purpose of the agency or to receive or discuss information on matters related to the purpose of the agency at which no official action is to be taken by the members;

(iii) The gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body or committee for the purpose of meeting with officials of the legislative or executive branches of the state or federal government at state or federal offices and at which no official action is to be taken by the members;

(iv) The gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body of an agency for the purpose of traveling to a meeting or gathering as otherwise authorized by this subsection so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum; or

(v) The gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body of an agency at social, ceremonial, civic, or religious events so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum.

This subparagraph's exclusions from the definition of the term 'meeting' shall not apply if it is shown that the primary purpose of the gathering or gatherings is to evade or avoid the requirements for conducting a meeting while discussing or conducting official business.

(b)(1) Except as otherwise provided by law, all meetings shall be open to the public. All votes at any meeting shall be taken in public after due notice of the meeting and compliance with the posting and agenda requirements of this chapter.

(2) Any resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or other official action of an agency adopted, taken, or made at a meeting which is not open to the public as required by this chapter shall not be binding. Any action contesting a resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or other

formal action of an agency based on an alleged violation of this provision shall be commenced within 90 days o f the date such contested action was taken or, if the meeting was held in a manner not permitted by law, within 90 days from the date the party alleging the violation knew or should have known about the alleged violation so long as such date is not more than six months after the date the contested action was taken.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2) of this subsection, any action under this chapter contesting a zoning decision of a local governing authority shall be commenced within the time allowed by law for appeal of such zoning decision.

(c) The public at all times shall be afforded access to meetings declared open to the public pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section. Visual and sound recording during open meetings shall be permitted.

(d)(1) Every agency subject to this chapter shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of regular meetings of the agency. Such information shall be available to the general public and a notice containing such information shall be posted at least one week in advance and maintained in a conspicuous place available to the public at the regular place of an agency or committee meeting subject to this chapter as well as on the agency's website, if any. Meetings shall be held in accordance with a regular schedule, but nothing in this subsection shall preclude an agency from canceling or postponing any regularly scheduled meeting.

(2) For any meeting, other than a regularly scheduled meeting of the agency for which notice has already been provided pursuant to this chapter, written or oral notice shall be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to the legal organ in which notices of sheriffs *sales* are published in the county where regular meetings are held or at the option of the agency to a newspaper having a general circulation in such county at least equal to that of the legal organ; provided, however, that, in counties where the legal organ is published less often than four times weekly, sufficient notice shall be the posting of a written notice for at least 24 hours at the place of regular meetings and, upon written request from any local broadcast or print media outlet whose place of business and physical facilities are located in the county, notice by telephone, facsimile, or e-mail to that requesting media outlet at least 24 hours in advance of the called meeting. Whenever notice is given to a legal organ or other newspaper, that publication shall immediately or as soon as practicable make the information available upon inquiry to any member of the public. Upon written request from any local

broadcast or print media outlet, a copy of the meeting's agenda shall be provided by facsimile, e-mail, or mail through a self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by the requestor.

(3) When special circumstances occur and are so declared by an agency, that agency may hold a meeting with less than 24 hours' notice upon giving such notice of the meeting and subjects expected to be considered at the meeting as is reasonable under the circumstances, including notice to the county legal organ or a news paper having a general circulation in the county at least equal to that of the legal organ, in which event the reason for holding the meeting within 24 hours and the nature of the notice shall be recorded in the minutes. Such reasonable notice shall also include, upon written request within the previous calendar year from any local broadcast or print media outlet whose place of business and physical facilities are located in the county, notice by telephone, facsimile, or e-mail to that requesting media outlet.

(e)(1) Prior to any meeting, the agency or committee holding such meeting shall make available an agenda of all matters expected to come before the agency or committee at such meeting. The agenda shall be available upon request and shall be posted at the meeting site as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible, but shall not be required to be available more than two weeks prior to the meeting and shall be posted, at a minimum, at some time during the two-week period immediately prior to the meeting. Failure to include on the agenda an item which becomes necessary to address during the course of a meeting shall not preclude considering and acting upon such item.

(2)(A) A summary of the subjects acted on and those members present at a meeting of any agency shall be written and made available to the public for inspection within two business days of the adjournment of a meeting.

(B) The regular minutes of a meeting subject to this chapter shall he promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection once approved as official by the agency or its committee, but in no case later than immediately following its next regular meeting; provided, however, that nothing contained in this chapter shall prohibit the earlier release of minutes, whether approved by the agency or not Such minutes shall, at a minimum, include the names of the members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, the identity of the persons making and seconding the motion or other proposal, and a record of all votes. The name of each person voting for or against a proposal shall be recorded. It shall be presumed that the action taken was approved by each person in attendance unless the minutes reflect the name of the persons voting against the proposal or abstaining.

(C) Minutes of executive sessions shall also be recorded but shall not be open to the public. Such minutes shall specify each issue discussed in executive session by the agency or committee. In the case of executive sessions where matters subject to the attorney-client privilege are discussed, the fact that an attorney-client discussion occurred and its subject shall be identified, but the substance of the discussion need not be recorded and shall not be identified in the minutes. Such minutes shall be kept and preserved for in camera inspection by an appropriate court should a dispute arise as to the propriety of any executive session.

(f) An agency with state-wide jurisdiction or committee of such an agency shall be authorized to conduct meetings by teleconference, provided that any such meeting is conducted in compliance with this chapter.

(g) Under circumstances necessitated by emergency conditions involving public safety or the preservation of property or public services, agencies or committees thereof not otherwise permitted by subsection (f) of this Code section to conduct meetings by teleconference may meet by means of teleconference so long as the notice required by this chapter is provided and means are afforded for the public to have simultaneous access to the teleconference meeting. On any other occasion of the meeting of an agency or committee thereof, and so long as a quorum is present in person, a member may participate by teleconference if necessary due to reasons of health or absence from the jurisdiction so long as the other requirements of this chapter are met. Absent emergency conditions or the written opinion of a physician or other health professional that reasons of health prevent a member's physical presence, no member shall participate by teleconference pursuant to this subsection more than twice in one calendar year.

50-14-2.

This chapter shall not be construed so as to repeal in any way:

(1) The attorney-client privilege recognized by state law to the extent that a meeting otherwise required to be open to the public under this chapter may be closed in order to consult and meet with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the agency or any officer or employee or in which the agency or any officer or employee may be directly involved; provided, however, the meeting may not be closed for advice or consultation on whether to close a meeting; and

(2) Those tax matters which are otherwise made confidential by state law.

50-14-3.

(a) This chapter shall not apply to the following:

(1) Staff meetings held for investigative purposes under duties or responsibilities imposed by law;

(2) The deliberations and voting of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles; and in addition such board may close a meeting held for the purpose of receiving information or evidence for or against clemency or in revocation proceedings if it determines that the receipt of such information or evidence in open meeting would present a substantial risk of harm or injury to a witness;

(3) Meetings of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation or any other law enforcement or prosecutorial agency in the state, including grand jury meetings;

(4) Adoptions and proceedings related thereto;

(5) Gatherings involving an agency and one or more neutral third parties in mediation of a dispute between the agency and any other party. In such a gathering, the neutral party may caucus jointly or independently with the parties to the mediation to facilitate a resolution to the conflict, and any such caucus shall not be subject to the requirements of this chapter. Any decision or resolution agreed to by an agency at any such caucus shall not become effective until ratified in a public meeting and the terms of any such decision or resolution are disclosed to the public. Any final settlement agreement, memorandum of

agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other similar document, however denominated, in which an agency has formally resolved a claim or dispute shall be subject to the provisions of Article 4 of Chapter 18 of this title;

(6) Meetings:

(A) Of any medical staff committee of a public hospital;

(B) Of the governing authority of a public hospital or any committee thereof when performing a peer review or medical review function as set forth in Code Section 31-7-15, Articles 6 and 6A of Chapter 7 of Title 31, or under any other applicable federal or state statute or regulation; and

(C) Of the governing authority of a public hospital or any committee thereof in which the granting, restriction, or revocation of staff privileges or the granting of abortions under state or federal law is discussed, considered, or voted upon;

(7) Incidental conversation unrelated to the business of the agency; or (8) E-mail communications among members of an agency; provided, however, that such communications shall be subject to disclosure pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of this title.

(b) Subject to compliance with the other provisions of this chapter, executive sessions shall be permitted for:

(1) Meetings when any agency is discussing or voting to:

(A) Authorize the settlement of any matter which may be properly discussed in executive session in accordance with paragraph (1) of Code Section 50-14-2;

(B) Authorize negotiations to purchase, dispose of or lease property;

(C) Authorize the ordering of an appraisal related to the acquisition or disposal of real estate;

(D) Enter into a contract to purchase, dispose of, or lease property subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; or

(E) Enter into an option to purchase, dispose of, or lease real estate subject to approval in subsequent public vote.

No vote in executive session to acquire, dispose of, or lease real estate, or to settle litigation, claims, or administrative proceedings, shall be binding on an agency until a subsequent vote is taken in an open meeting where the identity of the property and the terms of the acquisition, disposal, or lease are disclosed before the vote or where the parties and principal settlement terms are disclosed before the vote;

(2) Meetings when discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee or interviewing applicants for the position of the executive head of an agency. This exception shall not apply to the receipt of evidence or when hearing argument on personnel matters, including whether to impose disciplinary action or dismiss a public officer or employee or when considering or discussing matters of policy regarding the employment or hiring practices of the agency. The vote on any matter covered by this paragraph shall be taken in public and minutes of the meeting as provided in this chapter shall be made available. Meetings by an agency to discuss or take action on the filling of a vacancy in the membership of the agency itself shall at all times be open to the public as provided in this chapter;

(3) Meetings of the board of trustees or the investment committee of any public retirement system created by or subject to Title 47 when such board or committee is discussing matters pertaining to investment securities trading or investment portfolio positions and composition; and (4) Portions of meetings during which that portion of a record made exempt from public inspection or disclosure pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of this title is to be considered by an agency and there are no reasonable means by which the agency can consider the record without disclosing the exempt portions if the meeting were not closed.

50-14-4.

(a) When any meeting of an agency is closed to the public pursuant to any provision of this chapter, the specific reasons for such closure shall be entered upon the official minutes, the meeting shall not be closed to the public except by a majority vote of a quorum present for the meeting, the minutes shall reflect the names of the members present and the names of those voting for closure, and that part of the minutes shall be made available to the public as any other minutes. Where a meeting of an agency is devoted in part to matters within the exceptions provided by law, any portion of the meeting not subject to any such exception, privilege, or confidentiality shall be open to the public, and the minutes of such portions not subject to any such exception shall be taken, recorded, and open to public inspection as provided in subsection (e) of Code Section 50-14-1.

(b)(1) When any meeting of an agency is closed to the public pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section, the person presiding over such meeting or, if the agency's policy so provides, each member of the governing body of the agency attending such meeting, shall execute and file with the official minutes of the meeting a notarized affidavit stating under oath that the subject matter of the meeting or the closed portion thereof was devoted to matters within the exceptions provided by law and identifying the specific relevant exception.

(2) In the event that one or more persons in an executive session initiates a discussion that is not authorized pursuant to Code Section 50-14-3, the presiding officer shall immediately rule the discussion out of order and all present shall cease the questioned conversation. If one or more persons continue or attempt to continue the discussion after being ruled out of order, the presiding officer shall immediately adjourn the executive session.

50-14-5.

(a) The superior courts of this state shall have jurisdiction to enforce compliance with the provisions o f this chapter, including the power to grant injunctions or other equitable relief. In addition to any action that may be brought by any person, firm, corporation, or other entity, the Attorney General shall have authority to bring enforcement actions, either civil or Grimin[g], in his or her discretion as may be appropriate to enforce compliance with this chapter.
(b) In any action brought to enforce the provisions of this chapter in which the court determines that an agency acted without substantial justification in not complying with this chapter, the court shall, unless it finds that special circumstances exist, assess in favor of the complaining party reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred. Whether the position of the complaining party was substantially justified shall be determined on the basis of the record as a whole which is made in the proceeding for which fees and other expenses are sought.
(c) Any agency or person who provides access to information in good faith reliance on the requirements of this chapter shall not be liable in any action on account of having provided access to such information.

50-14-6.

Any person knowingly and willfully conducting or participating in a meeting in violation of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed $1,000.00. Alternatively, a civil penalty may be imposed by the court in any civil action brought pursuant to this chapter against any person who negligently violates the terms of this chapter in an amount not to exceed $1,000.00 for the first violation. A civil penalty or criminal fine not to exceed $2,500.00 per violation may be imposed for each additional violation that the violator commits within a 12 month period from the date that the first penalty or fine was imposed. It shall be a defense to any criminal action under this Code section that a person has acted in good faith in his or her actions.'