

Guidelines for Running Elections to Senate Positions

Revised and Approved by Senate Rules Committee on January 27, 2025

This document is designed as a guideline for university units (including academic departments and schools, colleges, the Libraries, University Outreach, the Cooperative Extension System and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station) as to best practices for running elections to Senate positions, including the election of Senators and elections to the Faculty Grievance and Faculty Dismissal Hearing committees.

These guidelines do not apply to internal elections to positions inside academic units, such as the election of department chairs, which are governed by the units' own bylaws and established procedures.

Election of Senators

The Senate Constitution stipulates that all units with at least four full-time faculty members (or the equivalent thereof) are eligible to elect a Senator. Units that meet this criterion but who do not yet have representation in the Senate should contact the Senate Secretary. Units with fewer than four full-time faculty members (or the equivalent thereof) should also contact the Senate Secretary who will instruct the Rules Committee to develop an alternative means for their faculty members to be represented. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]

Initiation of elections

1. The Secretary of the Senate is responsible for notifying unit leaders when senate terms are about to expire. Unit leaders are then responsible for organizing the election process and reporting its result to the Senate Secretary. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]

Senators looking to step down from their role before the expiry of their term should contact both the Senate Secretary and their unit leader. While senators can nominate substitutes to attend meetings, an election must be held if a senator is to be permanently replaced. This election should be held by the unit within two weeks after the vacancy occurs. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]

Nominations

2. The unit leader should contact all members of the unit at the same time to solicit nominations. A deadline for receiving nominations should be clearly indicated in the announcement. The call for nominations should be open over at least two business days (though ideally for longer).

3. It is important that unit leaders are impartial throughout the process. All nominations received should be considered. All faculty members in the unit are eligible for election. Faculty, according to the university faculty constitution, includes all positions of professorial status and other positions that have a primary academic function related to instruction, research, and/or extension associated with Auburn University, main campus. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.1 University Faculty Constitution, Article 2: Membership. Also see Faculty Handbook Chapter 3. Faculty Personnel Policies and Procedures, Section 3.3: Faculty Appointments, 3.3.2 Kinds of Appointments and Faculty Handbook Chapter 3. Faculty Personnel Policies & Procedures, Section 3.5: Nontenure-Track Faculty, M. University Membership.] In effect, this means that those eligible for election include all tenured and tenure-track faculty, all non-tenure-track titles whether full-time and part-time, including instructor and professor of practice. Graduate students, including Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants, are not eligible.
4. If insufficient nominations are received before the deadline set, the unit chair can consult with colleagues to identify (a) willing candidate(s) to run for election without any further calls for volunteers.

Election of Senators

5. A vote must be held, whether there are multiple candidates or only just one candidate. The senate constitution stipulates that the election of senators must be held by secret ballot. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]
6. All faculty members in the unit are eligible to vote. As noted above, this includes both tenured and non-tenured faculty, including full-time and part-time appointments.
7. The unit leader will report the results of the election by email to the secretary of the Senate (between April 15 and May 15 for elections to renew or replace senators at the end of their term.) [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]

Elections to the Faculty Grievance and Faculty Dismissal Hearing committees.

Members of senate and university committees are not normally elected (though nominees to senate committees are confirmed by senate vote). The Faculty Grievance committee and the Faculty Dismissal Hearing committee are exceptional in that they require committee members drawn from academic colleges and the Libraries to be elected by faculty. The Faculty Grievance committee also requires that

members representing non-tenure track faculty members of the Cooperative Extension Service and University Outreach who are not included in academic departments should be elected. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee. Also see Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.2: University Committees, Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee.]

NOTE: This process is not clearly defined in the Faculty Handbook, but the Senate Rules Committee recommends following the process below:

Nominations

1. The leaders of the academic colleges, Libraries, ACES, and Outreach (or their designees) should contact *all* members of the unit, either directly (for example, by email) or indirectly (for example, through department heads and chairs) to solicit nominations. A deadline for receiving nominations should be clearly indicated in the announcement. The call for nominations should be open for at least one week.
2. If insufficient nominations are received before the deadline set, leaders can move to identify (a) willing candidate(s) to run for election without any further calls for volunteers.
3. Only tenured full professors are eligible for nomination and to serve on the Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee. Faculty of all titles and ranks are eligible for nomination and to be elected to the Faculty Grievance committee. It is recommended, however, due to the nature of some of the grievances most regularly heard by the Faculty Grievance committee, including challenges to Promotion and Tenure processes, that faculty with the protections of tenure – that is to say, associate or full professors – are more suitable candidates.

Elections

4. A vote must be held, whether there are multiple candidates or only just one candidate. Voting can be electronic or other ballot or follow any of other forms outlined in Robert's Rules: including voice, show of hands, rising, roll call, and unanimous consent (if there is just one candidate). Ballots do not have to be secret, though secret ballots are encouraged in cases where there are multiple candidates. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee. Also see Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.2: University Committees, Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee.]
5. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote in elections to the Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.2: University Committees, Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee.] All faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, are eligible to vote in elections to the Faculty Grievance Committee. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate

Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee.] In elections from the Cooperative Extension Service and University Outreach to the Faculty Grievance committee, only non-tenure track faculty members who are not included in academic departments are eligible to vote. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee.]

6. Leaders of the academic colleges, Libraries, ACES, and Outreach will report the results of the election by email to the secretary of the Senate. Ideally, the results of these elections will be reported to the Secretary at the same time as results of Senator elections, from April 15 – May 15.

Initially presented to Senate on 3/15/2022. Revised 1/15/2025.

Edits to Previous Guidelines for running elections to Senate Positions (in place March 2022-January 2025) with Track Changes

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7. If insufficient nominations are received before the deadline set, the unit chair can consult with colleagues to identify (a) willing candidate(s) to run for election without any further calls for volunteers.

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8. A vote must be held, whether there are multiple candidates or only just one candidate. The senate constitution stipulates that the election of senators must be held by secret ballot. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]
9. All faculty members in the unit are eligible to vote. As noted above, this includes both tenured and non-tenured faculty, including full-time and part-time appointments.
10. The unit leader will report the results of the election by email to the secretary of the Senate (between April 15 and May 15 for elections to renew or replace senators at the end of their term.) [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 2: Organization, Section 4. Senators.]

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NOTE: This process is not clearly defined in the Faculty Handbook, but the Senate Rules Committee recommends following the process below:

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8. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote in elections to the Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee. [\[See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University](#)

Governance, Section 2.2: University Committees, Faculty Dismissal Hearing Committee.] All faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, are eligible to vote in elections to the Faculty Grievance Committee. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee.] In elections from the Cooperative Extension Service and University Outreach to the Faculty Grievance committee, only non-tenure track faculty members who are not included in academic departments are eligible to vote. [See Faculty Handbook Chapter 2. Faculty Participation in University Governance, Section 2.1: Constitutions, 2.1.2 University Senate Constitution, Article 4: Senate Committees, Faculty Grievance Committee.]

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