



Faculty Senate

Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

April 12, 2024

Ilana Feldman, Chair

FSEC Activities

FSEC met on March 22 and discussed the future-oriented discussions with faculty, students, staff, and alumni that have taken place in preparation for strategic planning. The upcoming Faculty Senate retreat on April 19 will be an opportunity for Senators to reflect on, and contribute to, the themes that are emerging from those conversations. All Senators are encouraged to participate in the retreat.

The Parliamentarian also advised FSEC on two matters: its agenda-setting role and executive sessions.

On FSEC's agenda-setting role, the Parliamentarian addressed the limits of FSEC's ability to "arrange" the agenda, advising that FSEC is not a gatekeeper, nor a traffic cop but is, rather, closer to a crossing guard. FSEC can informally make suggestions to a reporting committee about potential concerns about a resolution (either raised by FSEC or by another committee), but FSEC does not have the formal authority to return a resolution to committee. FSEC does have some flexibility in terms of which meeting a resolution is scheduled for, within reason, based on the size of the agenda at the next meeting.

With regard to what happens when two committees want to weigh in on a matter, the Parliamentarian advised that it is important for FSEC to avoid formally involving two committees. If an issue crosses committee boundaries, collaboration needs to be worked out informally, with one committee receiving formal directions from FSEC. If a committee generates a resolution and then finds another committee wants to weigh in, it's smart for the original committee to confer with the other committee; however, there is no formal requirement that this take place--and no formal ability of FSEC to make it happen. With this said, resolutions are more likely to be adopted if significant concerns raised—and maybe addressed—prior to a resolution coming to the Senate floor.

On the matter of executive sessions, the Parliamentarian raised the issue of who should participate. She encouraged inviting voting members of relevant committees. For example, the CFO's recent presentation in executive session creates a potentially awkward or unfair situation for subsequent committee discussions of MFA finances, as non-Senate members weren't privy to the information, and Senate members couldn't share executive session content. Going forward, the Parliamentarian recommended that committee members be invited to relevant executive sessions; this can be added to the (amendable and debatable) motion to go into executive session. This requires that FSEC work with any relevant committee chairs to make sure committee members are invited to an executive session in advance. A formal change in the bylaws is not necessary to make this happen, and the Parliamentarian recommended that FSEC start with a change in practice and see how its implementation goes. In the future, the bylaws could be amended, perhaps to make committee invitation the default.

Academic Freedom Portal

The Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee has provided a brief report on the responses received through the academic freedom portal. That report was circulated with the agenda for today's meeting and has been posted to the Senate website.

Senate & FSEC Membership

All schools have now completed their Senate elections and have reported results to the Senate office. The FSEC Nominating Committee will meet soon to confirm the slate of nominees for the 2024-2025 FSEC. The slate will be put forward for election at the top of the May Senate meeting.

Faculty Organization Plan

Following the Board's approval of recent amendments to the Faculty Organization Plan, the Senate office has posted an up-to-date version of the FOP to the Senate website. The [downloadable PDF](#) includes a table of contents, best accessed from the Bookmarks sidebar in Acrobat, to assist with navigating the document.

Personnel Actions

There is one active grievance at the university, in the Elliott School of International Affairs; the parties have agreed to mediation.

Calendar

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is April 26, 2024. Draft resolutions and any other possible Senate agenda items should be forwarded to Liz Carlson in the Senate office as soon as possible to assist with the timely compilation of the FSEC meeting agenda, ideally by April 19. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting, the first of the 2024-2025 session, is May 10, 2024.