

University of California, Irvine Guidelines for Chairs of Senate Committees

Thank you for your willingness to serve as Chair of a Senate committee. The following guidelines are designed to help you understand your role and responsibilities and to provide you with information about the resources available to you. Here is an overview of the Academic Senate and Irvine Division.

The Board of Regents

The University of California is governed by the Board of Regents who have “full powers of organization and governance” according to Article IX, Section 9 of the Constitution of the State of California. Regents are appointed by the Governor of California.

Shared Governance

Bylaws 40.1 and 40.2 of the Regents of the University of California empower the faculty of the University of California to form a systemwide Academic Senate that has the authority to, among other things:

- Determine the conditions for admission and for certificates and degrees and recommend to the President all candidates for degrees;
- authorize and supervise all courses and curricula, except in professional schools offering work at the graduate level only, and over non-degree courses in the University Extension (the Division of Continuing Education at UCI);
- advise the Chancellor concerning the campus budget; and
- address the Board of Regents on any matter pertaining to the conduct and welfare of the University.

The systemwide Academic Senate and the divisional Senates at each UC campus provide the organizational framework that enables the faculty to exercise its right to participate in the University’s governance.

Organization of the Academic Senate

Under the leadership of the systemwide Senate Chair, Senate members’ opinions are voiced through a deliberative process that includes the standing committees of the Senate, the Academic Council, the Assembly of the Academic Senate, and their Divisional counterparts.

Consultation with the administration occurs in a parallel structure: at the systemwide level between the systemwide Senate Chair and the President; and on the campus level between the Divisional Senate Chairs and the Chancellors.

Under the leadership of the Senate Chair, the Academic Senate exercises its right to participate in the University’s governance. The deliberative process of the Senate occurring in the standing committees of the Senate, the Cabinet, and the Divisional Assembly results in either advice and comment or final action on various issues. The Senate’s activities are guided by the bylaws and regulations published in the [Manual of the Systemwide Academic Senate](#) and [Manual of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate](#).

SENATE ROLES

The Divisional Chair

The Divisional Chair is the senior officer of the Senate. This is a one-year term following a one-year term as Chair Elect-Secretary. The Divisional Chair is the voice of the Senate; they transmit the Senate's position on relevant issues to the Chancellor, Provost, systemwide Senate, and the press. It is critical that all Senate Committee Chairs keep the Divisional Chair fully informed on all matters related to the Senate and the activities of its councils and committees.

Most requests for advice and comment will come directly to the Divisional Chair. Issues are entered into a tracking system in the Senate office and then routed to the pertinent councils and committees. All correspondence to the Chancellor and Provost on matters of policy, stating final action, or providing Senate comment for the Division must be routed through the Divisional Chair. In most cases, the Divisional Chair or Executive Director first vets such important correspondence.

The Committee Chair

Committee Chairs are the chief officer of their respective committees. Committee Chairs should be familiar with and comply with University and Divisional bylaws, regulations, and policies to set the Committee's agenda for the year and for each meeting. Committee Chairs are responsible for generating and finalizing all memos for submission on behalf of the committee. Senate Analysts will assist Committee Chairs in the generation of memos and other written records by drafting, providing notes, etc. Committee Chairs are expected to respond by the stated deadline in requests for information and communications from the Senate Office.

Committee Chairs coordinate with Senate Analysts to invite members of the administration to meetings as needed. Committee Chairs will not initiate any communications with the administration and/or represent the Senate without prior consultation and coordination with the Divisional Chair. All communication with the administration must be coordinated through the Senate office. It is critical that the Senate speak with one voice; this requires a coordinated Senate approach for requests for information or action.

Committee Chairs ensure that the integrity of the review process is maintained at all times, that confidentiality is respected, and that conflicts of interest are handled appropriately. Committee Chairs are expected to disclose any conflicts of interest with committee members and the Divisional Chair. All Senate members serving on committees are expected to follow the [Senate Conflict of Interest and Recusal Policy](#), in addition to any committee-specific policies. Committee Chairs cannot be involved in the initiation of an item or its review at multiple levels (i.e. their school and the Senate); such involvement at multiple levels represents a violation of the Senate's conflict of interest guidelines.

Committee Chairs should regularly update the Divisional Chair about issues and priorities of their committees. After issues are reviewed, Committee Chairs should report outcomes as soon as possible to the Divisional Chair. Committee Chairs should regularly communicate with fellow Senate colleagues about issues and priorities. Often the issues and concerns of a committee are of import to other committees; working together can increase our efficiency and effectiveness in addressing issues and representing faculty concerns and priorities.

A Senate Analyst is assigned to each committee to assist the Chair and its members. Senate Analysts are well informed, knowledgeable about policies and processes, and have worked to build solid working relationships with administrative and school counterparts. Senate Analysts guide Committee Chairs regarding Divisional and University protocol. The communication between Committee Chairs and Senate Analysts is critical to the successful operation of the committee and the Senate as a whole. It is expected that Committee Chairs will respond to communications/requests from Senate Analysts within 48 hours or less. Please be sure to discuss with the Senate Analyst your preferred method of communication (email or phone) and notify the Senate Analyst if you will be traveling or unavailable so that you can both plan accordingly. Please be aware that Senate Analysts work with multiple committees. It is important that Committee Chairs be sensitive to the work demands of Senate Analysts and limit last minute requests for information as much as possible.

If a committee member is not fulfilling expectations, the Committee Chair is expected to address these issues with the member; they can do so directly or, if more appropriate, direct the matter to the Committee on Committees.

It is strongly encouraged that all Committee Chairs secure a member to serve as Vice Chair and represent the committee when they are unavailable. This allows for another committee member to gain an understanding and awareness of the work involved in leading the committee, and may provide for the succession of Chairs.

Starting in January, the Committee Chair is expected to begin conversations with members about nominations for the Committee Chair for the upcoming year. The Committee Chair, with the assistance of the Senate Analyst, will communicate with the members the Committee Chair role and responsibilities, and will begin outreaching to individual members to consider running for the Chair position if the Vice Chair declines to run. All committees will collect nominations and vote on the Committee Chair for the upcoming year by April.

At the beginning of the year, the Committee Chair and Senate Analyst should discuss expectations and preferences with respect to scheduling, agenda generation, minutes and memoranda, and communication with committee members, consultants, ex officio members, and other representatives.

The Committee Member

Committee membership is determined by the committee's bylaws. Some committees have one or more faculty members from each faculty (as defined in Bylaw 40) represented on the committee, while others do not. Most members are appointed to the committee by the Committee on Committees; members of the Council on Academic Personnel and Committee on Committees are elected. Committee members are expected to represent the faculty at large and bring to bear, as appropriate, the perspective and knowledge they have as a result of their school/unit affiliation. Committee members are expected to attend 75% or more of the committee's meetings, keep committee deliberations confidential, and communicate with the Chair should they have or believe they have a conflict of interest with an issue before the committee. Members are expected to:

- Review committee meeting materials in advance and come to meetings prepared to contribute;
- Refrain from sharing the outcome of any committee deliberations before the Senate has formally communicated decisions;

- Share information with the committee that is accurate and designed to benefit the effective and thorough deliberation of the committee; and
- Behave in conformity with APM 015.

If a committee member does not fulfill these expectations, the Committee Chair should address the matter directly with the member or may refer the matter to the Committee on Committees. If a committee member believes another committee member is not fulfilling these expectations, they should raise their concerns with the Committee Chair.

The Executive Director and Assistant Director

The Executive Director and Assistant Director are the chief policy advisors and the chief administrative officers of the Academic Senate office, the Divisional Assembly, the Senate Cabinet, and all standing councils and committees. The Executive Director and Assistant Director supervise and monitor the work of Senate committees to ensure they are in compliance with Divisional and University policies and procedures. The Executive Director evaluates the Senate staff and is responsible for all assignments of staff to assist Committee Chairs and members in the conduct of Senate business. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the Senate staff provides Committee Chairs and members with the institutional expertise necessary to effectively conduct business. Committee Chairs who have questions about support for their committee should contact the Executive Director. All requests for expenditures and reimbursements from the Divisional Senate office should be directed to the Executive Director and must have prior approval. Any proposed changes to committee structure or workload requiring additional staffing should be submitted to the Executive Director for consideration.

The Senate Analyst

The primary function of Senate Analysts is to staff committees according to the work assigned by their bylaws. Effective, well-functioning committees depend on professional, highly trained, career staff who provide the expertise essential for the faculty to fulfill their responsibilities. Senate Analysts provide current information related to committee issues, set up yearly meeting schedules, advise on policies and procedures, suggest agenda items, draft agendas, attend meetings, produce minutes, follow up on action items, draft committee recommendations and statements, and draft annual reports. Senate Analysts serve as liaisons between committees and the Executive Director and Senate leadership. You are encouraged to work closely with the Senate Analyst assigned to your committee. Senate Analysts provide continuity of knowledge and processes related to the work of the Academic Senate, which is a key factor in moving the work of the Senate forward, despite the routine rotation of committee members and Chairs. As team members, the staff are entitled to a work environment that models the very best of Senate values.

Ex Officio Members and Consultants

Ex officio members and student representatives are specified in committee bylaws. Consultants are not specified in committee bylaws, but typically have a continuing role as an advisor based on their area of expertise and responsibilities. The primary role of these representatives is to provide the perspective of their constituents and to serve as liaisons between their constituents and the committee. Ex officio members are committee members; they may voice their opinions on issues and have their opinions recorded separately, but they do not vote. Consultants, usually administrators and staff, provide a vital

role in providing timely information to committees. They are not committee members; they may be invited to attend all or portions of committee meetings. Chairs should feel no obligation to have consultants attend all meetings or to sit in on the entire meeting. Generally, consultation is limited to a particular agenda item. Chairs are expected to schedule executive sessions – voting members only – as needed to conduct Senate business.

Representatives to Universitywide Committees

Each spring, most Senate committees should select a member to represent them at systemwide meetings of the equivalent University committee in during the following year. This representative may be the Chair, Vice Chair, or another committee member; it is ideal for the Chair to serve in this role to allow for regular updates to the Cabinet. Your University committee representative, as the liaison between the two groups, should take your committee's advice and questions to systemwide meetings and report regularly back to your committee.

CONDUCTING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Note on Confidentiality

When confidential discussions take place during a meeting or documents are circulated that are considered confidential in nature or still in draft form, it is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to clearly inform members, guests, and student representatives that this information is not to be shared with their constituents or anyone outside of the meeting. If meeting participants are unclear as to the nature of a discussion or document, they should be reminded to seek clarification from the Chair.

Scheduling Meetings

Senate Analysts will work with Committee Chairs to schedule committee meetings. Some committees have a set meeting time that does not vary. Other committees schedule a time each academic year or quarter. Meeting schedules should be set at least one quarter in advance.

Adding or Eliminating Meetings

In consultation with the Senate Analyst, a Committee Chair may add a meeting if there is sufficient business or cancel a meeting if there is insufficient business. Once the Committee Chair decides to add or cancel a meeting, they should inform the Senate Analyst, who will notify the members and guests.

Setting Meeting Agendas

The Committee Chair, in consultation with the Senate Analyst, sets the agenda for each meeting. The Senate Analyst prepares a draft agenda, which may include a consent calendar for non-controversial items. The Committee Chair should review and return it to the Senate Analyst promptly. The Committee Chair, in consultation with the Senate Analyst, should prioritize agenda items in order to meet deadlines for committee comments and reviews.

Ongoing Functions of Senate Committees

- Committee comment: generated at the meetings and recorded in the committee meeting minutes. If further discussion is required and no definitive position is reached, then the issue may be placed on the next meeting's agenda. When the committee's review is complete and

resolution for action voted on, committee comments are forwarded to the Divisional Chair for discussion by the Cabinet and/or Divisional Senate Assembly. When consensus opinion is not reached and discussion has been thorough, both majority and dissenting opinions should be forwarded. Committee comments are submitted through the Divisional Chair, unless the committee has legislative authority to comment directly.

- Initiating recommendations, proposals, and studies: the Committee Chair or any committee member so requesting of the Chair, may place an item for the committee's consideration on the committee's agenda. The Senate Analyst may also recommend agenda items to the Committee Chair, based on their knowledge of pending issues under consideration by campus or University administration.
- Reviewing reports and policies: reports and policies generally originate from the UC Office of the President, systemwide Academic Senate, campus administration, other Senate committees, or the Divisional Chair.

Ensuring Continuity through Transitions

In order for shared governance to be effective, the administration and the Senate should work as partners. The Senate should strive to be a reliable partner, changing a previous position only rarely, and only for good cause. The following are suggested guidelines for changing a position reached by the previous committee:

- New information comes to light that was not previously available to the committee;
- There were substantial procedural errors in earlier deliberations; or
- A strong majority of committee members believe that the previous committee reached an untenable position.

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

Conducting Meetings

It is important at the first meeting of the year to review the committee's bylaws and determine how your committee will carry out its charge. This is an excellent time to review the roles of members, ex officio members, consultants, and student representatives. Remember that the Committee Chair, in consultation with the Senate Analyst, sets the agenda for the year and for each meeting.

Best Practices

In order to make meetings more effective and productive, here are some recommendations you might consider to shape the collaborative culture of your committee:

1. Utilize multiple sources of information, solicit both quantitative and qualitative data, and see what others have done with similar issues (other campuses or a systemwide body).
2. Listen to each other's ideas, opinions and perspectives; remember that everyone can make a contribution to the decision-making process, but always heed the [Senate Conflict of Interest and Recusal Policy](#).
3. Do not defer to your consultants even though they may be "content experts" on your team; listen carefully to each team member's expertise, but don't give up responsibility for contributing to the decision-making process. This is key for shared governance. Many groups are

tempted to defer to a recognized content expert; it is much easier to do so than think through the implications of a particular decision. It is certainly better to solicit the content expert's perspective and advice, openly discuss what your committee is learning about the content areas, and then make a decision as a group.

4. Take the time needed to make an informed decision, but don't get bogged down with a slow decision process.
5. [Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised](#) guides all Senate meetings.
6. It is helpful to have a written copy of a verbal motion so that it is accurately recorded in the meeting minutes.
7. The committee should decide what constitutes a majority vote (usually one more than half of all present and voting). Abstentions are not counted in the vote but may be recorded in the minutes.
8. Ex officio members, student representatives, and consultants do not vote.
9. It is useful to elect a Vice Chair early in the fall quarter. If the Vice Chair will not serve as Chair during the next academic year, the committee should elect a Chair early in the spring quarter.
10. Make clear how members, student representatives, and consultants are expected to handle confidential material and discussions. Undergraduate student representatives are required by ASUCI to report on meetings they attend; their notes are published on the ASUCI website. If desired, the Committee Chair or Senate Analyst may review student reports for accuracy.
11. The Chair or members may suggest that a member abstain from voting when a conflict of interest exists.
12. The Chair is encouraged to call for executive session or schedule it as part of the meeting as needed.
13. All Senate members are governed by the [Faculty Code of Conduct \(APM 015\)](#):

Faculty Code of Conduct (APM 015) II.D. Colleagues - Ethical Principles

"As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debts and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution." (AAUP Statement, 1966; Revised, 1987).

14. The Committee Chair is responsible for addressing any concerns regarding civil discourse that occur during discussion. If there is a problem, the Committee Chair should bring this to the attention of the Divisional Chair.

Attendance

Members are expected to attend at least 75% of meetings; their attendance is important to the successful operation of the committee or council. The Senate Analyst will record attendance. If a committee member does not attend meetings regularly or does not participate in the group's work, and you are unable to change this behavior, you should contact the Committee on Committees for a replacement.

Finding Substitutes for Systemwide Meetings

As soon as you learn that the designated University committee representative from your committee cannot attend a systemwide meeting, please follow the process below. It will help both the Divisional and Systemwide Senate Offices keep track of business and ensure that the substitute will be reimbursed if traveling to the meeting.

It is the Committee Chair's responsibility to:

- Work with the Senate Analyst to find a substitute within the committee (an elected or appointed committee member). Keep in mind that no administrator at the level of Department Chair or above may substitute at a systemwide meeting.
- Forward the substitute's name to the Senate Analyst.

It is the Systemwide Senate Office's responsibility to:

- Send the substitute an agenda and any e-mail notices regarding the meeting.
- Process travel reimbursement (instructions are usually on the last page of the meeting agenda).

Resources

Please visit [the Senate website](#) for current Senate news and for information on meetings, annual reports, and Senate bylaws and regulations. Please familiarize yourself with [your committee's page](#) on the Senate website.

Annual Reports

At the end of the academic year, the Divisional Chair will call for a report of committee activities. The Senate Analyst assigned to your committee will help prepare this report. [Annual reports](#) are posted on the Senate's website and are presented on the consent calendar at the first meeting of the Divisional Senate Assembly in fall quarter during the following academic year.