Faculty Senate FAQs

Nomination/Election of Chair & Vice Chair FSH 1580 Article IV:
Section 1. Nomination. Each spring, as soon as practicable following the appointment and election of new members of the senate, the president of the university or the president's designated representative calls and presides at a meeting of those who will be members during the ensuing year for the purpose of nominating candidates for the offices of chair and vice chair. Nominations are by secret ballot, and no other official business is transacted at this meeting. [ed. 7-10]

Section 2. Election. Not less than three days following the nominating meeting referred to in section 1, above, the president or the president's designated representative calls and presides at a second meeting of the same group for the purpose of electing the chair and the vice chair for the ensuing term. No other official business is transacted at this meeting. The requirement that there be no less than three days between the two meetings may be suspended only by the unanimous consent of the members in attendance. The procedures for the election are as follows:

Clause A. Additional Nominations. Before balloting begins for each office, additional nominations may be made for that office.

Clause B. Procedure for Balloting. Elections for officers of the senate are by secret ballot, and a majority of all votes cast is necessary for election, a quorum being present [see V-3]. In the event that more than two candidates are nominated for either office and none receives a majority of the votes cast on the first ballot, balloting continues with the name of the candidate receiving the fewest votes being dropped from the ballot after each vote. In the event that there is no candidate with the fewest votes, balloting continues with all names included until such time as a candidate receives a majority of votes (in which case he or she is declared elected) or until a candidate receives the fewest votes (in which case his or her name is dropped from the ballot and the balloting continues). [ed. 7-97, 7-10]

Appointment of Secretary - FSH 1520, Article V: Section 3. Officers. Each year the senate elects a chair and a vice chair from among the elected faculty members of the senate. Also, each year a secretary is appointed by the chair, subject to confirmation by the senate, from among the members of the senate or from the membership of the university faculty. The appointment of a person who is not a member of the senate to serve as secretary does not carry with it membership on the senate. [ed. 7-09]

When and who oversees the elections for senate members? Current senate members from each respective college/group consult and assign someone who will handle the process. Check your respective college/group by-laws for procedures. It is fine for faculty senate members to solicit assistance from the dean’s office in sending out and receiving secret ballots. Faculty should oversee the process and count votes received. All faculty within the college are given the opportunity to be involved and vote.

FSH 1520, Article V, Section 6. Elections. Regular elections for senators in the senate are held before April 15 of each year in which an election is to be held. All elections for members of the senate are by secret ballot. Appropriate procedures for nominations and elections are developed and approved by a majority vote of the faculty of the college or other unit. [ed. 7-09]

How long is my term on Faculty Senate?
FSH 1520, Article V, Section 4. Terms of Office. Elected faculty members of the senate serve for three years. The academic dean shall serve one year, the staff representatives shall serve for staggered two year terms. The terms of office for student members are as established by the senate. [See 1580 VI.] Newly elected members take office each year on September 1 or on the official opening date of the academic year, whichever is earlier. To carry out the requirement that approximately one-third of the elected faculty members are to take office each year, the senate may shorten the initial term of office of faculty senators elected to fill new positions in the senate to conform to a balanced
rotation plan. When members are elected to fill a vacancy, they take office at the first
meeting after the election and serve for the unexpired term of the vacancy. A faculty
member elected to the senate may serve two consecutive terms. After serving two
consecutive terms the faculty senate member must wait one full year before they are
again eligible for election [see also FSH 1580 III-3]. [ed. 7-09, rev. 7-12, 7-15]

What if I will be gone for one month, or for more than four months?
FSH 1520. Article V, Section 7. Vacancies.
Clause A. If it is necessary for a member of the senate to be absent temporarily (more
than a month, but less than four months), the candidate who received the next highest
number of votes in the most recent election in the college or unit acts as his or her
alternate in the senate with full vote. If it is necessary for a member to be absent for
more than four months, but less than one year, a special election is held to fill the
temporary vacancy. When the senate member returns, he or she resumes the position
in the senate. If it is necessary for a member to be absent for more than one year, or if
the member is unable to complete the term of office for any reason, a special election is
held to fill the unexpired term. [See 1580 VI for procedures covering student
vacancies.] [ed. 7-09]

Clause B. The chair of the Faculty Senate must declare a position vacant if a member
is absent from three consecutive meetings unless the member has informed the chair of
the senate in writing that he or she intends to participate fully in the activities of the
senate in the future. When a position is declared vacant, the chair must notify the
constituency concerned. [ed. 7-09]

What is the Center Senator’s Role?
1520 Article V. Section 2. Structure. A (2). University Centers. The resident faculty of
the university centers in Boise, Coeur d’Alene and Idaho Falls each elects one senator
from among its number. Those senators shall have the right to participate and vote insenate meetings by means of available two-way video-audio technology located
at the centers. If the available technology fails, telephone conferencing will be used.
Senators elected to represent a center have a unique role on senate, which is to provide
a voice and vote from the perspective of their centers. That perspective is not intended
to be college and/or discipline specific. [add. 7-09, rev. 7-12]

What if I have replaced a member from my college who resigned from Faculty
Senate, can I serve again?
1580 Article III, Section 3. Members Completing Unexpired Terms. A member who has
been elected or appointed to complete the unexpired term of another member and has
served more than half of that term will be considered to have served one full term
(see FSH 1520 V-4 - Terms of Office). [ed. 7-10, rev. 7-15]

Can you send someone in your place, if you will be absent? Yes, but not with vote.
FSH 1580. Article V, Section 7. Alternates. Alternates participate in meetings of the
Senate only as permitted by the constitution of the university faculty [see 1520 V-7].
This rule does not preclude a member from having another person attend the meeting in
his or her stead as an auditor. [ed. 7-10]

Are proxy votes allowed? No

How are abstentions handled?
FSH 1580. Article V. Section 11. Voting. Voting on motions is by raising a hand. Proxy
votes are not allowed. (According to a standing rule of the senate, the chair does not
ask how many members abstained from voting on a particular motion, and abstentions
are not recorded in the minutes unless a member requests that his or her abstention be
recorded.) [ed. 7-10]