

FAQ

■ What does the Faculty Senate do?

The Faculty Senate represents the faculty of the University of Maine in developing and overseeing policies affecting the academic mission of the University of Maine. The full Senate convenes twice per month to discuss business pertaining to matters over which it has authority to act and make recommendations, including but not limited to:

1. Establishing degree requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree;
2. Establishing University policy in the areas of academic freedom, standards for actions on the academic standing of students, free speech and assembly policies, the definition of academic titles, and more;
3. Making recommendations to the administration regarding all academic matters;
4. Participating in the appointment of academic and administrative officers;
5. Evaluating University of Maine administrators; and
6. Reviewing matters affecting the academic environment

The Faculty Senate does *not*:

1. Represent the University of Maine or its offices, centers, or colleges;
2. Enter into contractual agreements, appropriate funds, or make business decisions on behalf of the University;
3. Negotiate or bargain as an agent of any faculty or student association;
4. Make *decisions* regarding the hiring or termination of any faculty, staff, administrators, or auxiliary positions or employees; or
5. Have the authority to make binding recommendations to the Chancellor, to the Board of Trustees, or to any other System Level office.

For more information, please see the following help document: [Introduction to the Faculty Senate: Jurisdiction, Procedure, and Committees](#)

■ What is the best way to get involved in the work of the Faculty Senate?

Senators advance the interests of faculty at the University of Maine by a) attending and participating in senate meetings; b) joining standing or ad-hoc committees; and c) submitting, debating and voting on proposals. If you are not a senator but would like to contribute to the work of the Senate, you may be appointed to serve on a committee or attend Open Meetings as a non-voting member.

■ How do I make a motion?

All proposals must be submitted to the Agenda Committee in advance. Proposals can be conveniently submitted on the “[Motions](#)” page of the faculty senate website. For more information on the process for submitting and making motions, please see the following help documents:

1. [Process for Submitting Proposals](#)
2. [Parliamentary Procedure: Guidance for Officers & Elected Members](#)

■ There is a pressing issue that requires the Senate’s attention. What should I do?

Any senator or committee can request senate action by *moving* the proposed action at a senate meeting (any meeting with the full senate will do, but motions are standardly made and voted upon at *Open Meetings*). If the issue requires further study before specific proposals are considered, a senator may move to refer the subject to the appropriate standing committee (or an ad hoc committee created for that purpose) and request that it submit a report.

■ Are senate meetings recorded?

Open Meetings of the Senate are recorded. Recordings are stored temporarily and used only by the Secretary (or designee) as a reference to ensure the posting of accurate meeting minutes. They are normally deleted within 2 months of the meeting date and are never circulated publicly.

■ Will everything I say in a meeting be made public?

Whether the statement of an attendee will be made public depends on the meeting type:

Open Senate Meetings:

Of the four meeting types, Open Meetings are the most public. Anyone can attend these meetings in person or via the webinar link posted on the Faculty Senate website. As a policymaking body of an instrumentality and agency of the State of Maine, Open Meeting minutes, along with any printed or digital materials or communications associated with Senate business, may be considered “public records” under the Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). Statements made during Open Meetings may become available or be circulated by the public at any time. Minutes from Open Senate meetings are posted on the Faculty Senate website.

Elected Members Meetings:

It is possible that something said in an Elected Members Meeting could be made public. However, the Secretary generally does not take official minutes during Elected Members

Meetings, and if notes are taken, they are not posted publicly. While these meetings are not recorded, they are broadcast via Zoom to a live audience composed of the full Senate membership and any special guests. Like Open Meetings, any printed/digital materials or communications produced in connection with Senate business may be considered “public records” under the FOAA.

Executive Committee Meetings:

The Executive Committee meetings twice per meeting cycle, once privately and once with members of the UMaine administration. Topics discussed during these meetings are treated confidentially and should be regarded as such unless explicit permission is granted during the meeting to discuss matters with a wider audience. In general, no statement made during either Executive Committee meeting will be made public.

■ Who should I contact if I am unable to attend a mandatory meeting of the Faculty Senate?

Article VI, §6 of the Constitution states that, “A member who must be absent from any meeting of the Senate shall name an alternate from the same college or administrative office to attend and to exercise all privileges and powers of the regular member.” After an alternate has been selected, please notify the Senior Administrative Coordinator *prior* to the meeting so the change is reflected on the attendance sheet and in the minutes.

■ What is the term of a faculty senator?

The term of a faculty senator is 3 years, beginning on July 1 following the senator’s election and ending on June 30 after the completion of the third year of the term. A senator may serve up to two terms successively, with no limits on the total number of served terms.

■ What are my responsibilities as a faculty senator?

The Constitution and Bylaws name several explicit and implied responsibilities for faculty senators, including but not limited to the responsibility to:

1. Represent the interests, values, and priorities of faculty within the senator’s college;
2. Attend meetings (the Senate cannot conduct business without the presence of a quorum);
3. Make and vote on proposals (this entails staying informed about senate business, asking questions, reading background materials on proposals, taking notes, and keeping abstentions—which are non-votes—to a minimum);
4. Serve on committees and subcommittees of the Senate;

5. Appoint a substitute whenever a member must be absent from any meeting (including committee meetings) of the Senate; and
6. Regularly report on the activities and proposals of the Senate, along with any nonconfidential committee work, to the represented college or department to which the Senator belongs.

■ When is the Senate in session?

Article VI, §1 of the Constitution states that, “The Senate shall hold regular monthly meetings during the academic year ...” Open Meetings are normally scheduled once per month from September through May. Meetings with elected members only may occasionally be scheduled shortly before classes begin to avoid scheduling subsequent meetings during religious holidays. Faculty cannot be required to attend a meeting that has been scheduled outside the working term for which they have been contracted by the University of Maine. Full participation of the Senate is encouraged and necessary for the valid execution of Senate business.

■ I have a question about parliamentary procedure. Who do I ask?

If the question arises during a regular or special meeting of the Faculty Senate, the Senator should make a “parliamentary inquiry” to the presiding officer and wait to be recognized. The presiding officer may answer the question or consult with the Parliamentarian. If the question arises outside of a regular or special meeting, the Senator may contact the Parliamentarian directly and copy the President via email.