

Academic Governance Standing Rules

State University of New York

College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Adopted May 22, 2015; Revised October 2018, Revised October 2021

Preamble

These are the Standing Rules for Academic Governance. Changes to the Standing Rules require unanimous vote of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will announce all changes to the Membership at the following College-wide meeting and posted to the Academic Governance website. The Membership may call for a vote to endorse or retract any Standing Rules change made by the Executive Committee at the meeting at which the change is announced. The Memberships vote will be binding.

I. Organization

A. Membership

1. Faculty

All Faculty members as defined in the Bylaws are automatically members of Academic Governance.

2. Staff Representatives

The 30 Staff Representatives shall be chosen by election with half of the Staff Representatives being elected in alternate years for two-year terms. All non-Faculty professional staff eligible to be Staff Representatives per the Bylaws may vote for the Staff Representatives. Elected Staff Representatives shall be available to serve on Standing Committees and the various Ad Hoc Committees and Subcommittees formed.

15 staff positions will be eligible for reelection each spring. For a slate of 15 positions, each voter will rank the top 10 candidates from 1-10, with 1 being the highest rank. If there is not a full slate of candidates (there are fewer than 15 nominees for 15 positions), the Executive Committee may appoint representatives from among eligible staff.

3. Student Representatives

The eight (8) undergraduate representatives shall consist of the President of the Undergraduate Student Association and seven (7) additional undergraduate students elected by the members of the Undergraduate Student Association. The eight (8) graduate representatives shall consist of the President of the Graduate Student Association and seven (7) additional graduate students elected by the members of the Graduate Student Association. Each respective Student Association shall develop such election processes and communicate the processes to Academic Governance. The Student Representatives are expected to serve on Standing Committees, Search Committees, and the various Ad Hoc Committees and Subcommittees formed. The undergraduate representatives and the graduate representatives shall be appointed by their respective student organizations.

B. Election of Officers and At-Large Members

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for conducting the College-wide election of officers and Staff Representatives.

1. Election Schedule

The annual election shall take place in the Spring Semester such that results can be announced at the final Academic Governance meeting of the academic year.

2. Taking Office.

Members elected to office or committee shall assume their posts on the first day of obligation of the fall semester immediately following the election, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws.

3. Vacancies.

In the case of a vacancy in any committee post or staff representative position of more than one month, the Executive Committee (in consultation with the affected academic unit, as applicable) may appoint an alternate for the duration of the duly-elected incumbent's absence.

4. Removal from Office.

Officers and committee members may be removed from office by a vote of the membership following complaint to the Executive Committee and review and recommendation by the Executive Committee. The decision shall be made by no less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those voting (exclusive of abstentions).

C. Electronic Balloting.

Voting in Academic Governance elections shall be by confidential ballot. In each contest, the nominee receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected. In the event of a tie, there shall be a run-off election.

Academic Governance bylaws allow for electronic balloting; the following procedures will be used to clarify the process for ensuring a confidential and accurate vote. When the ballot is intended to be confidential but de-identified these are the procedures that will be followed:

1. The Executive Committee will generate the list of voting members and their email addresses before the first ballot or survey of the semester.
2. Electronic voting will be conducted using a third-party commercially available voting system. The Academic Governance Executive Committee will purchase a secure account using funds from the Governance Account. Information regarding the security of the account will be made available to the electorate.
3. No fewer than two members of the Executive Committee, who are not on the ballot, and including the Sergeant-at-Arms will have access to the account once the ballot/survey is live. Contact information for these individuals will be listed on the first page of the ballot/survey and on the final page of the ballot/survey.
4. Ballots will run three (3) working days beginning the day after the ballot is announced, and will be checked periodically by those indicated in item 3, to ensure that the system is functioning properly. No less than one reminder email will be sent automatically to Members who have not already voted. No preliminary election results will be reported.
5. Election results will be posted on the Academic Governance website as soon as they are reviewed by the Executive Committee.

II. Committees

A. Executive Committee

1. Members

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Academic Governance officers as defined in the Bylaws, the chairs of the Standing Committees, the president of the Undergraduate Student Association (USA), and the president of the Graduate Student Association (GSA).

2. Voting

Each member of the Executive Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

B. Academic Affairs Committee

1. Members

The Academic Affairs Committee shall consist of one member recommended by each of the chairs/heads of the Academic Units, two Staff Representatives, and two Student Representatives, one representing undergraduate students and one representing graduate students. The Associate Provost for Instruction shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Voting

Each Academic Unit Representative of the Academic Affairs Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

C. Student Experience Committee

1. Members

The Student Experience Committee shall consist of one member recommended by each of the chairs/heads of the Academic Units, two Staff Representatives, and four Student Representatives, two representing undergraduate students and two representing graduate students. The Dean of Students shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Voting

Each member of the Student Experience Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

D. Faculty and Staff Advancement Committee

1. Members

The Faculty and Staff Advancement Committee shall consist of one member recommended by each of the chairs/heads of the Academic Units, two Staff Representatives, and two Student Representatives, one representing undergraduate students and one representing graduate students. The Provost shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Voting

Each member of the Faculty and Staff Advancement Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

E. Research and Scholarship Committee

1. Members

The Research and Scholarship Committee shall consist of one member recommended by each of the chairs/heads of the Academic Units, two Staff Representatives, and two Student Representatives, one representing undergraduate students and one representing graduate students. The Vice President of Research shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Voting

Each member of the Research and Scholarship Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

F. Awards Committee

1. Members

The Awards Committee shall consist of at least two full-time faculty members, at least two members of the professional staff, one faculty member who holds the rank of Distinguished Faculty, and two Student Representatives, one representing undergraduate students and one representing graduate students. The committee will populate itself at the end of each academic year, with members serving two year terms. The Provost shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee.

2. Voting

Each member of the Awards Committee will have one vote. Decisions shall be made by no less than a majority vote.

G. Ad hoc Committees

An ad hoc committee is formed as a subgroup of an Academic Governance Standing Committee (including the Executive Committee) to study a specific subject, within a short well-defined time period. The chair of an ad hoc committee must be a member of the committee from which it is formed and is charged with populating it. It is the originating standing committee's responsibility to define the scope and time period for the work and the ad hoc committee will report to the standing committee.

H. Committee Operations

1. Committee Chairs

Each committee shall elect one of its members to be the Committee Chair. The Committee Chairs are expected to facilitate committee work, to understand what the committees are working on, to integrate common committee projects when they come to their attention, and to attend all Executive Committee meetings. Timely and frequent communication from committee chairs to the Executive Chair, in the form of reports, minutes and meetings, is an important aspect of this. Committee Chairs are typically a one-year commitment with no term limits.

2. Operations

Each committee shall set an annual agenda for committee's tasks, elect a committee secretary, monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of policies and practices that originated within the committee, propose bylaws changes as needed, and meet with the Executive Committee and/or Executive Chair in May to discuss the committee's possible agenda items for the following academic year.

3. Committee Meetings

Each committee shall regularly meet during the academic year at least once per month, create a written report on committee activities for a 12-month period, and report on committee activity no less than once a year at an Academic Governance meeting. All action items (resolutions, policy changes, etc.) should be forwarded to the Executive Chair one (1) week prior to the Executive Committee Meeting before the Academic Governance meeting at which they will be presented to the Membership.

III. Meetings

Meetings of Academic Governance and its constituent committees shall be held and conducted as outlined in the Academic Governance Bylaws. Voting at Membership meetings may be done via voice vote or count. For meetings held virtually, the voting mechanism of the virtual platform software (e.g., Zoom) may be used for voting. The results of any vote shall be established by count, if requested by a voting member.

IV. Consultation

New York State Education law (Sec. 6004) authorizes the College Board of Trustees to make regulations governing:

- The care, custody, and management of lands, grounds, buildings and equipment, and
- The conduct and behavior of students.

In all other matters the College President makes regulations after consultation with appropriate campus constituencies including, but not restricted to, the College Board of Trustees and the College faculty. Certain policies may require collective bargaining negotiation at the College, SUNY or State-level. Issues and ideas that may result in new or amended College policies may originate within the Board of Trustees, Executive Cabinet, Cabinet, Academic Council, Academic Governance committees (Executive, standing or ad hoc), or with any individual faculty or staff member or group of individuals. College policy may be recommended to College Board of Trustees or President via the procedures articulated below, which are intended to:

- Ensure clarity and transparency of College policy statements, and to
- Communicate approved College policy to the College-wide community.

Separate procedures are prescribed for approval of policies that are directly related to the College's academic mission, those that are not, and those that are mandated by SUNY. The Executive Cabinet, in consultation with the Executive Chair of Academic Governance, will determine whether a policy is academic, non-academic or a SUNY mandate. A flow chart of the review procedure is given in the Appendix.

A. Procedures for approving College Policies affecting the academic mission

1. Suggestions for new or amended College policies will be communicated to the Executive Chair of Academic Governance. Such proposals will then be remanded to the appropriate standing committee(s) of Academic Governance for consideration. If no appropriate standing committee can be identified, the Executive Committee of Academic Governance will consider the proposal.
2. The designated committees will generate recommendations regarding the adoption of new or amended College policies. Committees are expected to consult with affected campus constituents in developing their recommendations.
3. The Executive Committee of Academic Governance will review policy recommendations generated by standing or ad hoc committees to determine if they are fully formed and ready for consideration by the full membership of Academic Governance. Once approved by the Executive Committee, policy recommendations will be presented for discussion and endorsement at the next appropriate College-wide meeting. Endorsement will be determined by vote of the membership of Academic Governance via electronic ballot.
4. Once endorsed by the membership of Academic Governance, the Executive Chair of Academic Governance will communicate the policy recommendation with the voting results to the College President within 10 working days.
5. College Policy is official when the President has signed the policy document.
6. All adopted resolutions on College Policy and official College Policy changes, will be posted to the Academic Governance website, recorded in the College President's office and archived by the Secretary of Academic Governance within ten (10) working days after being signed by the President.
7. The President will share significant additions or amendments to College policy with the ESF Board of Trustees.

B. Procedures for approving non-Academic College Policies

1. Suggestions for new or amended College policies may originate with any faculty, staff or Board of Trustees member. Suggestions arising within the faculty or staff ranks should be transmitted through the chain of command, with review at each level, to the supervising vice president for consideration by Executive Cabinet.
2. Executive Cabinet will consider suggested policy changes and either decline to act or commission the drafting of policy to be reviewed by Cabinet and Academic Council.
3. Cabinet and Academic Council will provide commentary on the draft policy whereupon Executive Cabinet will compose a final draft policy for Board of Trustees and/or presidential approval (see the first paragraph of the policy for Board of Trustees jurisdiction).
4. College Policy is official when the College Board of Trustees or President has signed the policy document.
5. Newly approved College policies will be communicated to the campus by email and be posted to the web page of the Vice President for Administration within 10 working days after being signed by the President.
6. The President will share significant additions or amendments to College policy that he/she has approved with the College Board of Trustees.

C. Standard Procedures for Policies originating within SUNY Administration

Any policy mandated by SUNY is not subject to this set of Procedures. However, all SUNY mandates at a minimum, will be presented at the next College-wide Meeting and will then be posted to the Academic Governance website, recorded in the College President's office and archived by the Secretary of Academic

Governance within 10 working days of the College-wide Meeting at which it is presented.

D. Standard Procedures for Urgent Policy

In times of exigency, ad hoc College Policy of any type may be developed and executed outside standard procedures; however, the ad hoc College Policy will be communicated to the Executive Chair within 10 working days to expedite communication to the Executive Committee and Academic Council and will be presented at the next Academic Governance meeting. Ad hoc College Policy may remain active for up to six months at which time it must be vetted through standard procedures (academic or non-academic as appropriate) or be retired.

E. Consultation Concerning Appointment of the President

The Membership shall assist the College Board of Trustees in seeking candidates for the office of President of the College according to the SUNY Board of Trustees Guidelines for Presidential Searches.

F. Consultation Concerning Appointment and Re-appointment of Academic Vice-presidents and Deans

1. Faculty, staff, and students shall be represented on all administrative searches where the primary duties of that position are to work closely with faculty and students or where consultation with Academic Governance is required by the SUNY Policies of the Board of Trustees.
2. When the committee is being formed, the Executive Committee shall be consulted by the administration in advance as to the composition of the committee and shall jointly with the administration select the faculty and staff representatives of the committee.
3. The committee shall represent the broad diversity of the College with respect to rank and academic unit.
4. The College President shall appoint the chair of any administrative search committee.
5. Provost searches shall have majority representation from faculty (including academic department chairs), at least one member of the professional staff, and at least one member of the student body.

G. Procedures for the Execution of a Vote of no Confidence

1. To initiate the process for a vote of no confidence, a petition from a group composed of 20% of the current Academic Governance (AG) membership is required. The group initiating the process shall bring forward a resolution to the Executive Committee highlighting the issues leading to the initiation of the request for a vote of no confidence. The names on the signed petition must be validated through the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Secretary of Academic Governance and kept confidential.
2. The Executive Committee would then move resolution through as a regular piece of business and create an ad hoc committee of the Executive Committee to review the resolution.
3. Once the resolution is acceptable to the Executive Committee, it will be placed on the agenda for the next Academic Governance meeting.
4. The discussion of the resolution will commence at a regular College-wide meeting; the discussion of the resolution will be considered concluded only after a Special Meeting of Academic Governance is held no sooner than 2 weeks following the initial College-wide meeting where it was introduced.
5. Voting on the resolution will occur immediately after the Special Meeting.

V. Standing Rules Revision

The procedure for amending the standing rules is given in the Academic Governance Bylaws.

VI. Definitions

Administrative Personnel: Members of the President's Executive Cabinet

Anonymous ballot: A ballot cast such that the responses are not linked to a name and there is no record kept of who voted or how many times a vote was cast.

Campus Personnel: Includes Faculty, Staff, Students, and Administrative Personnel

College Policy: Policy as defined above that originates on the ESF Campus(es) and is specific to the ESF Campus(es). College Policy affects multiple units and departments and provides direction to the entire college community in specified areas. The definition of College Policy does not include departmental/unit level or local policies and procedures internal to the workings of any single department or unit within the campus. College Policy also does not refer to decision making related to departmental or administrative procedures, or day-to-day decision making necessary to carry out policy.

College: The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Confidential ballot: A ballot cast such that who responds to a survey is known, but direct links to the respondent will be de-identified.

De-identified ballot: Data is collected by confidential means, but responses will be grouped and reported as percentages. This makes the data anonymous when "processed" but the data collection method is not anonymous.

Policy: a definite course or method of action (selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions) to guide and determine present and future decisions; or a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body. (Source: <http://www.merriamGwebster.com/dictionary/policy>)

SUNY Policy: Policy mandated by SUNY system central offices, the SUNY Board of Trustees, broadly by state government entities covering all campuses within the SUNY system.

