

New Senator Orientation

Welcome, and congratulations on being elected to serve as a Faculty Senator. What you do as a Senator is important. The Faculty Senate is the primary legislative body of the College of Charleston faculty. The Faculty Senate is concerned with all matters relating to academic programs, the curriculum, admission and continuation standards, the grading system, degree and certificate requirements, and the utilization of intellectual resources of the College. The Senate may also make recommendations to the President concerning educational and athletic programs, academic organization, the College budget, and the general welfare of the College community, among other matters. In short, the Faculty Senate sets academic policies for the College and advises the President on a wide range of issues.

Fifty-three Senators and several officers serve in the Senate. The Speaker of the Faculty presides at meetings and facilitates the work of the Senate. The Speaker will keep meetings of the Senate moving -- making certain that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that everyone understands what is being discussed and voted on. The Faculty Secretary distributes the agenda and takes the minutes during the meetings. The Parliamentarian assists with procedures.

As a Senator you will have the opportunity to:

- Ask questions of all individuals who report to the Senate.
- Discuss the merits or drawbacks of motions before the Senate.
- Propose amendments to improve motions under debate.
- Introduce matters for the Senate to consider (see below).
- Vote on all measures that are put before the Senate for a vote.

Meetings of the Senate are governed by parliamentary procedures set out in *Robert's Rules of Order*. Don't let the rules intimidate you -- they are there to help facilitate participation. Keep in mind a few simple rules that will allow you to participate effectively:

- Raise your hand when you wish to speak.
- When recognized by the Speaker, identify yourself by name and Senate affiliation (department or school) as you begin speaking.
- Speak in a loud voice so that everyone in the room can hear. When you speak in the Senate you are addressing the entire Senate, not just one individual.
- Comments made during a debate should be germane to the specific issue that is on the floor. If an amendment has been proposed, discussion should be limited to the amendment and should not address the main motion.
- Limit yourself to speaking twice on any single issue. The Speaker may enforce this rule if many people wish to speak.
- Be prepared to vote on each issue. The Speaker will ask for a voice vote on most issues, with an "aye" to show support and a "no" from those who oppose the measure.

Meetings of the Senate are regularly held once a month during the academic year. The Senate meets on Tuesdays at 5:00 P.M. (specific dates will be announced). The Senate agenda will be distributed to you one week prior to each meeting. Be sure to review the agenda carefully. Supplemental materials, including the full proposals for curricular items, will be posted on-line. You may find it helpful to prepare a list of questions and comments in advance of each meeting.

As a Senator, you have the opportunity to place items on the Senate agenda as well as respond to items placed on the agenda by others. To propose a motion for consideration, you should prepare a written document and submit the motion to the Faculty Secretary. Any item that requires a vote must be included on the Senate agenda. The Senate agenda deadline is usually twelve days before the Senate meeting (specific dates will be announced). If you have any questions about preparing a proposal to bring to the Senate, the Speaker of the Faculty is available to assist you. Other matters that are not on the agenda may be brought up and discussed at the end of a Senate meeting. Time is always made available at the end of each meeting to address other items under the heading "Constituents' Concerns." This is your opportunity to introduce new matters for discussion, but any item introduced at this time may not be voted on during the meeting.

Finally, remember that what you do as a Senator is important. As an elected representative of your department or school, you have a responsibility to take action on matters of importance to faculty, students, and staff at the College of Charleston. The Faculty Senate is only effective if Senators play an active role in governance.

More information about the Faculty Senate and committees can be found in the By-laws of the Faculty that are included in the Faculty/Administration Manual. A copy is posted on line (accessible on the MyCharleston Faculty tab and on the Academic Affairs website).

Copies of *Robert's Rules of Order* are available for your use in the office of the Faculty Secretariat (Randolph Hall, Suite 108).

A template for motions brought to the Senate can be found on the Faculty Senate website.