



# Handbook for Academic Senators

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# Welcome

Welcome Senators! You have accepted a profound duty in agreeing to serve on University of The Bahamas (UB) Academic Senate. As you read this handbook and participate in the work of the Academic Senate you will come to appreciate the importance of this governance body in the life of our University.

This handbook provides a step-by-step introduction to what it means to be a member of the UB Academic Senate. This handbook serves to explain your role in everyday language, while at the same time providing insights into aspects of being a Senator not included in the official documents. The Statutes and Bye-Laws of the Academic Senate is the official document detailing your responsibilities and is found on the UB webpage. If there is a conflict between this Handbook and the Statutes and Bye-Laws of the Academic Senate, the latter will prevail.

# 1. University of The Bahamas Act, 2016

University of The Bahamas Act of 2016 explains the Governance and Financial management of the University. In addition, the Act establishes the UB Charter and University of The Bahamas Statutes. The Articles of the UB Charter establishes the various bodies of the University including the Academic Senate, while the Statutes specify the composition of those bodies. It can be found on the University website at [University of The Bahamas Act \(2016\)](#).

## Composition of the Academic Senate

Article 7 of the University Charter establishes the Academic Senate in accordance with Statute X of the Statutes of the University. The Academic Senate is composed of officers elected and appointed as follows:

- the President of the University, ex officio;
- two persons elected by each school of the University;
- two persons elected by Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning;
- two persons elected by the Culinary or Hospitality Management Unit or any successor institution or academic unit;
- two persons elected by each campus outside of New Providence;
- four persons elected from the faculty (two of whom shall be adjunct or part-time);
- one person elected from counsellors and librarians;
- eight UB officers carrying out administrative duties who shall be appointed by the President;
- four members of staff elected from the body of full-time staff; and
- four students elected from the body of students.

## Responsibilities of the Academic Senate

The Academic Senate is the academic authority of the University and has responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of the University. The work of the Academic Senate is conducted in Ordinary meetings, specially called Extraordinary meetings, and through the work of the Academic Senate Committees. In general, the Academic Senate is responsible for approving changes to the academic programme, maintaining the quality of the academic programme, determining requirements for admission to the University, approving graduation and honours lists, and other matters impacting the academic affairs of the University as described in Article 7.3 of the UB Charter. Any Academic Senate resolution that has financial implications must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The full powers and responsibilities of the Academic Senate are enumerated in Article 7.3 of the UB Charter on the University's website at [University of The Bahamas Charter](#).

## The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees, constituted as described in Article 5 of the UB Charter, is the overarching governing body of the University and, as such, has the general direction and control over the conduct of the affairs of the University. In this governance structure, the Academic Senate shall exercise its authority subject to the powers of the board as described in the UB Charter.

## The Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs, led by the Provost or the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, oversees, administers and supervises the academic affairs of the University and, as such, works closely with the Academic Senate to advance the academic agenda of the institution including, but not limited to, academic programmes, faculty affairs, teaching, learning, and research.

## 2. Statutes and Bye-laws

The Academic Senate, subject to the powers of the Board, is the academic authority of the University. The Academic Senate carries out this mandate in monthly Ordinary and specially called Extraordinary meetings and through the work of the Academic Senate Committees. The Statutes and By-laws are divided into Articles which include:

- Responsibilities of the Academic Senate. This article references the responsibilities listed in the UB Act;
- Composition of the Academic Senate. This article references the composition of the Academic Senate as explained in the UB Act;
- Appointment to the Academic Senate. This article explains how the *appointed* members of the Academic Senate are appointed;
- Election to the Academic Senate. This article explains the conduct of Academic Senate elections and bye-elections, and who is eligible for election to the Academic Senate: full-time faculty, adjunct or part-time faculty, staff, and students.
- Rights and responsibilities of the Senators. Without repeating the Academic Senate responsibilities as detailed in the UB Act, this article describes Senators' rights and responsibilities with regard to participating in the business of the Academic Senate. Specifically, the article explains requirements for attendance and service, and explains consequences for Senators failing to fulfill their obligations.
- Committees. This article explains the work of Academic Senate committees and explains Senators' obligation of Committee service. In Section 6 below we explain more about the Academic Senate Committees.

- Academic Senate Officers. This article lists and explains the requirements for Academic Senate Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and two Parliamentarians. More about the Academic Senate Officers is discussed in Section 3.
- Meetings. This article explains the conduct of Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings. More about Academic Senate meetings is discussed in Section 5.
- Amendments. This article explains how Academic Senate Statutes and Bye-Laws can be amended.
- Existing Policies and Practices. This article explains that the Statutes and Bye-Laws take the place of any existing laws, rules, practices and procedures or the Academic Senate.

The full text of the Academic Senate Statutes and Bye-Laws can be found on the UB webpage.

## 3.The Academic Senate

### Academic Senate Officers

There are six mandated Academic Senate Officers:

- Chair: The Academic Senate Chair convenes and presides over all Academic Senate meetings. The Chair is a full-time faculty member who is elected by Academic Senator for an initial term of two years. The Chair will not vote on motions except when needed to break a tie.
- Vice-Chair: The Vice Chair is a full-time faculty member who is elected by Academic Senators for an initial term of two years. The Vice-Chair will perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- Secretary: The Secretary is a full-time faculty or staff member who is elected by Senators for an initial term of two years. The Secretary is responsible for recording attendance and minutes of meetings, distributing Academic Senate papers, disseminating Academic Senate decisions, and arranging for the orderly conduct of Academic Senate meetings.
- Assistant Secretary: The Assistant Secretary is a full-time faculty or staff member who is elected by Senators for an initial term of two years. The Assistant Secretary will perform the duties of Secretary in the Secretary's absence.
- Parliamentarians: There are two Parliamentarians who are full-time members of faculty or staff who are elected by Academic Senators for an initial term of two years. Parliamentarians assist the Chair in ensuring that Senators adhere to proper meeting protocol.

## Roles & Responsibilities of Senators

The main responsibilities of Senators are to attend meetings and participate in the work of the Committees on which they serve. Senators are expected to attend all Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings. If there is any reason for a Senator's absence, this should be brought to the attention of the Academic Senate Secretary at the earliest opportunity. Senators missing two or more consecutive Academic Senate Ordinary meetings without due cause shall vacate their seats.

## Core Duties of Senators

Much of the work of the Academic Senate centres around:

- Approval of policies: Any policy impacting academic programmes must be approved by the Academic Senate after due consideration by the Committee on Policies;
- Approval of "Academic Papers": Academic papers include proposals for new programmes and programme changes. Note that graduation lists from each College will have been reviewed and approved by College Boards prior to being presented to Academic Senate for approval;
- Approval of graduation lists: Twice annually, Academic Senate will be required to approve graduation lists. Note that graduation lists from each College will have been reviewed and approved by College Boards prior to being presented to Academic Senate for approval. Graduation lists will only be tabled for approval in Closed meetings without Student Senators;
- Academic Calendar: The schedule of events on the Academic Calendar is typically approved on a three-year cycle. The Academic Calendar includes such dates as start and end dates for Fall and Spring semesters and summer sessions, Graduation, summer and winter holidays, mid-term breaks, mid-term and final examinations, orientation and special events.

Faculty Senators play a particular role in the work of the Academic Senate. These include:

- A quorum for Ordinary and Extraordinary Academic Senate meetings is considered to be 50% + 1 of Faculty Senators;
- Only Faculty Senators are eligible to vote on faculty matters;
- Only Faculty Senators are eligible to vote on academic papers and graduation lists;
- Only Faculty Senators are eligible to be nominated for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.



## Serving as a Senator

There are four main responsibilities of senators:

- Participate in the work of the Academic Senate;
- Serve on Academic Senate committees;
- Represent and report to their constituencies; and
- Declare any conflicts of interest that may arise.

## 4. Meetings

The main work of a Senator takes place in Academic Senate meetings and in meetings of the Academic Senate committees. Ordinary meetings are typically held the second Tuesday each month from 2:15pm to 3:50pm. If a Senator wishes to include any new business on the agenda, the Senator should forward that topic along with any relevant document(s) to the Academic Senate secretary no fewer than 10 days prior to the meeting. The Secretary distributes the meeting papers usually the Friday prior to the meeting. Meeting papers will include the Agenda, Minutes of the previous meeting and any additional documents relevant to the upcoming meeting. Senators are expected to review the documents prior to meetings and note any points of interest. In particular, Senators are expected to review minutes of previous meetings for accuracy.

As the main work of the Academic Senate is conducted at meetings, Senators are expected to attend all Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings. The importance of attendance must be stressed – as explained above in 3.2, a Senator may be removed from office if that Senator misses two or more consecutive Ordinary meetings without due cause.

### Conduct of meetings

The Academic Senate Chair directs all Academic Senate business. All meetings follow the principles of *Robert's Rules of Order*, as interpreted by the Academic Senate Chair and the Parliamentarians. In order to be heard, Senators must raise their hand (real or virtual) and wait to be recognized by the chair. All decisions of the Academic Senate must be made by motion, second and assent of the Academic Senate. As explained in 3.3 above, voting on certain items is limited to faculty Senators only.

After a motion is moved and seconded, Senators may discuss the motion. To participate in the discussion, Senators raise their hand and, when recognised by the Chair, make their presentation. In principle, once a Senator has made a presentation, he or she cannot be

recognised to speak again until all other Senators wishing to speak are heard. When all Senators wishing to speak on a motion have been heard, or when the Chair is satisfied that the Academic Senate has exhausted a topic sufficiently, the Chair calls for a vote.

If a Senator speaks out of turn, the Chair or the Parliamentarians may ask that Senator to desist and wait to be recognised by the Chair. Speakers may be interrupted by a Point of Order if they commit a serious violation of procedure, but usually Points of Order are raised only by the Parliamentarians.

## Order of Meetings

All Academic Senate meetings will generally follow the following order:

- Call to order - the Chair will call the meeting to order at the prescribed time, or closest to that time as possible when a quorum is present.
- Roll call – the Secretary will call the roll. Senators arriving after roll call will be recorded as being “late.”
- Prayer - the Chair usually asks a Senator to open the meeting in prayer.
- Acceptance of Agenda - the Chair may ask for any amendments to the Agenda, and after either adopting amendments or otherwise, the Chair will call for a motion and second for the adoption of the agenda as amended.
- Academic Senate minutes - the Chair will ask for amendments to the Minutes of the previous meeting, page by page, and when any amendments have been proposed and adopted, will call for a motion and second for the adoption of the Minutes (as amended) of the previous meeting.
- Matters arising - the Chair will invite Senators to comment on matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting, page by page. As with all Academic Senate business, Senators must raise their hands (whether real or virtual) and wait to be recognised by the Chair before introducing a matter arising from the minutes. Matters arising usually take the form of updates on continuing business mentioned in the Minutes or questions about outstanding business mentioned in the Minutes. If a matter arising is listed on the Agenda under New Business, discussion is usually deferred.
- New business - Items for discussion under New Business are listed on the agenda and are discussed in turn. Each item is presented and discussed according to the same procedures explained above.
- Adjournment - Upon completion of all business on the Agenda or at an appropriate hour, the Chair may ask Senators for a motion for adjournment. Any agenda items not addressed prior to adjournment are carried over into the next meeting.

## 5. Representing your constituency

All Senators represent particular constituencies. Senators must balance their duty to represent their constituency with their duty to serve the best interests of the University as they see fit.

Additionally, it is the duty of Senators to report back to their constituencies on Academic Senate deliberations, particularly on matters that have direct relevance to their constituencies. Again, debates that take place in closed sessions must not be shared.

## 6. Academic Senate Committees

All Senators are required to serve on at least one and not more than two Academic Senate Committees. There are two types of Academic Senate Committees: Standing and Special Committees. Standing Committees are permanent committees with specific Terms of Reference, whereas Special Committees are formed ad hoc to carry out specific tasks. Special Committees are usually convened for a fixed period of time.

Below is a list of the Standing Committees of the Academic Senate and their composition as of May 2022:

### Committee on Committees

Purpose: to determine and recommend the committees required for the effective functioning of the Academic Senate

Composition:

- Five (5) Senators representing faculty
- Two (2) Senators representing administration
- One (1) Senator representing staff
- One (1) Senator representing students

## Statutes, Bye-Laws and Rules Committee

Purpose: to recommend protocols and procedures that determine the operation of the Academic Senate.

Composition:

- Five (5) Senators representing faculty
- Two (2) Senators representing administration
- One (1) Senator representing staff
- One (1) Senator representing students

## Academic Policies Committee

Purpose: to develop, monitor, review and evaluate all policies and standards pertaining to academic matters and make recommendations regarding changes in academic policies and standards.

Composition:

- Five (5) Senators representing faculty
- Two (2) Senators representing administration
- One (1) Senator representing staff
- One (1) Senator representing students

## Committee on Research and Creative Works

Purpose: to promote and support scholarship, research activities and programmes at University of The Bahamas.

Composition:

- One (1) representative from each of the following
  - Office of Graduate Studies and Research
  - University Libraries
- Five (5) Faculty representatives, at least one of whom must be a Faculty Senator, from each of the following groups:
  - College of Business
  - College of Liberal and Fine Arts
  - College of Pure and Applied Sciences
  - College of Social and Educational Studies
  - College of Tourism, Hospitality, Culinary Arts and Leisure Management
- Faculty-at-Large inclusive of:
  - Adjunct Faculty
  - Counselling Services Faculty and
  - UB-North Faculty

## Curriculum/Academic Programme Committee

Purpose: to review curriculum, programmes and proposals for academic programmes offered by University of The Bahamas in all locations, through the respective College Boards.

Composition:

- Eleven (11) faculty representatives, at least three (3) of whom must be Faculty Senators with at most one from each group outlined below:
  - Business
  - Chemistry, Environmental and life Sciences
  - Communication and Creative Arts
  - Education
  - English Studies
  - Mathematics, Physics and Technology
  - Nursing and Allied Health Profession
  - Social Sciences
  - Tourism, Hospitality, Culinary Arts and Leisure Management
  - UB-Libraries
  - UB-North

- One (1) Student Representative from the Academic Senate or Student Government Association
- One (1) Senator representing Staff
- One (1) Administrator from the Office of Academic Affairs
- One (1) Administrator from the Office of Graduate Studies

## Faculty Development Committee

Purpose: to promote and support scholarship, activities and programmes related to the development of University of The Bahamas faculty with the exception of research and creative work.

Composition:

- Four (4) Senators representing faculty
- Two (2) non-Senators representing faculty
- One (1) Senator representing administration

## Promotion, Tenure and Post-Tenure Review Committee

Purpose: to review existing and best practice models with respect to faculty promotions, tenure and post-tenure review.

Composition:

- Seven (7) members including a member from US-North:
- Four (4) Senators representing faculty
- Two (2) non-Senators representing faculty
- One (1) Senator representing administration

## Student Affairs Committee

Purpose: to recommend policies regarding appropriate provisions for the personal development and well-being of all University of The Bahamas students.

Composition:

- Two (2) Senators representing faculty
- Three (3) Senators representing staff
- Four (4) Student Representatives from the Academic Senate or Student Government Association

## University Libraries Committee

Purpose: to make recommendations to the Academic Senate regarding the operation and development of all University Libraries.

Composition:

- One (1) University Librarian
- Five (5) Representatives from different areas of the Library inclusive of the Branch Libraries
- Five (5) Faculty representatives at least two of whom should be Senators
- One (1) student representative from the Senate or Student Government Association