

APPENDIX B CONSTITUTION OF THE FACULTY SENATE
(Amendments through April 2007, incorporated.)

Preamble

The Faculty Senate was authorized by an act of the General Faculty on May 12, 1960, and approved by the former Board of Trustees on June 1, 1960, as an agent to conduct the business of the Faculty responsibly and efficiently. It was the intent of the Faculty to create a smaller legislative body to which the powers of the Faculty should be delegated so long as it should represent the will of the Faculty. The Faculty intended that the Senate should act in the best interests of the University as a whole and of all its parts, in the pursuit of its aims and in the performance of the service for which the University exists. To the extent permitted by the laws of the state of Rhode Island and the laws of the United States, the authority of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Senate derives from approval by the General Faculty and by the former Board of Trustees. This document was first approved by the General Faculty on April 19, 1961; amendments were proposed by the Attorney General on October 3, 1961; the former Board of Trustees approved the Constitution and By-Laws with these amendments on November 1, 1961; and the General Faculty subsequently approved the amendments in May, 1962.

Article I. Name.

1. The name of this deliberative body shall be the Faculty Senate of the University of Rhode Island, referred to hereafter in this document as the Senate.

Article II. Powers.

1. The Senate, subject to the provisions of state and federal law, subject to consistency with the general objectives established by its governing Board, and subject to the referendum power of the General Faculty, has ultimate legislative power on educational policies. It shall, with the concurrence of the President, formulate policy concerning teaching and research, study, exercise, discipline and government: for example, and without excluding others not listed, academic standards (scholastic standing, admission and dismissal policy, class attendance, grading systems, etc.), the University calendar, University-wide curriculum matters both graduate and undergraduate, and research and patent policy as they may affect the faculty as a whole. Nothing in this article should be construed to interfere with the authority or responsibility of the appropriate administrative officers in the carrying out of established policy, or in proposing, through the President, such changes in policy as they deem desirable.

2. The Senate, with the concurrence of the President, shall formulate such policies regarding student activities as it may deem appropriate to advance the educational purposes of the University and to promote satisfactory discipline and behavior.

3. The Senate may make recommendations to the President and/or the Board of Governors through the President in regard to policies affecting faculty status and welfare, including such subjects as promotion, tenure, rank, leaves of absence, salaries, grants and contracts. This section shall not be construed to conflict with the rights delegated to an exclusive collective bargaining agent duly authorized to represent the faculty in conformity with public laws.

4. The Senate shall establish such standing and special committees as it deems necessary to carry out its functions: for example, Academic Standards, Curriculum, Faculty Welfare and Research and Patent Policy.

5. The Senate shall exercise all authority delegated to the University faculty by law and all authority lawfully delegated to it by the Board of Governors, except that the General Faculty shall act upon the recommendations made by the various college faculties and by the Graduate Faculty for granting of degrees in course to those recipients who have fulfilled the requirements for the appropriate degrees.

6. The General Faculty may review decisions made by the Senate. Upon petition to the President of the University signed by 10 percent of the members of the General Faculty, and notice to the Chairperson of the Senate, any vote of the Senate shall be submitted to the General Faculty at a meeting that shall be called for that purpose within five (5) weeks after the time of the Senate vote. The President or, in his/her absence, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will preside. In computation of elapsed time, as provided for in this article, days during the Christmas recess, spring recess, and days between commencement and the first day of registration in the fall semester shall not be counted.

The faculty member who originates the objecting petition shall act as chairperson of a committee of the opposition, and shall select at least two other signers of the petition to form a committee of three or more to prepare and lead the presentation of the case for the opposition. The names of this committee shall be published to the General Faculty in the call to the meeting. The meeting shall be conducted according to the same parliamentary authority that governs meetings of the Senate and its committees. Amendments to the Senate act may be adopted at this meeting. No final vote on the decision of the Senate or the version of this decision as amended by the General Faculty shall be taken at this meeting, but voting on this referendum shall be conducted by a secret mail ballot, as prescribed in the By-Laws. A majority of the legal votes cast shall be conclusive, provided that a majority of the General Faculty participates in the referendum. If a majority of the General Faculty do not cast valid votes, the Senate action shall stand as voted.

Article III. Membership.

- * 1. The Senate shall consist of designated ex officio administrative members, ex officio student members and of elected members of the full-time teaching, library, research and extension faculty, chosen in the approximate ratio of one senator for each 10 full-time faculty members. For the purpose of determining the number of senators to be elected by a college, the library or other unit of the faculty authorized to conduct elections, part-time faculty members shall be counted according to the fraction of full-time which they serve. Any professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor of the full-time teaching, library, research and extension faculty may be elected a member of the Senate. The Senate will provide means by which all eligible faculty members not in a college or the library have the opportunity to vote and to be candidates for election. The President, the Provost, the Vice Provosts, the Vice Presidents, the deans of the colleges and schools, the Dean of Admissions and the President or in his/her absence, the Vice President of the Student Senate and the President or in his/her absence, the Vice President of the Graduate Student Association shall be members of the Senate ex officio without the right to vote, but with the right to make and second motions. Other officers of administration, including personnel deans and the directors and assistant directors of the University administrative divisions, shall not be eligible for election to the Senate.

Article IV. Officers

1. The officers of the Senate shall be a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The duties of these officers are those usually associated with the titles, except as modified or added to in the By-Laws. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall exercise the full powers of the Chairperson. Their term of office shall be one year and they may be elected to succeed themselves once.

2. The faculty members serving as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Faculty Senate shall be entitled to reductions of at least one-half and one-third, respectively, of their normal duties. Normal duties include teaching, assigned research, advisement, committee work, thesis direction and other assigned responsibilities. For this reason, faculty members should consult with their appropriate administrative officers prior to acceptance of nomination for these offices. Entitlement should follow automatically upon election, and no further negotiation would be required except for consultation within the department and college to determine how the reduction might best be accomplished.

Article V. Executive Committee.

1. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and four senators elected annually from the elected membership of the Senate shall constitute an Executive Committee. The Chairperson of the Senate shall be chairperson of the Executive Committee. This Committee shall meet on call of the Chairperson, or on request of any two of its members. It shall serve as the steering committee of the Senate and shall represent, or designate persons to represent, the Senate in meetings with the President, Board of Governors and other University bodies.

Article VI. Meetings.

1. Regular meetings of the Senate shall be held at least once a month during the academic year, unless otherwise voted by the Senate.

2. Special meetings may be called upon due notice at any time during the academic year (1) by the Chairperson of Senate, (2) upon request by a majority of the Executive Committee, (3) by vote of the Senate at any regular or special meeting, (4) by petition to the Chairperson of at least 25 percent of the senators, or (5) by a petition to the Chairperson of at least 10 percent of the members of the General Faculty.

3. Within two weeks after the meeting of the Senate at which the results of elections of new members are announced, a meeting of the newly constituted Senate shall be held to elect officers and Executive Committee members of the ensuing year. If a date has not already been set for this meeting in the yearly calendar of Senate meetings, the time and place shall be set by the out-going Chairperson and Executive Committee. The out-going Chairperson shall preside at this meeting. Newly elected officers shall assume their duties at the close of this meeting. Out-going senators shall have no vote.

4. Prior to each meeting the agenda of the business to be conducted must be sent to all members of the General Faculty. Senate meetings shall be open to all members of the faculty, the student body, and the administration. Non-Senate members may address the Senate upon invitation of the presiding officer of the Senate. Procedure is outlined in the By-Laws.

Article VII. Amendment of the Constitution.

1. Except as provided in VII/3, amendments shall be proposed to the General Faculty by a majority of the total voting membership of the Senate, and ratified by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the General Faculty voting on the question, excluding abstentions, as determined by a mail ballot conducted by the Executive Committee and by three tellers appointed by the President of the University. (Approved by referendum, May 2002)
2. Balloting shall be conducted in accordance with the By-Laws governing secret mail balloting. A faculty member wishing to abstain shall submit a ballot in envelopes sealed and signed in the prescribed manner.
3. Proposals for changing titles of *ex officio* members of the Faculty Senate shall be submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. If in the judgment of the Committee, a title change is of a nature such that incorporating it into the Membership Article (III) of this Constitution does not require a referendum, the Committee shall report this finding to the Faculty Senate, together with a recommendation for an appropriate change of the Membership Article. Unless specified otherwise in the recommendation, the change shall become effective upon a two-thirds majority vote of the senators present and eligible to vote. The recommendation may not be voted upon at the meeting at which it is first moved.
4. Any member of the Senate may challenge a finding of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee that a change of the title of an *ex officio* member of the Faculty Senate can be incorporated into the Faculty Senate Constitution without a referendum. Such a challenge may be presented only prior to the actual vote on the change. If the challenge is upheld by a majority of the senators present and eligible to vote, the title change shall be submitted to the referendum process as outlined in Article VII, 1 and 2, of this Constitution.
- * 5. Changes to the provisions determining Faculty Senate membership can be made only in accordance with the referendum process as outlined in Article VII, 1 and 2, of this Constitution.

