V. Faculty Participation

The advice of faculty members concerning administrative leadership and academic programs is sought actively and systematically. Faculty and administrators are partners in the enterprise of education at The University of Alabama. Processes guiding all important decisions that shape the University’s educational potential and that allocate its resources are the joint responsibility of faculty and administrators. (Appendix A contains “Policies and Guidelines for Faculty Participation in the Selection and Evaluation of Deans and Departmental Chairpersons and in the Review of Programs.” See as well Appendix N, “Principles and Procedures for Discontinuance or Merger of Academic Units.”)

The President ensures faculty participation in the selection of vice presidents by appointing faculty members to each search committee.

A. Committees and Task Forces

The University maintains a number of University Standing Committees and appoints University Task Forces that deal with special matters not in the purview of a standing committee, to assist the administration in reaching decisions and to ensure representation of appropriate segments of the University community. These committees and task forces make recommendations on issues of concern to the University community, as well as working closely with the President and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs both to oversee the University’s planning process and to help establish University budgetary priorities and allocations. The importance of their work is recognized by giving them access to all information relevant to their missions and by giving them timely written responses to their recommendations. These committees and task forces make annual written reports, which are filed in the Library and are available upon request.

The chairs and the faculty and staff membership of standing committees and, where appropriate, task forces are selected by the President from the nominees and alternates presented by the Committee on University Committees (with the exceptions noted below). Faculty and staff are invited each spring to indicate to the Committee on University Committees their preferences about service on University committees. Standing committees are described in memoranda that are distributed annually to every department or school and are available in the Office of the President and the Office for Academic Affairs. Appointments to standing committees are announced in the spring semester, and such committees are expected to begin their work promptly at the beginning of each fall.

The Faculty Senate appoints one person to membership on each appropriate University Standing Committee and, normally, on each task force appointed by the President or the Provost/Academic Vice President.

The faculty membership of the Committee on University Committees constitutes a voting majority of the Committee and is selected by the President from a group of faculty recommended by the Faculty Senate. The Committee on University Committees annually elects its chair from its faculty membership.

Where the President chooses not to accept a nomination or recommendation, the President contacts the chair of the Committee on University Committees or the President of the Faculty Senate, as appropriate, in order to reach agreement. If agreement cannot be reached, the President requests another nomination or recommendation.

Membership on appropriate standing committees rotates in order to involve different members of the University community in University governance. Normally one-third of a committee’s membership rotates off the committee each year, and normally at least one year will intervene before a person can be reappointed to a committee. Members are selected to reflect the diversity of disciplines, race, and gender of the faculty.
and staff, unless the charge to a committee or task force makes it impractical to do so. A faculty or staff member does not ordinarily serve on more than two University committees or task forces at one time. A term of service for a committee member usually will not exceed three consecutive years.

Divisional, departmental, or area committees assist the institution by making recommendations on aspects of divisional and departmental activities.

**B. Curriculum Matters**

Normally, recommendations about curricular matters are initiated at the program level and are reviewed at appropriate administrative levels. Implementation of recommendations depends on the availability of resources.

The Graduate Council and the Graduate Dean evaluate proposals for new graduate degree programs and recommend whether to seek approval for such programs.

The Honors Council is responsible for establishing criteria and approving courses for inclusion in the University Honors Program. Additional responsibilities include designing and conducting an annual evaluation of the Honors Program and providing an annual report to the Office for Academic Affairs. Members of the Honors Council include the Honors Program Director, who acts as Chairperson of the Council; a representative from the Admissions Office; a faculty member appointed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs from each undergraduate division; a representative from the Office for Student Affairs; and at least three students who are elected by the Honors Program Student Association from among students enrolled in the Honors Program.

**C. Faculty Senate**

The Faculty Senate consists of faculty members elected from the various divisions. The Senate aids the University in making decisions on issues of policy, development, and operations by:

1. Offering advice and suggestions on matters of general faculty concern and

2. Providing a channel for communication between the faculty and University officials.

The Faculty Senate’s deliberations and recommendations should reflect the opinion of the faculty at large. Service in the Senate is a high honor, carrying with it responsibility to report to one’s division about the Senate’s activities, to solicit the opinion and advice of divisional colleagues on issues before the Senate, and to represent divisional colleagues in Senate debate and votes. All meetings of the Faculty Senate and of its committees are open to all who wish to attend.

The Faculty Senate appoints one person to membership on each appropriate University Standing Committee, and, normally, on each task force appointed by the President or the Provost/Academic Vice President.

The President of the Faculty Senate can request to meet with the Council of Deans (decided by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs) or to meet with the Vice Presidents (decided by the President) on specific occasions to discuss issues that are of mutual importance to the Faculty Senate and these groups and with the intent to streamline processes of input on these issues to the Provost/President.

Those matters the Faculty Senate or University Administration deem to be especially important, and are not specific to individual academic divisions, are referred to the faculty for a faculty-wide referendum.

The wording of such referenda will be determined by the Faculty Senate and Provost after consultation with
other University officials or committees, as appropriate. Voting will be administered by the Office of Academic Affairs and generally will commence within six weeks following a decision by the Faculty Senate that a referendum is required. The Office for Academic Affairs will print, distribute, receive, and count ballots. Faculty will have a minimum of two weeks to submit ballots after they have been distributed. The Office of Academic Affairs should provide a written statement of voting results within two weeks after the deadline for submission of ballots. The voting process normally should be completed within ten weeks following a decision by the Faculty Senate that a referendum is required.

Except as governed by other sections of the Faculty Handbook, for purposes of voting on referenda, “faculty” is defined to include all permanent and temporary full-time faculty with the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or equivalent and whose administrative appointments do not exceed fifty percent of their total appointments. Visiting and emeriti faculty are not included in this definition. The Faculty Senate may elect, by a majority vote of the Senate, to modify the list of faculty eligible to vote on a particular referendum.

Except as governed by other sections of the Faculty Handbook, a question on a referendum will pass if it is approved (1) by a majority of the faculty who vote in the referendum and (2) by a majority of colleges and equivalent academic divisions (determined by a majority of their voting faculty) that participate in the referendum. The Faculty Senate may modify these rules as necessary in cases of referenda asking the faculty to choose between more than two options.

Faculty are entitled to vote only in the division in which they hold their primary appointment. In cases of joint appointment, faculty must choose an academic unit in which to vote.

Matters specific to individual colleges or equivalent academic units and not affecting a broad-cross section of faculty outside of those academic units are not governed by these policies.

The constitution and by-laws of the Faculty Senate appear in Appendix F.