



# Getting to Know Your Academic Senate

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A Guide for Faculty, Staff, and  
Students of SJSU

**Why you need to know about  
the SJSU Academic Senate**



# What is the SJSU Academic Senate?

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- President Wahlquist approved creation of the Faculty Council in 1952. The Faculty Council initially consisted of 18 members (15 faculty and 3 staff)
- In 1963, the Faculty Council became the Academic Council. The Academic Council was authorized to make policy recommendations to the President, and was considered the official representative body of the faculty. In the 1960's students were added to the Academic Council.
- In 1974, the Academic Council became the principal agency for formulation of policy for the University and was renamed the Academic Senate. There were 6 students , 24 faculty, and 7 administrators on the Academic Senate (37 total)
- Today there were 55 members of the Academic Senate (9 administrators, 7 students, 1 alumni rep, 1 emeritus faculty, 36 faculty and 1 honorary senator).



# Who are the Senators

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- There are 55 Senators on the Academic Senate.
  - 3 are Ex Officio\* members including the Chair of the Senate, the Past Chair of the Senate,\*\* and the President of Associated Students.
  - There are 3 CSU Statewide Senators who are also Ex Officio.
  - There are 9 administrative representatives: the President, the Provost, the VP for Student Affairs, the VP for Administration & Finance, the VP of Advancement, and 4 Academic Deans/AVPs
  - There are 6 student Senators appointed by Associated Students.
  - There is one Alumni Senator and one Emeritus Faculty Senator. There is also currently one Honorary (non-voting) Senator.
  - There are 3 faculty members from the "General Unit" and 28 from the 8 colleges.
- \* Ex Officio members may not chair a Senate policy or operating committee, but do vote in the Senate.
- \*\* In a year when the Senate Chair is serving a second term, there is no past chair and therefore there will be only 54 senators.



# Senators - Continued

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- There are 5 faculty members from the College of Applied Sciences and the Arts.
- There are 3 faculty members from the College of Business.
- There are 2 faculty members from the College of Education.
- There are 3 faculty members from the College of Engineering.
- There are 6 faculty members from the College of the Humanities and the Arts.
- There are 4 faculty members from the College of Science.
- There are 5 faculty members from the College of Social Science.
- There are 3 faculty/staff members from the General Unit.



# What is the General Unit?

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By-Law 1.2 of the SJSU Academic Senate defines the General Unit.

“...the following staff positions and classifications are declared to be directly related to the instructional program. All employees serving in the following positions are qualified to vote (using proportional voting based on assignment) and are eligible as faculty representatives to the Senate with the exception of (i) administrators (covered by the Management Personnel Plan), (ii) employees in clerical and technician classifications, and (iii) volunteers.



## General Unit – continued

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- a) All members of Bargaining Unit III who are not members of or included in one of the college representative units.
- b) Employees classified as Student Service Professional III or IV."



# What Does the Senate Do?

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- The Constitution of the Academic Senate states that, “the Academic Senate, subject to the laws of California and the Policies and regulations of the Board of Trustees, shall formulate policies and procedures on matters affecting the general welfare of the University, including (a) educational policies, (b) faculty affairs, (c) student affairs, and (d) budget and finance.
- Upon passage by the Academic Senate, proposed policies and procedures shall be submitted to the President of the University for consideration and action. Those approved by the President become official University Policy and will be implemented as soon as practicable. The President will report to the Senate promptly on those proposed measures of which he or she does not approve.”
- The Academic Senate consists of representatives from the administration, faculty, and students.
- It is the responsibility of each member of the Academic Senate to assess the attitudes and viewpoints of the constituency which elected him/her. However, it is a policy that no member shall come instructed and that, in voting, each member represents the entire University. (By-law 1.11)



# Organization of Academic Senate

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- Executive Committee

  - Policy Committees:

- Curriculum & Research
      - Instruction & Student Affairs
      - Organization & Government Committee
      - Professional Standards
      - Committee on Committees
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- Operating Committees (report to policy committees)
      - Special Agencies
      - Other Committees and Task Forces



# Types of Policies with which the Senate is Involved

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- RTP
- Evaluation of teaching effectiveness
- Academic Integrity
- Add/drop procedures
- Grading
- Office hours
- Appointment and Review of Administrators
- General Education
- University-wide programs
- Research related: human subjects, animal care, and misconduct
- Budget priorities
- Campus climate
- Naming of facilities

**Basically, if you have a question about how something works at SJSU, check the list of university policies at the Senate website – you'll likely find the information you need.**



# Other activities with which the Senate is Involved

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- Sense-of-the-Senate resolutions where appropriate, for example:
  - Input to CSU trustees
  - Budget priorities for the campus
  - Athletics
  - Workload
- Making recommendations to the President on lottery proposals and budget priority funding proposals.
- Committees involved with a variety of activities from program approval, violations of academic freedom, student rights, student success, parking and transit and SOTEs.



## How Can I Know What the Senate is Working On?

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- Talk to your Senator
- Come to a Senate meeting as a visitor
- Visit the Senate webpage regularly:
  - What's new page
  - Meeting minutes
  - Agendas
- Participate in one of the Senate's committees



# Who may participate in Senate activities?

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- Senate:
  - Tenured, probationary and temporary faculty (Unit 3)
  - Students selected by Associated Students
- Policy & Operating Committees
  - Seats are generally specified per by-laws as for faculty (usually one person from each college), students and administrators.
  - See the Senate Handbook (online) or ask the Committee on Committee's rep for your college or unit
- Special Agencies and Boards
  - Varies – check the Senate bylaws and manual



# Top 10 Reasons to Get Involved in the Work of the Academic Senate

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10. It looks good in your RTP or personnel file.
9. You'll meet people from other colleges or units.
8. You'll have something to do during any free time you might currently have.
7. You'll be using Robert's Rules of Order.
6. If you ever plan to become a Department Chair, Dean, AVP, Director, Provost or President, you'll need to know about all of the types of work that goes through the Senate – being involved is the best way to learn.



## Top 10 Reasons to Get Involved in the Work of the Academic Senate – cont'd

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5. Your colleagues will be appreciative.
4. You'll get a chance to write policies for the university after engaging in research and discussion/debate on the content.
3. You'll learn about university operations and policies you never knew existed (and be glad that you found out).
2. You'll have an opportunity to make SJSU even better than it is.
1. You'll have fun!



## For more information ...

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- Visit the Senate website at:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate>

Be sure to bookmark it!