

Sierra College Academic Senate Constitution

(rev. March 2012)

Article I: Name

This organization shall be known as the Sierra College Academic Senate, hereinafter referred to as “the Senate.”

Article II: Powers and Responsibilities

Section 1. Academic Senate Powers

The purpose of the Academic Senate is to provide the faculty with its formal representative voice. The Senate represents the Sierra College faculty in “academic and professional matters” as defined by Educational Code, Title 5 and AB 1725.

Title 5, paragraph 53200 (b) states that the Academic Senate is an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters. Section 53200 (c) defines “academic and professional matter” as

1. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines.
2. Degree and certificate requirements.
3. Grading policies.
4. Educational program development.
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success.
6. District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles.
7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports.
8. Policies for faculty professional development activities.
9. Processes for program review.
10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development.
11. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the Academic Senate.

The following passages from Ed Code also specify the Roles and Responsibilities of the Academic Senate:

Section 70902 (B)(7) Governing Boards; Delegation The governing board of each district shall establish procedures to ensure faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level, and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and the right of Academic Senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

Section 87359 (B) Waiver of Minimum Qualifications; Equivalency

The agreed upon process shall include reasonable procedures to ensure that the governing board relies primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senates. The process shall further require that the governing board provide the Academic Senates with an opportunity to present its views to the governing board before the board makes a determination.

Section 87360 (B) Hiring Criteria Hiring criteria, policies, and procedures for new faculty members shall be developed and agreed upon jointly by the representatives of the governing board and the Academic Senates.

Section 87458 (A) Administrative Retreat Rights The agreed upon process shall include reasonable procedures to ensure that the governing board relies primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senates. The process shall further require that the governing board provide the Academic Senates with an opportunity to present its views to the governing board before the board makes a determination.

Section 87610.1(A) Tenure Evaluation Procedures The faculty's exclusive representative shall consult with the Academic Senates prior to engaging in collective bargaining regarding those procedures.

Section 2. Collegial Consultation

According to AP2510, The Board or its designees will consult collegially with the Sierra College Academic Senate, as duly constituted with respect to academic and professional matters, as defined by law. Procedures to implement this section are developed collegially with the Academic Senate.

Consult Collegially means that the district governing board shall develop policies on academic and professional matters through either or both of the following:

1. Rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate, OR
2. The governing board, or its designees, and the Academic Senate shall reach mutual agreement by written resolution, regulation, or policy of the governing board effectuating such recommendations.

Section 3. Board Delegated Responsibilities

The Senate may accept any powers and responsibilities delegated to it by law and/or by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. Recommendations to the Board

The Senate shall present its views and recommendations directly to the Board of Trustees, in verbal or written form.

Section 5. Consultation

The Senate shall be available to act as a consultative body both to the president of the college and to the Board of Trustees in any matter affecting the conduct and welfare of the college.

Section 6. Meetings

The Senate shall be responsible for conducting any meetings necessary for carrying out these responsibilities as stated in Article II, section 1.

Section 7. Faculty Committees

The Senate may disband or combine any faculty committee(s) not required by law. Committees of the faculty may be disbanded or merged only after public deliberation and only to assist the Senate and faculty in carrying out their responsibilities as specified in Article II. The Senate shall have the responsibility of creating standing committees of the Senate as appropriate to address faculty responsibilities. The Senate shall maintain oversight of standing committees and must approve all changes in standing committee policy. Policies and guidelines for standing committees of the Senate are specified in the Bylaws.

Clause 1. Accountability and Vitality

The Senate shall have the responsibility to schedule annual accountability reports from its Standing Committees. Information provided by Committees will provide for an assessment by the Senate to maintain support only after public deliberation as specified in Article II, Subsection 1.

Section 8. Appointments to Committees

The Senate shall appoint all faculty members to serve on Senate standing and sub-committees, as well as college committees, sub-committees, task forces and ad hoc committees.

Article III: Organization and Election of Officers

Section 1. Composition and Representation on the Academic Senate

The Senate shall consist of representatives from organizational units of the college, of at-large representatives, and representatives of the part-time faculty. The membership of the Senate shall be comprised of 10% of the number of full-time faculty determined in March at the time of elections. The Senate will be comprised of two faculty representatives from each division, two faculty members from student services and two faculty representatives from the part-time faculty. The remainder of the positions shall be at-large positions. The maximum size of the Academic Senate shall not exceed 25 members. In the event of a divisional reorganization at the college, the Academic Senate will correct its membership as individual Senator's terms expire.

Section 2. Senate Officers

Senate officers shall include a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer and as stipulated by the Bylaws. The duties of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be set forth in the Bylaws. Terms of office shall be two years, reelectable for a period not to exceed two consecutive terms. All senators are eligible to serve as officers with the exception that the office of the President must be filled by a full-time faculty member. The responsibilities and duties of any office may be borne by only one individual and are not transferable to any other officer or member. Officers shall be elected by simple majority of the Academic Senate.

Article IV: Senator Election Procedures and Terms of Office

Section 1. The Election Process

The Vice-President will serve as chair of the election process unless up for re-election. In that instance, a senator will be appointed to serve as election chair.

Section 2. Voting Dates and Terms of Office

Regular elections to fill vacant seats shall be held annually in March. Newly elected Senators will serve 3-year terms beginning on June 01.

Section 3. Election Procedures

The Academic Senate shall designate election procedures, in its Bylaws or by a vote of the Senate.

Clause 1. Uncontested Seats

If a Senate seat is uncontested, elections are not necessary for that seat.

Clause 2. Voting Irregularities

Any qualified voter may appeal alleged election irregularities to the Academic Senate by initiating a petition signed by twenty fellow faculty members, either full-or part-time, and presenting an oral appeal to the Academic Senate during a regularly scheduled meeting. Senators may resolve the appeal by a vote recount or by voiding the election and re-conducting the election or any other appropriate action as decided by a simple majority vote of the Academic Senate.

Section 4. Nominations to serve as an Academic Senator

Members of the faculty shall be nominated to serve as a Senator through nomination petition.

Clause 1. Full-time Faculty

Full-time faculty may become candidates by

- a. Originating a petition that must be subsequently endorsed by seven other members of the full-time faculty, or

- b. Accepting (signing) a nominating petition that has been signed by seven members of the full-time faculty.
- c. Two faculty members may be nominated to share a single Senate position that shall be restricted to a single vote in the decision making process.

Clause 2. Part-time Faculty

Part-time faculty senators will be nominated to serve by

- a. Originating a petition which must be subsequently endorsed by seven other members of the part-time faculty, or
- b. Accepting (signing) a nominating petition that has been signed by seven members of the part-time faculty.
- c. Two faculty members may be nominated to share a single Senate position that shall be restricted to a single vote in the decision making process.

Section 5. Senatorial Leave-of-absence

Senators, whether full-or part-time, may request a leave from Senate duties for up to one year. Interim replacements will be sought from the appropriate represented area and elected through simple majority by the Academic Senate.

Section 6. Senatorial Terms of Office

A Senate member's term shall be 3 academic years. Senators will serve from June 01 of year 1 to May 31 of year 3. If a Senator leaves office before his or her term is completed, the Academic Senate will appoint a replacement for the remainder of the academic year. At the end of the academic year, elections for the vacated position shall be conducted as noted in Article IV.

Article V: Procedures

Section 1. Meetings and the Brown Act

All meetings and notices of meetings will be held in accordance with the Brown Act. The Senate may hold closed meetings only to discuss those issues requiring confidentiality; no actions may be taken in closed sessions.

Section 2. Recommendations, Agendas and Referrals

The Senate shall determine appropriate procedures for preparing and presenting recommendations, formulating agendas, referrals to committees, and holding and conducting meetings.

Article VI: Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws

Section 1. Changes to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution require a two-thirds majority of all votes cast by Sierra College faculty.

Section 2: Changes to the Bylaws

Changes to the Bylaws require the consensus of the Senate.

Article VII: Representative Equity

The Academic Senate will pursue a genuine and deliberate effort in its recruitment to achieve representative equity of all faculty. Equal participation opportunities will be provided to all faculty without regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sex, marital status, family relationship, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, or veteran status. Historically, ethnic minority groups are defined as those groups, e.g., African American, Mexican American/Latino, and Native Americans who have been underrepresented by unintentional exclusionary practices.