

South Texas College Faculty Senate Constitution

PREAMBLE

The faculty of South Texas College, in order to promote the cause of education, to provide quality education to students, to improve communication among the members of the faculty, and to maintain professional relations with the Board of Trustees and the Administration, hereby establish the Faculty Senate of South Texas College.

ARTICLE I **NAME AND PURPOSE**

Section 1: The name of this organization shall be the South Texas College Faculty Senate and shall hereafter be referred to as the Faculty Senate. South Texas College shall hereafter be referred to as STC.

Section 2: The purpose of the Faculty Senate shall be to represent faculty interests and to present the views and recommendations of the college faculty to the administration and to the Board of Trustees of STC. Recommendations may include but are not to be limited to, such matters as curricula, academic standards, salaries, contracts, student development, board policies, institutional goals, and future policies.

ARTICLE II **MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1: In order for the Faculty Senate to function efficiently and effectively, the Faculty Senate shall consist of one (1) faculty Senator for every twenty (20) full-time faculty members employed within the Senator's division. While the Faculty Senate provides a link between faculty and administration, the Senators will provide a link for information and concerns between the Faculty Senate and the faculty of their divisions and departments. Senators will be elected by the division in April. Senators will be elected in staggered terms; one-half (1/2) of all Senators will be elected every two (2) years. Senators cannot serve for more than two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms, except in the rare event that no other candidate runs from the same division.

Section 2: Faculty Senate meetings are open to all faculty members, whether they are adjunct or full-time.

Section 3: Subject to the provisions of Article II, Section I, the Faculty Senate shall have the power to rule on disputes involving membership.

ARTICLE III

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Section 1: The Faculty Senate shall represent and act for the faculty in all matters of general policy and may also act in an advisory, planning, and consultative capacity to the President of the College.

Section 2: Any faculty member may submit items for inclusion on the agenda for discussion.

Section 3: The Faculty Senate shall have the power to adopt, and shall operate under, the bylaws and rules of procedure consistent with this Constitution.

Section 4: While not excluding other possible channels of communication, recommendations made by the Faculty Senate will be transmitted by the President of the Faculty Senate to the President of the College, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or other administrative personnel. In the event that no resolution to a specific issue occurs, the Faculty Senate may bring the matter before the Board of Trustees.

Section 5: Senators must attend monthly meetings regularly. Representation in this capacity will be seen as a committee assignment for STC purposes and, as such, Senators will be replaced if they miss more than two (2) consecutive meetings per semester or three (3) meetings per academic year. If the Senator cannot attend a meeting, she or he may appoint a proxy to attend.

ARTICLE IV

FACULTY SENATE OFFICERS

Section 1: Officers of the Faculty Senate shall be the President, Vice President, President-Elect, and Secretary. These Officers will constitute the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The Past President shall be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee for two (2) years.

Section 2: President: The President shall preside at all meeting of the Faculty Senate and shall conduct meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order*. The President is

the official Faculty Senate spokesperson in formal communications with the College administration and the Board of Trustees. The Faculty Senate President may delegate the duty to be official spokesperson to the Vice President on a temporary basis. The President shall appoint such committees as may be necessary from the general faculty membership, but those committees will be chaired by a Faculty Senator. In the event of a tie in an Executive Committee vote, the Past President will break the tie.

Vice President: The Vice President is a voting member of the Executive Committee and will fulfill the responsibilities of the President when the President is absent or to fill the vacancy for an unexpired term of the President.

President-Elect: The President-Elect may chair a committee and shall assume the presidency on August 1st of the year completing the President's second year in office.

Secretary: The Secretary will maintain a current list of all members, record minutes of meetings, and circulate copies of the minutes to all members after each meeting. This officer will be responsible for sending official Faculty Senate correspondence.

Past President: The Past President will assist the President in her/his transition to Faculty Senate President. The Past President will be a non-voting member of the Executive Committee, except in the event of a tie in an Executive Committee vote. In the event of a tie in an Executive Committee vote, the Past President will break the tie.

Senators: Senators will serve to bring issues and concerns from the departments to the Faculty Senate meetings and information from the meetings back to the Divisions. The position of Division Senator is considered a College Committee assignment. Regular attendance is expected. If a Senator must be absent they must send a proxy. If more than two (2) unexcused absences per semester or three (3) per academic year occurs, the Senator will be replaced. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate shall notify the President whenever a vacancy occurs as a consequence of excessive absence. In such instances, the President of the Senate shall notify the affected faculty member in writing of his/her removal from the Senate. The affected faculty member shall have right of appeal to the Executive Committee within ten (10) working days after the date of written notification from the President. Upon hearing the appeal, the Executive Committee shall decide by secret ballot whether to declare a vacancy. In the case of a tie vote, the faculty member shall retain Senate membership.

ARTICLE V

BY-LAWS

Section 1: Committees

Executive Committee: A standing committee consisting of the President, Vice President, President-Elect, and Secretary that will serve as the vehicle to open communications between all parties involved in issues that come to and from the Senate. The Past President will serve as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall make the necessary provisions for conducting elections.

Ad-Hoc Committees: Selected by the President to serve as necessary on a specific project or study. Faculty members are encouraged to volunteer their expertise.

Section 2: Meetings and Quorums

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall announce, at the Fall Faculty In-service Meeting, the tentative meeting dates for the academic year. A regular meeting of the Faculty Senate shall occur monthly, no less than twice during the fall and spring semesters, and at such times as deemed necessary during the summer semester.

A quorum is constituted by two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the Faculty Senate.

The Executive Committee may call a special meeting of the Faculty Senate with one week's notice (either written or by e-mail) to the members of the Faculty Senate.

All Faculty Senate Meetings and those of committees will be held in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, latest edition.

Decisions of the Faculty Senate (except as noted elsewhere in the By-Laws) shall be by simple majority - by show of hands, voice vote, or extended to e-mail vote. The presiding officer will announce the outcome of the vote, but a simple majority of the members present may request and receive a secret ballot vote or e-mail vote. Full membership of the Faculty Senate will have the opportunity to vote for or against proposals through a secret ballot.

Members who will be absent may request to vote by written absentee ballot or by proxy. Executive Committee members and Senators voting on issues may provide an absentee vote by delivering written notification to the Senate President identifying the issue or issues on which the vote is cast by absentee. This absentee statement must bear the name and signature of the absent member. Members voting by proxy must inform the Senate prior to the meeting

and provide the name of the proxy. Proxies voting for members must inform the Senate at the beginning of the meeting. Proxy voting rights may not be given to another Senate Member to cast on their behalf.

Issues brought up during the regular Faculty Senate meeting may be published in the monthly newsletter and/or the Faculty Senate website.

Section 3: Elections

Election of Officers and Senators shall be conducted annually by e-mail or secret ballot during the spring semester.

The President will appoint a committee at the first spring meeting to serve as a Nominations and Elections Committee. They shall solicit and accept written nominations from the faculty at large and compile a ballot of candidates to be ready at least one (1) week before the scheduled March meeting date. In odd numbered years, nominations shall include President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary and Senators. In even numbered years, nominations shall include Senators. Special elections may be held to fill vacated positions, as per the succession statements in Article V, section 4.

Any faculty member may announce for any elected position by sending a memorandum to the Nominations and Elections Committee. Candidates may only run for one position per election.

The winner of the election is the candidate that receives the most votes cast in the election. Ties will be subject to a run-off election.

Voting will be by e-mail or secret ballot, and there will be balloting sites on each campus. The Nominating Committee will distribute ballots, supervise the voting procedure, and collect all ballots. The committee will announce the winners of each position and post the results by e-mail and/or on the Faculty Senate website.

Officers: The President-Elect, Vice President and Secretary will be elected by the faculty in an at-large (college-wide) election in April of each odd numbered election year.

Senators: Senators will be elected from all interested faculty by the faculty at large within each division in April of each election year. No more than two (2) Senators can come from the same department, except in the rare event that there are vacant seats which were not able to be filled because the only candidates come from a department that already has two (2) senators. Senators will be elected in staggered terms; one-half (1/2) of all Senators will be elected every two (2) years. "Class one" Senators are elected in odd numbered years and "class two" Senators are elected in even numbered years.

Section 4: Terms of Office

Persons elected to serve shall begin their terms of office on August 1st and continue for two (2) years. Those whose terms will be specified are: President, Vice President, President-Elect, Secretary, Senators

Any Faculty Senate Member may present articles of impeachment against any officer at any regular meeting, but no action will ensue until the next regular meeting or called meeting no sooner than thirty (30) days after the article is presented. Removal of an officer requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the entire membership of the Faculty Senate. Voting on impeachment article(s) will be by secret ballot. Impeachable offenses shall be those which represent sufficient serious actions as to justify this extreme measure.

Vacancies: A vacancy shall be declared when, prior to the expiration of her/his term, a Senate member: a) terminates employment with the College, b) accepts appointment within the College to an administrative position above the level of department chair, c) resigns Senate membership, or d) is absent from two (2) consecutive Senate meetings in one semester or three (3) such meetings within an academic year.

Presidential Succession: If a vacancy exists in the office of the President, the Vice President will serve the remainder of the term as Interim President. The Interim President will propose a Vice Presidential nominee who may be confirmed by a vote of the Faculty Senate at the next meeting.

Vice-Presidential Succession: A vacancy in the Vice President position will be filled by a nominee proposed by the President and confirmed by a vote of the Faculty Senate at the next meeting. The confirmed becomes Interim Vice President until approved by a faculty at large special election. If a vacancy occurs during the first year of the term, a faculty at large special election will be held. If a vacancy occurs during the second year of the term, the confirmed will remain as Interim Vice President and no special election will be held. Nominations for other candidates may occur before the special election.

If vacancies occur in the positions of both the President and Vice President, a faculty at large special election will be held to fill both unexpired terms. The Past President will become Interim President until the outcome of the special election is determined.

President-Elect Succession: If a vacancy occurs during the time between the election and the inauguration date, the position will be offered to the runner-up. If a vacancy occurs after the inauguration date, a faculty at-large special election must be held as soon as possible.

Secretarial Succession: A vacancy in the Secretary position will be filled by a nominee proposed by the President and confirmed by a vote of the Faculty Senate at the next meeting. The confirmed becomes Interim Secretary until approved by a faculty at large special election. If a vacancy occurs during the first year of the term, a faculty at large special election will be held. If a vacancy occurs during the second year of the term, the confirmed will remain as Interim Secretary and no special election will be held. Nominations for other candidates may occur before the special election.

Senatorial Succession: A vacancy in the Senator position will be filled by a nominee proposed by the President and confirmed by a vote of the Faculty Senate at the next meeting. The confirmed becomes Interim Senator until approved by a faculty at large special election. If a vacancy occurs during the first year of the term, the Interim Senator will serve until the next at-large election. If a vacancy occurs during the second year of the term, the confirmed will remain as Interim Senator until the end of the term. Nominations for other candidates may occur before the special election.

Section 5: Resolutions

At least once a year, the Faculty Senate may vote on and ratify resolutions. Resolutions will include, but are not limited to, such matters as curricula, academic standards, academic freedom, faculty qualifications, professional development, salaries, contracts, student achievement, College Board policies, institutional goals, and future policies. The objectives of resolutions are to focus on instructional related matters and then act upon them within the resolutorial guidelines. Resolutions will be considered approved or rejected when 51 percent of the faculty and 51 percent of those voting pass or reject an issue. These resolutions will be presented to the College President and the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VI **AMENDMENTS**

Section 1: Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be proposed by the Constitution Committee or by a petition signed by at least twenty (20) percent of the Faculty Senate presented in writing to the Secretary of the Senate.

Section 2: To be ratified, amendments must receive an affirmative vote by at least 2/3 of a quorum present at a regular or special meeting.

ARTICLE VII
RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Section 1: This Constitution and By-Laws shall go into effect immediately upon at least a 2/3 majority of faculty voting.

ARTICLE VIII
AUTHENTICATION

This Constitution and By-Laws are approved; June, 1999.

For the administrators:
Dr. Shirley A. Reed, MBA, Ed.D.
STC President

For the Board of Trustees:
Dr. Amparo Cardenas, Chair
STC Board of Trustees