

**Charter & Bylaws of  
The General Faculty of  
Oklahoma State University**

# Charter and Bylaws of the General Faculty of Oklahoma State University

1953

(Subsequently Revised and Approved by  
the General Faculty and by the Board of Regents)

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## Preamble

The basic functions of a university are to advance, evaluate, preserve, and transmit knowledge and to foster creative capabilities. These functions are performed by a community of faculty, students, and administrators, who are free to exercise independent judgment in fulfilling their educational responsibilities. The government of a university should be designed to allow this community to select and carry out its responsibilities with maximum effectiveness and integrity. The Faculty, the Administration, and the Board of Regents for Oklahoma State University and the A & M Colleges have come to play the most important roles in the government of Oklahoma State University. The Faculty, which is entrusted with the primary tasks for which educational institutions are organized—defined at Oklahoma State University as teaching, research, and extension—is recognized as an essential participant in formulating and recommending university policies.

This Charter of Organization of the General Faculty is therefore adopted in order to promote the effectiveness of the University in the discharge of its responsibilities, and particularly to provide the most effective means for utilizing the competencies of the members of the Faculty for formulating, recommending, and executing the educational policies, procedures, and long-range plans of the University.

## Article I

### The General Faculty

**Sec. 1. Composition.** All tenured, tenure-track, and career track faculty (minimum 75% appointment) are members of the General Faculty and are entitled to vote in General Faculty elections and initiatives.

**Sec. 2. Organization.** The General Faculty shall adopt such Bylaws as it considers necessary to perform its functions.

**Sec. 3. Meetings.** The General Faculty shall meet during the fall semester of each academic year and at other times upon call of the President of the University, the Chair of the General Faculty, the Faculty Council, or by petition of forty (40) members of the General Faculty. A quorum shall consist of forty (40) voting members of the General Faculty.

**Sec. 4. Officers.** The officers of the General Faculty shall consist of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Past-Chair and the Secretary. The Vice-Chair and the Secretary shall be elected by the General Faculty from nominations made by the Faculty Council. The Vice-Chair shall be elected for a term of one year and then shall automatically become Chair for the succeeding year. The Chair shall not be eligible for immediate re-election as Vice-Chair. The Secretary shall be elected for a term of three years and shall be eligible for re-election. The Secretary shall keep complete records of Faculty proceedings and be responsible for the secretarial work related to the business of the General Faculty. Only voting members who have had at least three years of faculty service shall be eligible to hold any elective office of the General Faculty. Persons who hold administrative positions above department head, department chair, unit head or equivalent, are not eligible for election or service as officers of the General Faculty.

**Sec. 5. Functions and Responsibilities.**

- a. The General Faculty is directly concerned with the welfare of the academic community and shall therefore participate in formulating and recommending policies and procedures concerning the whole University or those involving more than one school or division and in matters affecting the welfare of the institution, such as the following:
  - (1) Educational policies and procedures relating to admissions, courses, curricula, academic standards, schedules, the academic calendar, degrees, undergraduate and graduate programs of instruction, the University Library, research, extension and educational procedures and innovations.
  - (2) Policies and procedures related to student affairs and auxiliary services, including student regulations and discipline, academic freedom, extracurricular activities, intercollegiate athletics, advisement, counseling, health and welfare, and safety and security.
  - (3) Policies and procedures directly affecting members of the Faculty, including budgeting of funds, Faculty and administrative appointments, continuing education of the Faculty, sabbatical leave, academic freedom, salaries, fringe benefits, promotions, tenure, retirement, and other factors affecting Faculty morale.
  - (4) Long-range planning involving the goals, development, and growth of the University, including educational, innovative, and building programs, and allocation of resources. The General Faculty shall fulfill its duties through the Faculty Council and when appropriate through ad hoc committees from the General Faculty.
- b. The General Faculty shall elect the members of the Faculty Council and delegate to the Faculty Council those functions and responsibilities which are not reserved for the General Faculty by this Charter.
- c. The General Faculty shall consider matters referred to it by the President of the University, the Faculty Council, or by the Board of Regents through the President.

## Article II The Faculty Council

- Sec. 1. Composition.** The Faculty Council shall consist of elected members of the General Faculty, the Chair of the General Faculty; the Vice-Chair of the General Faculty; the Past-Chair of the General Faculty and the Secretary of the General Faculty. All members of the General Faculty are eligible for election to Faculty Council. Faculty members holding administrative positions of dean or above are not eligible for election to the Faculty Council. The elected members of the Faculty Council shall be chosen as follows: one each from the Technical Branches at Oklahoma City and Okmulgee, one from the Library, one from the College of Osteopathic Medicine, one from OSU/Tulsa and one Multicultural representative. The remaining 21 positions shall be allocated to the undergraduate colleges or divisions in a representative manner based on the number of faculty with a minimum of one seat per college. Anyone, otherwise qualified, may run as a representative for any constituency in which they are qualified to vote. However, no one may run for two representatives' positions in the same election or hold more than one representative's position at any time. Councilors shall be elected for three years and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election, except that a Councilor appointed or elected to fill a vacancy may be subsequently elected for a regular three-year term. No faculty member may run in two elections at the same time. This includes officer positions of the Faculty Council or any other elected position on the Faculty Council.
- Sec. 2. Organization.** The Faculty Council shall prepare Bylaws for the conduct of its business.
- Sec. 3. Officers.** The officers of the General Faculty shall also serve in the equivalent positions of leadership of the Faculty Council; namely, the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Past-Chair and the Secretary.
- Sec. 4. Meetings.** The Faculty Council shall hold monthly meetings, except during the months of June and July, and upon call of any of its officers or six (6) of its members. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members of the Council. Special meetings may be called to which only elected members of the Council are invited.
- Sec. 5. Functions.** The Faculty Council shall:
- a. Carry out the functions and responsibilities assigned to it by the General Faculty.
  - b. Keep the General Faculty fully informed of its actions and proceedings through reports in General Faculty meetings and by distribution of the minutes of regular meetings, and receive and acknowledge written communications from individual faculty members and transmit them to the appropriate committees for consideration.
  - c. Consider matters referred to it by the Board of Regents through the President of the University, or by members of the General Faculty.

- d. Initiate studies of matters within the concern of the General Faculty and make recommendations to the President and/or to the Board of Regents through the President on behalf of the General Faculty.
- e. Make recommendations to the President and/or to the Board of Regents through the President concerning matters of vital importance to the Faculty as stated in Article 1, Section 5a.

### **Article III**

#### **Amendments**

Amendments to this Charter may be proposed by a two-thirds vote of the Faculty Council or by a majority vote of the General Faculty in a General meeting. The text of a proposed amendment shall be distributed to each member of the General Faculty not less than thirty (30) days before it may be voted on. An amendment must be approved by a majority of those voting in: (1) a General Faculty meeting; or (2) an electronic ballot of the General Faculty. It shall then be submitted through the President of the University to the Board of Regents and become effective upon their approval.

### **Article IV**

#### **Ratification and Implementation**

This Charter shall become effective after approval as an amendment or amendments to the Charter of Organization which was adopted on October 9, 1953, and in compliance with the amendment procedures of that Charter. Upon such approval, this Charter will completely supersede the Charter of Organization of October 9, 1953. The Faculty Council shall be charged with the responsibility for taking the steps necessary to make the transition to the new Charter.

## **Bylaws of the General Faculty**

- I. In accordance with the Charter, Article 1, Section 1, complete current records of membership, indicating voting rights in the General Faculty, shall be kept by the Secretary of the General Faculty.
- II. Individual notices of regular meetings specified in the Charter, Article 1, Section 3, shall be sent by the Secretary to members of the General Faculty. The regular meetings shall normally be held on the third Tuesdays of November and April.
- III. Nomination and Election Procedures.
  - A. Nomination of Officers.**
    1. In accordance with Article 1, Section 4 of the Charter, the Faculty Council at its regular February meeting shall nominate two Faculty members for the position of Vice-Chair of the General Faculty for the ensuing Faculty Council year except when a vacancy in the office of Chair has been filled by the Vice-Chair and a new Vice-Chair has been elected as provided in Bylaw III, paragraph E.2 of the Bylaws of the General Faculty.
    2. Nomination for the three-year term of the Secretary of the General Faculty shall be separately conducted with the same procedure as that used for the Vice-Chair.
    3. At the nominating meeting each Faculty Council member shall suggest, in writing, one candidate for each position. Successive secret ballots shall be taken until two candidates for an office receive a combined vote of at least 75 percent of the total votes cast. A written announcement of the names of the persons so nominated shall be distributed to the General Faculty within ten days.
    4. Additional nomination for Vice-Chair or Secretary of the General Faculty may be placed on the primary election ballot provided that a petition signed by fifteen (15) members of the General Faculty is submitted for each such nomination by March 10.
  - B. Nomination of Faculty Council Members.**
    1. Not later than February 15, the Secretary shall email to each voting member of the General Faculty the following:
      - a. A description of each vacancy of direct concern to the member and a statement concerning the nomination and election procedures for Faculty Council positions.
      - b. Faculty members nominated for election to the Faculty Council shall be certified as eligible by the Rules Committee in accordance with Article I, Section 1 of the Charter.
    2. To be nominated for a position on the Faculty Council, an eligible Faculty member or his or her sponsor shall submit a petition signed by five (5) voting members of the

General Faculty from the constituency concerned and an accompanying signed statement indicating willingness to serve if elected. These documents shall be filed with the Secretary of the Faculty Council during the filing period of March 1 through March 10. If fewer than two candidates are nominated for a vacancy, the Nominating Committee of the Faculty Council shall make an additional nomination or nominations to provide two candidates for each vacancy at the General election.

**C. Election Procedure.**

1. When more than two candidates are nominated for a position, the candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected. In the event that none receives a majority, the names of the two candidates who receive the most votes from the electronic ballot shall be placed on the General election ballot.
2. The General election shall be conducted by the Rules and Procedures Committee by means of an electronic ballot.
3. The Secretary of the Faculty Council shall email to each voting member of the General Faculty a list of nominees for all positions to be filled together with the appropriate ballots. A voting period of at least one week in duration shall be set by the Rules and Procedures Committee and shall be completed by April 15. The electronic voting instructions shall indicate dates of the voting period.
4. The Rules and Procedures Committee shall count the ballots, resolve tie votes by lot, and certify the results to the Secretary of the Faculty Council. Challenges of nominations or elections shall be presented to the Secretary of the Faculty Council within seven days after publication of results and shall be decided by secret vote of the Faculty Council. The decision of the Faculty Council shall be final.

**D. Assumption of Office.** Newly elected officers and Faculty Council members shall assume their duties on June 1, which shall be the beginning of the Faculty Council year.

**E. Vacancies.**

1. **Definition of vacancy.** A vacancy shall be adjudged to exist when a Faculty Council member is elected Vice-Chair or Secretary of the General Faculty; or when an officer or Faculty Council member (1) dies, (2) resigns from office or departs the University, or (3) goes on leave for a semester or more.
2. **Procedure for Filling Vacancies.**
  - a. If a vacancy in the office of Chair occurs between January 1 and May 31, then the vacancy shall be filled by the Vice-Chair. In this case, the Secretary and the Past Chair will fulfill the duties of the Vice-Chair until anew Vice-Chair is elected during the regular election process. If the vacancy occurs between June 1 and December 31, the current Past Chair will serve as Chair until January 1 and then fulfill the duties of the Vice-Chair for the remainder of the term. The Vice-Chair will serve as Chair from January 1 until the end of the term and then serve his or her own respective term. In this case the faculty member who has just completed his or

her term as Past Chair will serve as Past Chair for the remainder of the current term.

- b. A vacancy in the office of Vice-Chair shall be filled by an election of the General Faculty following Bylaw III, Section C. A person elected Vice-Chair in a special election shall serve out the term of the incumbent and shall succeed as Chair as described by Bylaw III, Section D. A vacancy shall be filled within 60 Days unless it occurs during the summer term or one month prior to the end of the spring semester. In such a case, the vacancy shall be filled within 60 days after the start of the fall term of the year in which the vacancy occurs.
- c. A vacancy in the office of Secretary shall be filled by an election of the General Faculty following Bylaw III, Section C, and that person will complete the term of the incumbent. A vacancy shall be filled within 60 days unless it occurs during the summer term or one month prior to the end of the spring semester. In such a case, the vacancy shall be filled within 60 days after the start of the fall term of the year in which the vacancy occurs.
- d. Faculty Council Vacancies. The Chair of the General Faculty, in consultation with members of the group concerned and with the approval of the Faculty Council, shall, when a vacancy arises, make interim appointments effective until the next annual election. At the next annual election a member shall be elected to complete each unexpired term.

**F. Special Elections.** Special Elections to fill vacancies shall be conducted within 60 days when (1) more than three vacancies exist in the membership of the Faculty Council; or (2) a prior election has been voided by the Council. Special elections shall follow, as far as possible, the same nomination and election procedures used for the annual election. If the vacancies occur during the summer term or one month prior to the end of the spring semester the vacancies shall be filled within 60 days after the start of the fall term of the year in which the vacancy occurs.

#### **IV. Amendment of Bylaws.**

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular or called meeting of the General Faculty by a majority vote of those present, or by a majority of those voting by an electronic ballot in a general or a special election of the General Faculty, provided that the proposed change(s) shall have been submitted to each member of the General Faculty at least 72 hours before the meeting.

#### **V. Effect of Faculty Council Action.**

Unless annulled by subsequent action of the General Faculty, a decision of the Faculty Council shall have the effect of representing the will of the General Faculty.