

Report of the *Ad Hoc* Faculty Senate Review Committee

The *Ad Hoc* Faculty Senate Review Committee (FSRC) was formed in Spring 2001 at the request of the Provost, with the following charge:

In response to the North Central Accreditation Report as well as other faculty concerns that have been expressed, I am calling for a review of the Faculty Senate. The review shall be a faculty review, and the end result is to be a more effective senate to continue the history of shared governance at Southeast.

The committee consists of two faculty representatives from each college (one appointed by the Provost and one elected by the college faculty), the Chair of Faculty Senate, an Administrative Liaison, and a faculty chairperson.

The FSRC was given the responsibility to conduct a faculty review that will result in “a more effective Senate to continue the history of shared governance at Southeast.” The effectiveness of the Faculty Senate depends on mutual trust and respect between the administration and the Faculty Senate. Shared governance means that the Faculty Senate would be a partner in developing those policies that address faculty issues. Shared governance would mean that the Faculty Senate would be engaged with the administration in the conception of policy proposals and actively involved throughout the decision making process—not at the end. Shared governance means the Faculty Senate would take responsible and timely action to address issues arising from strategic initiatives of the University.

The FSRC members met with faculty in every department, the Faculty Senate, Student Government, Dean’s Council, Administrative Council, Executive Staff, Chairs Forum, and former Faculty Senate chairpersons from the last ten years. A survey instrument was used to elicit responses (see below), which were recorded from each meeting (see web site, <http://biology.semo.edu/review>) and tabulated (see below).

One of the overwhelming concerns expressed by the faculty to the FSRC at departmental visits and documented in the composite of departmental surveys is that the administration is perceived as not being seriously committed to “shared governance” with the Faculty Senate. The data strongly suggest a widely held perception across the departments on campus that the administration freely shares information with the Senate but seeks Senate approval on faculty-related decisions already made by administrative units on campus.

Data from the departmental surveys further suggest that a negative attitude exists among many faculty members about the functioning of the Faculty Senate. For the Senate to play an effective role in shared governance, faculty attitudes toward the Senate need to be improved. One goal of the FSRC’s recommendations will be to encourage changes in faculty attitudes towards the Senate. Furthermore, for the Faculty Senate to be effective, it must examine its relationship with the administration. The Faculty Senate-administration relationship must be based on mutual respect and a common understanding of “shared governance.”

In addition, many faculty members expressed concern that there was insufficient communication between the faculty and the Board of Regents, resulting in decisions by the Board that failed to take into account faculty viewpoints. The Board of Regents must also recognize the value of a strong Faculty Senate and give due consideration to the views of the faculty as expressed through their representative body.

Progress in Response to Concerns

While many of the concerns and possible solutions mentioned in the meetings with departments and other groups will require discussion and action by the Senate, the administration, or the faculty as a whole, some of the less controversial items have already been addressed.

1. E-mail promulgation of Faculty Senate minutes and agenda:

Faculty Senate Chair Bill Eddleman took it upon himself to pursue this, and arrangements are being made with Computer Services to provide these items to all faculty via e-mail. This should begin by Spring 2002. It may go some distance toward solving the communication problems reported at many department meetings.

2. Training/orientation for new Senators:

Again, this was an item that could be accomplished by the action of the Faculty Senate Chair, and the first training session for new senators was held this fall. Dr. Eddleman reports that those who attended found it useful, and he recommends that the Senate continue this practice.

3. Faculty Senate representation on Administrative Council:

Although this was suggested as a new initiative in more than one Department meeting, the Chair of Faculty Senate has been a member of Academic Council for at least ten years. No action was needed. The issue of representation in Executive Staff meetings is separate, and would require action by both the administration and Faculty Senate.

4. Faculty Senate representative to Student Government:

This was suggested at only one meeting, but since that was our meeting with Student Government, and since it seemed like a good idea, Dr. Eddleman has named Craig Roberts as the Faculty Senate representative to SG.

5. Frequency and timeliness of approval of bills:

Numerous groups have alleged that most bills are rejected by the President, or that most bills do not receive an official response within the prescribed 30 days. All Senate Bills for the last 10 years and their disposition have been catalogued in a searchable database accessible from the "Relevant Documents" link on the FSRC web page.
(<http://biology.semo.edu/review/searchbills.asp>)

Recommendations from the Faculty Senate Review Committee

After gathering information and input from faculty in every department, student government, Dean's Council, Administrative Council, Executive Staff, Chairs Council, and former Faculty Senate chairpersons from the last ten years, the Faculty Senate Review Committee submits the following recommendations for consideration by the Faculty Senate and the University Administration.

Recommendation to the Board of Regents:

In several meetings with campus groups, concern was expressed that there is insufficient communication between the Board of Regents and the faculty. It has been repeatedly suggested that there should be a non-voting Faculty Regent, a suggestion endorsed by this committee. However, the committee recognizes that this can only be accomplished by legislative action. **In lieu of formal representation on the board, the committee recommends that a Faculty Senate report be included in the agenda of each Board meeting.**

Recommendations to the Administration:

(See detailed proposals attached)

1. Hold monthly meetings with Senate Executive Committee.
2. Redefine Faculty Senate secretary as full-time position.
3. Give Senate Chair ½ time release, Chair-Elect ¼ time release.
4. Adhere to 30 day limit on response to bills.
5. Conduct biennial assessments of faculty and staff attitudes.
6. Foster an improved relationship with Senate and faculty.

Recommendations to Faculty Senate:

(See detailed proposals attached)

1. Improve communications and redefine role of secretary.
2. Establish Ad Hoc conference committees.
3. Reduce the size of the Senate.
4. Impose Faculty Senate term limits.

Recommendations to the administration:

1. Many former Senate chairs expressed the feeling that relations with the administration have been at their best when the Senate executive committee met with the University President on a regular basis. Although it was suggested in some meetings with administrators that the Senate should send bills directly to the Provost rather than the President, most faculty also value the access that the Senate leadership has historically had to the President. **We recommend that the University President and Provost meet monthly with the Faculty Senate Chair, Chair-Elect, and Membership Committee Chair.**

2. Many of the concerns expressed by all parties about the functioning of Faculty Senate can be attributed to problems in communication. At most of the department meetings attended by committee members, dissatisfaction was expressed with the quality and timeliness of the minutes, with the timeliness of distribution of agendas, with the lack of availability of texts of bills, and with the difficulty of finding out what had happened to bills after passage. If the proposed reduction in size of the Faculty Senate is adopted, improved communications will become even more crucial, as not every department will have its own Senator. Term limits, if enacted, will tend to reduce the “institutional memory” of the Senate, increasing the importance of readily available archives.

We are making a number of recommendations to the Faculty Senate to improve communications, all of which will require considerable time and computer expertise of the Senate Secretary. We are therefore recommending to Faculty Senate that the duties of the Faculty Senate Secretary be expanded and redefined to reflect this expanded role (see Recommendations to Faculty Senate below). The expanded duties, including writing minutes of Senate and committee meetings, maintaining searchable databases of bills, resolutions, and minutes on the web, electronic distribution of minutes, and administration of faculty on-line forums and elections, constitute a full-time job. **We recommend that the Faculty Senate Secretary position be expanded from half-time to full-time.**

3. In several meetings, it was mentioned that the duties of the Faculty Senate Chair and Chair-Elect are very demanding and little rewarded. Both to ensure that those duties can be performed effectively, and to signal that the institution appreciates and values the services performed by these officers, expanded release time is warranted. **We recommend that the Faculty Senate Chair be given half-time release from teaching, and that the Chair-Elect receive ¼ - time release.**

4. An analysis of the disposition of the 72 bills passed by the Senate in the period from 1992 through 2001 showed that, of 56 bills approved by the president, 40 were approved within 30 days. Of 11 bills denied by the president, only 4 were denied within 30 days. It appears that Presidents have been reluctant to send back negative responses promptly. One of our proposals to Faculty Senate would create a public electronic tracking system for the disposition of bills; **we recommend that the President adhere to the 30 day limit specified in the Faculty Senate Constitution.**

5. Faculty have expressed concerns that morale is low, that little “listening” occurs within the university community (especially between administration and faculty) and at times there appears to be a blatant disregard for the collegial process of governance. Whether this is based on fact or misperceptions is not as important as the understanding that these attitudes exist and can impact effective communication and governance.

The committee suggests that a systematic and consistent assessment of the attitudes, values and practices (for example, communication practices) of the institution’s employees (at all levels) be implemented every two years. This assessment is typically referred to as a cultural audit or strategic audit. By instituting a regular audit, the institution would have a better understanding of the institution’s communication climate.

Ideally the assessment would be quantitative in nature, using reliable multi-item measurement scales tailored to the role and scope of the individual employee within the institution, meaning that questions about managerial responsibility would not be directed to non-managerial employees. The overall purpose of the audit would be to assess to what degree the attitudes, values and practices of the organization’s employees supports achievement of the institution’s goals and strengthens its values. The feedback from the instrument provides valuable input for strategic planning (from the unit-level to the institutional-level) and for self-improvement by the individual employee. **We recommend that the institution conduct biennial assessments of faculty and staff attitudes, values and practices.**

6. Last, and most important, the Faculty Senate Review Committee recommends that the President and Provost exert themselves to foster an open and honest relationship with the Faculty Senate. The committee does not want to imply that the current holders of these offices have failed to do this; rather, it is important to recognize that there is considerable distrust on the part of the faculty toward the administration. In the discussions with departments, no response to any question was more frequent than statements to the effect that the administration makes decisions before consulting the Senate, and does not listen to Senate input on issues. The faculty of this institution represents a tremendous resource of commitment to institutional goals, expertise, and historical knowledge of the institution; a perceived failure to make use of this resource is a serious detriment to the University as a whole. This situation can only be remedied by concerted effort by all concerned parties to actively encourage open dialogue and respect between faculty and administration. **We call on the administration at all levels to seek out the counsel of Faculty Senate and give serious consideration to its input.**

Recommendations to Faculty Senate:

1. Improve communications and redefine position of secretary.

A number of the issues raised by faculty and administrators in discussions about the role of Faculty Senate come down to communications problems. The current availability of information relevant to Senate actions is sporadic at best.

Timeliness and information content of minutes: At numerous meetings the committee heard that the minutes of Faculty Senate come out months after the meeting, and that they contained little information about the course of debate on issues. It was suggested independently by members of several departments that the minutes should be more complete and timely, and that they should be distributed via e-mail as the Southeast Newswire is. The last suggestion has already been adopted and is currently being implemented. The other suggestions entail the adoption of a required format for the minutes, with some requirements for information to be included. At present the minutes are mentioned only in the Faculty Senate Bylaws sections 6.50 and 6.60, and the only required content is the record of roll call votes.

We recommend that sections 6.50 and 6.60 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended to require more extensive documentation and give a timeline for publication of minutes.

Web accessibility of Faculty Senate documents: In several departments it was suggested that minutes, text of pending bills, agendas of upcoming meetings, and relevant news be made available on the web. In about half of the department meetings, faculty reported that they were not well-informed about the activities of the Senate. While minutes are posted on the web, many faculty were unaware of this, and the delay in posting of these is longer than the delay in distribution of printed minutes. Bills are archived in the library, although almost no faculty were aware of this. In a search conducted by the committee, the fate of three of the 72 bills passed in the last ten years could not be determined. Generally, it appears that there is a lack of access to Senate-related information.

It was frequently stated that after bills are passed, they do not always get a timely response from the President, and faculty are often unaware of their status. An actual survey of the 72 bills passed by the Senate in the period from 1992 through 2001 showed that, of 56 bills approved by the president, 40 were approved within 30 days. Of 11 bills denied by the president, 4 were denied within 30 days. Furthermore, many faculty were concerned that bills that are passed are not always followed. While these problems, to the extent that they occur, can only be remedied by conscientious action on the part of the administration, it would be far easier for faculty to hold administrators accountable for these actions if the bills themselves, along with some tracking of their progress, were available publicly on the web (see sample at <http://biology.semo.edu/review/searchbills.asp>).

The committee therefore recommends that the archives of bills, resolutions, and minutes of the Faculty Senate be maintained in searchable database form electronically on the web, along with records of administrative approval or rejection of bills. At present the Faculty

Senate Bylaws section 6.60 provide for paper archives; we recommend that this section be amended to add electronic archives.

Faculty Senate meeting agendas are presently governed by section VI.B.8 of the Senate Constitution, which requires that they be distributed to senators and alternates only, 2 days in advance of meetings. The lead time would need to be greater for electronic dissemination, particularly in order to meet the stated goal of allowing time for constituents to express their opinions on issues to their senators. This appears to require a constitutional amendment, although it might be best to remove the specific statements about agendas from the Constitution and add such material to the Bylaws.

We recommend that the Faculty Senate Constitution, section VI.B.8 be amended to state that the agenda of each Faculty Senate meeting be distributed to interested parties in a timely manner, and that a clause be added to the Faculty Senate Bylaws stating a specific lead time for distribution.

Another suggestion relevant to communications was that there should be an online forum for discussion of Faculty Senate issues. This could be implemented by a Senate Chair, though we recommend that it be added to the Bylaws.

We recommend that the Faculty Senate Bylaws be amended to provide for an online forum for discussion of appropriate Faculty Senate issues by all faculty.

Recommendation for Administrative Assistant for Faculty Senate

The above recommendations entail a complete redefinition of the position of Faculty Senate Secretary. The Secretary would have to write more extensive minutes, including summaries of debate. The Secretary would also be responsible for a variety of computer-related tasks, including maintaining databases, web pages, and on-line forums. The role of the Secretary is not codified in the Senate Constitution or Bylaws at this time. We recommend that the Senate Bylaws be amended to specify the role of the Secretary; based on the sorts of responsibilities listed, this position would be defined by the university as an Administrative Assistant.

We recommend that a full-time administrative assistant should be employed by the Faculty Senate, with the following duties:

- Record minutes of all meetings, including summaries of debate concerning bills and resolutions
- Distribute minutes in electronic form to all faculty
- Publicize meeting agendas electronically in advance
- Maintain archives in electronic form of bills, resolutions, and minutes in searchable databases, accessible via the internet
- Maintain records on the disposition of bills and resolutions in searchable databases accessible via the internet
- Maintain archives in electronic form of Faculty Senate committee reports, cross-referenced as appropriate to bills and resolutions

- Administer elections of senators
- Oversee scheduling of meetings of faculty senate and senate committees
- Administer electronic forums for faculty comment on issues relevant to the Senate
- Attend and record minutes of meetings of Faculty Senate legislative committees and conference committees, as scheduling allows
- Perform other administrative, archival, and data collection duties as assigned by the chair of faculty senate.

This position would supersede the current half-time Faculty Senate administrative assistant position. Qualified applicants would have strong writing skills and expertise in a variety of computer applications, including Access and FrontPage.

Recommendations to Faculty Senate:

2. Establish Ad Hoc Conference Committees.

In a number of meetings with faculty and administrators, it was proposed that a process be established for formally gathering input from all affected parties when a bill is under discussion. **The Faculty Senate Review Committee recommends the following addition to the Faculty Senate By-Laws.**

Proposed addition to Faculty Senate By-Laws:
Section 7 “Functions, Duties and Responsibilities”
7.50 “Committee Structure of the Faculty Senate”
See 7.51a on Ad Hoc Committees.

Proposal: 7.5101 Ad Hoc Conference Committee

If the topic of a Senate bill under discussion, either on the Senate floor or in committee, affects groups, departments, or offices external to the Senate such that their input is necessary to make an informed decision, an ad hoc conference committee may be convened to assist with preparation of the bill.

The conference committee should include representatives of affected groups (departments, business offices, administrators, students, etc.) and the individual(s) who proposed the bill. The topic of proposed bills should be posted on the Senate web site to solicit potential conference committee members.

The chair of the Senate will identify ad hoc committee members and appoint a committee chair who will convene the committee. The ad hoc conference committee will report to the Senate or Senate committee within 30 days of appointment. An extension of the 30-day deadline may be granted by the Faculty Senate Chair.

The report will carry signatures of all ad hoc committee members. Dissenting views may be attached.

The conference committee’s role is complete when the bill is either approved or fails in the Senate or Senate committee.

Recommendations to Faculty Senate:

3. Reduce the size of the Faculty Senate.

Rationale: The rationale for reducing the size of the Faculty Senate as suggested in the options below arises from comments made by faculty during the review process. While the representative nature of the Senate was praised by many who attended the departmental forums, problems were often cited that could be addressed by a restructuring of the composition of the Faculty Senate. At present, almost one in five faculty members serves either as a Senator or Alternate. The prestige associated with being a Faculty Senator and individual faculty members' willingness to serve as a Faculty Senator would likely be increased if, in fact, there were fewer Senators. In addition, a smaller Senate might make for a more efficient Senate, one that addresses issues in a more timely fashion. While the individual departmental representation might be viewed as a loss, particularly if Senators are currently communicating regularly about Senate activities with their departmental peers, the new electronic methods of distributing Faculty Senate agendas, minutes, and proposed bills would allow for faculty to be apprised of Senate activities and to express their concerns and opinions to their college or at-large representatives. The options below are not listed in any order of preference.

Option 1: Each of the five colleges and the School of Polytechnic Studies would have two Senators; the library would have one. There would be seven at large faculty representatives from across the university. (This option would require a constitutional amendment.)

Option 2: Smaller departments ($n < 10$) would share a Senator with other departments within the same college/school/library. No department would have more than one Senator. This option would affect the following departments which have fewer than ten faculty members: Middle and Secondary Education, Physical Education, Administrative Services, Economics, Marketing, Communication Disorders, Criminal Justice, Social Work, Foreign Languages, Philosophy and Religion, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, Geosciences, Physics, Agriculture. The departments, which would no longer have two Senators, include Biology, English, Math, and Nursing. (This option would require a resolution.)

Option 3: All Senators would be elected as college representatives. The number of representatives per college would be based on the number of full-time tenure-track or continuing faculty in the college. Currently, the number of such faculty in each college is as follows:

Harrison College of Business 46
College of Education 48
College of Health and Human Services 74
College of Liberal Arts 134
College of Science and Mathematics 75
School of Polytechnic Studies 20
Kent Library 13

Three possible scenarios for Option 3 are provided in the following chart.

College/School/Unit	# of Senators per 25 faculty (with the minimum being 1)	# of Senators per 20 faculty (with the minimum being 1)	# of Senators per 15 faculty (with the minimum being 1)
Harrison College of Business	1	2	3
College of Education	1	2	3
College of Health and Human Services	2	3	4
College of Liberal Arts	5	6	8
College of Science and Mathematics	3	3	5
School of Polytechnic Studies	1	1	1
Kent Library	1	1	1
Total # of Senators	14	18	25

(This option would require a constitutional amendment.)

Note: The number of faculty positions in each college may change annually.

Logistical Procedures

- This restructuring would occur in spring 2003 and take effect for the 2003-2004 Faculty Senate.
- All Senators would be **elected** by faculty, **not appointed** by chairs, directors, or deans. For college/school/library representatives, all full-time tenure-track or term faculty in those units will be eligible to vote.
- If Option 1 or Option 3 is chosen, for at large representatives, all faculty across campus will be eligible to vote.
- Staggered terms of 1, 2, or 3 years would be created.

Recommendations to Faculty Senate:

4. Impose Faculty Senate term limits.

One of most frequent recommendations resulting from the review of Faculty Senate was the establishment of term limits for Senators, although data show that over half of the current Senators are serving in their first term. While strong arguments were made to the Review Committee both for and against term limits, **the Faculty Senate Review Committee strongly recommends that the Senate address this issue by adopting one of the following options:**

1. Two three-year terms as a lifetime limit
2. A maximum of two terms on followed by at least one year off Senate, with unlimited terms on the Senate
3. Term limits for Faculty Senate committee chairs
 - a. Three years as a lifetime limit **OR**
 - b. A maximum of two years as committee chair, followed by at least one year out of that position, with unlimited years as chair of a committee

Senators should be allowed to serve longer terms as members of a committee than as chair of a committee.

Furthermore, the committee recommends that Senate consider the number of terms served by current Senators as the limits are imposed. Depending on the type of term limits chosen, some sort of phase-in plan may be necessary, but the changes should be phased in so that they are evident within the next academic year.

Term limits should apply to all Senators, whether elected as departmental representatives, college/school/library representatives, or at-large representatives.

Faculty Senate Review Committee Survey and Responses

During the Fall 2001 semester, members of the FSRC met with Faculty Senate, Student Government, Deans' Council, Executive Staff, Administrative Council, and Chairs' Forum, as well as with each department in the University, and the former Faculty Senate Chairs from the last 15 years. Each group was provided with a list of questions about Faculty Senate in advance (see below), and responses made in discussion were recorded by committee members. The individual reports of these meetings are all available at the FSRC web site (<http://biology.semo.edu/review>), as is a detailed summary table of the departmental responses.

Faculty Senate Survey Questions

Overall Questions about Role and Effectiveness

1. What, in your opinion, is the purpose/role of Faculty Senate?
2. What are the strengths of Faculty Senate as currently operating at Southeast? What are the weaknesses?
3. What are some factors/changes that you think would improve the operation of Faculty Senate?

Questions Dealing with Faculty Senate's Relationship with Administration

1. What should be the role of administration in Faculty Senate processes?
2. To what extent do you think the Administration listens to and responds to Faculty Senate concerns and decisions?

Questions Related Specifically to Faculty

1. What sort of issues do you think Faculty Senate should be considering?
2. In the last year, have you been well-informed about the work of Faculty Senate?
3. What do you think your Faculty Senate currently does?
4. What do you think your Senate should do for you?
5. Under what circumstances would you volunteer to serve as the senator from your department?

Responses from Surveyed Groups

Student Government Responses

The meeting with Student Government provided a distinct perspective on the role of the Faculty Senate in governance, but the students generally expressed a lack of knowledge about the operations of the Senate. One suggestion that was made was that communication between Senate and Student Government would be improved if there were a Faculty Senate representative to Student Government. In response, this suggestion was implemented by the Senate in Fall 2001.

Former Faculty Senate Chairs' Responses

The discussions the FSRC members had with former Faculty Senate chairs were more open-ended than the others, and did not explicitly follow the survey questions as did the other meetings. The former chairs expressed a variety of views. Some emphatically supported term limits, while others opposed them, citing the value of experienced members to an effective Senate. One suggested that the Senate has become too large to function well.

Several former chairs expressed the concern that, as the number of other advisory councils has grown, the role of Faculty Senate has diminished over time. One suggestion was that the Senate be given more policy-making power over a clearly defined set of issues relevant to faculty. A problem cited several times was that administrators come in without a clear understanding of the role of Senate or of the policies in the Faculty Handbook, and that policies are often violated as a result. A specific example is the approval process for bills; several university Presidents have regularly failed to respond to Faculty Senate bills within the prescribed 30-day timeline, some chairs pointed out. One way to expedite this process might be to send bills to the Provost rather than the President, as the Provost usually has to provide input anyway.

A recurring theme in the opinions of the former chairs was that the relationship between the Senate and the administration is strongly dependent on the specific persons occupying offices, especially the Faculty Senate chair, the President, and the Provost. There was a general agreement that the perception of the Senate as dysfunctional produces a vicious cycle, by diminishing its actual influence on policy.

Faculty Senate Responses

Overall Questions about Role and Effectiveness

1. What, in your opinion, is the purpose/role of Faculty Senate?

To provide an independent voice for the faculty, to advocate for faculty concerns. The Faculty Handbook says that the Senate is advisory, but everyone is advisory except the Board of Regents.

2. What are the strengths of Faculty Senate as currently operating at Southeast? What are the weaknesses?

Strengths:

Representative, diverse. Recent modifications have improved committee operation. We are successful at academics and professional issues.

Weaknesses:

There is too much time spent on rehashing the same topics every year; nothing seems to get done. Neither faculty nor administration respects the Senate. In part this is because a lot of work goes into a bill, only to have it sent back by the President. Bills that are approved as policy are not enforced. Many faculty believe that Senators are not representative of them; it's an image problem.

3. What are some factors/changes that you think would improve the operation of Faculty Senate?

The role of Senate in governance needs to be defined more clearly.
Faculty Senate should choose representatives on various bodies in the University.
Senate should have a non-voting member on the Board of Regents.

Questions Dealing with Faculty Senate's Relationship with Administration

1. What should be the role of administration in Faculty Senate processes?

None; just listen and respond to our input; don't meddle.

Should ensure that legislation is adhered to.

Presence of Provost may inhibit discussion; others felt that it was helpful to have a liaison present.

2. To what extent do you think the Administration listens to and responds to Faculty Senate concerns and decisions?

The administrators don't stay for the business part of the meeting.
The administration has already made the decisions; we're wasting our time. Often issues are saved for the summer when Senate is gone. The President is supposed to respond in 30 days, but that rarely happens.
In the early 90s governance was more collegial.

2b (Nancy Blattner asked how much the Senate listens to the Administration.)

We have no choice, as they have all the power.
Them/us is a mistaken view, too simple. We need more collegiality on both sides.
Sometimes there is not enough time for us to talk to constituents before decisions must be made.

Questions Related Specifically to Faculty

1. What sort of issues do you think Faculty Senate should be considering?

Hiring of new faculty, increasing salaries of long-term faculty.
Workload, amount of service and research required for tenure/promotion.
Vision for the sort of University we are to be.
Off campus centers, articulation agreements.

**2. In the last year, have you been well-informed about the work of Faculty Senate?
(For this group, the question was reversed: have you informed your constituents?)**

Yes. Need cooperation from chairs, putting Senate report on department meeting agenda, not scheduling Senators for class during meeting times

**3. What do you think your Faculty Senate currently does?
(omitted here)**

**4. What do you think your Senate should do for you?
(omitted here)**

**5. Under what circumstances would you volunteer to serve as the senator from your department?
(omitted here)**

Open discussion:

There was extensive discussion afterward. Some concern was expressed that a decision had already been made to disband or drastically change Faculty Senate.

There was discussion about the impression that bills disappear after being passed. Senators said that there should be more communication from the President about why particular bills are rejected, and it should be more prompt.

Some doubt was expressed about the invocation of the Board of Regents or the university law counsel to justify rejection of bills. Senators feel that they have no way of knowing if these objections are genuine.

There was general agreement that the work involved in serving on Senate is not adequately rewarded. Suggestions included release time, merit pay consideration, and reward in the tenure/promotion process.

Several Senators said that morale is negatively affected by the feeling that Senate must do all the compromising, that the Administration will continually return bills until the Senate arrives at the preordained result.

Departmental Responses

The most frequently heard responses to each question have been grouped together, with the number of department meetings in which each response was heard. A more detailed summary with slightly different groupings of responses is available at the FSRC web site.

Overall Questions about Role and Effectiveness

1. What, in your opinion, is the purpose/role of Faculty Senate?

Representative/voice for faculty interests	20
Liaison between faculty and administration	13
Legislate policies and procedures for university governance	7
Protect/advocate faculty interests	6
Advisory	3

Some tension exists between the Senate's perceived function as purely advisory and the desire that it should have more policy-making power.

2a. What are the strengths of Faculty Senate as currently operating at Southeast?

None/hard to tell	10
Broadly representative, diverse	9
Voice for faculty	6
Includes faculty who work hard, are knowledgeable, dedicated	5
Meets at scheduled times/often	4
Current president/leadership	3
That it exists is a strength in itself	3

There was considerable cynicism expressed about the strength of the Senate. Individuals in the Senate were mentioned favorably, both leaders and members, but its effectiveness was questioned. In several meetings, the location of the Faculty Senate on the most recently distributed organizational chart was criticized as indicating it to be irrelevant.

2b. What are the weaknesses?

There were many responses to this question, so we have grouped them under several general headings.

Attitude:

Too adversarial	9
Perception as a waste of time	4
Not adversarial enough/ Lacks will to challenge administration	3

Clearly there was some disagreement over the proper attitude of the Senate. Some faculty held that an adversarial attitude limits the ability of the Senate to affect policy; others felt that the Senate needs to be more outspoken in opposition to some administration positions.

Weaknesses continued:

Composition:

Too many lower-rank faculty/ junior faculty trying to get service component/ resume builder	5
Old boys club/ Senior faculty too powerful/Same people serve too long	5
Too large	3

The first two points are not necessarily mutually exclusive, despite appearances. It is conceivable both that there could be many lower-rank faculty and that the senior faculty on Senate do dominate discussion. The concern that the size of the Senate makes it unwieldy was heard both in some department meetings and in some meetings with administrative bodies.

Communication:

Senators don't really represent/communicate with faculty	11
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Numerous faculty members said they didn't know what their senator did, and that they were not consulted prior to votes.

Relationship to administration:

No real (policy-making) power/ advisory only	18
Administration makes decisions before consulting senate / rubber stamp / keeps returning bills until desired result obtained (merit pay, River Campus, selection of president)	10
Administration doesn't listen/respond to Senate	8
No respect from administration	5

This question provoked strong responses on this topic from faculty in many meetings. The second point was variously expressed, but the general idea is that the administration makes a decision in advance, then asks the Senate to devise a policy; the resulting bill is then sent back repeatedly for modification until the desired decision is made. The specific issues mentioned repeatedly in this context were merit pay and the establishment of the River Campus. There was also widespread concern over the fact that the current President was selected without any input from Faculty Senate.

Issue choice/handling:

Bickering, gripe session, "debate society", legalisms, hair-splitting, dithering, trivialities	18
Senators use for personal issues/agendas	6
Keep dealing with same issues	4

3. What are some factors/changes that you think would improve the operation of Faculty Senate?

General (includes proposals requiring both faculty and administration action):

Full faculty should vote on some major issues/ election of exec. committee/ could be online	6
Include deans, faculty and chairs / University Senate/ Add administrative seats	5
More power	5
More cooperation between Senate and Administration / shared governance	5
Should have representative or agenda spot with Board of Regents	3

Improvements continued:

The suggestion that the full faculty might vote on some Senate issues was raised several times, and was usually coupled with the suggestion that electronic means could be employed.

There were several suggestions for something approximating a University Senate, in which administrators would have some voting seats in Senate; however, it should be noted that under the “relationship with administration” section, many more meetings expressed the view that the administration should have little or no role in the Senate.

Internal Structure/Procedure:

Term limits	11
Training/orientation for new senators, leaders	5

The call for term limits was one of the most common suggestions overall.

The current Senate chair has already instituted orientation for new Senators as a result of this survey.

External/Administrative:

Reward service better in tenure/promotion	6
Define role/ make authoritative on issues really pertinent to faculty	6
More release time for senators, Senate chair	4
Administration should respect faculty Senate decisions	3
executive staff, administrative council should have Faculty Senate member or members chosen by FS	4

The desire for increased power for the senate was in some cases linked to a more narrowly focused role for the Senate; thus, it was suggested that if the Senate’s purview was defined as limited to faculty welfare and academic issues, it could then have policy-making power in those areas.

The suggestion that administrative council should have a member from Faculty Senate is probably indicative of a lack of communication, as the Chair of the Senate is a member of administrative council, and has been for many years.

Communication:

E-mail/ online dissemination of minutes, agenda, news to faculty/ Web-based discussions/ like NewsWire / post pending bills on web	13
Make sure senators represent/ communicate with their departments/ Encourage FS reports in dept. meetings/ discuss pending bills with faculty	7
Better, more informative, timely minutes/ Better secretary/ print comments	8

The suggestion that Faculty Senate agenda and minutes should be distributed by e-mail as the Southeast News Wire is was the most common recommendation from department meetings. While minutes are posted on the web, few faculty were aware of this; in addition, those that were held that they were often months behind the actual meeting dates. Numerous faculty members also expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the minutes, averring that they fail to provide enough coverage of arguments made in debate.

Questions Dealing with Faculty Senate’s Relationship with Administration

1. What should be the role of administration in Faculty Senate processes?

Communicate issues and information	11
None, little, no interference	6
Better communication about what happens to bills and why	4
Collaborative	4
Administrative liaison should report and leave/ doesn’t need to attend every meeting / should not be at any meeting	4
Provost should explain administration’s stance on issues better/ stay to listen to discussion	4
Follow faculty handbook	3

As mentioned above, while some faculty proposed that administrators should have seats on the Senate, in several meetings faculty felt that the administration should have little or no role in the Senate. There was also some disagreement about the desirability of having the Provost attend meetings. At present the Provost acts as administrative liaison, and usually attends the beginning of the meeting to report. Some faculty wanted the Provost to attend less frequently or for less of the meeting, to avoid an inhibitory effect on discussion; others felt that communication would be improved if the Provost attended the entire meeting.

2. To what extent do you think the Administration listens to and responds to Faculty Senate concerns and decisions?

Not at all/ Administration has own agenda, FS doesn’t influence it/ No power / very little	20
Uses Senate to apply a veneer of collegiality to predetermined decisions/ validate what they want/ Listens and responds, but only affirmatively if FS agrees with administration’s wishes/ Sends bills back until FS does it “right”	6
Personalities: Depends on who is in Senate/ Chair/ Some improvement under Provost Stephens/ Worse under current administration	6
Suggestions that faculty senate needs representation at Board of Regents meetings	2

This was another question that provoked considerable cynicism. The claim that administrative decisions are made prior to Senate discussion arose in this context again. Several statements were made that indicate that the functioning of Senate in governance depends on the individuals in both Senate and administrative offices (although there was disagreement over the positive or negative effect of the current administration).

Questions Related Specifically to Faculty

1. What sort of issues do you think Faculty Senate should be considering?

Numerous issues were named, and a full listing is available in the detailed summary. Almost without exception, the issues fell into the categories of faculty welfare, including issues of pay, work conditions, tenure and promotion, etc., and academic issues, including academic freedom, curriculum, and grading issues. This is a point of general agreement, not only among faculty, but between faculty and administrators.

2. In the last year, have you been well-informed about the work of Faculty Senate?

No/ not well	11
Yes	9
Report from senator is scheduled in department meeting	3
Senator reports	3

Response to this question was rather evenly divided. It's clear that some senators are more diligent in communicating with their constituents than others. Comments also suggest that some department chairs encourage this communication in faculty meetings, while others do not. In fact, one department chair allotted only five minutes for these questions to be discussed with committee representatives.

3. What do you think your Faculty Senate currently does?

Not much/ Zip /Wastes time / debates useless issues/ Eats cookies / Dogs on campus	11
Meets regularly	3
Merit pay	3
Tenure and promotion	3

This is another response showing widespread cynicism and dissatisfaction with the current functioning of the Senate.

4. What do you think your Senate should do for you?

Protect rights of faculty/ promote faculty interests	6
Advocate for better salaries/ Cost of living increase	4
Watchdog over implication of decisions for faculty, university as a whole	3

5. Under what circumstances would you volunteer to serve as the senator from your department?

None/ hell freezes over/ gun to my head	9
If it counted for something/ was valuable/ was effective/ was rewarded	8
Release time	3
If asked	3

The general unwillingness to serve on Senate again reflects dissatisfaction with its role. It was also apparent from the discussions that, although members are elected to the Senate, in practice these elections are not often contested.

Administrative Responses

The committee has summarized here the responses to the survey questions from Deans' Council, Executive Staff, Chairs' Forum, and Administrative Council. Not surprisingly, considering the overlap in membership among these bodies, there was substantial similarity in their responses. Where different bodies had particularly divergent views, we have indicated them.

Overall Questions about Role and Effectiveness

1. What, in your opinion, is the purpose/role of Faculty Senate?

The administrative groups surveyed all regard the Faculty Senate as representing and advocating faculty interests and as a forum for communication between faculty and administration. All agreed that it has a role in shared governance, influencing policy on matters pertaining to faculty; at Chairs' Forum the view was expressed that it has in the past had a stronger policy-making role, and that it has become more purely advisory. At the Deans' Council the role of Senate was described as stating "a collective faculty judgment on issues dealing with faculty policy and welfare."

2a. What are the strengths of Faculty Senate as currently operating at Southeast?

In general, the administrative bodies perceive the Faculty Senate as much stronger than the faculty appear to. Three of the groups mentioned the free access that Faculty Senate has to executive staff and other administrators as a potential avenue for influence. There was general agreement that in times of crisis, the Senate rises to the occasion and acts in the best interests of the institution; a case in point was the A133 compliance/attendance issue, which was mentioned by both Executive Staff and Administrative Council. The role of Faculty Senate in the Budget Review Committee (on which the Compensation Committee members serve) was mentioned repeatedly as an example of a highly effective example of advocacy of faculty interests.

2b. What are the weaknesses?

Three of the groups named an adversarial attitude as a weakness of the Senate. It was stated both in Deans' Council and in Administrative Council that the Senate tends to regard issues as "wins" and "losses" against the administration rather than as cooperative efforts. Three of the four groups also suggested that the Senate underestimates its own influence and fails to make optimal use of the extensive access it has to upper administration to influence policy. In Deans' Council, the large size of the Senate was cited as a factor in slowing its responses; other groups mentioned the impression that nothing gets accomplished. An excessive emphasis on formal procedures was also said to limit the ability of the group to respond to issues; the decision not to allow an e-mail ballot last summer was cited as one example. In the Chairs' Forum, it was suggested that the presence of the Provost inhibits discussion at Senate meetings. One of the chairs also observed that a group of senators who have served for a long time may detract from its image.

3. What are some factors/changes that you think would improve the operation of Faculty Senate?

Chairs, Deans, and Administrative Council all advocated term limits. Three groups also suggested that a smaller Senate, perhaps composed of one representative of each college and some at-large representatives, would be more effective. It was suggested at two meetings that a conference committee should be instituted for each bill passed, in which details would be worked out between the Senate and other groups potentially affected by the bill. Problems could be identified in such a committee, it was proposed, and the bill sent back for revision before it went to the President for approval. Better communication between Senate and administration as well as between Senate and faculty was cited as a necessity. The chairs particularly asked for more informative minutes and agendas, to be distributed via email. Members of the Executive Staff expressed a concern that, in some instances, reports of Senate committees are informal and may not represent the views of all committee members. It was suggested that committee reports be formalized and signed by all members.

Questions Dealing with Faculty Senate's Relationship with Administration

1. What should be the role of administration in Faculty Senate processes?

Most of the responses called for better communication and cooperation between administration and Senate. The idea of establishing some mechanism for negotiation and identifying potential problems before sending bills out for formal approval was reiterated.

2. To what extent do you think the Administration listens to and responds to Faculty Senate concerns and decisions?

The Executive Staff held that the administration often does listen and respond to Senate decisions, and that in fact the Senate is seen as potentially very powerful, stating that administration "ignores faculty views at its peril." Other groups acknowledged some problem with response to Senate concerns, but held that the Senate is listened to when its recommendations are "reasoned and thoughtful." At Chairs' Forum, the point was made that the quality of the interaction between Senate and administration depends greatly on who the chair of the Senate is, and it was suggested that the chair should be compensated with additional release time to confer more respect on the position.

Questions Related Specifically to Faculty

Only Chairs' Forum had time, or felt it appropriate, to deal with these questions, and the time allotted was brief. They felt that the appropriate issues for the Senate were not clearly defined, and that they were not well informed about the work of the Senate.

Faculty Senate Review Committee Composition

The Faculty Senate Review Committee is an *ad hoc* committee reporting to the Provost. It was formed in Spring 2001 with a chairperson, the Faculty Senate Chairperson, and an Administrative Liaison, along with two faculty members from each college, Kent Library, and the School of Polytechnic Studies. One faculty member was appointed by the provost from each of those bodies, and one was elected by the faculty.

Members:

Allen Gathman	Committee Chairperson
Bill Eddleman	Faculty Senate Chairperson
Nancy Blattner	Administrative Liaison

Provost-appointed members:

Judy Wiles	Harrison College of Business
Jean Benton	College of Education
Gloria Green	College of Health and Human Services
Martha Zlokovich	College of Liberal Arts
Sharon Coleman	College of Science and Mathematics
Greg Boyd	School of Polytechnic Studies
Ed Buis	Kent Library

Elected members:

Jim Buckenmyer	Harrison College of Business
Beverly Petch-Hogan	College of Education
Paula King	College of Health and Human Services
Peter Bergerson	College of Liberal Arts
Jim Bruening	College of Science and Mathematics
Harry Pry	School of Polytechnic Studies
Carl Pracht	Kent Library