

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck

School of Social Work

Bylaws of the Faculty Council 2025

I. PURPOSE

The USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work (SDP-SSW) Faculty Council is a faculty advisory group to the Dean. It represents the faculty of the School as stated in the Constitution of the Academic Senate. It is concerned with issues directly related to faculty status, responsibilities, and welfare within the SDP-SSW.

These bylaws represent the operating principles of the Faculty Council of the USC SDP-SSW. These principles will apply to the deliberations of that body. If there is conflict between these principles and the Faculty Handbook of USC, as revised from time-to-time, or the Governance Document of the USC SDP-SSW, as revised from time-to-time, the Faculty Handbook and Governance document prevail.

II. PRINCIPLES

The Dean will consult regularly with the Council for advice on important issues facing the school and, as much as possible, to provide the Council with necessary information or means of obtaining it for the Council to complete its functions. The elected members of the SDP-SSW are expected to be junior and senior faculty whose judgment is respected and valued, and who reflect the diversity of the school. The Council members are expected to represent the School's overall interests and the faculty in policy matters introduced by either the School or the University's governing bodies.

III. ROLE

The SDP-SSW Faculty Council:

- serves as a deliberative and consultative body with the authority to survey the faculty and make studies, reports, and recommendations on all matters that have a significant bearing on the work or status of the faculty.
- identifies issues of highest priority to the faculty and discuss and debate current issues and matters of interest to the faculty.
- advises the Dean and makes recommendations on major reorganizations of the School governance.
- advises the Dean on academic and faculty status matters and concerns.
- advises the Dean on budget and administrative issues.
- advises the Dean as needed on policies relating to faculty personnel matters, including recruitment, appointments, merit standards, workload policies, and tenure and promotion procedures.
- advises the Dean on strategic hiring plans for the school.
- advises and counsels the Dean on the appointment and reappointment of chairs and directors, including endowed professorships and Center directors.

- makes recommendations to the Dean for appointments to certain committees, or approves the membership of committees, actively solicits faculty volunteers to serve on school standing and ad hoc committees, where appropriate.
- provides oversight of the APR process in collaboration Faculty Affairs, including setting metrics and managing the appeals process.

The SDP-SSW Faculty Council Chair and Vice Chair:

- set the agenda for Faculty Council meetings and convene special meetings if required.
- set the agenda for full Faculty meetings in consultation with the Office of the Dean.
- represent the School in the Academic Senate (or select a designated appointee of Faculty Council to represent the School).

IV. ARTICLES

Schedule of Meetings

The Council will meet twice monthly. The members may vote to cancel meetings as needed.

Composition and Elected Terms

The Council will be composed of eight members: four Tenure faculty (three Associate or Full rank and one at the Assistant rank) and four full-time RTPC faculty consisting of two member from the Teaching and Lecturer lines (one Teaching faculty and One Lecturer faculty) and two members from Practicum Education faculty.

Tenure Faculty at the Associate and Full rank will serve for terms of two years (staggered). Tenure faculty at the Assistant rank will serve for one year. Tenure faculty will be ineligible for election to Faculty Council for two years and to Curriculum Council for one year following their term of service. RTPC faculty will stagger terms to ensure historical continuity.

RTPC faculty will be ineligible for election to Faculty Council for two years and to Curriculum Council for one year following their term of service. RTPC faculty representatives must be at the rank of Associate or Full Professor, Senior Lecturer or Master Lecturer. If there is not an eligible faculty member for any given RTPC faculty line, then an alternate RTPC faculty from the eligible pool may be elected as a substitute for the term.

Faculty with a 100% administrative role or who carry the title of Dean cannot be elected to Faculty Council, but can serve as ex-officio members.

If a member is unable to fill the entire term because of leave, the following conditions apply:

- If the leave is to be for only one semester, the position will remain vacant;
- If the leave is for an academic year, a new member will be elected to serve that year;
- Service of one year for a senior faculty member will make them ineligible for election for one year;
- If the Chair or Vice Chair are on leave for one semester, the position will remain vacant and the remaining Chair/Vice Chair will serve both roles;
- If the Chair or Vice Chair are on leave for greater than one semester of their term of service, a special election will be held to fill that vacancy.

To ensure historical continuity, if 50% or more of faculty are rotating off Faculty Council, a vote may be taken to retain member(s) for 1 additional year beyond their elected term. Faculty who are considered for an additional year may decline the invitation to serve for the additional year beyond their original term.

Ex-officio members of the SDP-SSW Faculty Council

The Dean may attend the Faculty Council meeting if invited. Associate Deans and Directors may attend SDP-SSW Faculty Council meetings on an *ex-officio* basis to further facilitate communication between the Council and Dean's office. Other ex-officio members may include Senior Leadership as invited by Faculty Council. Ex-officio members of Faculty Council are invited by the Chair of Faculty Council.

The meetings may also be attended by an assigned staff member from the Dean's office to provide routine office support.

Election Procedures

Elections for Faculty Council are held annually. The following procedures will apply:

Representatives will be elected by the faculty line that they will represent. When an At-Large member will be included, Research, and eligible Part-Time Faculty may self-nominate to serve as the At-Large representative.

The Office of Faculty Affairs will prepare a list of eligible candidates to be included on the ballot for faculty council nomination. Elections will be held online. Candidates who receive the most votes, plurality, will be declared the elected members. Each line has the option to submit candidate nominations to the Office of Faculty Affairs prior to the election.

After the election results for incoming members are certified, a separate ballot will be drawn to determine the incoming Chair of Faculty Council. Eligible candidates are derived from a list of tenure-line faculty who are continuing or newly elected to the Council. Faculty who are scheduled for a sabbatical or other planned leave during the year are not eligible to serve as Chair. Only those at Associate or Full Professor rank with prior experience of at least 1 year on Faculty Council are eligible. However, all faculty lines are eligible to vote for the Chair. In order to be elected, the candidate with the most votes will be declared the chair. The election will be held online. The Chair is elected for 1 year.

Similarly, a Vice Chair of Faculty Council will be selected following election of the Chair. Eligible candidates are derived from a list of RTPC faculty who are continuing or newly elected to the Council. Only those at Associate/Full Professor or Senior/Master Lecturer ranks with prior experience of at least 1 year on Faculty Council are eligible. However, all faculty lines are eligible to vote for the Vice Chair. All faculty will be eligible to vote. In order to be elected, the candidate must receive the majority, plurality, of the votes. The election will be held online. The Vice Chair is elected for 1 year and may be reelected. If the Chair did not serve on faculty Council the prior year, it is recommended that the pool of eligible RTPC faculty be drawn from RTPC faculty who served on Faculty Council the prior academic year to preserve historical continuity.

Voting

All elected members of the Faculty Council are considered voting members. Only members in attendance may vote on motions or present them from the floor. A record of the vote count for each item of business voted on will be kept by the assigned staff member and recorded in the minutes. The voting record will specify the number of "Yes, No, and Abstention" votes for each item of business voted upon. Voting by email is allowed if an urgent issue is presented through an email communication by the Chair of Faculty Council. The email voting period should be clearly stated in the email communication with the time period set by the Chair of Faculty Council.

Quorum

Fifty percent or more of the voting members of the Council (a quorum) must be present at a meeting to vote or must respond by email when an email vote is sought. In the absence of a quorum, no action will be taken although informational items may be presented and discussed.

Attendance at Meetings

Voting members attend all sessions unless the topic of discussion includes them, such as in the case of discussion of their performance evaluation.

The Council meetings will be open for observation by all fulltime and part-time faculty members of the School. Any faculty member desiring to attend a meeting as a visitor must obtain permission from the Chair of Faculty Council at least one week in advance of the meeting they wish to attend. The Council may invite any person to make presentations or to serve in an advisory capacity at the meetings.

Meeting Agenda and Format

Meeting agendas will be set by the Chair and Vice Chair with input from Faculty Council members, with an invitation to all faculty for items to be considered. The Office of the Dean may also provide agenda items to be considered by Faculty Council. Faculty at large will receive the agenda for every meeting once it is established. The Chair and Vice Chair of Faculty Council determine the meeting format. There are three types of sessions utilized by Faculty Council: open session, executive session, and closed session.

- Open session: May be attended by any faculty member, as well as ex-officio members.
- Closed session: Includes only the elected members of Faculty Council. No other attendees are permitted to attend unless invited by the Chair of Faculty Council with the assent of the full Faculty Council. Minutes of closed sessions may be taken at the direction of the Chair of Faculty Council.
- Executive session: Held when there are sensitive personnel, budget or School issues being discussed. Attendance during executive session is by invitation only, yet usually includes the Dean and/or Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs. No meeting minutes are taken during executive session, and the content is generally considered confidential. Discussion of what occurs during an executive session with other faculty members is prohibited.

Minutes of Meetings

The Office of Faculty Affairs will be responsible for preparing minutes of Faculty Council meetings. They will be reviewed and formally approved by the Faculty Council. The Office of Faculty Affairs will be responsible for preparing minutes of All Faculty meetings for circulation to the general faculty. All decisions and action items will be recorded and distributed to the entire faculty.

Delegation of Faculty Council Functions

The Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chair, will determine how responsibilities will be delegated to Council members for representation at the Academic Senate and other committees. Voting representation in the Academic Senate is defined by Article IV of the Academic Senate Constitution. See Academic senate policy: <https://academicsenate.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2021/06/Constitution-updated-3-10-2021.pdf> The Chair and Vice Chair will serve as the elected representatives to the Academic Senate. If the Chair or Vice Chair are unable to represent the school, the Faculty Council will elect another member from Faculty Council to serve as the voting representative.

Amendments to the Bylaws

The Council will adopt such bylaws as it considers necessary to the conduct of its business. Bylaws may be adopted or amended by majority vote of the Council at any regular meeting, provided that the proposed bylaws or their amendments have been submitted in writing to the Council at a prior meeting, and are congruent with the SDP-SSW Governance document. If the Bylaws conflict with the Governance Document, the Governance Document prevails. If the Bylaws or the Governance Document conflict with the University Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Handbook prevails.

- a. The bylaws and any amendments thereto will become effective immediately upon their adoption by the Council.
- b. Amendments to the Bylaws will be made publicly available in a timely fashion. Faculty may request a copy from the Office of Faculty Affairs at any time.

Faculty Council Review of the Governance Document.

The Council will review and make any necessary amendments to the SDP-SSW faculty governance document as needed. Amendments to the Governance Document may be proposed by a majority vote of the SDP-SSW Faculty Council, by the Dean, or via a petition by 1/3 of full-time faculty members.

After amendments are proposed, the draft amended governance document will be posted online and a notification sent to all faculty inviting them to review and comment for a 30-day period. At the end of the 30 days, Faculty Council will review all comments and suggestions and revise the draft amended document as appropriate. All comments from faculty require a written response from the Council, which will be posted for review, along with the final amended document.

The final amended document will be voted on by the Faculty Council and if it is approved by majority vote, will go to the Dean. The Dean will make a recommendation concerning the amendment to the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs. Authority to amend the SDP-SSW Governance Document rests with the President of the University, or at his or her direction, the Senior Vice President for Health Affairs.