

# Faculty Senate Rules Committee

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** September 24, 2026

**Time:** 2:00 p.m.

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

**Chair:** Amy Mendes

**Present:** Amy Mendes, Marian Buzon, Chemera Ivory, Michael Hopper, Henry Zpt

### 1. Virtual and Hybrid Meeting Policy

The committee discussed policies governing virtual and hybrid meetings of the Faculty Senate and General Faculty. Discussion focused on balancing the value of in-person deliberation with accessibility, flexibility, and the need to conduct university business when an in-person meeting may not be practical.

Committee members noted that virtual meetings could be particularly useful when Faculty Senate or General Faculty business arises outside the normal academic calendar or when circumstances make assembling faculty in person difficult.

The committee also discussed hybrid participation. Members generally recognized the potential value of hybrid attendance for faculty who cannot attend in person because of disability, illness, travel, or other circumstances. At the same time, members expressed concern that unrestricted hybrid participation could diminish in-person attendance and potentially affect the quality of deliberation.

An example was discussed involving a faculty member with an approved telework accommodation who is unable to participate in Faculty Senate under current in-person attendance practices. The committee noted that meeting policies may therefore have implications for equitable access to faculty governance and institutional service opportunities. Members also observed that restricting service opportunities for some faculty may shift additional governance responsibilities to other faculty members.

The committee agreed that any proposed policy should seek to preserve meaningful face-to-face participation where practicable while also providing appropriate mechanisms for virtual participation.

### 2. Status of Previously Approved Language

The committee discussed earlier language concerning virtual or hybrid meetings that had reportedly proceeded through Faculty Senate and received General Faculty approval.

The committee does not yet have sufficient information to determine what occurred following that approval or whether the language was formally implemented, rejected, or left without further action.

The Chair will review available records and consult individuals involved in the earlier process to establish the procedural history of the proposal. The Chair will also consult the Faculty Senate leadership and parliamentarian regarding the appropriate process if the previous action requires further approval, reaffirmation, or reconsideration.

### **3. Virtual Voting**

The committee discussed the relationship between virtual attendance and voting rights. Members generally agreed that if a member is authorized to participate remotely, the policy should provide a means for that member to participate fully in voting.

Rather than specifying a particular software platform, members favored policy language that establishes the requirement for a reliable and verifiable voting process while allowing the specific technology to change over time.

During the meeting, members explored Microsoft Teams polling functionality and confirmed that the platform includes tools that may support electronic voting. Other voting platforms and methods may also be appropriate.

The Chair will share information regarding Teams polling capabilities with Faculty Senate leadership.

### **4. Review of Comparable Institutional Policies**

The committee agreed to examine virtual and hybrid meeting policies at other institutions before drafting final recommendations.

Areas for comparison will include:

- circumstances under which virtual meetings may be called;
- authorization for hybrid participation;
- quorum requirements;
- remote voting procedures;
- mechanisms for verifying votes;
- accessibility and accommodation considerations; and
- any limitations or conditions placed on remote participation.

Committee members will add relevant examples and findings to the shared Rules Committee working document.

### **5. Committee Working Document**

The committee agreed to use the shared document titled “**FS Rules Committee 26–27**” as the central working repository for research, policy examples, procedural findings, and draft language between meetings.

The Chair will ensure that all committee members have editing access.

## **6. Action Items**

### **Chair:**

- Review prior Faculty Senate and General Faculty records to determine the history and disposition of the previously approved virtual/hybrid meeting language.
- Contact the appropriate former Senate officer(s), including the former Executive Secretary as appropriate, for additional procedural history.
- Consult Faculty Senate leadership and the current parliamentarian regarding the status of the previous action and possible procedural next steps.
- Share findings regarding Microsoft Teams polling and electronic voting capabilities with Senate leadership.
- Research comparable virtual/hybrid meeting policies at other institutions.
- Provide all committee members with editing access to the shared working document.
- Add findings and procedural information to the committee working document.

### **Committee Members:**

- Research policies at peer or comparable institutions concerning virtual meetings, hybrid participation, quorum, and remote voting.
- Add findings and relevant policy examples to the shared committee document.

## **7. Upcoming Meetings**

The committee agreed to continue meeting via Microsoft Teams unless circumstances warrant an in-person meeting.

The next meetings were scheduled for:

- **October 22, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**
- **November 19, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**

Additional individuals may be invited to participate as the committee's work develops.

## **8. Adjournment**

With no additional business raised, the meeting was adjourned.