

By-Laws Template

Faculty Affairs Committee

Spring 2026

This template was generated by the Faculty Affairs Committee of the 2023-2024 SFSU Academic Senate, and revised in Spring 2026, as a resource for faculty units to use in the development or revision of by-laws in accordance with [Academic Senate Policy #F25-306](#). The policy requires each faculty unit: 1) to have by-laws, and 2) to create or revise by-laws to meet the specifications as set out in the policy. **Faculty units should consult the policy in full prior to embarking on revisions.**

Use of this template is **mandatory**. Faculty units are invited to add additional language to their by-laws as needed to assist with day-to-day functioning. Direct quotes in the template are from AS #S23-306 unless otherwise noted. Each section of the template is annotated with the part(s) of AS #S23-306 to which it most directly relates.

Completed by-laws may be submitted to the SFSU Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee chair.

The template is as follows:

Department/Equivalent Unit Name [insert department or equivalent unit name] **By-Laws**

Date of last revision: [insert date of last revision and approval]

(AS #F25-306 II.a)

By-laws are in accordance with Academic Senate policies on equity, academic quality, and shared governance.

(AS #F25-306 II.b)

1. Statement of purpose. The following example can be amended to reflect departmental particularities:

“The purposes of these by-laws are to promote clarity, democracy, efficiency, and transparency in faculty unit governance; to support faculty equity across differences in status, rank, experience, background, and identity; and to enable success in achieving the faculty unit's academic and educational goals.”

(AS #F25-306 II.c)

2. Organization of faculty unit and leadership roles:

- a. [Identify all unit leadership and coordination roles (e.g. chair, director, associate director or associate chair, undergraduate coordinator, graduate coordinator, etc.). Identify the administrative duties and essential responsibilities for which each position is responsible, as well as how each position is appointed]
- b. [Specify terms, term limits, duties, and election dates for all leadership and coordination roles]
- c. [Describe procedure for filling vacancies]
- d. [Describe term limits and other mechanisms that provide equitable opportunities for faculty to serve in leadership and coordination roles in the unit]

(AS #F25-306 II.d and II.h)

3. Committee membership and voting rights

- a. Tenured and tenure-track faculty voting rights: All tenured and tenure-track faculty in the faculty unit, regardless of their time base, shall be entitled to full participation in all faculty unit voting and meetings.
- b. Faculty on early retirement voting rights: All faculty on early retirement, regardless of their time base, shall be entitled to full participation in all faculty unit voting and meetings.
- c. Lecturer faculty voting rights and committee participation:
 - i. All lecturer faculty who are teaching at least one class during the current academic year or who have been granted sabbatical or leave with pay during the current academic year shall be entitled to participation in all faculty unit voting and meetings, with the following exceptions:
 1. voting for RTP committees, subcommittees, and chairs;
 2. voting for faculty hiring committees, subcommittees, and chairs.
 - ii. With respect to voting for chairs/directors, faculty units bylaws should indicate how lecturer faculty votes are counted per II.e.iii of the Policy on By-laws.
 - iii. [In all other decisions for which a vote is called, faculty units should determine how lecturer faculty votes are weighted. Insert whether lecturer faculty will have prorated voting based on time-base or full voting rights]
 - iv. Lecturer faculty membership on committees and meeting attendance: All lecturer faculty shall be entitled to full participation in all faculty unit meetings with the following exceptions:
 1. participation on RTP committees and subcommittee meetings
 2. participation on faculty hiring committees and subcommittee meetings.
- d. Per AS #F25-306, "In the event that university policies conflict with faculty unit by-laws, university policies shall take precedence."

(AS #F25-306 II.e)

4. Faculty meetings

- a. Meetings of the faculty are held... [insert how often faculty meetings take place]
- b. Meetings are ordinarily scheduled and called by the faculty unit chair/director.
- c. Meetings can be called upon the request of one-third of the members of the faculty unit.

- d. [Insert other aspects of how faculty meetings take place, such as if they use Robert's Rules, rely on consensus or voting, etc.]
- e. A necessary quorum to complete business shall consist of 60 percent of the tenured, tenure-track, and faculty on early retirement in residence that semester.
- f. [Insert whether faculty meetings are recorded and whether minutes will be taken]

(AS #F25-306 II.f)

5. Faculty unit committees [In this section, identify committees, describe the roles/responsibilities of each, and detail how members are selected, how long terms last, etc.]

- a. Membership on faculty unit committees is determined by election unless otherwise specified. All committees elect their own chairs.
 - i. [Insert procedure for filling vacancies, election of committee chairs]
 - ii. [Insert term limits for committees and any other mechanism that provides for equitable opportunities]
 - iii. [Insert how faculty unit will ensure equitable and representative participation on all committees]
- b. Standing committees
 - i. [List standing committees. This will vary according to the department/unit. Some examples include Curriculum, Advisory, Post-tenure review, etc. For each one, provide: committee charge and responsibilities; duties and functions; membership and terms of service; sub-committees if applicable; process for recommendations to the department/full faculty, and participation of staff, students, and lecturer faculty]
 - ii. Retention, Tenure and Promotion Committee ([AS #S25-241](#))
- c. Non-standing committees mandated by Academic Senate Policy (see applicable policy listed):
 - i. Leave With Pay Committee ([AS #S22-301](#))
 - ii. Hiring Committee ([AS #F24-158](#))
- d. Ad-hoc committees (temporary committees to address specific issues)
 - i. [Insert how ad-hoc committees are created, charged, and organized]
 - ii. [Insert how assignment to ad-hoc committees is made in an equitable and transparent manner]
- e. Non-committee service work
 - i. Non-committee service work could include, for example, work associated with college initiatives and requests for information or reports. [Identify how non-committee service work is distributed amongst the faculty in an equitable and transparent manner]

(AS #F25-306 II.g)

6. Essential work. This section should address the essential work of the faculty unit, and include by-laws related to how the essential work of the faculty unit is equitably distributed (such as course schedules, teaching assignments, and other workload). This may be defined as the work of a committee or as accomplished through another mechanism. Essential work may include but is not limited to:

- a. Teaching and supervision of culminating experiences and thesis, when applicable
- b. Curriculum coordination, development, and revision
- c. Advising and student success
- d. Faculty professional development
- e. Peer review for teaching
- f. Post-tenure review
- g. Student awards and scholarships
- h. Program accreditation (if relevant)
- i. Planning, budget, and finance
- j. Assessment of program and student outcomes
- k. Course schedules, teaching assignments, and workload
- l. Lecturer appointment and evaluation
- m. Service work inclusive of committees

[Non-teaching faculty should adapt this to reflect their specific essential work]

(AS #F25-306 II.i)

7. Community agreements: Faculty units are strongly encouraged to develop community agreements around interactions with each other and equity in discussion and decision making.

- a. [insert faculty unit community agreements]
 - i. Faculty units community agreements may want to specify:
 - 1. Does the faculty unit have expectations about communication (tone, timing) in meetings, email exchanges, etc.? Is there an agreement about respecting each other in all communication?
 - 2. How does the faculty unit work to make sure that all voices are heard? How do the faculty unit members ensure they are hearing everyone's voice?
 - 3. Does the faculty unit have expectations around inclusion or exclusion of individuals on email exchanges? For instance, when is it appropriate to write to the community as a whole, and when might the communication be more limited?
 - 4. How can faculty unit members hold each other accountable for following groundrules? E.g. when faculty unit members make a mistake, does the chair or another community member compassionately remind them about the agreements? Can the faculty unit members call “flags” to indicate their concern that agreements aren’t being followed?
- b. [insert how often, typically between 1 and 3 years, community agreements are reviewed]

(AS#F25-306 II.j)

8. Approving and amending bylaws

- a. [Describe how faculty will review and ratify bylaws to ensure accurate reflection of unit’s policy, practices and values]

- b. Proposal: [Insert how amendments are proposed; identify who is eligible to initiate, when those proposals are suggested; and how proposed changes are drafted]
- c. Ratification: [Insert how amendments are ratified, including how they are presented to faculty unit, what indicates approval of amendment (ie., majority or 2/3s), and what administrators shall approve amendment]
- d. Adoption: [Insert when amendments become effective]

(AS#F25-306 II.k)

9. Bylaw review

- a. [insert when bylaws will be reviewed next (five years from ratification)]

(AS#F25-306 II.l)

10. By-law adherence:

- a. Faculty units should forgo bystander apathy by calling attention to language or behaviors that are unjust toward a particular person or group of people *and* respond in a way that helps maintain a supportive environment.
- b. If departments are unable to resolve issues through their internal processes, other avenues for redress include: Title IX, ombudsperson, Faculty Affairs, statutory grievance process as specified in the CBA, and college administrators.

(AS #F25-306 II.m)