Guidelines for Chairing a Faculty Governance Committee
Thanks to Karen Thompson, SAC Chair 2007-2009, 2012-2014

Prior to First Meetings of the Fall and Spring Semesters
- Email all committee members the schedule of meetings for the upcoming semester (or email the weblink to the schedule that lives on the Senate website).
    - Additional recommended step: double-check the accuracy of the dates before sending them out.

First Meeting of the Academic Year
- Chair initiates introductions around the table.
- Chair asks for a volunteer to take minutes for the day's meeting.
- Then, Chair begins meeting with review of agenda and minutes (see details in "During Committee Meetings" section below). Chair gives report, which serves primarily as an introduction to the committee, its charge, and its structure. (Print out copies of the charge and member roster from the Senate website. Include in first agenda packet, if possible. Otherwise, bring the copies with you.)
- First business item is usually to get volunteers for the various committee and liaison positions for the entire academic year including:
    - Minute taker
        - As soon as possible after the meeting, the minute taker should send the minutes to the chair of the committee and cc the Senate office.
    - Liaisons – appoint liaisons as soon as possible
- Next business item is, ideally, to review the year-end report from the previous year.

After the First Meeting of the Academic Year
- If any of the seats on the committee have not been filled yet, alert the Chair of Structures and Functions, and the Senate Analyst. Review the committee membership requirements to determine your committee membership. See the Senate website: web.sonoma.edu/senate.

Prior to or Between Committee Meetings
- Prepare agenda topics and email them to the Senate Analyst no later than five working days before the scheduled meeting or at least 72 hours in advance, along with the minutes from the previous meeting. Remember agendas need to be delivered 48 hours in advance according to the Senate by-laws.
    - In preparing the agenda, the Chair might email committee members to see if they have anything to add to agenda. Liaisons, in particular, may have business items to add.

- Review minutes from the prior meeting, edit as needed, and send to the Senate Analyst no later than three working days before the next scheduled meeting. It's a good idea to submit the minutes at the same time as the agenda.
- Any attachments that need to be included in the agenda packet should be emailed (preferably) or hand-delivered (only if absolutely necessary) to Senate Analyst no later than three working days before the scheduled meeting. If you can submit these attachments at the same time as you submit the agenda and minutes, that simplifies the process for the Senate office.
- In preparation for the Chair's report, compile information from the Senate, Executive Committee, and other meetings. This information will be presented in summarized form to the committee (verbally, generally, but key handouts should be copied for committee members).
- Contact guests at least two weeks in advance and set a time certain for them to present to your committee, if possible. It's a good idea to think of the semester as a whole, and schedule guests early for various meetings across the semester.
- Send updates or additional information to members as needed between meetings, including reminders about upcoming business items, discussion topics, and votes.
- Touch base with the Administrator assigned to your committee regularly prior to and throughout the semester to maintain communication flow and a collaborative relationship.

During Committee Meetings
- Begin meeting with review of agenda. Ask for any additions or changes. A motion to approve the agenda (with changes, if relevant) needs to be voted on and accepted by a majority.
- Next, the committee needs to review and approve the prior meeting's minutes. Again, a motion to approve the minutes (with changes, if relevant) needs to be voted on and accepted by a majority.
- Reports begin with the Chair's report. (See suggestions above for content.)
- After reporting, the Chair solicits reports from the various constituents on the committee as appropriate.
- Throughout the meeting, the Chair needs to manage the discussion to keep the meeting moving forward.
- After reports, the Chair commences discussion of business items. Note that the Chair typically needs to provide background information (usually verbally) and any supplemental materials not included in the agenda packet.
- The Chair solicits input from committee members as to how they want to handle issues.
- The Chair allows enough time for a full discussion, but also seeks a resolution, decision, or actionable outcome to the discussion.

- The Chair needs to keep track of requests for information from committee members. Respond to these requests via email between meetings or by bringing the information to the next scheduled meeting.

- When guests attend the meeting, the Chair initiates introductions around the table. Then, the Chair provides a brief background of the topic at hand, explains what the committee is seeking from the guest (e.g., information, expertise, collaboration, etc.), and gets the discussion rolling.

- All committee are encouraged to use Robert's Rules of Order. The committee chair only votes if there is a tie. The motion to end debate is not allowed at the committee level.

- Business items that are approved by a majority of committee voters moves up to the Executive Committee for a review of their readiness for the Senate. The committee Chair needs to send the approved items and relevant attachments to the Senate Analyst so s/he can add them to the Executive Committee's agenda.

During Executive Committee and Senate Meetings

- Keep in mind the Chair's role is to be the champion of the committee and the protector of the interests entrusted to the committee (see the committee's Charge).

- Report to the Executive Committee and Senate as needed on issues of your committee and its activities. Select items judiciously and provide verbal bullet points of the relevant issues. Note that a report is not necessarily required or expected at every Executive Committee or Senate meeting.

- Be aware of discussions or business items that impact related areas of your committee. Be prepared to ask questions and/or respond to queries on these matters.

Key Timing Issues

- The Chair for the next academic year should be elected no later than the first meeting in February. The early election is required since departments are planning their fall schedules in February, and they need to know if a faculty member will be unavailable for one course, if the committee has reassigned time.

- The Chair is in charge of writing a year-end report which provides an overview of the committee's activities for the previous academic year. The year-end report from the previous academic year should be presented to committee at its first meeting in the fall semester of the following academic year. The report is useful in showing new committee members what activities the committee has been involved in and is also an opportunity to see if returning committee members have any comments or changes on the report's content. It also provides the opportunity for committee members to consider the committee's future areas of business. The report needs to be voted on by the committee. If a majority approves it, the report should be sent to the Senate Analyst to be placed on the Executive Committee's (and ultimately the Senate's) agenda.