

# Constitution Committee operating procedures

The Constitution Committee is responsible for reviewing and drafting changes to two University of Florida governance documents:

- The University of Florida **Constitution**
- The **Bylaws** for the University of Florida Faculty Senate

It advises the Faculty Senate on regulation changes and administration.

The Constitution Committee does not make policy, or make substantive decisions about governing language in any of the above-referenced documents. Instead, it puts into appropriate language, the Faculty Senate's policies, amendments, and resolutions.

In the instances where the Committee must make substantive judgments, the Committee will request full clarification from the Senate, the Senate Steering Committee, the Policy Councils, or the administration. When substantive judgments are necessary, the Committee will inform the Senate where--in the amendment language--the Committee exercised its own judgment.

The Constitution Committee will determine whether changes and amendments should be in the Constitution or Bylaws, or both, and the University Counsel's Office will determine whether suggested changes must also be made to the University Regulations.

## **Amendments to the University of Florida Constitution and Senate Bylaws:**

Upon the direction of the Senate, the Senate Steering Committee, the Policy Councils, or the administration, the Constitution Committee shall draft proposed changes to the University Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

## **Amendments to University Regulations<sup>2</sup>:**

The Faculty Senate may propose changes to University Regulations and may comment officially on Regulations proposed by other entities of the University. Senate approval is not necessary for adoption or amendment of University Regulations. The Senate should comment on Regulations affecting shared governance aspects of faculty life.

The Constitution Committee shall review all amendments to University Regulations, report to the Senate on the content of all changes that affect faculty. The administration should provide the draft of all relevant Regulation amendments no later than:

- **October 1st** for Regulations set for approval at the December BOT meeting,
- **February 1st** for Regulations set for approval at the March BOT meeting, and
- **April 1st** for Regulations set for approval at the June BOT meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitutional amendments require 30 days notice and bylaws 15 days notice before final adoption. Because these items normally must be noticed as an information item at a Senate meeting prior to their adoption at a subsequent meeting, the Constitution Committee should make them available to the Senate Steering Committee by the first day of the month one full month before they are to be adopted. For example, to adopt a constitutional change at the December meeting, it would first have to be an informational item at the November meeting and developed by the Constitution Committee at its October meeting.

<sup>2</sup> The Board of Trustees adopts the Regulations that govern the University of Florida only after a notice period of 30 days, which includes 14 days for public comment. After the conclusion of the public comment period, the President may schedule a public hearing on any Regulation.

The Constitution Committee shall review pending amendments and report to the Faculty Senate at the **October**, **February**, and **April** Senate meetings, respectively. The report will be an information item only.

The Committee's role in reviewing University Regulation amendments is advisory to the Senate. Its primary purpose is to inform Senators of impending changes to Regulations that could affect them or their colleagues. The Committee will post the report on the Senate website for easy access, but neither the Committee nor the Senate is required to take action on any proposed amendment.

### **Other Duties of the Constitution Committee**

The Constitution Committee has three additional duties:

1. Alert Faculty Senate to relevant new or amended university policies. Similar to the review of proposed changes to University Regulations, the Constitution Committee will periodically review new or amended policies that may be of relevance to faculty. These alerts will be shared with the Faculty Senate Chair to determine next steps for informing faculty.
2. Periodically review the University Constitution and Bylaws and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate regarding housekeeping changes. The Committee may not propose changes to the Constitution or Bylaws without Senate approval; but may suggest to the Senate that it direct the Committee to make appropriate changes.
3. Interpret the meaning of provisions of the Constitution or Bylaws. Upon request of the Faculty Senate, the Senate Steering Committee, any Policy Council or Senate Committee, any Joint or Presidential Committee, or any College Dean or Vice President, the Committee shall render a written advisory opinion interpreting the constitution or bylaw. The Committee will provide written opinions at the earliest opportunity, but in no event shall the Committee take longer than two months to render an opinion.