

2026-2027 Faculty Senate Committee Charges

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Charge 1 – Improving SETE response rates

Charge Details: SETE response rates are very low, yet much emphasis is put on these numbers, especially for question 9, the “effective teacher” question. Look at how SETEs are currently presented to students and make recommendations on how to improve SETE response rates. Should the SETE response window be widened? Should students be encouraged in class to fill out SETEs, etc.? Investigate other institutions and how they record student feedback for tips that could help.

Deliverables: A written report summarizing current SETE administration and how it compares to other R1 universities, with actionable recommendations that could be implemented by the university to improve SETE response rates.

Timeline: Provide an interim update by the end of fall semester, with a final report with recommendations submitted to the Faculty Senate by April 1st.

Charge 2 – Increasing student presence on campus in a time when students are increasingly favoring online classes

Charge Details: The university wants students to be on campus, but the increase in the popularity of online classes potentially threatens these efforts. What could be done to increase student engagement on campus? Is there currently some sort of tool or survey or orientation to help students understand the difference between online and in person classes, and which might work best for them? What new ways could the university support on-campus culture among students, including online and commuter students? The committee may want to contact administrators that are working on student engagement to understand the initiatives that are ongoing or planned.

Deliverables: A written report summarizing university efforts to engage students on campus, with actionable recommendations that could be implemented to increase student presence on campus, particularly among online and/or commuter students.

Timeline: Provide an interim update by the end of fall semester, with a final report with recommendations submitted to the Faculty Senate by April 1st.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Charge 1 – Continuing revision of Faculty Senate Articles of Authority

Charge Details: Continuing from last year, The Academic Support Committee is charged with leading the multi-year effort to review and revise the Faculty Senate's Articles of Authority. This document, which governs the structure, authority, and procedures of the Faculty Senate, is significantly outdated and in need of revision to reflect current university structures, shared governance principles, and best practices. The section on standing committee, Article 2, section 5 should be of particular focus.

Building on the work completed during the previous academic year, the committee should:

- Review and evaluate the proposed changes developed by last year's Academic Support Committee.
- Revise, refine, or build upon those suggested changes where appropriate, with attention to clarity, internal consistency, and alignment with institutional realities.
- Continue drafting revisions to the remaining sections of the Articles of Authority that have not yet been addressed.
- Use the governance structure of University of North Carolina - Greensboro as a primary model for comparison and inspiration, identifying language or structural elements that could strengthen our own document.
- Consult with relevant campus stakeholders as needed (e.g., past Senate leaders, administration, legal counsel) to ensure that revisions are both feasible and effective.
- Consider whether any revisions to the Articles would necessitate corresponding updates to Senate bylaws, committee descriptions, or other governance documents.

Deliverables: A working draft of the revised version of the Articles of Authority, including tracked changes or side-by-side comparisons with the current version, clearly indicating what has been modified and why. A summary document outlining major changes and the rationale behind them, to accompany the draft and support Senate deliberations. A plan for next steps, including feedback solicitation, formal approval process, and identification of any further policy documents that may require alignment.

Timeline: Review and finalize revisions to previously addressed sections by the end of the fall semester. Complete a draft of remaining sections by March 1st. Submit a draft and summary report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for preliminary review by March 20, with the goal of bringing a proposed version to the full Senate before the end of the academic year, allowing for a vote on the new Articles of Authority at the All Faculty Meeting in August 2027.

Charge 2 – Compensation for faculty senate president

Charge Details: The FS president receives a one course release per fall/spring semester and does not receive any summer compensation. The FS president position includes a significant amount of work over the summer, including meetings and planning for the next year of FS business. The committee is charged with producing a report and formulating a motion to address FS president compensation and whether it should be expanded for the summer and/or the fall/spring semesters. The committee should look at what other R1 universities do for FS presidents to get an idea of what the norm is on this topic.

Deliverables: A summary report on norms surrounding compensation for FS presidents at R1 universities, and a motion, if appropriate, to address compensation for the FS president.

Timeline: A final report will be due by April 1st, with a motion, if appropriate, ready for the March 30th faculty senate meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

Charge 1 – Ongoing review of faculty-administration communication protocols

Charge Details: The Administrative Policies Committee is charged with evaluating the communication and transparency protocols between university administration and faculty, with a focus on how information is shared regarding major academic and financial decisions. The committee should assess the effectiveness, timeliness, and clarity of current communication practices and identify areas where increased transparency or more structured faculty engagement may be beneficial.

As part of this work, the committee should:

- Review recent examples of academic or financial decisions to assess how communication with faculty was handled.
- Consult with faculty and, where appropriate, administrative units to gather feedback on perceived strengths and gaps in communication.
- Consider models from peer institutions that promote effective shared governance through clear communication and timely consultation.
- Recommend improvements to processes, policies, or structures that could strengthen transparency and support meaningful faculty involvement in decision-making.

Deliverables: A report summarizing current practices, identified concerns, and proposed recommendations for improving administrative-faculty communication and transparency.

Timeline: Submit final report and recommendations by February 1st.

Charge 2 - Out of state work policy

Charge Details: The university recently adopted a revised out of state work policy, which can be seen at the following URL:

<https://www.memphis.edu/hr/pdf/out-of-state-work.pdf>

The committee is charged with looking into out of work state policies at other universities in TN, and investigating whether this policy relates to state or federal law, or if this policy is the product of purely internal policy change at the University.

Deliverables: A report summarizing findings on the implementation of the revised out of state work policy.

Timeline: Submit final report by February 1st.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Charge 1 – Strengthen faculty engagement with the budget process

Charge Details: The committee is charged with identifying ways the Faculty Senate can have a more meaningful role in institutional budget planning and decision-making. To support this, the committee should:

- Meet quarterly with the CFO to build a consistent channel of communication and to identify opportunities for faculty input.
- Explore potential mechanisms for Faculty Senate involvement with the University Budget Council or other key budget-setting bodies.
- Work to establish regular collaborative practices that ensure faculty perspectives are included in high-level financial decisions.
- Exploring the development of a budget handbook, in collaboration with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), if this is of interest to that office. This should include reviewing budget communication models and materials used by peer institutions.

Deliverables:

- A summary of quarterly meetings with the CFO, including any agreed-upon opportunities for ongoing collaboration.
- Recommendations for a more formalized role for Faculty Senate in the University Budget Council or equivalent body.
- Recommendation on whether to proceed with a budget handbook and, if so, a proposed outline.

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the academic year.

Charge 2 – Review and advise on budget allocations

Charge Details: The committee is charged with reviewing key elements of university budgeting for the upcoming year and advising on potential areas of collaboration between the Faculty Senate and senior administration. Specifically, the committee should:

- Review the proposed 2026–2027 university budget and identify areas where faculty input could inform allocation decisions moving forward.
- Meet with Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to discuss annual budget proposals and provide faculty feedback.
- Identify budgetary priorities that align with faculty needs, academic mission, and institutional goals, and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate accordingly.

Deliverables:

- Written feedback on the 2026–2027 budget proposal.
- Recommendations for areas where the Faculty Senate can work with senior leadership on budget priorities.

Timeline:

- Feedback on 2026-2027 budget following the fall adjustments submitted to Faculty Senate November 21.
- Recommendation on how the senate can work with senior leadership on budget priorities submitted to Faculty Senate by February 13.

FACULTY POLICIES

Charge 1 – Coordination with the university undergrad and grad councils

Charge Details: The Faculty Policies Committee is charged with coordinating regularly with the Undergraduate Council and Graduate Council to ensure that major academic changes are communicated effectively to the Senate. These may include significant programmatic or curricular developments, shifts in academic advising practices, or changes to undergraduate or graduate admissions policies that warrant broader Faculty Senate awareness or input.

The committee should:

- Establish a regular reporting structure with both councils.
- Monitor proposed changes that may have university-wide implications or affect multiple academic units.
- Bring forward to the Faculty Senate any items that merit discussion, input, or formal Senate action.

Deliverables: Brief oral or written updates to the Faculty Senate at least once per semester, summarizing relevant developments from both councils, and a year-end summary report outlining major issues tracked and any resulting Senate actions or recommendations

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the academic year

Charge 2 – Ongoing review of key policies

Charge Details: The Faculty Policies Committee is charged with the ongoing review of policies and procedures related to faculty rights, responsibilities, and governance, with special attention to evolving issues in higher education. The committee should monitor developments and make recommendations to the Faculty Senate on matters related to:

- Divisive concepts legislation and its potential or actual impact on academic freedom, curriculum, and classroom expression.
- Academic freedom and responsibility, including how these principles are defined, protected, and communicated in university policy.
- The Faculty Handbook, ensuring that its policies remain up to date, internally consistent, and aligned with institutional values and shared governance (see separate charge relating the Faculty Handbook).
- All university policies and procedures related to faculty appointment, dismissal, promotion, tenure, and appeals, identifying areas where clarification, revision, or alignment with best practices may be needed.

The committee should remain in consultation with the Provost's Office, Legal Counsel, and other relevant bodies as needed, and should inform the Faculty Senate of any developments that warrant attention or action.

Deliverables: Briefing memos or summaries for the Faculty Senate on any changes or risks related to policies impacting academic freedom, and proposed revisions to university policies and procedures related to faculty status, if warranted.

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the academic year, with updates provided to the Senate at least once per semester.

Charge 3 – Revisions to the faculty handbook

The Faculty Policies Committee is charged with the annual review and revision of the Faculty Handbook, in collaboration with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Provost's Office. This year, particular emphasis should be placed on reviewing:

- Section 3.1.11 Professional Development Assignments

The committee should expand this section to better reflect the current policy on PDAs (email FS president for PDF of most current policy), as well as note the university's priorities around PDAs that serve the R1 mission of the university. The committee should consult faculty from the hard and social sciences, humanities, and arts to understand how PDAs look different coming from these different fields.

Deliverables:

- Revised draft of Section 3.1.11, including tracked changes and explanatory notes.
- Summary of proposed changes and rationale for submission to the Faculty Senate.
- Additional proposed revisions to other handbook sections, as warranted during the year

Timeline:

- Timeline for proposed changes submitted to the Faculty Senate by November 1.
- Targeted revisions to Section 3.1.11 completed by February 1.
- Final proposed revisions submitted to the Faculty Senate by April 1.
- Additional revisions to other sections may be submitted on a rolling basis as issues arise.

LIBRARY POLICIES

Charge 1 – Ongoing review of library policies, procedures, and practices

Charge Details: Maintain regular communication with the Executive Director of University Libraries to review policies, procedures, and practices related to the operation and strategic direction of the libraries. The committee should engage in ongoing dialogue to better understand how the libraries support academic programs, research, and student success across all University of Memphis schools and colleges.

This charge includes, but is not limited to, reviewing and providing feedback on:

- Staffing and support personnel needs
- Library facilities and space planning
- Acquisitions and resource access
- Allocation of fiscal resources across collections, services, and technologies
- Emerging library initiatives and their alignment with institutional priorities

The committee should meet with the Executive Director at least once per month during the academic year and serve as a liaison between the Senate and the Libraries, ensuring that faculty perspectives are incorporated into planning and decision-making.

Deliverables: A summary report of key issues, trends, and recommendations to be presented to the Faculty Senate at the end of the academic year.

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the year, with a final report due by April 1st.

RESEARCH POLICIES

Charge 1 – Ongoing monitoring of developments in federal research funding

Charge Details: The Research Policies Committee is charged with monitoring developments in federal research funding, including changes in agency priorities, budget shifts, and evolving policy directives that may affect faculty competitiveness in securing external grants. The committee should identify trends that are particularly relevant to the university's research strengths and emerging areas of opportunity and consider how the university can proactively support faculty in responding to these shifts.

As part of this charge, the committee should:

- Track and summarize major changes or trends at key funding agencies such as NIH, NSF, DOE, NEH, and others.
- Identify areas where faculty may need targeted support or guidance to align proposals with new or changing agency priorities.
- Recommend university strategies, resources, or programming (e.g., grant writing workshops, seed funding, interdisciplinary collaboration support, mentoring) that would help faculty remain competitive.
- Engage with the Office of Research and Innovation to share insights and coordinate on possible actions.

Deliverables:

- A mid-year update summarizing major trends in federal funding and emerging areas of opportunity
- A year-end report with recommendations for institutional strategies or supports that could help faculty adapt to the changing research funding landscape

Timeline: Ongoing throughout the academic year, with a final report due by April 1st.

Charge 2 – Continuing work on the assessment of the office of research and innovation

Charge Details: Continuing from last year, The Research Policies Committee is charged with conducting a collaborative assessment of faculty experiences with the university's Office of Research and Innovation, with the goal of identifying ways the office can most effectively allocate its time and resources to support the university's diverse and growing research enterprise. This work should be framed as a constructive effort to support the office's mission by

gathering faculty perspectives on current services and identifying opportunities to enhance research support across disciplines and career stages.

As part of this assessment, the committee should design and administer a faculty-wide survey to collect input on experiences and perceptions related to:

- Pre-award services (e.g., grant proposal development, budgeting, compliance support)
- Post-award services (e.g., grant management, spending policies, reporting)
- Strategic guidance for pursuing external funding, particularly in light of shifting federal funding priorities (e.g., NIH, NSF)
- Support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research
- Resources and mentorship for early-career faculty and those new to grant seeking
- Communication, transparency, and responsiveness
- Overall faculty understanding of and engagement with the office's role in advancing the university's research mission

The committee is encouraged to ensure the survey provides space for both quantitative and qualitative responses and to work with the Office of Research and Innovation, as appropriate, in the design or interpretation of results. The intent of this work is to generate constructive, evidence-based recommendations that can inform strategic planning and promote continued growth in research support infrastructure.

Deliverables:

- A final report summarizing key findings and outlining recommendations that can assist the Office of Research and Innovation in aligning services with faculty needs and institutional research goals

Timeline:

- Final report and recommendations submitted to the Faculty Senate by December 1

Charge 3 – Advanced research computing needs

Charge Details: The Research Policies Committee is charged with assessing faculty needs related to research and advanced computing, including access to high-performance computing, data storage, specialized software, and technical support. The committee should gather input from faculty across disciplines to understand current challenges and opportunities, and provide constructive feedback to the university's Research Computing team.

Deliverables: A summary report outlining key faculty needs and recommendations for how Research Computing can enhance its services and infrastructure to better support research activities.

Timeline: Report should be submitted to the Faculty Senate and shared with Research Computing by December 1.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE