

# **Bylaws of the Texas A&M University System Assembly of Faculty Senates**

## **Article I Mission Statement**

The Texas A&M University System Assembly of Faculty Senates (TAMUS-AFS) promotes the foundational principles of academic freedom and best practices regarding shared governance throughout the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) by providing a forum for TAMUS faculty governance leaders to establish and maintain effective communication, collaboration, and consultation at the system level among the TAMUS faculty, the TAMUS Chancellor, and all TAMUS leadership to improve the strength and well-being of TAMUS and its member institutions.

## **Article II Vision Statement**

The Texas A&M University System Assembly of Faculty Senates aspires to be a trusted governance body that represents all TAMUS faculty.

## **Article III Membership and Duties**

Section 1: The members of the TAMUS-AFS will be appointed by the respective faculty senates representing all universities within the TAMUS. To qualify for membership, each member must either be serving on their institution's faculty senate executive committee or have previously served in such a role.

Section 2: Members:

1. Each institution has two representatives: one member and one alternate.
2. Each institution will have no more than two members present at a meeting, exclusive of the TAMUS-AFS executive committee.
3. Each institution has a single vote.
4. Alternates are determined by each institution.

Section 3: Duties of Members:

1. Attend and actively participate in TAMUS-AFS meetings. If unable to attend, the member must ensure that an alternate will attend the meeting.
2. Uphold effective communication between the TAMUS-AFS and their respective institution's faculty senates.
3. Represent the interests of all TAMUS faculty on system-wide councils and committees, as recommended by the TAMUS-AFS and appointed by the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of the TAMUS.

Section 4: Each faculty senate will appoint alternate members from its existing membership to attend TAMUS-AFS meetings with full voting privileges in the event of the regular member's absence.

Section 5: In terms of finance, travel costs incurred while attending meetings will be covered by the institutions of the primary member unless otherwise stipulated.

Section 6: The Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Regents will have ongoing standing invitations to partake in all TAMUS-AFS meetings.

#### **Article IV Officers**

Section 1: The TAMUS-AFS will elect its Speaker, Vice Speaker, and Secretary from among its members through a majority vote. These elected officials will form the Executive Committee. TAMUS-AFS also has the provision to establish and appoint additional offices and officers as required, which will be decided and announced in regular meetings. The roles, responsibilities, and election/appointment process for these additional positions should be detailed when they are established.

Section 2: The term of office for these positions shall begin on September 1, following an annual election to be held no later than May 1. The annual election of officers will be conducted by secret ballot and in a manner that ensures all members can participate.

Section 3: The Speaker will serve a one-year term and may be re-elected to a second one-year term. The immediate past Speaker will continue as an ex-officio voting member of the TAMUSAFS for one year, provided they remain a full-time faculty member of their university. Any former Speaker may not run for that position again for at least two years following the conclusion of the previous term of office.

Section 4: The Vice Speaker will serve a one-year term and may be re-elected to a second one-year term. The Vice Speaker may not run for that position again for at least one year following the conclusion of the previous term of office.

Section 5: If the Speaker resigns, the Vice Speaker shall become the Speaker for the remaining term of office and can run for Speaker for two more terms after. If the Vice Speaker resigns, a new election will be held to fill the vacant office.

Section 6: Executive Committee Officers will receive one-course release (or equivalent assignment reduction) for each academic year (fall and spring) semester and 2/9 summer salary. All other members will receive a teaching assistant or research assistant.

## **Article V Term Limits**

Section 1: To maintain institutional memory and continuity, all charter members of the Texas A&M University System Assembly of Faculty Senates (TAMUS-AFS) are requested to remain in their positions until August 31, 2025, unless circumstances dictate otherwise (health reasons, retirement, employment outside the TAMUS, etc.). Any vacancies that occur during this period should be filled according to the existing procedures outlined in the bylaws.

Section 2: On or after September 1, 2025, members of the TAMUS-AFS will establish a cycle of continuous rotation and will be appointed to serve staggered terms of 1, 2, or 3 academic years.

1. One-third of the membership will be appointed for a 1-academic-year term.
2. One-third of the membership will be appointed for a 2-academic-year term.
3. One-third of the membership will be appointed for a 3-academic-year term.

Section 3: The assignment of term length will be decided by a drawing or another method of random selection during the first meeting of the 2025 academic year, and subsequently as terms expire or members leave office.

Section 4: Upon the completion of their term, members may be reappointed for subsequent terms following the procedures outlined in the bylaws. All terms of service will begin on September 1 and end on August 31 of the respective academic year.

## **Article VI Senator Participation and Communication Expectations**

Section 1: Members are expected to contribute meaningfully to the TAMUS-AFS by attending meetings, engaging in discussions, voting on key issues, and fulfilling any additional responsibilities as outlined in our bylaws. Active participation also includes maintaining open and regular communication with TAMUS-AFS leadership, fellow members, and relevant stakeholders.

Section 2: Members must respond promptly to communications related to TAMUS-AFS activities. This includes responding to emails, participating in polls or surveys, and providing input on matters requiring member feedback.

**Article VII**  
**Lack of Participation and Unresponsiveness of a Senator**

Section 1: If a senator consistently fails to participate or respond, the Speaker or an assigned officer will reach out to discuss their participation to understand any extenuating circumstances and explore possible accommodations or solutions.

Section 2: If the senator's behavior continues, the Assembly will determine by a majority vote to vacate their position.

Section 3: If the position becomes vacant, the appointed alternate member will step in, assuming all duties and responsibilities. Subsequently, a new alternate member will be identified within 30 days.

**Article VII**  
**Regular Meetings**

Section 1: The Texas A&M University System Faculty Senate (TAMUS-AFS) shall convene for regular meetings to conduct its official business, which are essential for the execution of its mission and objectives. The schedule for such meetings shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. An initial meeting coinciding with a college football game in College Station, Texas, to be held during fall semester, fostering community spirit and engagement among senators.
2. Meetings of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates to be organized bi-annually, first in the months of September or October and subsequently in the months of February or March, dedicated to strategic discussions and decision-making processes.
3. A concluding meeting in late Spring, which may be conducted in person or via virtual means, aimed at reviewing yearly achievements, discussing future plans, and facilitating networking among members.

Section 2: Notification regarding the schedule of regular meetings shall be issued by the Secretary of TAMUS-AFS. Such notification shall be dispatched via email to the last recorded email address of each member, no less than sixty (60) days prior to the appointed date for the meeting. This advance notice is to ensure maximum participation and preparation time for all members.

Section 3: To accommodate the diverse preferences and logistical needs of its members, TAMUS-AFS meetings may be conducted in both in-person and virtual formats. The specific format for each meeting will be determined based on the nature of the agenda, member availability, and prevailing circumstances, with a focus on maximizing engagement and participation.

## **Article VIII Special Meetings**

Section 1: Special meetings of the TAMUS-AFS may be called by the Speaker. Notice of meetings shall be provided no less than 48 hours in advance, unless all members agree to meet sooner, and can be given via email or text. Notice of such meetings, issued by the Secretary, shall be emailed to the last recorded email address of each member. Meetings may take place in person, or virtual.

Section 2: The Executive Committee will be responsible for setting the meeting agendas in consultation with the TAMUS-AFS members and will be uploaded in an electronic repository accessible only to members.

## **Article IX Order of Business**

Section 1: The order of business may be altered or suspended at any meeting by a majority vote of the members present. The usual parliamentary rules, as laid down in the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, shall govern, when not in conflict with these Bylaws.

## **Article X Voting Practices and Quorum**

Section 1: Each institution has one vote. Tie votes will be recorded as such if not resolved by a second vote; the motion fails.

Section 2: No formal business may be executed, nor a vote taken, without a quorum. A quorum constitutes seven Assembly members.

Section 3: Amendments to the Bylaws will require seven votes from the membership.

Section 4: The TAMUS-AFS may conduct voting by open voice vote, secret written ballot, or secret electronic ballot, according to the wishes of the Assembly on a particular item.

## **Article XI Action on Recommendations and Resolutions**

All recommendations and resolutions approved by the TAMUS-AFS will be forwarded to the TAMUS Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Any dissenting or "minority opinion" will be included in any recommendations forwarded.

## **Article XII TAMUS-AFS Representation on System Councils and Committees**

Given the newness of our organization, our primary focus is on solidifying our foundation and internal structures. As we grow and mature, we are optimistic about

identifying and embracing opportunities for broader system involvement where TAMUS-AFS can offer its unique insights.