

# 6. ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY & SUPPORT

## **ACADEMIC SENATE**

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### **OVERVIEW**

The Academic Senate is a faculty administration governance body that relates directly to the President and Provost without review by any other Institute group. Its primary functions are to assist in the governance of the Institute by advising the President and the Provost about academic matters and concerns, and speaking as the primary voice of the faculty of the Schools of Architecture, Art & Design, Information & Library Science, Liberal Arts & Sciences, and the Library.

## SPECIFICS

*FAQ, Issue, First contact, Best contact*

### **Q. How does the Academic Senate fit into Pratt Institute's organizational structure?**

A. The charter of Pratt Institute vests the Board of Trustees with the primary responsibility for the educational and financial well being of the institution. The Board, in turn, authorizes the president and administration to direct the Institute in its many and complex operations. The Board, the president, and the administration recognize the important role of the faculty in developing, implementing, and monitoring the content and quality of Institute programs, curricula, and courses. To this end the Institute has established an academic senate composed of faculty and chair representatives elected directly by the faculty and chairs of the Institute.

### **Q. How does the Academic Senate fulfill its role and accomplish its functions?**

A. The Senate relies on two, basic features: participatory governance and effective communications. Governance and communication are characteristics that foster teaching and learning both directly and indirectly. Senate self-governance is organized horizontally to involve a wide range of perspectives. Communications are designed to disseminate information in a timely way and increase knowledge among the academic community. The Academic Senate has developed and provides services and opportunities, such as electronic listservs, online discussion message boards, printed material and in-person forums.

### **Q. What is a listserv and what type of listservs are available?**

A. A listserv, or e-mail list, is one e-mail address through which many people correspond. The Academic Senate provides three public listservs, which also maintain web-accessible archives of messages that can be accessed by current list subscribers (members are prompted for their list password when accessing the archive). The following listservs are open for subscription:

**ACADEMIC-ANNOUNCE:** for academic announcements. E-mails sent via this list have the caption [announce] in the Subject line.

**ACADEMIC-FORUM:** for discussion of academic issues, intended to be a free and open forum for the exploration of academic ideas and concerns. E-mails sent via this list have the caption [forum] in the Subject line.

**SENATE-CONSTITUENTS:** is for Senate constituents, faculty and chairs, only - to be used by the Senate for communicating senate actions and issues under discussion. Post message to senate-reps.

*NOTE: Senate email listservs are NOT Pratt Institute's universal e-mail System. Therefore, e-mail addresses subscribed to senate lists are subject to Senate policies and procedures as they relate to information and communications.*

**Q. Do I have to pay for this service and will I receive a lot of e-mails if I am subscribed?**

A. Subscription is voluntary, free and open to everyone in the Institute's community. The listservs offer a variety of subscriber options, such as limiting the frequency of e-mail delivery to your mailbox (such as "no mail" and "daily digest") or, if you prefer, live e-mail feed.

**Q. How can I participate on the Senate listservs?**

A. You may subscribe yourself at <http://www.prattsenate.org/subscribe.htm> or contact the Senate Assistant at 718-636-3625, [sen-asst@pratt.edu](mailto:sen-asst@pratt.edu)

And, remember, you are free to suspend subscription or unsubscribe at any time. Please visit the senate website to learn more about this and other communications services provided by the Academic Senate, and how, and to what extent, you may participate.

**Q. What types of committees does the Senate maintain and how can I participate?**

A. The Academic Senate fulfills its responsibilities in part through recommending and/or nominating faculty and chair representatives to Senate standing committees, Board of Trustees committees and Institute committees. Details on representation by faculty and chairs on each committee are available on the Academic Senate web site.

Please contact the Senate if you are interested in serving on any of the committees. Below are summary descriptions of Senate committees. Please feel free to contact the respective committee chairs if you would like more information.

**COMMITTEES OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Officers of the organization, President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer constitute the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. The position of Treasurer is a new position, which was approved by the Senate in May 2004 and by the Board of Trustees in May 2005. Executive Officers, who serve three-year terms, are elected by secret ballot. The Executive Committee has the authority to act when the Senate is not in regular session.

**NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

The role of the Nominations and Elections Committee is to conduct nominations and elections for Senators every three years, and, in the interim, to oversee when necessary, their replacement by alternates. It also monitors the election of Senate officers. The N+E Committee is empowered to appoint Faculty/Chair Representatives to the various standing committees of the Senate, to the Board of Trustees Committees,

as well as All-Institute Committees. The N+E Committee also forms ad hoc faculty/chair focus groups.

#### **ACADEMIC CONCERNS AND SUPPORT**

The Senate committee on Academic Concerns & Support is charged with addressing non-curricular academic issues like faculty development and support. It has an ongoing responsibility to oversee the election of an Institute Distinguished Teacher Award, conferred by the Academic Senate, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees. The recipient usually addresses the student body at Honors Convocation, presents the mace at graduation ceremonies, and delivers a lecture for the Institute community.

#### **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FUND**

The Faculty Development Fund provides financial support for the development and advancement of full-time faculty, chairpersons, and members of the adjunct and visiting faculty who have completed at least three years of service at Pratt. In addition to a \$50,000 fund, \$10,000 is allocated for the development of cross disciplinary courses/studies at the Institute.

#### **FACULTY HANDBOOK**

The Faculty Handbook Committee oversees the review and revision of the Faculty Handbook, which is intended to provide faculty members of Pratt Institute with a collection of the current policies and procedures of Pratt Institute. In August 2005, the Academic Senate, in consultation with Pratt Institute's Administration and the Board of Trustees, re-issued the Faculty Handbook as a DRAFT with corrections, limited to facts, and subject to the approval process specified in Part 5 of the Faculty Handbook. A more complete review is anticipated in the fall semester. A more complete review is anticipated in subsequent semesters.

#### **DISTINGUISHED TEACHER AWARD**

The Pratt Institute Distinguished Teacher Award recognizes exceptional dedication to Pratt's mission and applauds the accomplishments made over the course of a career. The Distinguished Teacher is nominated by students and the Award is conferred by the Academic Senate, the Provost, and the Board of Trustees. The recipient usually addresses the student body at Honors Convocation, presents the mace at graduation ceremonies, and delivers a lecture for the Institute community.

#### **ACADEMIC INITIATIVES**

The Senate committee on Academic Initiatives serves to identify academic imperatives, develop and/or review proposals for corresponding program initiatives, and assist in the approval and implementation process of those initiatives. Faculty and Chairs are encouraged to play an active role in the identification and examination of current academic imperatives, and to offer relevant proposals for committee consideration.

### **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND POLICIES**

With representatives from all schools of the Institute, the Academic Programs and Policies Committee has an important overview and facilitator role in curriculum development, the creation of new courses, and the revision of existing ones. It assists in ascertaining redundancies or conflicts in courses from more than one department with similar concerns. Examining each course proposal, its findings and recommendations are reported to the full Senate for its input before implementation. All matters pertaining to curriculum are within the purview and responsibility of this committee.

### **CRITICAL AND VISUAL STUDIES COMMITTEE**

*Draft description:* The Academic Senate will form an ad hoc committee to discuss critical and visual studies and their relationship to programs in art, design and architecture. The proposal arises from the belief that visual studies should not be limited to a studio setting, just as critical thinking is not limited to Liberal Arts lecture halls. The committee will seek to promote/enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and foster intellectual and curricular exchanges across the institute. A principal objective will be to integrate the liberal arts and studio practice. The Academic Senate ad hoc Critical and Visual Studies Committee will provide a convenient space to explore and create opportunities for collaboration.

### **PLEASE REFER TO THE FACULTY HANDBOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

#### FACULTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Academic Senate

Functions of the Academic Senate

Responsibilities of the Academic Senate

Composition of the Academic Senate

Constituencies of the Academic Senate

Eligibility for Membership on the Academic Senate

Officers of the Academic Senate: President; Vice-President; Secretary; Treasurer

Compensation for Key Positions

Administrators' Relationship to the Academic Senate

Specific Duties and Powers of the Academic Senate

Senate Meetings

Standing Committees of the Senate

Other Business of the Senate