

Bylaws of the Executive Committee of Distinguished Professors

1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (ECDP) shall consist of nine elected distinguished professors and those recognized as ECDP emeritus members. Each year, three members are elected for terms of three years, effective at the start of the fall semester.

2. Elections of Members of the Executive Committee

In May of each year, the Chair of the Executive Committee shall invite all distinguished professors to submit nominations and self-nominations for candidates for the Executive Committee. All candidates must consent to serve if elected, and provide a statement (maximum of 300 words) regarding how their election will benefit the electorate and university. Emeriti faculty are not eligible for ECDP election.

The election shall be administered by the Dean of Faculties. A ballot with all candidates and their statements will be distributed to the distinguished professor electorate. Each distinguished professor is allotted three votes, with a maximum of one vote allowed per candidate. The candidates with the three highest vote totals will become members of the Executive Committee.

In the case of a tie for third place, the candidate whose College has the lesser representation on the Executive Committee (calculated from the six members not standing for election and the two candidates with the highest vote totals) will be declared the winner.

Although the terms of the new Executive Committee members do not begin until the start of the fall semester, they may, at their discretion, attend all summer meetings and activities.

3. Officers of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall include a Chair and a Vice Chair, and any other officers deemed desirable by the Committee. The Vice Chair substitutes for the Chair when the Chair is not available. The Chair and Vice Chair can divide various duties as they see fit.

4. Election of Officers of the Executive Committee

As early as possible after the election of the new Executive Committee members, the current Chair of the Executive Committee shall invite all members of the Executive Committee to submit nominations and self-nominations for (1) Chair, (2) Vice-Chair, and (3) any other offices deemed desirable by the Executive Committee. The Chair will submit the nominees to the Dean of Faculties, who will conduct the election. The newly elected Chair and Vice-Chair will begin service at a designated date coincident with the beginning of the fall semester.

5. Resignations and Substitutions

Should a member of the Executive Committee resign, who is not up for election in that academic year, the vacancy will be filled at the next May election, with the end date of the term of office corresponding to that of the person who resigned (in order to ensure a pattern of electing three new members each year). In a representative scenario, the three nominees with the highest number of votes would be assigned three year terms, and the fourth highest nominee would be assigned the shortened term of the resigning member.

If a resignation occurs far in advance of the May election, the Executive Committee, at its discretion, can elect an interim voting member. The interim voting member may be an experienced past member, although this is not a requirement. Attention should also be given to balance among Colleges.

If an Executive Committee member plans a sabbatical or leave lasting at least one semester, and plans to suspend his/her activities, the Committee should be notified so that an interim voting member may be elected.

An Executive Committee member who becomes an emeritus Professor may serve the remainder of his/her term.

In any Executive Committee activity, the Chair shall have the option of asking distinguished professors at large and emeriti to substitute in a non-voting capacity for absent Executive Committee members.

6. Emeritus Status

The Executive Committee benefits from the historical memory and wisdom of long-serving ECDP members. Therefore, the position of emeritus member of ECDP is established.

Emeritus status may be granted to any distinguished professor who has served four or more elected terms on the executive committee. A distinguished professor holding emeritus status on the Executive Committee will have active participation status including full voting and participatory privileges as any ECDP member, including serving as an officer. Emeritus status is granted by two-thirds vote of all members of the Executive Committee. Active ECDP participation by those holding ECDP emeritus status may be removed by a majority vote of the executive committee; however, the title of emeritus member of ECDP, once granted, is held in perpetuity.

7. Plenary Meetings

The Executive Committee is responsible for holding a minimum of one plenary meeting per year. The ECDP should regularly schedule meetings with the administration including the President, Provost, and Vice President for Research, and other office holders as needed.

Key activities of the Executive Committee should be summarized at the plenary meeting, and/or by regular written correspondence with the distinguished professors.

8. Evaluation of Nominees for Distinguished Professor

The Executive Committee recommends to the Provost a slate of candidate members for the committee which evaluates nominees for distinguished professor. The Executive Committee may also participate in the evaluation of candidates in other ways, as requested by the Provost and Dean of Faculties.

9. Changes to Bylaws

The Bylaws may be changed or amended by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee or by a majority vote of all distinguished professors. The entire membership must be notified of any revision within 30 days of adoption.

Definitions

- 1) Distinguished Professor is a collective reference to those faculty who hold the rank of Distinguished Professor and to those faculty who have been awarded the honorific title of "University Distinguished Professor."
- 2) The Executive Committee of the Distinguished Professors (ECDP) is the elected representative group that serves as the contact focal point and organizational unit for the whole body of distinguished professors.

Appendix: Executive Committee Customs and Best Practices

- (1) After a new distinguished professor has been approved by the Provost, Chancellor, or Regents, the Chair should send a brief congratulatory letter.
- (2) The Chair should invite new distinguished professors to be guests at one "sample meeting" of the Executive Committee (e.g., a session with the President or Provost).
- (3) The Chair should recognize and thank any distinguished professors moving to emeritus status at the last plenary meeting or reception of the academic year (insofar that this information is known or available).
- (4) The activities of the Executive Committee should include, as appropriate, meetings with the President, Provost, Vice-President for Research, Dean's Council, Student Body President, Chancellor, Regents, other university and system officials, the executive committees and/or officers of the Faculty Senate and Council of Principal Investigators, Texas congressional representatives, United States congressmen/women, and counterparts at other universities.