

RPP Committee
AY 2025-26 End of Year Report
May 11 2026

Chair: Jonathan Brennan

Members: Ken Alfano, Sun-Yung Bak, Audrey Bennett, Jonathan Brennan (Chair), Howard Bromberg, James Gulvas, Lynette Hoelter, Neil Marsh, Nick Montgomery, David Potter, Mitchel Sollenberger

Staff Support: Lucas McCarthy, Eric Vandenberghe, Meaghan Blanchard

In 2025-2026 the committee held eight meetings, monthly over the Fall and Winter terms. This report summarizes the discussions at those meetings and actions taken with respect to our charges for the current academic year.

We elected to focus in the Fall term on charges relating to procedures for resolving disputes that arise within the Faculty Senate and to consider the utility of the Senate Assembly nominating committee. We began to consider issues relating to Senate rules and the Regents plan to update bylaws governing the faculty senate, and we reserved our time in the Winter to develop concrete recommendations.

Fall Term

The committee discussed how we might codify procedures for handling disputes that arise in the course of the business of the faculty senate. These discussions led us to recommend the creation of a Code of Conduct for the Faculty Senate along with procedures by which issues that arise under that code might be adjudicated. Formulating such a Code might be a future charge for this committee.

The committee also considered the utility of the SACUA nominating committee and, with feedback from committee members as well as FSO staff, we recommended that this committee be dissolved. Those recommendations were communicated December 15th 2025 along with some additional details from our deliberations. A copy of those recommendations is below.

Finally, the committee reviewed the current Regents' Bylaws governing the faculty's senate and identified several passages that may warrant attention if the language is adjusted by the Regents. These include (but are not limited to) section 4.01, especially regarding "Jurisdiction over academic policies" as they may affect "University policy as a whole", and also section 4.06 regarding communication between VPs and faculty senate committees.

Winter Term

Discussions in the Winter term focused on several components of the Regents Bylaws governing the Faculty Senate that we believed warranted consideration.

First, we considered the language surrounding the role of Faculty Senate committees as advisory to University leadership. We noted that the current language describes a “one-way street” where committees may provide input to University leaders, but there is no expectation that administrators also provide information to Senate committees. The current formulation thus allows for an interpretation that is not compatible with the notion of shared governance in which elected faculty representatives offer fully informed advice and consent. The committee thus recommends a small modification (Regents Bylaws chapter IV, section 06) indicating that committees “may receive information from” administrators to whom they are advisory.

The committee then took up two related questions concerning the jurisdiction of the Faculty Senate in matters that affect multiple units or the University as a whole. We identified a tension between the long history of local, unit-level, decision making in University policies and the status of the Faculty Senate as a university-wide body. What is the proper way for this body to “interface” with units to support shared governance with elected faculty representatives? These discussions emphasized the committee’s consensus that unit-level decision making remains a hallmark and strength of policy-making at the University, while we recognized that there exist some issues that affect multiple units and we see value in strengthening faculty governance’s role in those matters. The committee considered two possible avenues to address this tension.

First, we recommended that the Faculty Senate might draft guiding principles that bear on academic matters that are shared across University units, such as for principles of promotion, annual reviews, or perhaps certain aspects of emerging matters such as artificial intelligence. These principles would be advisory and subject to revision as circumstances change.

Second, the committee considered whether language might be adopted to ensure that College-level governance committees (EC, Promotion & Tenure, Curricular etc.) reserved a space for at least one elected member of faculty governance. Discussion on this second matter did not reach a conclusion and we suggest it deserves further consideration before recommendations may be made.

Summary of Actions: The recommendations made by the committee are included below.

RPP Recommendations, Fall 2025

Dec 15 2025

Regarding faculty disputes

Charge:

In collaboration with the Faculty Senate Office, consider the Faculty Senate's current rules and procedures for resolving disputes between faculty. In 1987, the Senate Assembly created a "SACUA Faculty Hearing Committee" to address issues between or among faculty members, but such a committee does not currently operate, even though it is mentioned in the Faculty Grievance Procedures. Robert's Rules of Order provides other means of addressing issues, but the procedures are complex, and disputes between faculty might be better resolved through a new procedure.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the RPP draft a Code of Conduct, this be considered for approval by the Senate Assembly, and be distributed to all members of the Senate Assembly and Senate Assembly committees.
2. Potential violations of the Code of Conduct should be submitted to the Faculty Senate Office by any member of the Senate Assembly, Faculty Senate committee members, and/or Faculty Senate officers.
3. A designated faculty senate committee will (a) be responsible for fact finding and (b) recommend consequences. The results of this process will be shared with SACUA and members of any affected committees.
4. RPP should carry out the responsibilities in (3)
5. Where conflict has arisen on the designated committee (e.g. RPP), then SACUA may deliberate and make decisions on the matter

Regarding the SACUA nominating committee

Charge:

Provide a recommendation to SACUA regarding the continuing utility of the electing from the Senate Assembly a nominating committee each year for approving the SACUA candidates submitted to the Senate Assembly for the annual SACUA member election. Such a committee is currently required under the Senate Rules.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the SACUA nominating committee be dissolved

2. Proportional ranked choice voting (single transferable vote) can be adopted by the Senate Assembly to elect SACUA members.
3. In cases where there are few SACUA nominees, for example such that there is just one nominee for an open seat, Senate Assembly members can be tasked with nominating candidates.

RPP Recommendations, Winter 2026

May 11 2026

Regarding Regents Bylaws governing the Faculty Senate

The Regents are considering updating the bylaws, including Chapter IV which governs the Faculty Senate. Accordingly, in Winter 2026 the RPP discussed these bylaws and approved the following recommendations.

1. Chapter IV, Section 06 currently states “The assembly shall establish standing committees to advise and consult with the vice presidents of the university on matters within the areas of their respective responsibilities”

The committee recommends this be revised to “The assembly shall establish standing committees to advise, consult, and receive information from the vice presidents of the university on matters within the areas of their respective responsibilities.”

Notes: This recommendation serves to codify the expectation that administrators have a responsibility to provide faculty governance committees with information as part of their advisory role.

2. Chapter IV, Section 01 currently states “insofar as actions by the several faculties affect University policy as a whole, or schools and colleges other than the one in which they originate, they shall be brought before the University Senate”

The committee recommends that, pursuant to this charge, the Faculty Senate adopt and disseminate principles that bear on academic matters that are shared across University units. The committee further recommends that the Faculty Senate constitute committees ensuring transparency, equity, and fairness regarding the matters subject to these guidelines.

Notes: This recommendation does not entail changing any language in the Bylaws. Examples of matters that may be considered for such principles include: faculty annual reviews and artificial intelligence in the classroom. The committee discussed that drafting such principles may be a future charge for RPP. Oversight may be managed by existing standing committees or by newly constituted committees.