

# BYLAWS FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE OF WEBSTER VIENNA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

On October 25, 2016 the University Senate of Webster Vienna Private University adopted the following Bylaws which were approved by the University Council on November 23, 2016.

## **Section 1: Authority and Functions of the University Senate**

The University Senate (Senate) derives its authority from the legal and organizational framework stipulated in the Constitution of Webster Vienna Private University. It represents the interest of the faculty, the staff, and the students, enabling them to participate in matters of strategy development and quality management pertaining to teaching, research, and services.

The role of the Senate as a consultative and decision-making body is based on the understanding that the responsibility and authority for the operation of the university are vested in the position of the Campus Director and the Executive Board where essential responsibility and authority over academic quality and rigor are also vested in the position of the department heads. The effectiveness of their leadership and decision-making however rests upon the understanding of the needs and concerns of the university's stakeholders, the access to current and relevant information, the ability to muster a comprehensive choice of options and to elicit the confidence and support of various stakeholders of the university in implementing these decisions. To these ends, the Senate acts as a representative body to support the process of communication and consultation between the leadership of the university and faculty, staff and students.

The functions of the Senate as specified in the Constitution include the following:

- a) Expressing an opinion on the Campus Director's proposals with regard to changes of the Constitution prior to resolution by the University Council and the General Assembly.
- b) Presenting proposals with regard to changes of the Constitution to the University Council following consultation with the Executive Board.
- c) Discussing and presenting proposals to the Campus Director with regard to the development of the university, including strategic recommendations pertaining to the dedication of human and financial resources in due consideration of the overall assurance of quality in teaching, research, and services.
- d) Expressing an opinion on the draft development plan presented by the Campus Director prior to resolution by the University Council and the General Assembly.
- e) Expressing an opinion on the multi-year agreements of objectives and performance with the Executive Board to be presented to the University Council.
- f) Expressing an opinion on the draft organization plan prepared by the Campus Director prior to resolution by the University Council.
- g) Expressing an opinion on the Campus Director's decision for the appointment of the other members of the Executive Board.
- h) Applying to the University Council for the discharge from office of the Campus Director or the other members of the Executive Board at the end of their term of

employment or with immediate effect on the grounds of severe misconduct, conviction of a criminal offence, mental incapacity, health impairment, or loss of confidence on reasonable grounds.

- i) Deciding on the introduction and discontinuation of study programs and curricula changes under consideration of the dual accreditation requirements, prior to consultation with the Campus Director and resolution by the University Council and the General Assembly.
- j) Nominating the members of the Working Group on Equal Opportunities (WGEO) of which the elected chair will act as the Diversity Manager.

In accordance with the Constitution, the Senate will delegate its chairperson to the search committee for the election of the Campus Director.

The Senate will express an opinion to the Campus Director or the Executive Board on any other issues of relevance and support the university operations in any other way, especially if requested or induced by the circumstances.

As a general rule, the Senate will not consider individual cases of redress unless these cases have implications for the university as a whole.

## **Section 2: Structure of the University Senate**

The Senate comprises five members, of which two represent the employed faculty, and one each the adjunct faculty, the staff and the students. Employed faculty denotes full, associate and assistant professors as well as the heads of academic departments who are not professors. Staff encompasses the scientific employees as well as the non-academic employees. Each member, if unable to attend a Senate meeting, can delegate a substitute member. The student representatives are nominated by the Student Government Association (SGA), whereas the other members and substitute members are elected in secret ballots by their respective peers. The period of office is two years.

The Senate will choose a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its members by a simple majority vote.

Any seats subject to election vacated prematurely before the end of a two-year period (e.g. through the termination of the member's contract, retirement, relocation, etc.) will be appointed by the Chair with approval of the Senate. For this purpose the results of the last election will be consulted and runner-ups will be given first consideration. Such appointments will expire at the end of the current period.

The limit for a Senate member is three consecutive periods. After a pause of at least one period a member is free to run for office again.

The function is not remunerated in any respect.

## **Section 3: The Election Process**

Elections of members and substitute members take place every two years in the Fall I Term. The two-year period of the newly elected body will begin in week 1 of the Fall II Term of that year.

The employed faculty and the staff are eligible to vote and to be elected if they are employed at the beginning of week 1 in the Fall I Term. The adjunct faculty is eligible to vote and to be elected if they had a teaching assignment in the year before that day.

The members of the Executive Board are not eligible to vote and to be elected.

#### The Election Schedule in Fall I Term:

- Week 1: Call for self-nomination to all eligible members of the peer groups
- Week 3: Deadline for self-nomination
- Week 4: Prepare ballots. Ballots sent out to all eligible voters.
- Week 6: Deadline for mail-in ballots
- Week 7: Announce election results

#### The Ballot and Election Process:

Employed faculty may select up to four, the members of the other peer groups up to two candidates in their vote. No more than one vote can be given to each candidate.

Ballots will be mailed to all eligible to vote. Besides the ballot the letter will contain two envelopes – one for the filled-out ballot (this envelope must be left blank) and another envelope including the address of Webster Vienna Private University, Attention: Reception, and space for the sender's name.

The receptionist will mark off the senders' names of all incoming ballots. He/she will then open the envelope and safe keep the unopened, unmarked second envelope containing the ballot. Voters will receive an email confirmation when their ballots have been received.

This process will ensure that election officials can register who has participated in the election while keeping the vote confidential. The ballot in the second, unmarked envelope remains secret and will only be opened on Election Day by the election officials.

The election is a simple majority vote. The two employed faculty, the adjunct faculty and the staff member with the most votes will be elected for members and correspondingly for substitute members. In the case of a tie this seat will be filled by lot.

#### **Section 4: Meetings and Resolutions of the University Senate**

There will be a minimum of one regular meeting of the Senate per semester except for the Summer Term. The Chair will, in a timely fashion, present the schedule, agenda, and minutes of Senate's meetings to its members and substitute members.

The Senate shall be quorate if all of its members were invited to the meeting and at least four of the members or their substitute members are present. It shall also be permissible to pass resolutions by a written vote, provided that no member objects. The Senate reaches decisions by simple majority; in the event of a tie the chairperson's vote shall be decisive.

It is understood that all members of the Senate and all invited guests speaking at the Senate meetings have the right to engage in free speech without the fear of reprisal.

## **Section 5: Amendments to the Bylaws**

Any two members of the Senate may submit proposed amendments to these Bylaws to the Chair. Any amendment thus submitted will be adopted in the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Any proposed amendment agreed by a quorum (i.e., four out of five) of the voting membership of the Senate shall be adopted, pending the final approval of the University Council following consultation with the Executive Board.