

How to Run Your School

Students can serve on faculty senate

By Butch Oxendine, editor in chief

What if a member of the faculty were a voting member of your student senate? And what if, conversely, a fellow student leader served on the faculty senate—a faculty group that works on college concerns? In theory, both groups could benefit by staying informed on pressing issues, sharing resources, and keeping the lines of communication open.

"I sat on faculty senate when I was a student in the 1970s for two years prior to being student body president," says Dr. E. Bernard Franklin, who served at **Kansas State University** and is the former assistant to the president at **Donnelly College** in Kansas. "I felt respected and appreciated. I had full voting rights, and the students do today as well. It should be the norm all around the country."

Do Student Governments nationwide have a voice on faculty senate? "We have two faculty members, non-voting, in our Student Advisory Council," says Marie Higginbotham, SAC president at the **University of Arkansas at Fort Smith**. "They're both fantastic, great people to work with. I serve on the Faculty Senate as a non-voting member. I give reports on the students' activities, SAC, and otherwise actively participate."

At **Truman State University** in Missouri, the Student Senate president serves as a non-voting member of the Faculty Senate, says Tanner Williams, public relations chair. "Also, the subcommittee, the Undergraduate Council, has two senators who are non-voting members," he says. "We have a bill coming forward that will try and give the student senator a vote on the Undergraduate Council."

Here's what it's like at a few other institutions:

- "At **Utah Valley State College**, a student serves on the Faculty Senate," says Phil Clegg, coordinator of student life.
- In New York, the governing body at **Queens College** is a joint student/faculty senate made up of 60 faculty members and 30 students.
- At **Western Michigan University**, former Student

Association President Chris Donathan says he's required to attend all faculty senate meetings, and student representatives serve on each of the faculty senate's committees, including those on academic policies, research, campus planning, and finance.

■ At **Gallaudet University** in Washington, D.C., the Student Body Government has

Student Leader Tip

Don't leave any student positions unfilled on faculty, staff, and administrative committees. This is your chance to have a direct hand in running your institution. Push for student reps, preferably voting, on all college or university committees.

reps on Faculty Senate and numerous other committees—all non-voting positions, according to Thomas Green, former special assistant to the SBG president.

■ "At the **University of North Texas**, the faculty senate holds two, non-voting seats for student reps," says Troy Griffis, Student Government Association chief financial officer. "When the SGA passes legislation,

it helps to have good ties with the administration and Faculty Senate because we need their support to make certain pieces of legislation a reality. FYI: It can take a little while before you feel comfortable, but once you become a regular and they recognize your face, it becomes easier to talk and interact with them."

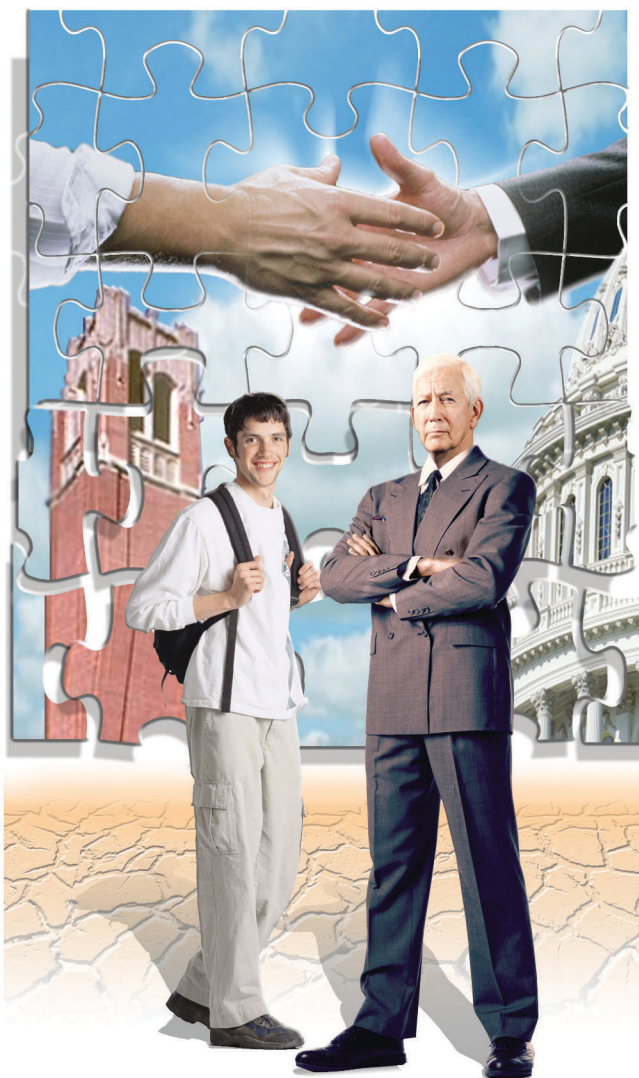
The most student participation in a faculty committee may be at **Illinois State University**, where 20 students serve on the Academic Senate along with 29 faculty members, says Valerie Uihlein, former SGA press secretary. "They deal with university governance issues, like the academic calendar, withdrawal policy, and things affecting university constitution, faculty and students," she says. "They're working on a mission statement and a student-protest policy."

"It's a phenomenal experience to get the 'inside scoop' on how faculty view issues on campus," says Ann Marie Olsen, secretary of the Non-Traditional Students Organization (NTSO) at the **University of New Hampshire**. "This, in turn, assists students in seeing some of the broader ramifications of their actions in relation to others on campus. Just as important, though, are student positions on committees across campus. I've been involved in several, from parking to non-trad issues, where I know my input has been very valuable and sought-out from administrators."

Students serving on faculty senates also have a greater understanding of the difficulties the administration faces. They can then relate these problems to their fellow students. "Sitting on these committee meetings is extremely helpful when combating criticism or misinformed students," Griffis says.

"For example, let's consider the age-old complaint about parking. Students might claim that we just don't do anything for them in terms of getting more parking. We have three seats on the Parking and Transportation Committee, so we're fully aware of why we don't have more parking and what the university is doing to alleviate the problem," Griffis says. "We can now explain the situation to the students and show that steps are being taken to take care of their needs. Once students realize that we have a voice on the committee, they're more inclined to complain to us, because they realize we have specific, worthwhile output for their complaints." ■

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