

SENATE CONSULTATION

In fulfillment of its role in [shared governance](#), per [Bylaw 40.1](#), the Riverside Division reviews and comments on campus and systemwide items. Sometimes the Riverside Division has authority to approve or deny an item (such as a new major or minor), and other times its role is advisory. In general, major changes in policy or practice which affect faculty should – for the sake of good policymaking and faculty morale – be developed in consultation with the faculty. Consultation, the process of seeking information before undertaking a course of action, can ensure that well-intentioned initiatives and policies do not have unintended consequences.

This document is intended to be general in nature and does not cover every type or instance of collaboration or engagement that occurs within the Senate and between our shared governance partners. If you are unsure about your proposal or issue, please contact the [Senate Executive Office](#).

In the Academic Senate, consultation is a **formal** process that involves

- A written request to comment on a written proposal
- A written response

In all cases, the request and the response come from groups or individuals with clearly articulated authorities. Senate consultation is distinct from everyday meanings of consultation -- “I’ve talked to this person who is involved with this”. While these informal conversations can inform the development of policies and programs, they do not constitute consultation.

Effective consultation requires that:

- The request for Senate review or comment is made in writing.
- The request is for an opinion that may change a proposal and is not intended to solely inform the Senate.
- The request is conducted with due attention to Senate process and protocol.

Requests for consultation include the following elements:

- The problem or challenge that the proposal seeks to address;
- How addressing that problem helps meet unit or campus strategic needs; and,
- The process through which the proposal was developed (discussions, resources, research, etc.).

This ensures that the Riverside Division as a whole is fully consulted and engaged in the shared governance of the University and allows for central record keeping of all inquiries and responses in a transparent manner.

Please email any consultation requests to the [Chair of the Academic Senate, Riverside Division](#), and copy the [Academic Senate Executive Director](#). Be sure to include all material relevant to the request, such as proposals,

background information, support letters from previous reviewers, etc. The Senate website has resource links for guidance on different types of proposals under the tab “About” as well as, on the pages of individual committees under “Resources”.

If you are unsure about what to submit, or whether the item needs Senate consultation, please reach out to the Senate Executive Office and we will work with you individually.

Academic program proposal reviews typically take 8-10 weeks during the academic year.

- *Proposals submitted in October should have completed Senate review by early January (due to holidays).*
- *Proposals submitted in January should have completed Senate review by March.*

Note: The Senate is committed to ensuring appropriate and timely faculty consultation. All timelines will be formed and communicated on a case-by-case basis. Below are general guidelines.

All new academic degree/unit proposals should be received no later than March 1st to ensure review before the end of the academic year. Keep in mind that undergraduate degrees must be reviewed by the Division (which meets 3 times per year), and graduate degrees must also be reviewed and approved by the Systemwide Senate and UC President. Please be aware that the ability to efficiently review proposals largely depends on the completeness of the proposal materials submitted and the proponent's responsiveness to requests for additional information as needed.

Within three weeks of receiving a consultation request, proponents may contact the Senate Office regarding the status. While timelines vary depending on proposal type, the time of the academic year, and the workload of Senate committees, consultations will, in general, follow an eight-week timeline (beginning when the Senate Office forwards a request to committees). Committees have approximately six weeks to opine, and the Division typically composes a formal response in two weeks. On occasion, if it's determined that only one or two specific committees need to opine on a request, the consultation process may proceed more quickly. More complex proposals (e.g., Appendix 7 items) take much longer.

Since committees need adequate time to meet and opine on consultation requests, sometimes they will not begin their review until the following quarter. For example, if you submit a request near the end of Winter Quarter, the Senate Office may not forward your items for committee review until the beginning of Spring Quarter, which will add to your overall timeline. **Please keep this in mind during your planning process.**

The Senate may have to place a hold on non-urgent business to focus on items of high priority.