

Discussion of the RTE Faculty Representation Resolution

Where We Are

December

Identify areas of concern in the current resolution that need to be addressed.

January

Encourage concerned colleagues to formulate motions to amend or modify the current resolution.

February

Those motions will be processed at the February Senate meeting in advance of a final vote.

March

University Faculty referendum.

Terminology

University Faculty

The tenured and tenure track faculty.

RTE Faculty

All other academic titleholders including all ranks of lecturer, research associate, extension associate, professor-of-the-practice, research professor, clinical professor, librarian, archivist, visiting critic, senior scientist, senior scholar, instructor, etc.

University Voting Rights

Eligible to serve in the Faculty Senate and eligible to vote in elections for Faculty Trustee, Dean of Faculty, Associate Dean of Faculty, etc.

The Resolution At-a-Glance

1. A subset of the RTE faculty are given university voting rights.
2. Departments and Schools are allowed to send RTE Faculty with university voting rights to the Faculty Senate.
3. Approximately 20 RTE-Only Senate seats are apportioned among the colleges and are to be filled by college-wide elections.
4. The Library is given a seat in the Faculty Senate.
5. Post-docs are given a seat in the Faculty Senate w/o voting rights.

What the Senate Would Look Like

1. The 90+ academic-unit seats and 9 At-Large seats filled by voting members of the University Faculty **or the RTE Faculty.**
2. **Approximately 20 RTE-designated Senate seats, apportioned among the colleges.**
3. **1 RTE-designated Senate seat filled by Cornell University Library.**
4. 1 Ex Officio seat each for the SA, GPSA, EA, ROTC, **and the postdoc community.**
5. 1 Senate seat designated for Emeriti and picked by Cornell Academics and Professors Emeritus.

The University Faculty (UF) – Faculty Senate (FS) Connection

The expanded-membership proposal **DOES NOT CHANGE** that connection:

The UF delegates its business to the FS and has complete authority over it as described in Article XII of its bylaws*.

The UF can meet on its own.

The UF can postpone and nullify any action of the FS.

* The Organization and Procedures of the University Faculty ([OPUF](#))

Three Further Perspectives

1. Almost all Faculty Senate votes are advisory and rarely of the 51-to-49 variety.
2. Many tenure-process issues are shared with other tracks and are informed by them, e.g., the role of teaching in promotion, the role of external funding in the assessment of research, etc.
3. Roll call votes can be used whenever independent assessments of how the two faculties “think” are needed.

Four Concerns

Voice

Won't an expanded Senate with RTE members have a diminished voice?

Identity

Is "RTE Faculty" the best way to refer to colleagues off the tenure track?

Voting

Is the voting/nonvoting line properly drawn across the RTE Faculty?

Ratio

Do we need legislation to prevent an RTE majority in the Senate?

The “Voice” Concern

Won't an expanded Senate with RTE members have a diminished voice?

“No” and here is the thinking behind the resolution:

The impact and the voice of the Faculty Senate has less to do with titles and more to do with the quality of its deliberations and the intelligence behind its resolutions.

A mixed Faculty Senate with “everyone in the room” makes this more likely because it squares with the idea of shared governance. Moreover, it creates opportunities for both the University and RTE faculties to lead.

The “Voice” Concern

Won't an expanded Senate with RTE members have a diminished voice?

“Yes” and here is what to do about it:

Create a separate “RTE Senate”. This would give representation to the RTE Faculty, avoid tensions, and not rock the current Faculty Senate “boat”.

Develop coordination mechanisms through the Office of Assemblies to facilitate discussion between the two senates on matters of mutual interest.

The “Identity” Concern

Is “RTE Faculty” the best way to refer to colleagues off the tenure track?

“Yes” and here is the thinking behind the resolution:

An academic titleholder who is a teacher or a researcher is a faculty member. This is a broadly-held definition of “faculty” .

Every academic job description on the books involves a significant mix of research, teaching, and extension (external engagement). Thus, “RTE” is an effective descriptor.

The “Identity” Concern

Is “RTE Faculty” the best way to refer to colleagues off the tenure track?

“No” and here are two alternatives:

- A.** Use terminology that communicates the distinction between those who are on the tenure track (“The Faculty”) and those who are not (“The Faculty Affiliates”, “The Faculty Associates”, “The Nontenure-Track Faculty”, etc.)

- B.** Expand the acronym so that in addition to referencing (1) research, (2) teaching, and (3) extension it also references (4) clinical work, (5) library work, and (6) entrepreneurial work.

The “Voting” Concern

Is the voting/nonvoting line properly drawn across the RTE Faculty?

“Yes” and here is the thinking behind the resolution:

This issue it is not about the value of a titleholder group. It is about length-of-appointment, appointment-renewal guidelines, and related matters that show up in the title and title-modifier definitions.

RTE Faculty with title visiting critic, visiting scholar, visiting scientist, instructor, and teaching associate do not have university voting rights nor do those whose title is modified by “visiting”, “acting”, or “courtesy”.

University Faculty whose title is modified by “adjunct”, “visiting”, or “acting” do not have university voting rights. (Not changing what is in the University Bylaws.)

The “Voting” Concern

Is the voting/nonvoting line properly drawn across the RTE Faculty?

“No” and here are two alternative strategies:

A. Because there may be limited vetting associated with the hiring of lecturers, research associates, and extension associates, those titleholders should not be given university voting rights. However, it is reasonable to revisit the issue after 3 years of experience with the expanded Senate.

B. Add a requirement that lecturers, research associates, and extension associates must have held those positions for at least 5 years in order to be eligible for membership in the Faculty Senate.

The “Ratio” Concern

Do we need legislation to prevent an RTE majority in the Senate?

“No” and here is the thinking behind the resolution:

Natural forces will lead to a Senate that has the right “RTE fraction”:

1. Academic units can be trusted to elect effective representatives, i.e., experienced colleagues who are willing to share department thought with the Senate and Senate thought with the department.
2. There is not a more-time-to-serve-in-the-Senate differential that would tip in favor of the RTE Faculty. Moreover, many RTE Faculty contracts leave no room for university-level service.

The “Ratio” Concern

Do we need legislation to prevent an RTE majority in the Senate?

“Yes” and here are three ways to control $R = \text{\#UF Senators} / \text{\#RTE Senators}$:

- A.** Insist that departments can only have University Faculty Senators and/or reduce the college RTE-only allocation. This forces $R \geq 100/20$.
- B.** If a department wishes to send one of its RTE faculty members to the Senate, then that individual must be an elected College-RTE representative. This forces $R \geq (100-20)/20 = 4$.
- C.** If a Dept RTE senator’s 3-year term comes to an end, then the successor must be a member of the University Faculty. This (essentially) forces $R \geq 1$.

Closing Reminder

The goal today is to identify parts the resolution that need to be modified in order to secure broad approval.

Towards that end, formal motions need to be put together for consideration at the February meeting.

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