# OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Academic Senate** = organization that represents faculty on all academic and professional matters. All full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty are members of the Academic Senate.

**Board of Trustees** = elected group of individuals that has overall responsibility for the management of the Ventura County Community College District.

**CCR** = California Code of Regulations

**College** = Ventura College.

**College-Wide Committee** = any committee, advisory group, workgroup, or task force whose voting membership includes a mixture of faculty, administration, classified professionals, and/or students from Ventura College.

**District** = Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD).

**District Committees** = any committee, advisory group, workgroup, or task force whose voting membership includes a mixture of faculty, administration, classified professionals, and/or students from two or more colleges within the Ventura County Community College District.

**General membership** = all full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty who are not designated as management and/or classified professionals by the Administration. Interchangeable with voting membership or regular membership.

**Senators** = elected representatives who serve on the Senate Council.

**Senate Council** = the legislative and representative governing body of the Academic Senate.

**Senate Executive Committee** = elected officers of the Senate Council, including a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.  Interchangeable with Senate Executive Committee or Senate Exec.

**Senate Subcommittee** = any committee, advisory group, workgroup, or task force whose mission and/or charge directly relates to the academic and profession matters defined in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

# VENTURA COLLEGE ACADEMIC SENATE CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

We, the faculty of Ventura College, do hereby establish an organization to represent the faculty in all academic and professional matters and to ensure that the faculty assumes its legal role in the governance processes of our College and District.

## ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Ventura College Academic Senate. The Academic Senate shall elect a governing council from its membership, herein referred to as the Senate Council.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE, DUTIES, AND POWERS

### Section 1. Purpose

The Academic Senate shall serve as the representative of the faculty in making recommendations to the Administration and to the Board of Trustees on all academic and professional matters. Academic and profession matters are defined in Title 5 CCR to include:

1. Curriculum including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines.
2. Degree and certificate requirements.
3. Grading policies.
4. Educational program development.
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success.
6. District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles.
7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports.
8. Policies for faculty professional development activities.
9. Processes for program review.
10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development.
11. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate.

### Section 2. Duties

The Academic Senate shall address the interests and concerns of the faculty either directly or through its subcommittees. It shall be the duty of the Academic Senate to:

1. Represent the faculty in the development and implementation of all College and District policies and procedures of interest and concern to the faculty.
2. Assess and declare positions on existing and proposed legislation relative to the welfare of the College, District, and California Community College system.
3. Promote and maintain the role that faculty plays in the shared governance processes of the College and District.
4. Participate in the process of developing the educational philosophy, the objectives, plans, and budget of the College and District.
5. Serve as a forum for the faculty to discuss, debate, and formulate formal opinions and resolutions on issues of concern and/or interest that are outside the purview of collective bargaining.
6. Promote the development and maintenance of excellence in teaching within a framework of academic freedom, professional responsibility, and ethics.

### Section 3. Powers

The powers of the Academic Senate are defined in California Education Code, Title 5 CCR, and by the policies of the Board of Trustees.

1. It is expected that the Administration and the Board of Trustees will consult collegially with the Academic Senate when adopting policies and procedures on academic and professional matters. The Academic Senate shall interpret “consult collegially” to mean by mutual agreement by written resolution, regulation, or Board policy.
2. The Board of Trustees may change policies regarding academic and professional matters in mutual agreement with the Academic Senate or after a good faith effort to reach agreement only for compelling legal, fiscal, or organizational reasons.

## ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

### Section 1. Membership

A. The general membership of the Academic Senate shall include all tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty members who are not designated as management and/or classified professionals by the Administration.

B. Part-time, non-contract faculty members shall be associate members. Associate members do not have the rights and privileges of the general membership, but they shall be entitled to one (1) voting representative on the Senate Council.

### Section 2. Organization

The business of the Academic Senate shall be transacted by the Senate Council and its subcommittees. Unless action is taken to the contrary, it shall be assumed that the general membership has delegated its powers to the Senate Council and its subcommittees.

### Section 3. Parliamentary Authority

A. The latest edition of Roberts’ Rules of Order shall guide the Academic Senate on all matters not specifically covered by state laws and regulations (California Education Code, Title 5 CCR, Ralph M. Brown Act), the Senate Constitution, and/or the Senate Bylaws.

B. The order of authority for the Academic Senate shall be state laws and regulations (California Education Code, Title 5 CCR, Ralph M. Brown Act), the Senate Constitution, Senate Bylaws, and Robert’s Rules and adopted Standing Rules.

## ARTICLE IV – SENATE COUNCIL

### Section 1. Purpose

serve as.

### Section 2. Membership

The membership of the Senate Council shall consist of elected representatives (herein referred to as Senators), the officers of the Academic Senate, and other positions as specified in the Senate Bylaws.

### Section 3. Duties

It shall be the duty of the Senate Council to:

1. Conduct the business of the Academic Senate in a timely and orderly fashion and in accordance with District policy and State laws and regulations.
2. Establish and oversee committees that deal with academic and professional matters.
3. Approve faculty to serve on all College and District committees.
4. Designate representatives to consult with the Board of Trustees and/or its designee on academic and professional matters and on any other matters of faculty concern that are outside the purview of collective bargaining.
5. Approve Academic Senate representatives to attend conferences, workshops, and plenary sessions of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.
6. Develop and approve procedures for conducting the work of the Academic Senate.
7. Approve expenditures from the Academic Senate accounts.
8. Advise and assist the Academic Senate President in preparing meeting agendas.

### Section 4. Voting

To eliminate conflict of interest issues which arise from faculty serving in multiple roles, each member of the Senate Council shall have a single vote regardless of the number of Senate Council positions held.

### Section 5. Term of Office

A. Senators shall be elected at the beginning of the Fall semester and serve a term of one (1) year. There shall be no term limits on Senators.

B. The Senate Council shall settle all disputes regarding the election of Senators. A disputed position shall be considered vacant until a resolution is reached by Senate Council.

### Section 6. Vacancies

Vacancies on the Senate Council occur through resignation, incapacitation, failure to fulfill responsibilities as stated in the Senate Bylaws, loss of eligibility, retirement, recall, or death.

1. Resignation from the Senate Council shall be assumed if any Senator fails to attend four (4) consecutive Senate Council meetings.
2. The Senate President shall notify the affected constituency within thirty (30) days of their Senator leaving office. The constituency shall elect a replacement to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

## ARTICLE V – SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Section 1. Membership

The officers of the Academic Senate shall include a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers of the Academic Senate shall form the Senate Executive Committee.

### Section 2. Duties

Officers of the Academic Senate shall fulfill their individual duties as specified in the Senate Bylaws. It shall be the duty of the Senate Executive Committee to:

1. Counsel and advise the Senate President.
2. Assist the Senate President in developing agendas for regular and special meetings of the Academic Senate and Senate Council.
3. Assist the Senate President in coordinating reports on the activities of College and District committees, the Administration, the Board of Trustees, and plenary sessions of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
4. Review the organizational structure of the College and reapportion Senate seats as specified in the Senate Bylaws.
5. Represent the viewpoints of the Academic Senate on College and District committees and at all meetings with Administration, the Board of Trustees, and Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.
6. Keep the Senate Council and Academic Senate informed on the activities of College and District committees, the Administration, the Board of Trustees, and the positions and actions taken by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.
7. Work with the Senate Council to develop annual Senate Goals and provide an end-of-year report on progress toward those goals.

**Section 3. Eligibility for Office**

All elected officers shall be tenured, full-time faculty when they take office. Officers must retain their status as tenured full-time faculty to continue in office.

1. No faculty member may hold more than one (1) Senate office at a time.
2. No faculty member serving as president of the faculty bargaining unit shall be eligible for the office of Academic Senate President.

**Section 4. Term of Office**

A. Officers shall begin their term of office on July 1 following an election and serve for a term of two (2) years.

B. No faculty member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in either the role of Senate President and/or Vice President. There shall be no term limits for Treasurer or Secretary.

### Section 5. Vacancies

Vacancies on the Senate Executive Committee occur through resignation, incapacitation, failure to fulfill responsibilities as stated in the Senate Bylaws, retirement, recall, or death.

1. Resignation from the Senate Executive Committee shall be assumed if any officer fails to attend four (4) consecutive Senate Executive meetings.
2. Vacancies shall be filled according to procedures outlined in the Senate Bylaws.

## ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS AND QUORUM

### Section 1. Conduct of Business

A. All meetings of the Academic Senate, Senate Council, and Senate Subcommittees shall be open to any interested persons and shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Act for the State of California (also known as the Ralph M. Brown Act).

B. The Academic Senate shall adopt and distribute a schedule of meetings at the beginning of each academic year.

C. Guests may not participate in Senate Council and/or subcommittee meetings unless requested to do so by the chairperson of the meeting.

### Section 2. Academic Senate

A. At least one meeting of the entire Academic Senate shall be scheduled each semester during a flex day.

B. Quorum for a meeting of the entire Academic Senate shall be thirty (30) percent of the general membership.

### Section 3. Senate Council and Subcommittees

A. The Senate Council and each of its Subcommittees shall meet at least once a month on campus during the school year.

B. Quorum for a meeting of the Senate Council, or any subcommittee, shall be a simple majority of its members. If a vacancy exists in a voting membership position, then that position shall be temporarily removed from the count of voting members until such time as the vacancy is filled.

### Section 4. Senate Executive Committee

A. The time, place, and frequency of Senate Executive Committee meetings shall be determined by the Senate President and confirmed by the Senate Executive Committee.

B. Quorum for a meeting of the Senate Executive Committee shall be a simple majority of the officers. If a vacancy exists in an officer position, then that position shall be temporarily removed from the count of voting members until such time as the vacancy is filled.

### Section 5. Special Meetings

A special meeting of the Academic Senate, Senate Council, or Senate Executive Committee may be called by petition of at least ten (10) percent of the membership, upon a simple majority vote of the Senate Council, or as deemed necessary by the Senate President.

## ARTICLE VII – ELECTIONS

### Section 1. Senators

A. Senators shall be elected by their constituencies at the beginning of each academic year. The procedures for electing Senators shall be determined by each constituency.

B. One part-time, non-contract faculty member shall be appointed by the Senate Executive Committee and confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Senate Council at the beginning of each academic year.

### Section 2. Senate Officers

A. The officers of the Academic Senate shall be elected by written and secret ballot of the general membership. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

B. The election of Senate officers shall be conducted according to the procedures specified in the Bylaws.

### Section 3. Recall Elections

A. The general membership may recall any officer or committee chairperson using the procedures specified in the Bylaws.

B. Faculty shall retain the right to recall Senators from their constituency using the procedures specified in the Bylaws.

## ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES

### Section 1. Membership

A. All full-time faculty are eligible to serve on Senate subcommittees, College-wide committees, and/or District committees.

B. All committee members must be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Senate Council. Committee membership shall be determined according to the procedures specified in the Senate Bylaws.

### Section 2. Organization

A. The charge, responsibilities, and Bylaws of each Senate subcommittee shall be approved by a simple majority vote of the Senate Council.

B. The members of each Senate subcommittee shall nominate a Chair by simple majority vote. Nominees must be confirmed by a simple majority vote of the Senate Council before they assume the role of Committee Chair.

C. Senate subcommittees shall be empowered to schedule regular meeting times, adopt Standing Rules and Procedures, and conduct operational actions that are consistent with the Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

### Section 3. Duties

A. Each Senate subcommittee shall address issues and concerns related to its charge. It shall be the duty of each Senate subcommittee to:

1. Consider, study, and make recommendations on all matters submitted by the Senate President, Senate Council, Committee Chairperson, and/or Academic Senate.

2. Report to the Senate Council at least once a month. The process for reporting to the Senate Council shall be established by the Senate Council and may be revised by it at any time.

3. Present to the Senate President at the beginning of the academic year the name of the committee chair and the committee’s voting membership list.

4. Submit proposals to the Senate Council for approval prior to undertaking a study or investigation. If the Senate Council disapproves of a committee’s proposal, the committee may appeal the decision of the Senate Council to the general membership using the referendum process.

B. The Curriculum Committee shall be granted the authority to make recommendations directly to the Board of Trustees in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

## ARTICLE IX – INITIATIVES, REFERENDUMS, AND RESOLUTIONS

### Section 1. Initiatives

The general membership may initiate action when the Senate Council or one of its subcommittees has not responded to regularly channeled requests within thirty (30) days. Initiatives shall be conducted according to the procedures specified in the Senate Bylaws.

### Section 2. Referendums

**The general membership may propose to overturn a previous action of the Senate Council or one of its subcommittees by referendum. Referendums shall be conducted** according to the procedures specified in the Senate Bylaws.

### Section 3. Resolutions

and Senate Council may adopt resolutions to recommend policy or action to the Board of Trustees, the Administration, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and/or other groups. Resolutions shall be adopted

## ARTICLE X – SUPPLEMENTAL POWERS

### Section 1. Powers

The Academic Senate may establish Bylaws, Standing Rules, Standing Procedures, and any other authority it deems necessary to put into effect the provisions of this Constitution or any other legally vested rights so much as they do not conflict with, nor are interpreted to supersede any provision of this Constitution.

### Section 2. Senate Bylaws

All matters not covered in this Constitution, or those matters not clearly interpreted by this Constitution shall be referred to the Senate Bylaws.

## ARTICLE XI– AMENDMENTS

### Section 1. Process

A. Amendments to the Constitution and/or Bylaws may be proposed by a simple majority vote of the Senate Council or by written petition of at least ten (10) percent of the general membership.

B. Proposed changes shall be communicated to the Senate Council at least two (2) weeks prior to a regular meeting at which time it will appear on the agenda. The Senate Council may debate, revise, and/or amend proposed changes.

C. The Senate Council shall approve or reject proposed changes to the Constitution and/or Bylaws.

1. Approval of a proposed change requires a simple majority vote. Approved change shall be sent to the general membership for adoption.

2. Rejection of a proposed change may be overturned by the general membership using the referendum process specified in the Senate Bylaws. If the referendum is confirmed, the proposed change shall be approved and sent to the general membership for adoption.

D. Approved changes shall be communicated to the general membership at least one (1) month prior to voting.

### Section 2. Adoption

A. All voting shall be by secret and written ballot. Ballots shall be distributed and counted by members of the Election Committee in accordance with the election provisions of the Bylaws.

B. Adoption of an amendment to the Constitution requires a two-thirds majority vote by the general membership.

C. Adoption of an amendment to the Bylaws requires a simple majority vote by the general membership.

D. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall be effective upon confirmation of election results.

## ARTICLE XII – ENACTMENT CLAUSE

This Constitution is hereby enacted by the general membership of the Ventura College Academic Senate.

## HISTORY

(VC Academic Senate Constitution: Adopted- April 30, 1971; Revised- December 7, 1973; Revised- April 27, 1978; Revised/Adopted- April 18, 2002)

Revised by Bob Porter and Peter Sezzi on October 19, 2005
Revised by Senate Executive Committee on February 23, 2006
Revised by Senate Executive Committee on  March 1, 2006
Revised by Senate Council on March 2, 2006
Revised and Adopted  Unanimously by Senate Council on March 16th, 2006
Approved by the General Membership on April 5th, 2006