



——— Oberlin College Student Senate ———

# **SENATE HANDBOOK**

**SPRING 2006**

# Senate Bylaws & Best Practices

## On Being a Student Senator

The Student Senate is the sole organization that officially represents students and their interests on campus. As representatives, we have a duty to our constituents, the College, and ourselves to use these resources to the fullest.

### Senator Tips

The Senate is composed of 15 students. Each one of us must fill many roles: legislator, lobbyist, representative, researcher, activist, and community member. While acting in any of these roles, remember that the Senate exists to facilitate student interests. This means that we are bound to inform our fellow students about issues that affect them as well as to ensure that their voices are respected and represented in College governance. And so, each Senator may take these tips into consideration for being effective in all of these roles:

1. Know the constitution, bylaws, and tips. It's hard for Senate to be an effective organization if its members do not know the rules.
2. Talk to your constituents, Organize dorm raps, bring Senate issues to your hall council, write letters to the media, and talk to people.
3. Attend. Not just your required events, but talks and meetings that interest you. You too are a part of the student body.
4. Be sure to perform the tasks assigned to you. If you are overworked, be sure to ask for help.
5. Use past and present Senators as resources.
6. Volunteer to facilitate. It is suggested that every Senator try facilitating at least once a year.
7. Remember that promoting your own agenda is promoting the student agenda as long as your motive is to build a better College for students.

## Senator Responsibilities

### Requirements

1. Each Senator must serve as an officer.
2. Each Senator must serve on a faculty or administrative committee, serve on the General Faculty, and serve on the College Faculty if applicable (if you are on a College Faculty committee).
3. Each Senator must perform publicity and communicate with the student body, including but not limited to tabling, posting signs, dorm raps, etc. as designated by the Publicity and Outreach Coordinators.
4. Each Senator will hold one or two office hours a week. These office hours if not held in the actual office must be held in a public place and be advertised to the public. At least one office hour each week must be held with another senator.
5. Each officer must attend weekly officers meeting scheduled at the discretion of the officers.

# Overview of Senate Officers

Each semester, Senate elects officers at the first meeting of the full Senate. Senate elects interim officers at the last meeting of the full Senate for the interim Senate of the next semester. If an office is vacated a new officer should be elected immediately.

Note: The experience and expertise of the Senate membership as well as Senate priorities vary. Therefore, Senate may amend the above officer positions, both in number and content, to best suit the individual Senate's needs, at its Retreat or at the first meeting of the full Senate. This may be done by a majority vote. These amendments will be considered as an interim agreement that will last for one semester. *Example: Spring 2006- one Senator is Recording Secretary and Outreach Coordinator; two senators are sharing Forum Coordinator with one focused on forums and the other focused on other Senate sponsored events and community building activities.*

1. <b>Liaison</b>	Senate spokesperson, coordinates Senate's legislative work
2. <b>Associate Liaison</b>	works with Liaison, involve students in Senate's legislative work
3. <b>Recording Secretary</b>	agenda, minutes, etc
4. <b>Operations Manager</b>	elections and training/retreat, Senate long-range-plan
5. <b>Student Affairs Liaison</b>	referendum, office hours, gathering student input
6. <b>Technology Manager</b>	website, technology support
7. <b>Forum Coordinator</b>	Senate forums and events
8. <b>Publicity Coordinator</b>	Coordinates publicizing Senate events
9. <b>Outreach Coordinator</b>	Outward communication, newsletter, bulletin board
10. <b>Membership Coordinator/Treasurer</b>	Treasurer, Senate office, attendance, accountability, and payroll
11. <b>Committee Coordinator</b>	Committee appointments, student committee member liaison
12. <b>Student Finance Chair</b>	Chairs the Student Finance Committee
13. <b>Organization Liaison</b>	Chartering, liaison to student organizations
14. <b>Governance Chair</b>	College governance system
15. <b>Process Coordinator</b>	Senate governance, constitution, by-laws, reform

## Liaison

The Liaison is the Senate spokesperson in communication with the staff, faculty, administration, Trustees of Oberlin College, and the greater community. The Liaison coordinates the legislative work of the Senate and working groups, and sends the Senate's legislation and proposals to the appropriate committees or administrative offices. In addition, the Liaison has the specific responsibility of keeping track of the Senate's outstanding business and producing a regular report to this effect. The Liaison will also deliver a "state of the Senate address" once a semester, to be printed in student media. The Spring semester address will also be presented at GF. The Liaison serves on the General Faculty Planning Committee.

The Liaison should send a thank you card to each trustee that attends the Class Trustee Forum on behalf of Senate.

## Senate's Legislation

Many proposals involve parties other than the Senate. For instance, Senate often feeds proposals to the Student Life Committee. Merely passing legislation, therefore, does not necessarily assure its implementation. Effective lobbying is usually necessary in effecting change. The Liaison ensures that passed proposals reach their destination.

## Working Groups

Working groups are the principal forum for students to formulate recommendations and proposals to the administration, Senate, and faculty and administrative committees on a particular set of issues. A working group may consist of senators, student members of faculty and administrative committees, and other students and non-voting faculty and administrators appointed by the Senate. Working groups may, as appropriate, involve the community in their work by holding public meetings and consulting with faculty, students, and staff with expertise or interest in an issue area. One example of a type of working group is the Advisory Council. An example of rules that used to guide Advisory Councils can be found in the appendix.

Working groups are created by the Student Senate to work on legislative activities. They are established by a majority vote of the Senate.

The Senate determines which senators, faculty committee student members individual students, and administrators serve on a particular working group.

The makeup of working groups must include a minimum of one senator. If that senator is the entire makeup of the group, the senator should be open to consultation and seek input collaboratively.

Senate may appoint student members of faculty or administrative committees as members of a working group.

Senate may appoint faculty or staff members to sit on working groups as ex officio, non-voting members.

Working groups may invite other students, staff, and faculty to attend meetings as guests.

## Associate Liaison

The Associate Liaison works closely with the Liaison to coordinate the legislative work of Senate and the working groups. The Associate Liaison has the specific responsibility of student involvement and activism with regard to Senate's legislative work and the working groups. The Associate Liaison is responsible for coordinating regular full Senate meetings with relevant administrators. The Associate Liaison works with the Liaison. The Associate Liaison serves on the Student Life Committee.

## Network of Student Advocates

The NSA is a network / e-mail list that keeps students more involved in Senate. They get more information than the average student and are involved in helping Senate advocate its goals. Senate can be a lot more effective if it has students helping to accomplish the changes Senate is trying to make on behalf of students.

A Few Methods for obtaining NSA members:

1. Sending out follow-up e-mails with an invitation to people who attended forums (take attendance lists at forums, these are good to have anyway)
2. Passing around a paper at Senate meetings for senators to write down names of student they think would be effective
3. Contacting people who ran for Senate but were not elected

The NSA involves having a few extra e-mails updating you on what Senate is doing and what's going on with us. It would also involve helping us to advocate. We might send out an alert asking you to send a personal e-mail to the president about such-and-such an issue. We might ask you to send an e-mail to the director of ResEd asking her to meet with a certain dorm that has an issue... etc etc. You get the idea. Basically, Senate can be a lot more effective if we have students helping us to accomplish the changes that we are trying to make on behalf of students.

## Meetings with Administrators

Senate schedules monthly meetings with the president (Nancy Dye – scheduler: Linda Losneck), provost (Al MacKay – scheduler: Maggie Henderson), the VP for Finance (Ron Watts – scheduler: Linda Leimbach), and the Dean of the College (Harry Hirsch – scheduler: Roberta Garcia). It may be worthwhile to extend an invitation to the Hirsch meeting to the Dean of Studies (Kathryn.Stuart) and the acting chair of the Educational Plans and Policies Committee (Nick Jones). Other important people are Diana Roose (confident assistant to the president), Lisa Farrar (confidential administrative assistant to the president), and Bob Haslun (secretary of the college).

Senate voted to put into its bylaws that meetings with administrators are for Senate and not for other students.

Administrator meetings: Traditionally held in the Cox Conference Room over lunch – meetings in the Ratskellar should be avoided if possible as no one can hear in there. Each Sunday that falls before an administrator meeting, the Associate Liaison should format the agenda for the meeting at the Senate plenary session.

After the plenary session, the Associate Liaison should e-mail the administrator with the agendas well as print out a copy of the agenda for senators (mini-agendas with small-type font can be used; then you can often fit eight agendas on a page and just print it out on two pages and then cut it up). The administrators should always be encouraged to bring their own agenda items regarding campus happenings.

Distributing the agenda to administrators as soon as possible can be a helpful strategy for Senate to accomplish its legislative goals. This is sometimes a way to encourage administrators to do research or get in contact with people about issues that otherwise would not have been priorities or on someone's radar screen. Administrators following up on issues to prepare for our meeting is sometimes the only way to get them to re-contact person X or keep working on Issue Z.

The Interim Associate Liaison at the beginning of each semester is responsible for setting up meetings either for the semester or at least the first month with the various offices.

## Trustees

Senate also publicizes the Class Trustee Forum, which is at 9 PM on the Thursday before Board of Trustee weekends. The Associate Liaison should check before Board of Trustee weekends with Secretary Bob Haslun whether or not there will be an open session.

The Open Forum with the Board of Trustees was instituted in 1975 in an effort to provide Trustees the opportunity to meet directly with students in a venue where students could bring issues of interest and student concerns to Trustees. These gatherings are scheduled before the plenary sessions of the Board of Trustees in September, December, and March, and they are moderated by Class Trustees, alumni elected in the summer following their commencement by their class, the class ahead of them and the class behind. Class Trustees report on this forum in a plenary session with the full board.

Ground Rules:

1. Attendance: These meetings are open exclusively to Oberlin College students and Trustees. College administration staff will not be present.
2. Procedures: Class Trustees moderate the discussion. It is customary for one of the Class Trustees to preside, but that person may designate another Class Trustee to assist in tracking discussion. In order to set the agenda, the Class Trustee may ask those gathered to list the issues they are bringing to the discussion.
3. The Role of the presiding Class Trustee
  - 3.1. To inform those in attendance of the ground rules and the expectations for the conduct of the meeting including general guidelines that relate to clear and open exchange of ideas in an atmosphere of respect and civility;
  - 3.2. To explain that time limitations may be imposed on presentations to ensure that all constituencies can be heard; To describe the kinds of information that can and cannot be shared in a public forum;

- 3.3. To set and control the agenda, preside over the meeting and determine when the discussion needs to end in order to move on to another topic.
4. The Role of All Trustees
  - 4.1. To listen to students' concerns;
  - 4.2. To provide, when appropriate, pertinent and updated information to help clarify the issue under discussion;
  - 4.3. To inform students of the appropriate and effective mechanisms for addressing concerns or resolving conflict;
  - 4.4. To suggest ways students could help facilitate a resolution to specific concerns.

Trustees cannot promise specific Board action on any particular issue, nor can they share confidential information that has not been cleared by the Board to be made public.

## General Faculty

General Faculty generally has meetings the third Wednesday of each month at noon in King 306. The schedule can be found at [www.oberlin.edu/secretary](http://www.oberlin.edu/secretary)

Senate is not on the mailing for General Faculty documents to be provided to us. The Associate Liaison should contact Bob Haslun the week before the GF meeting and ask him to e-mail the agenda and any electronic documents. The Associate Liaison should then forward those to Senate. (Note: attachments cannot be sent to [senators@oberlin.edu](mailto:senators@oberlin.edu), one needs to type in individual names). The Associate Liaison should also ask Bob Haslun if there are any other handouts or documents that are being sent to faculty. If there are, ask him to make 15 copies, and pick them up in time to distribute them to all the senators at Sunday plenary sessions.

## Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary keeps the agenda and coordinates taking minutes for Senate meetings. The Recording Secretary distributes copies of all passed legislation to the General Faculty through the General Faculty Council, to the Dean of Students, to the Board of Trustees, and to the Secretary of the College.

The Interim Secretary for the Fall semester should reserve Wilder 215 for all plenary sessions for the year. This can be done in the Student Union office or online at <http://www.oberlin.edu/stunion/schedform.htm>

## Proposals

Proposals should be submitted to the Recording Secretary in writing by noon on the Thursday directly preceding the plenary session at which they are to be proposed. The proposals should be e-mailed out to senators and 18 copies should be made available at the Senate plenary.

## Agenda

Any Senator may add an item to the agenda by contacting the Recording Secretary, who assembles the agenda. The standard agenda items are as follows and come in this order:

1. Approval of the Minutes – changes to last week's minutes should be noted and the minutes approved by general feelings.
2. Approval of the agenda – additions may also be made here by taking general feelings.
3. Check Ins and Introductions of Guests – Guests should be introduced as they come in or at the beginning of the meeting. Each Senator must also introduce oneself and give a brief summary of that senator's Senate-related activities

of the past week. This is also a good time to share new information and events. Guests should be given a copy of the “Your Guide to Plenary Sessions” document.

4. External Business – Any business that a guest proposes takes precedence over internal business.
5. Internal Business – A number of different items can fall under this category, including but not limited to appointments, internal elections (i.e. for an officer or facilitator) and event planning.
6. Working group reports – Working group chairs may report on the activities of their group, but should give detailed reports in writing over e-mail.
7. Evaluations – Senators should give feedback on how the meeting went.
8. Elections of Next Meeting’s Facilitator – Any Senator may nominate a Senator including oneself to be the next facilitator. General feelings are taken.

## Minutes

Minutes will be taken at all official meetings of the Senate and will be a matter of public record; they should also be on display. Minutes must include the names of the Senators present and Senators absent, and any guests present. Minutes are subject to review and approval of Senate.

Minutes, an accurate and thorough record of the Senate’s proceedings, should give the reader an idea of what happened at a meeting in a concise, easy-to-read way. Minutes are necessary for the benefit of the student body as well as the Senate. The information contained in the minutes is crucial to future Senates to explain the decisions reached and the reasoning behind them. Minutes should include a title, date, place and time of the meeting, the full names of the people who attended and of the Senators absent, descriptions of the proposals discussed, and the ways the Senators voted on them.

## Operations Manager

The Operations Manager coordinates elections and runs a training retreat for the Senate. The Operations Manager coordinates and keeps Senate focused on its long-range-plans, specifically those adopted at the Senate retreat. Elections for Operations Manager must take place by December 1 for Spring Semester and by May 1 for Fall semester. The senator elected to Operations Manager must be in the first semester of that person’s two semester term and must not have plans to graduate or take a leave of absence the following semester.

## Elections: Elections and Nominations

Any student regularly enrolled as a full-time Oberlin student may vote or run in a senate election. Eight Senators are elected at the beginning of the Fall semester and seven at the beginning of the Spring semester. The election task-force consists of any Senators not currently seeking re-election. The Senate chooses the dates for the election, allowing eight days for nominations before the election begins. The election lasts five days or until there is quorum (20% of the student body has voted), whichever is longer though no election may extend beyond the academic year. In addition, if by removal or resignation five seats on Senate become empty, a special vacancy-filling election is held until a quorum of 10% is met or for 5 days, whichever is longer.

Any student may nominate any Oberlin student, including oneself. Though anyone may be nominated, only Oberlin students who plan to attend for the term in question may accept their nomination and appear on the ballot. Though not encouraged, students may run in the Spring election before their graduation. Candidates may submit candidate statements of up to 150 words which will be published.

If a senator resigns or is removed from Senate and there are still two General Faculty meetings planned for that semester, Senate will offer the position to the candidate from that semester’s elections who was next up in line, so long as that

candidate received a minimum of ten votes in the election. The new senator shall serve until the completion of the term to which the new senator's immediate predecessor was elected.

The Senate can call elections to fill a vacancy with a majority vote. The Student Senate must call an election and open nominations within one week if more than three seats are vacant.

## Voting

Both online and printed ballots must include the names of all candidates and a space for write-ins. One candidate is randomly selected to appear at the top of the list, and the rest follow in alphabetical order. Each student must include the student's ID number (T-number) and OCMR to validate the ballot. Ballots without ID numbers are not counted. This information should be prominently displayed on the ballot.

For elections with five or less open seats, students may vote for a maximum of the full number of open seats. For elections with six to seven open seats, students may vote for a maximum of five candidates. For elections with eight to ten open seats, students may vote for a maximum of six candidates. For elections with nine or more open seats, students may vote for a maximum of half the number of open seats, rounding up.

On-line balloting should be conducted if possible. The voting program should provide the names of all candidates, include an option to read the statements of all candidates, allow a voter to choose candidates, allow a voter to write in candidates, prevent voters from choosing more than the appropriate number of candidates, require an OCMR and T-number, invalidate duplicate ID numbers, but provide a list of all T-numbers duplicated and their OCMRs, and provide a means of comparing T-numbers and OCMRs to paper ballots.

Senate would like to include students who are studying abroad in elections and referenda. The Registrar's Office says, "We can select the academic leave students--each time senate has requested lists from me I always ask as to what the population should be because I have the ability to include or exclude specific populations. So, these students could be included; it just needs to be part of the request. One note: because we often run in short supply on OCMRs, not all students on academic leave have an OCMR.

The election task-force validates and tallies the ballots daily during the election period. Duplicate ballots or ballots with partial information are disqualified unless the voting student can be contacted to verify their vote. Election results are not released until all ballots have been tallied. Numerical data are released to the public.

## Electoral Code of Ethics

This code must be sent to each nominee prior to the start of elections. The Code of Ethics prohibits a Senator from engaging in the following activities during an election:

1. Falsifying or misappropriating ballots.
2. Intentionally miscounting ballots or reporting incorrect numerical data to a member of the Election Task-Force, the public, or the press.
3. Releasing any numerical data to the public, the press, or any individual before the election is finalized.
4. Making public any disparaging comments that have been written on ballots about candidates.
5. Intentionally counting ballots that should have been disqualified.
6. Allowing the marking or handling of the ballots by any candidate.

These activities are grounds for removal of a Senator

## Validation and Tallying of Ballots

Present Senators who are not candidates validate and tally the ballots daily during the election period. Duplicate ballots missing either an OCMR number or ID numbers are disqualified. Election results are not released until the ballots have been tallied.

## Retreat: Spring Orientation

After the elections for the Spring semester, the newly elected Senators attend an orientation held by experienced Senators and planned by the Operations Manager. During this session, the new Senators choose committee seats.

After the committees are explained, each new Senator chooses one open committee seat. If more new Senators want to sit on a given committee than there are seats available, the new Senators will decide seats in a simple majority formal vote.

## The Senate Retreat

In the Fall, after all Senate seats are filled, the Senators elected in the spring run a Senate retreat planned by the Operations Manager. This is a meeting at which the internal workings of the Senate and the College's decision-making process are explained. Complex issues such as Financial Aid should be explained so that all Senators have a working knowledge. Any proposals that the Senate has passed but which the College has yet to implement are explained.

At the retreat, the Senate also establishes a lobbying strategy for the year. The strategy usually has four phases: identifying important issues to work on; designating Senators to research possible positions on each; taking positions on each; and lobbying the faculty and administration.

# Student Affairs Liaison

The Student Affairs Liaison coordinates the Senate referendum and Senate office hours, administers the Senate e-mail account, and works to solicit student opinion.

## Office Hours: Regarding Office Hours

Office hours may be held outdoors if that is more effective for the Senator to gather student input, provided that notice of location is put on the door of the Student Senate office.

During your office hours, you could be doing the following:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Working group update emails
3. Proposal writing
4. Talking to students about concerns

## Referenda

Referenda may be called by a vote of the Senate or by petition containing the names of at least 100 students. Referenda last at least one week or until quorum of 50% (for official referenda) is met, whichever is longer, though a referendum cannot extend beyond one academic year. Votes are tallied in accordance with the elections bylaws. Every ballot turned in containing a T-number counts toward quorum for all issues. Issues that are left blank count as abstentions. Each issue should have a "yes" option and a "no" option, though each of these may be split into further options. If more than one

option exists under either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ the majority on yes / no is ascertained first and then a majority established from among the included options.

In order to pass or fail, a referendum question needs over 50% either affirmative or negative (respectively). If no answer receives over 50%, then the question fails due to lack of support.

If a petition is brought to Senate with 100 signatures, Senate is mandated (by the Senate constitution) to hold a referendum on the topic brought forward. Petitioners should have a topic on the petition that is a singular phrase or clause, not an entire question.

## Technology Manager

The Technology Manager manages the Senate website, Senate e-mail account, and technology support.

At the beginning of each semester, the Technology Manager should obtain a current student list of enrolled students (for mss e-mails and election/referendum validation).

### E-mail

Senate has two e-mail addresses.

1. [Senate@oberlin.edu](mailto:Senate@oberlin.edu) ([student.senate@oberlin.edu](mailto:student.senate@oberlin.edu)) is the Senate e-mail account.
2. [Senators@oberlin.edu](mailto:Senators@oberlin.edu) is a listserv that automatically e-mails all senators.

Please note:

1. If you click reply to an e-mail that went to [senators@oberlin.edu](mailto:senators@oberlin.edu), it will automatically go to [senators@oberlin.edu](mailto:senators@oberlin.edu) unless you manually change it to the sender.
2. You cannot send attachments or very large e-mails over the listserv. If you need to send attachments, use the individual e-mail addresses of senators.
3. When you are done with senate, graduate, etc, you can remove yourself from the list by e-mailing [Majordomo@venus.cc.oberlin.edu](mailto:Majordomo@venus.cc.oberlin.edu). Type in the subject line Unsubscribe senators
  - 3.1. If you are not sending the e-mail from your Oberlin e-mail address, write Unsubscribe senators  
[First\\_name.Last.Name@oberlin.edu](mailto:First_name.Last.Name@oberlin.edu)

## Forum Coordinator

The Forum Coordinator is in charge of the organization and conducting of forums and other Senate-sponsored events and community-building activities. The Forum Coordinator will set the agenda and determine the substance of the forum in coordination with the Senate.

### Forums: Forums Codification

Here is some clarification on the manner in which forums will come to exist. These forums are a method of outreach for gathering student input. Student Senate organizes and conducts forums that are open to the entire Oberlin community and address issues that the Senate deems relevant and constructive. While there is some flexibility in the organization of these forums, the following details shall persist:

1. Student Senate will sponsor one forum per month during the academic year with the exception of Winter Term and months during which the full Senate is not yet assembled.

2. Any member of the Senate may propose a topic for a forum. Such proposals will be given to the Forum Coordinator and all proposals will be presented by the Forum Coordinator during the meeting at which the Senate will approve the monthly topic.
3. Proposals for forums shall include tentative moderators, panel speakers, and target populations to invite.
4. The Forum Coordinator is responsible for contacting prospective panel speakers and arranging the time and the place for the forum.
5. The Publicity Coordinator will publicize the forum.
6. A Student Senator shall always act as the moderator of discussion at a forum.
7. Surveys or questionnaires shall be distributed at these events and used by the Student Senate in their decision-making settings.

## Publicity Coordinator

The Publicity Coordinator is in charge of publicity, including the publication and distribution thereof, regarding Senate events and activities, and advertises nominations for Senate elections.

## Outreach Coordinator

The Outreach Coordinator is in charge of the bulletin board, a Senate newsletter, and additional outreach and publicity and electronic correspondence regarding Senate information. The Outreach Coordinator is in charge of communication with existing campus publications and media. The Outreach Coordinator will publicize all passed legislation to the student body.

## Online Calendar of Events

Here is a start to publicize effectively:

*My name is Sue Angell, and I work in the Office of College Relations. Part of my job includes maintaining the Oberlin Online Calendar of Events, which can be found at: <<http://www.oberlin.edu/events>>.*

*The calendar is a valuable tool that can help you advertise events for students, faculty, staff members, and local residents. Each chartered organization is allowed access to the calendar, which in turn allows individuals within that group to enter events throughout the year.*

*If a previous liaison for your group has graduated without telling you how to add events to the online calendar, please contact me at <[sue.angell@oberlin.edu](mailto:sue.angell@oberlin.edu)> or x55783. Or, if you need to designate another individual as your organization's "official" calendar liaison, give me a call. I will be happy to set you up in the calendar's database and explain how to enter events into the calendar.*

*If you cannot reach me, Kathy Drennan can also help you with online calendar queries. You can reach her by calling the Student Union Office at x58184 or e-mailing her at <[kathy.drennan@oberlin.edu](mailto:kathy.drennan@oberlin.edu)>.*

## Publicity: Regarding Publicity

Here is a start to publicize effectively:

1. **Printing Services:** Printing Services is a lot less expensive than copy machines. They are located in the Services Building, down the ramp. The person in charge of Printing Services is Wendy Kacso. <http://www.oberlin.edu/purchase/printing/Default.html>
2. **Poster:** Remember to hit the off campus spots like the Feve. Consider that you are representing Senate when you poster – lewd/offensive material is neither necessary, nor appropriate. Use judgment. Do NOT use fluorescent paper; it cannot be recycled.
3. **Tabling.** Flyers can be distributed throughout the dining halls right before the dinner hour. Good for doing on the day of the event.
4. **Banners:** Outdoor banners may be hung on the front of Wilder for no more than one week for each event. Schedule in advance through Kathleen Drennan, Wilder 111 and ask about restrictions for materials and due dates before you create the banner. Indoor banners are hung over the main staircase in Wilder and must be made in the marker room, outside, or in a designated area. Space is not scheduled and is instead arranged on a first-come, first-serve basis. Do not remove a banner unless an event has passed. Inside banners may be up for no longer than a week and must include organization and date of the event. Inside banner paper and markers are available at the information desk.
5. **Publications:** The Oberlin Review and Oberlin Grape papers will take paid advertising. Their deadlines for placement in the same week's paper are Monday and Tuesday at noon, respectively. Prices vary depending on the size.
6. **WOBC:** The student-run radio station will do public service announcements for events that are open to the entire community. For more information call WOBC at x58139.
7. **Activities Calendar:** If you are really on the ball and do your planning a semester ahead, you can get your event listed in the Activities Calendar. The calendar is produced by the student union and you can contact Kathleen Drennan for further information. Fall calendar deadline is May 31 and Spring deadline is December 13.
8. **Chalking:** Please use chalk, not marker, and only draw on the sidewalks.
9. **Painting the rock:** The rocks on Tappan Square are used by the College and the community to celebrate and announce events. Do not paint over someone else's message unless it's really old. Do not repeat paintings. Put on a base coat first.
10. **E-mailing:** E-mail all of your friends, dormmates, and student organizations of which you are a part that the event is happening. It's free.
11. **Residential Assistants:** Ask the Residential Life office to distribute information to Residential Assistants, who will then display the information in their residence halls.

## Membership Coordinator / Treasurer

The Membership Coordinator / Treasurer serves as the Senate treasurer, manages the Senate office and Senate mailbox, monitors the attendance of senators, and is responsible for Senate payroll and individual senator accountability.

The Membership Coordinator should update the officer list in the Student Union office.

### Attendance

In order to be an effective Senator and student advocate, each senator must attend all committee meetings, plenary sessions, and office hours, as mandated by the Constitution of the Association (see Rules and regulations V.B.II.4). However, we recognize that there are circumstances under which perfect attendance is impossible; therefore it is the responsibility of each Senate, specifically the Membership Coordinator, to recognize and appropriately address absences that materially affect an individual Senator's ability to perform one's duties.

Unless there is an emergency, senators must contact the Membership Coordinator within 24 hours of the meeting they will miss. It is left to the Membership Coordinator's discretion as to whether or not the absence will be excused. If the senator does not agree with the decision, they may appeal to the full Senate. If the excuse is invalid or unwritten, then the senator

will accrue points. This is to be determined at the sole discretion of the Membership Coordinator, although decisions can of course be appealed to full Senate.

1. Plenary sessions are 10 points.
2. General Faculty meetings are 5 points.
3. Senate meetings with administrators are 3 points.
4. Office hours are 2 points.

At 10 points, the Membership Coordinator sends a harshly worded, mean e-mail to the senator.

At 20 points, the senator is put for automatic censure to the Grape and the Review. The Membership Coordinator will inform the senator of the censure; if the senator contests it within 48 hours then it will go on the agenda for the upcoming plenary.

At 30 points, an agenda item with proposal to remove the senator will be on the next plenary's agenda.

## Accountability and Communicating Effectively (ACE)

Each senator must submit to the Membership Coordinator a completed Senate work log each week. The senator must additionally submit online (available at <http://www.oberlin.edu/stuorg/senate/ace/>) answers to questions put out by the Membership Coordinator.

The Membership Coordinator will then compile a document with all question answers and send it to the listserv and/or make copies for the plenary session. The document will be added to the minutes of the plenary.

The Membership Coordinator has full discretion in changing the content of what is asked regarding questions. The Membership Coordinator should additionally add to the questions items senators have committed at plenary to follow up on or address in the upcoming week and send those out by noon on Tuesday at the latest.

If a senator does not send in a work log with questions answered by Sunday at 4 PM, the senator will accrue three points. Work logs must be submitted to the Membership Coordinator in order to submit timecards and be paid. Same rules as always apply regarding excuses and Membership Coordinator's discretion regarding these.

Current questions on ACE as of Winter 2006:

1. Full Name
2. Was anything pertinent discussed at any committee meetings?
3. What did you do this week relating to your officer position?
4. Anything else Senate related?
5. Status of anything you committed to do at a previous meeting?

## Fall 2006 Addition to ACE

1. Once a Senator accumulates three excused absences from plenary sessions, future excused absences result in the addition of 10 points to their point total.
2. Tasks assigned to officers during plenary sessions have an automatic value of 3 points. 3 points are assigned to a student senator if the task is no completed by the next plenary.

## Code of Conduct

A violation of either of the following is grounds for removal from the Student Senate, or any position in the Senate:

1. Senators may not misrepresent the will of Senate. They may not present themselves as representatives of Senate if their representation has not been explicitly approved by the Senate.

2. Senators may not use their positions to unfairly favor or persecute any student or groups of students. This prohibition is not meant to inhibit regular expressions of opinion or normal legislative actions. It is aimed at preventing abuses of confidentiality and protecting the integrity of ballots.

A violation of any of the following principles is grounds for censure (which is an official reprimand of a Student Senator). Repeated violations may be grounds for removal of Senate:

1. Senators may not purposely break procedure, repeatedly create distractions, or otherwise impede Senate meetings.
2. Senators may not show disrespect, insult others, or act abusively during a Senate meeting or when acting in a Senatorial capacity.
3. Senators may not purposely violate any Senate bylaw or directive or any section of the Constitution of the Association.

## Removal

At any time, the Membership Coordinator may call for an attendance-related vote on the removal of a Senator. Furthermore, any Senator may call for a removal vote at any time if that senator feels a Senator is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities. A vote for removal should be conducted via secret ballot. A two-thirds majority is required to vote in favor of removal in order for a Senator to be removed and removal, if passed, is effective immediately.

Removal of a Senator may also be effected by a student referendum in which a two-thirds majority approves the removal of the Senator.

## Resignation

A Senator may resign from the Senate, either in person or by notifying the Membership Coordinator and/or Recording Secretary by mail or e-mail of such resignation. A resignation letter is read at the next Senate meeting. The Membership Coordinator should notify the appropriate committee chairpersons of the Senator's vacated committee(s) of the resignation.

A Senator who resigns or is removed will retain that senator's Senate-pick committee seat until the Senate is able to fill it. The Membership Coordinator should act on such vacancies immediately. The seats are offered first to other Senators, in accordance with the Constitution, and then to the student body at large, at which point the Senator who left Senate may interview for the seat. The Senate may decide to allow a resigning or removed Senator to keep his/her committee seat(s) in the interest of continuity; this requires a simple majority in a formal vote.

## Getting Paid

Senators receive payment after filling out a time card every two weeks. Time cards are given to the Membership Coordinator. You may choose to not get paid, but you cannot divert your divert your pay to another source without getting paid first.

Senators must have appropriate paperwork filed, including a student employment card / I-9 form, to be compensated. This paperwork can be found at the student employment office.

Senators currently CAN get paid for:

1. Plenary session
2. Office hours
3. Contributions to the web page and newsletter
4. Meetings of a working group of which the Senator is a member
5. Meetings set up officially during plenary session concerning Senate business
6. Meeting of the GF

7. Meetings of any faculty or administrative committees of which the Senator is a member (not a guest) as that Student Senator's pick, with the exception of Judicial, Mediation, and Community Boards.
8. Meetings made in advance by appointment relating to Senate
9. Meetings of the officers
10. Any duties directly related to a Senator's officership
11. Time spent at a Senate retreat
12. Time spent doing tasks approved by Senate (which has included time spent on elections, committee appointments, and the like)

Senators currently can NOT get paid for:

1. Chance meetings with people where Senate happens to come up
2. Emailing and phone calls
3. Time writing or researching proposals that is not directly related to a senator's function as an officer, (e.g. The Educational Coordinator revising the bylaws) or not directed by Senate to do such writing and research
4. Time lobbying faculty members or committee members
5. Their own electoral campaign
6. Any activity that otherwise cannot be easily verified.

Once the time card is filled out appropriately, the Membership Coordinator makes a photocopy of it.

## Committee Coordinator

The Committee Coordinator monitors the attendance of student members of working groups and of student members of faculty, administrative, and ad hoc committees. The Committee Coordinator coordinates appointment interviews and recommends appointments and removal to the Senate. The Committee Coordinator serves as the liaison to student members of committees.

Senate believes that in principle, one-third of members of appropriate committees should be students.

Committee appointments have a one year term if the committee does not have a self-defined term. Senate need not interview for reappointments.

## Committee Appointments

Article II, Section 9 of the Constitution of the Association passed in April 1997 by student referendum, Student Senate, Student Life Committee, and the General Faculty reads: "The Senate has the power to appoint all student members to faculty, administrative, and ad hoc committees and Advisory Councils."

It is the view of the General Faculty Council that Article II, Section 9 of the Student Government Constitution\* (\*Article II, Section 9: *The Senate has the power to appoint all student members of faculty, administrative, and ad hoc committees and advisory councils.*) applies in the case of student appointments to the working groups of the General Faculty Planning Committee.

This is understood to include, though not necessarily exclusively, any standing committee or temporary faculty, administrative or ad hoc committee, or charge of the committee, of which students are members or constituents, whether voting or nonvoting. Senate will appoint students to those seats according to the process outlined below and the membership guidelines established by the committees' charters.

Some committees require that, of the students appointed, a certain number meet specific criteria. For example, the Library committee requires that one student be from the College and one from the Conservatory. A hypothetical committee related to student computer usage might require that at least one student use the Mac and one the Wintel platform. Senate will apply these criteria in the appointments process.

Subcommittees are understood to be the province of the committee of which they are a part, provided the student membership is limited to existing members of the committee. Any additional student subcommittee seats desired by the committee are to be appointed through Senate's standard procedure.

Although this policy is already formally acknowledged and instituted by the student body, Senate, Student Life Committee, and GF, it is apparent that there remains some confusion particularly regarding student seats on personnel search committees. Administrators continue to be unsure as to how this rule affects their ability to appoint students to seats on committees.

It is our belief that a formal system for appointments, which includes outreach, advertising, interviews, and the democratic process is superior to less rigorous, less inclusive methods. Student Senate is dedicated to appointing the most interested, informed, responsible, able, and committed student participants to college governance roles while emphasizing diversity and broad representation as fundamental to the process.

At least two Senators must be present for a committee seat candidate's interview. Before interviewing, students interested in serving on a committee should fill out the online application, <http://www.oberlin.edu/stuorg/senate/application/>. The interviews are arranged and coordinated by the Committee Coordinator. The interview process for all open seats should begin as early as possible and may even be conducted the previous Spring, but appointments may not be made until the first Fall meeting of the full Senate after all of the Senators have picked a committee on which to sit, in accordance with the Constitution. For committees that intend to meet before that time, however, Senators should sit as members on an interim basis. Senators may choose any open seats that remain after the initial interview process is complete. In the event that more Senators wish to sit on a committee than there are seats available, the matter shall be decided by a majority vote of the Senate.

In addition to the initial interviews publicity, Senate shall have a standard publicity procedure in the event new committees are formed following the initial appointments process. Posters should be put up in the mailroom to include name and scope of the committees and the Committee Coordinator's contact information. This policy should be regularly advertised in the Senate newsletter, and every effort made to inform the campus about the procedure.

Appointments are made by slate votes. Candidates may be pulled from the slate for further discussion. Such candidates will be voted on separately from the slate. The Senate may remove, by formal vote, any student holders of committee seat who show poor attendance to their committee(s) or to their working group(s).

The following exceptions should be noted, in accordance with the Constitution. The members of Forum Board, Judicial Board, Community Board, Mediation Board, and the Honor Committee, and five members of the Student Finance Committee (SFC) are appointed in the Spring prior to their year of service, although any empty seats may be filled in the Fall. The Senate may not remove the members of any of these committees. In addition, the members of the Student Union Board will be appointed in the Spring in accordance with the deadline they establish.

Interviews team for the Student Union Board will include four members of the Board in addition to three Senate interviewers. The interview team will, as a whole, recommend an appointment slate to the Senate. Senators may not choose this committee on a "first picks" basis, but may apply through the process established by the Board.

Both GFPC student seats shall be filled by senators, with preference of one seat being a college student and one seat being a conservatory or double-degree student.

## Search Committees

### *Guidelines for a Search Committee*

The Oberlin College Student Senate holds the belief that responsible decision-making can only occur when a diversity of opinion is included and when all opinions are considered equally legitimate. In keeping with this view, it is vital that the

processes undertaken by search committees aim to seek input from a variety of sources and that all members of these committees receive equal treatment.

The Oberlin College Student Senate also contends that those who are affected by decisions should be permitted to participate in the making of those decisions.

Therefore, Student Senate wishes to formally suggest guidelines for search committee procedures that we feel will facilitate the manifestation of these values.

Student Senate proposes that the following conditions be present when needs arise for search committees:

1. Student Senate is responsible for selecting members of search committees.
2. The search committee shall deliberate and make decisions independently of the administrator who is ultimately responsible for finalizing the decision of the search committee.
3. Student members are given the same amount of time to examine the personnel files of the applicants as all other committee members.
4. Student members are given notice of committee meetings at the same time as are other committee members.
5. All committee members must make an effort to accommodate the schedules of the student members.
6. When possible, important meetings and forums at which the student body and student committee members are asked to give input or meet candidates, should not be scheduled during midterms, finals, Winter Term, Fall Break, Spring Break, or Summer Recess.
7. The operations of the committee should be made public information subject to student evaluation and response, when feasible, such that members of the community may articulate concerns. (The contents of the personnel files and the comments made by committee members regarding the content of those files shall, of course, be kept confidential).

Respectfully Submitted,  
Student Senate  
20 February 2000

### *Memo from Diana Roose*

TO: Al MacKay, Provost

FROM: Diana Roose, Assistant to the President

DATE: October 13, 2005

RE: Appointment process to GF committees

After the new Student Government Constitution was passed by the student body and the General Faculty in 1997, I sat down with representatives of the Student Senate who had written the Constitution and worked with them to develop a process by which students would be nominated and appointed to faculty committees. This process has worked well.

We developed the following understandings and procedures:

1. Article II, Section 9 states that "The Senate has the power to appoint all student members of faculty, administrative, and ad hoc committees and advisory councils." The Senate must advertise and interview widely for all student seats on committees.
2. It was understood that this power of appointment does not include appointment of students on search committees and other internal committees that deal with faculty or staff personnel issues. It also does not include committees for which the power of appointment is specifically designated, such as the Sexual Offense Review Committee, for which the power of appointment of all members lies with the President. (see #4)

3. The process of consultation will be two-way. The Student Senate consults with the President's office about any new committees or changes to existing committee structures. The President's office can suggest names of student nominees for committees, and has an opportunity to provide additional names upon request. The Senate will consider these nominees carefully, and makes the final student appointments.
4. In cases where the President makes the appointment, the Student Senate reviews names suggested by the President's office as well as its own nominations, and can make recommendations to the President. After this consultation, the President makes the final appointments.
5. In cases where there is disagreement or lack of clarity about the suitability of a nominee, the parties either discuss the problem or make additional nominations. In either case, discussions arrive at a consensus and the Senate makes the final student appointments.
6. We have urged the Student Senate to make some student appointments each spring for the following academic year, so that committees can start their work sooner in the fall. This and other suggestions should improve the efficiency of the appointment process.

## Student Finance Chair

Student Finance Chair, who chairs the Student Finance Committee.

All student organizations seeking annual funding from the Student Finance Committee must have an active charter.

### SFC Appeals

Organizations may appeal their SFC budget allocations to the Student Senate only after the regular SFC budget process is complete, including the standard fall appeals to the SFC. Organizations must submit their formal appeal to the Student Finance Chair, who will distribute copies to the Senate.

The formal request must:

1. specify the nature and amount of the disputed allocation
2. demonstrate arbitrary or unfair decision-making by the SFC
3. attest that the organization's decision to appeal was made in accordance with the established decision-making methods as outlined in their charter

The hearing should be scheduled for the next Senate meeting if possible. Members of the SFC and representatives of the organization must be invited to the hearing. The Senate must have quorum to hold a hearing. The appealing organization and the SFC each have 10 minutes to present their positions in that order, after which Senators may ask as many questions of either party as they wish. After discussion, the Senate may meet in executive session if it wishes, before returning to conduct a formal vote on the merit of the appeal. No Senator who has been endorsed by the appealing organization may vote on the appeal. Neither the Student Finance Chair nor any other Senator who is a member of the SFC may vote on any appeal.

If the Senate decides that the appeal has merit, proposals for alternative allocations may be proposed and voted on. These proposals should be general and may include upholding SFC's implementation of the same, in which case the organization may file a second appeal to the Senate. The same procedure will be followed as outlined above. However, the Senate's decision about a second appeal is final including any financial allocation.

# Organization Liaison

The Organization Liaison is the Senate's principal liaison to all student organizations and ensures that organizations are informed of and have the opportunity to be involved in the work of student government bodies. The Organization Liaison coordinates prompt consideration of organization charters.

The Organization Liaison is responsible for inspecting or coordinating the inspection of a charter in accordance with the proper format and recommending it to the Senate for approval. Approval may be given by a formal vote and the charter forwarded to the Student Life Committee.

## Senate Voting on Charters

### *Regarding Charter Approval*

The criteria each senator may use to judge a charter are:

1. Whether the charter breaks any rules and regulations of the college
2. Whether the charter follows the correct format.
3. Whether the activities of the chartered group may cause the college liability problems (e.g. the rock-climbing club's charter might need to describe how situations involving accidents will be addressed.)
4. The recommendation from the Organization Liaison

Senators should not consider the following criteria when judging a charter:

1. Whether there are other groups on campus that accomplish the same goals outlined in the "purpose" section.
2. Whether this group should receive funds from the Student Finance Committee (as this question is the privy of the SFC only)
3. Whether the purpose of the charter is morally or socially acceptable, though if a senator has strong concerns, that senator may always vote according to that senator's conscience.

Should a charter be rejected, it is the responsibility of the Organization Liaison to communicate the reasons for rejection that were brought up in discussion and to aid the authors of the charter in making appropriate changes.

## The Chartering Process

The following is the process by which Student Organizations are recognized and maintained:

1. Any student may obtain a copy of the Charter Guidelines from the Student Union Office. A draft charter must be submitted to Student Union Office with the signature of no fewer than five founding members (Oberlin College students). The charter will be forwarded to the Student Senate (via Senate's Organization Liaison).
2. Within one week (of class days, while classes are in session) from the date of submission, the Student Senate Organization Liaison will contact the founding members to serve as a resource and to assist with revision.
3. The Senate's Organization Liaison will meet at least once with the founding members and shall sign the draft charter certifying that such a meeting has occurred.
4. A joint subcommittee of both the Student Senate and the Student Life Committee (SLC) will be henceforth known as the Joint Chartering Subcommittee (JCSC). The JCSC will be composed of Senate's Organization Liaison, Senate's Liaison, a senator elected from within Senate, the SLC's Charter Liaison, a non-Senator student member of the SLC, and a faculty member of the SLC. Senate's Organization Liaison will be an *ex officio* (non-voting) member. The Dean of Students (or designee) will serve as a member of the JCSC (also *ex officio* and non-voting). A chair of the JCSC will be elected internally from among the voting members. Any member of the JCSC who is also a member of the petitioning organization (whether for recognition or review) may not be present during the deliberations or voting

pertaining to that organization. Should more than two voting members be affected by this provision, the Senate will appoint Senators to temporarily serve on the JCSC. Deliberations on recognition or review of charters will be conducted in closed session.

5. After obtaining the signature of the Organization Liaison, the group may submit a final draft charter to the JCSC. This draft should be submitted electronically to the Organization Liaison.
6. The Senate's Organization Liaison will contact the members of the JCSC to schedule a hearing on the charter. This meeting shall normally occur within two weeks from the Organization Liaison signing the charter. The JCSC will not consider charters in the final two weeks of classes or when classes are not in session.
7. The JCSC shall normally act on each charter within two weeks (of class days, while classes are in session) of the charter's submission to the JCSC.
8. The JCSC shall consider recognizing the organization based on its inclusion of the following elements:
  - 8.1. A name, a statement of purpose, an explanation of group organization (i.e. number of officers, operating procedures during meetings...etc.);
  - 8.2. A statement of inclusion declaring that the group membership is open to all Oberlin College students;
  - 8.3. A non-discrimination clause (including mention of the following categories: race, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and economic status);
  - 8.4. A statement specifying the organization's source(s) of funding, if any. A clause acknowledging that if the organization disbands, any disposable property will be redistributed by the Dean of Students or designee. If funded through the Student Finance Committee, a statement acknowledging that surpluses and losses will be dealt with as directed in the Student Financial Charter;
  - 8.5. section regarding obligations to the community including agreement to the following provisions:
    - 8.5.1. Submission of an Officers List/Charter Renewal Form to the Student Union Office by May 1 of each year,
    - 8.5.2. Continuous compliance with the provisions of the charter,
    - 8.5.3. Continuous compliance with the Rules and Regulations of Oberlin College.
9. The JCSC must consider the following aspects during deliberations:
  - 9.1. Liability concerns relating to potentially dangerous activities,
  - 9.2. Tax-exemption concerns relating to the College's non-profit status.
10. When the JCSC passes a charter, the chair shall contact the organization with changes proposed by the JCSC; if the changes are approved by the organization, the charter (as amended) shall be forwarded to the Student Senate *and* to the SLC for approval.
11. If the charter is forwarded to the Senate and to the SLC for approval, the chair of the JCSC shall contact the Office of the Secretary and student media (e.g. the Review, The Grape, and WOBC) and indicate that the charter has passed through the JCSC and is to be considered by the Student Senate and by the SLC.
12. The Student Senate and the SLC shall normally consider the charter within one month (of class days, while classes are in session) of its passing the JCSC.
13. Should the JCSC decide not to forward the charter, it must provide the petitioning organization with a written rationale for its decision, which may be made public. An organization may appeal the decision to the Student Union Board. The Student Union Board will consider the points listed in sections G and H, as well as a presentation from the JCSC. The deliberations of the Student Union Board will occur in closed session. The decision of the Student Union Board is final.
14. Should the Student Senate and the SLC decided to recognize the charter, the organization will become "Active." "Active" status entitles an organization to:
  - 14.1. Request funds from the Student Finance Committee ("Active" status does not guarantee funding from the SFC),
  - 14.2. Request space from the Student Union,
  - 14.3. Represent the organization as an officially charter organization of Oberlin College.

15. Failure to submit the annual Officers List/Charter Renewal by May 1 will result in the organization becoming “Inactive,” during which time all privileges of “Active” status are suspended. After five years of “Inactive” status, an organization must re-apply for recognition to become active.
16. Should an organization violate its charter, any member of the College community may present a written grievance to the JCSC concerning the nature of the violation. The JCSC shall hold deliberations on the issue and is encouraged to gather community input or information regarding the alleged violation. Should the JCSC find that no violation has occurred, a statement describing the conclusions and the process which produced them shall be made public and a copy held on file in the Student Union Office with the organization’s charter. Should the JCSC find that the violation has occurred, two possibilities exist for action:
  - 16.1. The organization may be publicly censured. A statement describing the conclusion of the JCSC and the process which produced them shall be made public and a copy held on file in the Student Union Office with the organization’s charter.
  - 16.2. The organization may be sanctioned. This results in immediate suspension of all the privileges of an “Active” organization. A statement describing the conclusion of the JCSC and the process which produced them shall be made public and a copy held on file in the Student Union Office with the organization’s charter. A sanction may be lifted by the JCSC after the organization provides a written statement to the community and presents this statement to the JCSC regarding the violation and the organization’s plans for reconciliation with the community. After four years a sanction is automatically lifted, although the organization remains “Inactive.”
17. Charters must be renewed annually by May 1. If no changes have been made, the charter may be renewed by a staff member of the Student Union office. If significant changes have been made, as determined by a staff member of the Student Union office, the charter must go through the recognition process again.
18. A charter-pending organization may reserve a room in the Student Union on an ad-hoc basis and may not receive funding from the SFC other than ad-hoc funding as specified by the SFC’s bylaws and policies on mid-year funding.
19. Charters will be maintained by the Student Union office and will be made available for public reference.

## Letter to student organization founder

Dear Student Organization Founder,

Student Senate would like to thank you for your interest in starting a new student organization. As you begin the process of thinking through your ideas for this organization, we would like you to consider the following.

Within Oberlin’s history of diversity among its students is a certain expectation that the community will support and respect that diversity. Your contribution to the Oberlin College community in establishing a new student organization can prove to be a valuable addition. We ask that you keep in mind the diversity of the student body in the beginning stages of this process, not only in terms of membership but also in regards to the organization itself. Do as much research as you can as to the historical and social location(s) of your intended organization. It can be a dangerous mistake to neglect acknowledgment of the origins of your area(s) of interest and this oversight can be particularly damaging to the community(s) that have been forgotten.

We realize and support every student’s right and privilege to establish an organization of their choosing (while in compliance of Oberlin College’s guidelines) and we hope that the responsibility that accompanies this right is not taken lightly. Please be advised that we are here for you as a resource at any time during the chartering process, and again, we thank you for your desire to contribute to the Oberlin College community.

Good Luck,  
*Student Senate*

## Creation of a Chartered Organization

### *The Purpose of the Chartering Process*

Any group of students must be chartered in order to use the name of Oberlin College, or its buildings, facilities, or services. This includes anyone on the Oberlin campus who wishes to:

1. publish literature intended for on or off-campus distribution
2. bring outside speakers to address open meetings
3. carry out activities for the benefit of non-members
4. participate in off-campus activities in the name of Oberlin College
5. ask for yearly student activity fee moneys.

### *Recognition as a chartered organization*

A group shall be considered as fully recognized if it has had its charter approved by the General Faculty, Student Senate, the Student Life Committee, the Joint Chartering Sub-Committee and has submitted to the Student Union a list of officers and liaisons for the current year.

If an organization is changing the name of the organization, it need only submit an addendum to the original charter, to be approved by the Student Union. If the organization changes its purpose, then the organization needs to resubmit its entire charter as though it was a new organization.

Charters are to be submitted to the Student Union Office for our records and to be forwarded to the appropriate bodies for approval. The Student Union office monitors the entire chartering process. Any questions about where your charter is in the process should be directed to them.

Exceptions to any of the following procedures must be specifically addressed during approval by the Student Senate and Student Life Committee.

### *Format of a charter*

All charters must include the following sections: Name, Purpose, Membership, Officers, Finances, Operating Procedures, and Amendment Procedures. Explanations of each section appear below:

1. **Name:** This is important, because this section will give the official name of the organization. This should include an acronym, if one is to be used.
2. **Purpose:** The organization should give the general goals of the organization and must have the following values and principles clause: *“(group) acknowledges the values and principles of Oberlin College, as expressed in the Oberlin College Student Regulations, Policies, and Procedures Handbook, the Preamble of the Constitution of the Association of Students of Oberlin College, and the Oberlin Statement of Goals and Principles in the Preface to the Oberlin College Bulletin.”*
3. If funded through the Student Finance Committee, the values and principles clause should be followed by “the preamble to the Student Financial Charter” which is: *“(group) acknowledges the Preamble of the Student Financial Charter: to establish and outline the financial system of the Association of Students of Oberlin College. The system shall regulate and administer the collection and allocation of the Student Activity Fee; this fee being designed for the creation of social, cultural, religious and educational activities for students; for the improvement of student life, and to augment the general student welfare.”*
4. **Membership:** The charter must specify that the organization is open to ALL Oberlin Students. It may allow non-students to be members, but if so, then it must state that a majority of its members must be Oberlin students. Organizations are strongly discouraged from demanding dues from their members. There must also be a non-discrimination clause.
5. **Officers:** Besides those officers the organization wishes to have, the organization must have one officer who acts as a liaison to the Student Union. The charter should also, as specifically as possible, give information about eligibility, method

of selection, terms of office, date of selection, and the duties of each officer. All officers must be enrolled students of Oberlin College.

6. **Finances:** If the organization wants funding, they should specify where they will get their money. Many organizations, in addition to donations, apply for money from the Student Finance Committee. If so, they must follow the rules listed in the SFC-Funded Organization section. **Being chartered does not guarantee SFC funding.** If not, the charter must still explain what will happen to disposable property should the organization disband. Groups involved in commercial operations must designate a student in the group who will meet with appropriate administrators to determine the effects of their activities on the tax-exempt status of the college.
7. **Operating Procedures:** The organization should have rules by which their meetings are organized. Many groups follow some version of Robert's Rules of Order, or any other process that is approved by the organization. This section should also indicate that an officer's list, for the upcoming year, signed by their advisor, will be filed in the Student Union Office by May 1. Organizations also must determine and state a method of publicizing their meetings and activities to the entire student body. The organization must also state that it will abide by its charter and the rules and regulations of Oberlin College.
8. **Amendment Procedures:** The charter must allow for amendments and revisions to be made. Amendments may require the approval of the Student Senate, Student Life Committee, and the JCSC.

Five founding members must sign their names at the end of the charter, and their OCMR and e-mail addresses so the Student Union can contact them, if necessary.

If the organization will be applying to the Student Finance Committee for money:

1. Under **Purpose**, remember to follow the values and principles clause with "The Preamble of the Student Financial Charter" (see above)
2. Under **Officers**, one officer must act as the treasurer, responsible to the SFC for all financial transactions.
3. Under **Finances**, the following must be included: *"Surpluses and losses will be dealt with as directed in the Student Financial Charter. In the event that the organization disbands, any disposable properties will be distributed to appropriate divisions of Oberlin College through the Dean of Student Life or designee. Remaining funds revert to the Student Finance Committee."*
4. In addition, the organization should specify the activities in which it may spend activity fee money. All activities of the organization might not be appropriate for the use of activity fee money.

### *Other Important Information*

When a group is part of a larger, non-college organization, the campus organization must be sure that the guidelines established by the larger group do not violate any College regulations. The organization must certify this, upon request, to the Student Senate.

Organizations involved in hazardous activities must submit a statement to the Student Senate from the Oberlin College lawyer and the Oberlin College insurance officer regarding liability incurred by the organization and Oberlin College during the execution of its activities.

When an organization performs a function which brings its members into contact with the student body (including, but not limited to dances, fund-raising activities, and tabling), at least half of the people involved with the organization of the activity must be students.

### *Obligations of an organization, to remain active status*

1. Restrict its activities to those in agreement with the provisions of its charter, or revise the charter.
2. Function as an organization for some part of each college year, unless otherwise specified in its charter.
3. File with the Student Union Office, **before May 1** of each year, a list of its officers, liaisons and the General Faculty advisor for the next academic year, and later, file changes to this list, as they occur. An officer list must be submitted or the organization will be suspended and its account frozen until one is turned in.
4. Comply with all regulations in this document.

### *The Charter Pending Process*

Once a charter is submitted to the Student Union Office it follows these steps before it is considered officially chartered:

1. Submitted to Student Union (date)
2. Submitted to Senate Organization Liaison (date)
3. Approved by Student Union and Senate Organization Liaison (date)
4. Submitted to Joint Chartering Sub-Committee (date)
5. Approved by Joint Chartering Sub-Committee (date)
6. Submitted to Student Senate (date)
7. Submitted to Student Life Committee
8. Approved by Student Senate and Student Life Committee (date)
9. Filed at Student Union (date)
10. General Faculty

## **Governance Chair**

The Governance Chair ensures that senators, student committee members, and the college community are informed about campus governance. The Governance Chair shall act as a resource for senators and students on the college governance system. The Governance Chair shall coordinate a project each year during orientation to teach new students about the campus governance system and activism.

### **Ex Officio**

The term “ex officio” is a Latin phrase meaning “by virtue of holding an office.” Thus, if you are, for example, the Secretary of the College, under our bylaws, you are a members of all three faculties by virtue of holding that title. “Ex officio” has nothing whatsoever to do with the issue of voting although there is a very widespread misconception about this. Whether an ex officio member votes or not is up to the body in question or to the body that created it. So again, for example, the secretary of the College is a voting member of all three faculties, but while he is, ex officio, on the General Faculty Council, he is not a voting member of that group.

## **Process Coordinator**

The Process Coordinator will publish the Senate by-laws and coordinate by-law revisions. The Process Coordinator will keep the Senate handbook up to date and look into Senate reforms. The Process Coordinator shall act as a resource on Senate’s operating procedures.

An updated constitution (if updates have occurred) should be sent at the end of the year to Kimberly Jackson Davidson, so that it can be updated for the Student Rules and Regulations.

# Senate Plenary Rules

All meetings of the Senate in plenary session are open to all Oberlin students. The door must remain open unless, due to a noise disturbance, the door is closed and a note is placed on the door. Senate may enter **executive session** by passing a process suggestion to do so. While in executive session the door to the plenary session will be closed and only Senators and those guests specifically included in the process suggestion will be allowed into the room.

The Constitution requires that Senate meetings follow the principles of **feminist process**. The process is an inclusion and consensus-oriented way of structuring debate; one of its goals is to redress the disparity of power in society.

Discussion of a proposal should begin with an **introduction** by the proposal's sponsor. The introduction should always specify Senate's role in the proposal (whether to vote on it, consider it, etc.) The floor is then open for **clarifying questions**, which should be objective and factual. Only after all clarifying questions have been asked is the floor open for general **discussion**, which is the time for opinion and debate. Speakers will be called on by the facilitator. A speaker is permitted to request a direct response from a specific individual, but no one may jump stack by asking to make a direct response. When discussion is finished, Senate should vote on any proposals that have survived. Before a vote, a proposal's sponsor is allowed a minute for closing remarks, and should restate the wording of the proposal so that all are clear about what it means to be "in favor".

**Process Suggestions** are ways of steering the direction of discussion and can contribute greatly to efficiency. Process suggestions can be made at any time, without waiting for stack, and require an immediate vote. Some common process suggestions are:

*"I move to close stack"*—if approved, anybody who wants to get on stack does so and it is closed. When stack is exhausted, discussion is over. Note: another useful process suggestion is to reopen stack.

*"I move to table this proposal"*—Tabling a proposal removes it from discussion during that meeting. This proposal is appropriate if a proposal is taking too much time when there are other pressing matters, or if it needs more work. If a proposal is tabled stack is not finished.

*"I move to limit speaking time to X minutes"*—If this motion passes, a timekeeper clocks each speech and calls "time" when a speaker has reached the limit. This motion applies only to a specific discussion and not to the rest of the meeting.

The process suggestion is useful at particularly verbose meetings or when facilitation has not been aggressive. Strict time limits, however, can hamper serious discussion of complex issues and may make people uncomfortable.

*"I move to limit/extend discussion time to X more minutes"*—Sets or extends a time limit to the discussion. When the time runs out, stack is considered closed.

## Voting

The Senate uses several types of votes. Each is more appropriate than the others for certain situations.

At least half of the Senate must vote in order to constitute a quorum. If fewer than half of the Senators vote on a proposal and a Senator calls quorum, the vote is considered disqualified.

For all votes more formal than general feelings, those who abstain are considered to count toward quorum for that vote. Here are two examples:

1. If a vote is 2 for and 3 against, with 10 abstentions, the proposal would fail due to a lack of support, not because the abstentions invalidated the vote.
2. If a vote requires a 2/3 majority, and the vote is 9 for and 4 against, with 2 abstentions, the vote would fail. A two-thirds majority is 10 in this case, 2/3 of those present, not 9, 2/3 of those voting and not abstaining.

For all votes where half of those voting are in favor, and fewer than half are opposed, the motion will carry. For example, a vote of 8-7-1 will pass.

**Process votes** are used for all process suggestions and simple organizational matters, such as closing stack, internal appointments, or setting a date for a meeting. Process votes are decided by general feelings, which each Senator should indicate with a thumbs-up, thumbs-down or thumbs to the side (indicating indifference). The facilitator decides whether the thumb array indicates general feelings of mostly positive, mostly negative, or mixed. If the response is mixed, Senate should return to discussion, while positive or negative response indicates passed or rejected, respectively. If response is mostly positive with a few strong negatives, the facilitator should ask the objectors to state their objection and a brief discussion of the objection may ensue. If a dispute cannot be resolved through compromise, a formal vote should be taken. Any Senator may call for a formal vote instead of general feelings at any time.

There are three kinds of **formal votes**, listed here in order of increasing formality. A Senator may vote for or against a proposal, or abstain. Every Senator must vote. All formal votes are decided by majority. Any Senator may call for a more formal method of voting at any time.

The **hand vote** is used for most formal proposals and for issues too contentious to be decided by a simple process vote. Hands are raised in favor, against, and in abstention, and the number of each is recorded by the Recording Secretary.

The **ballot vote** and the **roll call** are used for any issue deemed too important for a hand vote. In roll call the names of all Senators are called and their votes recorded. The roll call tabulation explicitly notes which Senators are absent on a given vote. Since votes are given one at a time, there is the possibility that one senator's vote may influence another's. If a Senator suspects this may be an issue that senator should call for a ballot vote. In a ballot vote, all votes are written down on paper along with the voter's name and tabulated by the Recording Secretary. The names of the Senators are recorded along with their votes. Absences should also be noted.

Ballot votes may also be **secret ballot votes**, in which case Senators do not write their names on their ballots. Secret ballot votes may be used for particularly sensitive issues.

When a number of proposals are on the floor, and especially, for example, when approval is being sought for a long list of charters or appointments, **slate voting** may be used to hold one formal vote for the entire list, called a slate. Any Senator may pull an item from the slate for discussion or to be voted on separately.

When two or more conflicting proposals are up for a vote at the same time, an **approval vote** may be held to determine which proposal will be accepted, if any. A hand vote is taken on each proposal to determine which of the competing proposals is the most popular. Senators may vote for as many of the competing proposals as they wish, but they may not vote against any. The most popular proposal is then subjected to a formal vote to determine whether it passes. If the proposal does not pass, the proposal receiving the next most votes in approval voting is voted on, and so on, until a proposal passes or all have failed.

Proposals may only be made by Senators, although the authors need not be Senators. All proposals deemed by the author or proposer as meriting a formal vote are to be submitted in writing by noon on the Thursday directly preceding the plenary session at which they are to be proposed. 18 copies should be made available outside of the Senate office for pick-up. Counter-proposals that arise in the course of a discussion are exempt from this process. If possible, Senators should be given the time to look over a proposal and give suggestions before plenary session.

All proposals not written by a Senator must be reviewed for proper format by a Senator. The reviewing Senator will be responsible for responding to any format concerns that are raised in session. Format is defined as proposal structure.

## Online Voting

Senate has in the past moved to online voting if there is a time-sensitive matter that may need a vote during the week. This should be avoided if at all possible as proper discussion cannot be had. However, it is occasionally necessary. Senate may vote in a process to use, usually allowing a certain amount of time for online discussion before voting may begin.

## Feminist Process

Student Senate Plenary Sessions are run by the Feminist Process. This is a system of conducting business that is intended to address the disparity of power in our society and make sure that everyone is heard. This is mainly accomplished by structuring debate to include more people through a voting procedure that lets an individual voice strong concerns in a prominent manner. It strives for consensus, though it does not mandate it, but by incorporating everyone's ideas attempts to reach a compromise that everyone can live.

The system is set up to frequently take the pulse of the group in the form of "general feelings." Though the discussion is being conducted by the facilitator, the will of the group as a whole is the guiding force in the process. The facilitator will often ask for general feelings, indicated by a thumbs up, down, or indifferent horizontal as a way to gauge how best to shape the discussion or meeting. This is an important mechanism that quickly and effectively makes sure that the overall will of the group is being followed.

If someone wishes to speak, that person must signal to the facilitator, who will write down the name of that person. The facilitator may also designate another senator to take stack. Jumping stack (speaking out of turn) is to be abhorred.

Feminist Process requires competent facilitation. If this is in place, then meetings can be productive and empowering. Good facilitation helps the group focus and act in a democratic way and gives everyone an equal chance to participate. Often the facilitator does not take a strong role in voicing concerns and issues. When the facilitator does voice the facilitator's views, that person needs to make a distinction before the comment between the person's role as a facilitator and the person's role as a participant. Co-facilitation is also allowed, and may be beneficial.

Good Facilitators:

1. Make sure the environment is conducive to group participation through the elimination of side conversations and other disturbances.
2. Make sure that the participants know what is being asked of them, whether it's general discussion or a more specific process, such as voting.
3. Carefully think about on whom to call, when and how often. They do not let a few people dominate the conversation, which is why stack is not first come, first serve. People often don't participate if they are uncomfortable with the dynamics; the facilitator's job is to make them feel comfortable while stressing the importance of participation.
4. Do not let people speak out of turn, nor let them engage in back and forth dialogue.
5. Do not let people ramble or become repetitious—a facilitator breaking in on someone who is doing this should not be viewed by the speaker as a personal insult, but rather as an important key to keeping the discussion moving.
6. Go into a meeting with a plan about how to organize each discussion.
7. Do not let minority or dissenting opinions be ignored. Before closing a discussion it is vital to make sure that everyone is ready to move on.
8. Do not let people direct respond to the speaker, unless requested by the speaker or the facilitator.

9. Write down the major points that people are making. Periodic summary of what has been said, what the goals of the discussion are, and how much time is left helps keep the group on track and cuts down on repetition.
10. Bring the discussion to a concrete end, allowing the group a sense of closure and accomplishment.

The other side of the coin is good participation and “self-facilitation.” This is equally as important to a successful meeting.

#### Good Participants:

1. Listen. It’s not as obvious as one may think. Take notes when they see a good facilitator. Consider what that person did and what they want to mimic.
2. Ask questions if they have them.
3. Self-facilitate. Don’t repeat arguments that have already been stated in discussion or in the proposal itself. Part of professionalism is being polite.
4. Take notes before they speak, which helps prevent them from rambling.
5. Respect the stack. A direct response is used when a person not speaking has factual information to provide to the person speaking. Direct responses are only appropriate if they clarify some factual aspect of the issue, not for furthering an opinion (e.g. “I think the GF meeting is on Wednesday, but I’d like a direct response from someone who really knows.”)
6. Speak concisely and precisely.
7. Don’t use references only a few people will understand. If they are bringing up an obscure point, ask if anyone needs an explanation.
8. Don’t take things personally. Don’t mistake criticism of an idea for an attack on one’s character. Respect others’ opinions. Opposition is inevitable.

## Feminist Process in Plenary Session

The time for clarifying questions is restricted to questions that are objective, factual, and aim to clarify the proposal. For instance, “when will this proposal take effect?” is acceptable, but “Isn’t this proposal a bad idea?” is not. Before moving on to general discussion, all of the senators should fully understand what is being discussed. Stack is taken by the facilitator during clarifying questions.

After clarifying questions, the facilitator takes a process suggestion to move on to discussion. Discussion is the time for Senators and guests to offer their arguments and suggest any amendments.

When one or more proposals are on the table, after stack has been finished, the facilitator asks for general feelings on voting. If general feelings are negative, the proposal may be discussed further, tabled, or sent to a subgroup for revisions.

If general feelings are positive, the facilitator asks if any Senator has a major objection to voting. Any Senator who objects explains why and there is a brief discussion only about the objection. If the dispute cannot be resolved through compromise, the facilitator calls for a formal vote to override the objection and normal procedures follow.

Evaluations come at the end of each meeting to give each person a chance to comment on the process of the meeting. Important considerations include whether the process was followed, the effectiveness of the facilitation, whether everyone got a chance to participate, whether the discussion was intimidating or uncomfortable, etc. Both positive and negative points should be raised and solutions offered. Use this time for constructive criticism.

# Your Guide to Plenary Sessions

**All Senate meetings are open to the public** (unless Senate is in Executive Session). You are welcome to join us at our meetings, which are traditionally held on Sundays from 7 PM to 10 PM in Wilder 215.

1. Meetings start with Check-ins, where we go around the table.
  - 1.1. Check-ins are a good time to introduce yourself and state your purpose for attending the meeting.
2. If you are bringing an item to Senate, you will be placed under “Outside Business.”
  - 2.1. Outside Business is always on the front of the agenda.
3. After you have discussed your item with Senate, you are free to leave, although you are also welcome to stay for part of or the rest of our meeting.

Student Senate operates using a revised feminist process.

1. We have a rotating facilitator at meetings who takes “stack”.
2. Stack is simply a list of people who wish to speak.
3. To get on stack, signal the facilitator, who will put your name down.
4. Stack is not first-come first-serve; the facilitator is encouraged to use stack to adjust power dynamics and strive towards consensus.
5. As a non-senator, you may fully contribute to the discussion.

**However, only senators may make proposals, give general feelings, or vote.**

Discussion starts with the person who is making a proposal or bringing forth a discussion topic.

The discussion then moves into a stack for clarifying questions, which is restricted to questions that are objective, factual and aim to clarify the proposal. This is not a time to voice opinions on the proposal. After clarifying questions, the facilitator will move into discussion.

When stack runs out, Senate will move into a vote or move onto its next agenda item. A Senator may make a process suggestion to close stack. The facilitator will then take general feelings of senators. Note that general feelings do not operate the same as in OSCA: a thumbs-up is positive, a thumbs-sideways is indifferent, apathetic, or mixed, and a thumbs-down is negative. If stack closes, there will be one last opportunity to jump stack. Signal the facilitator and you will be placed on stack.

During a discussion:

1. **Signal the facilitator to get on stack and talk.**
2. Make a C to ask a clarifying question to someone who has just spoken.
3. Make a D to ask someone who has just spoken if you can give a factual direct response.
4. Senators may also make Ps if they have a process suggestion or proposal, as these always jump to the front of stack.