CONSTITUTION OF THE FACULTY SENATE
(Revised Spring 2012)

Article 1 – Purpose

The Faculty Senate will represent the Tarleton State University faculty in all matters of general faculty interest raised by senators, senate committees, the university president, petitions from other administrative bodies or officials, full-time faculty members, part-time teaching personnel with no administrative responsibilities, and librarians. The Faculty Senate is the principal liaison between the faculty and the Academic Council and/or the university president. The Faculty Senate will act for and on behalf of the faculty and will express the faculty’s consensus position on all matters brought before it.

Article 2 – Composition

Section 2.1 – Membership
Each academic department will elect one department member from their ranks of full-time teaching faculty (other than department heads) and part-time teaching faculty holding the rank of instructor or higher (who do not have official administrative responsibilities) to serve as department representative. Representatives of all academic departments and one librarian will compose the Faculty Senate’s elected members.

Section 2.2 – Eligibility
To be eligible for election to the Faculty Senate, a faculty member must have a minimum of two years teaching experience at Tarleton or another university (Departments where none of the faculty meet this qualification are exempt from this requirement.). The library representative to the senate will have two years of university experience. Individuals are not eligible to serve two successive full terms of office.

Section 2.3 – Election
Departments will elect senators in April, with senators whose terms are expiring being responsible for initiating the process of electing his or her replacement. Each department’s full-time faculty members (not including the department head), as well as part-time faculty members holding rank of instructor or higher who do not have official administrative responsibilities, are entitled to vote. In the case of a department that has only one eligible member, that member will automatically be the department representative.

A majority of a department’s eligible voters will constitute a quorum for selecting a senator. For election, a candidate must have a majority (greater than 50%) of the votes cast to be votes in his or her favor. The elected members will assume office on the first day of the fall semester following their election.

Section 2.4 – Terms of Office
Elected members of the Faculty Senate will hold office for three academic calendar years (September 1 – August 31) barring termination from the senate for causes listed in the “Attendance, Removal from Office, and Actual and De Facto Resignation” section below.
The elected members of the senate will be divided into three classes, each with a term of three years, maintaining as closely as possible a mathematical balance among the classes. As new seats are created, the terms of office for members in each class will end in different years in order to maintain the mathematical balance as closely as possible. If a senator is elected president-elect of the senate, his or her term of office may be extended beyond three years if such time is needed to fulfill his or her duties as president-elect, president, and past president. This exception will also apply to a senator elected secretary/treasurer whose term of office may extend beyond his or her third year.

Section 2.5 – Attendance, Removal from Office, and Actual and De Facto Resignation

Any senator whose department is unrepresented for three regular or special called Faculty Senate meetings during the academic calendar year (September 1 – August 31), will automatically be removed. The Faculty Senate president will draft a letter to the senator’s department head delineating the senator’s record of absences and requesting that the department head initiate the process for selecting a new departmental senator who will begin his or her term at the beginning of the semester following the previous senator’s removal. A senator who is absent for three senate meetings but has provided for departmental representation will not be automatically removed, but the senate president will contact him or her to ascertain the implication of his or her absences. If the senate president ascertains that the senator will be unable to attend future senate meetings, he or she, with concurrence of the Executive Board, may draft a letter to the senator’s department head suggesting that the department head initiate the process for selecting a new departmental senator who will begin his or her term at the beginning of the semester following the previous senator’s removal. In addition, individual departments may, at their discretion, elect a temporary substitute senator for a senator who will be taking a leave of absence of one semester or less, or who will be absent for the summer.

A senator may be removed from office and replaced by a new senator based on a majority vote, initiated by the department head, of all faculty members in the department the senator represents. Faculty Senate membership will be vacated for a departmentally terminated senator on the date the department head notifies the senate president in writing that the department has removed its representative from his or her senatorial office as the result of a departmental meeting and vote of the department. The department’s new senator will assume senator’s position immediately subsequent to that vote.

In addition, membership on the Faculty Senate will terminate on the date that any senator becomes ineligible for the office of faculty senator as a result of any of the following conditions. His or her department will elect a representative to complete the unexpired term, with the new member taking office immediately.

- **Assumption of a Disqualifying Position**—A senator terminates his or her position as faculty senator office by accepting appointment to or assuming the duties of a university position that makes him or her ineligible for Faculty Senate service.

- **Initiation of an Extended Leave of Absence**—A senator terminates his or her position as faculty senator upon beginning a leave of absence of more than one semester.
- **Resignation from the University**—A senator terminates his or her position as faculty senator upon his or her resignation from the university.

- **Resignation from the Faculty Senate**—A senator terminates his or her position as faculty senator upon the submission of written notification of his or her resignation from the senate to the senate president.

**Article 3 – The Faculty Senate’s Operation**

**Section 3.1 – Meetings**
The Faculty Senate will hold regular meetings each month during the academic year. The senate president may call a meeting at any time he or she deems advisable, provided that at least one day notice is given. Senators unable to physically attend meetings may attend using real-time distance conferencing with approval of faculty senate president. Regular faculty senate meetings will be held on the main Tarleton campus.

- **Quorum** – The presence of a majority of the Faculty Senate’s total membership will constitute a quorum for the transaction of all senate business.


- **Open Meetings** – Faculty Senate meetings will be open to members of the faculty unless, by a two-thirds vote of the senators present, the senate decides that the meeting should be held in executive session.

- **Special Meetings** – The Faculty Senate president may call a meeting at any time he or she deems advisable, provided that at least one day notice is given. Additionally, *Robert’s Rules of Order* stipulates that “a meeting may also be called at the request of the Executive Board or with a written request of ten members.” The call will state the meeting’s purpose and will be sent to all members at least three days before the meeting.

**Section 3.2 – Officers**

(1) The president, president-elect, past president, secretary/treasurer, and parliamentarian will constitute the Faculty Senate’s officers. The faculty senate president will be a member of the tenured faculty. The senate will elect the president-elect and secretary/treasurer at its final scheduled spring semester meeting, and its parliamentarian at its first scheduled meeting of the academic year’s fall term. Election of officers will be by a show of hands or verbal acknowledgement. In the event an officer vacates his or her office before the end of his or her term, a vote will be held as the first agenda item at the next meeting of faculty senate to elect an interim officer to complete the remainder of the term.
The secretary/treasurer will hold a two-year term of office. All other positions will be for one-year terms.

- **The Faculty Senate President** – The Faculty Senate president will call senate meetings, and preside at all senate meetings. He or she will also appoint members to ad hoc committees, and, at the first scheduled fall meeting and with the concurrence of the senate, will appoint senate representatives to the Curriculum Committee, the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Committee, and Employment Benefits Committee. The Faculty Senate president report all communication from the university president to the senate, and transmit the written minutes of each senate meeting and any other written communication the senate directs to the university president. In carrying out this office, the president will faithfully follow any mandate the senate has properly expressed by voting in the manner this document specifies. The senate president may have a voice in a senate meeting at any time he or she desires, and will vote in case of a tie. The Faculty Senate president will also serve as the senate's Academic Council representative.

- **The Faculty Senate President-Elect** – The Faculty Senate’s president-elect will call and preside at senate meetings in the event of the President’s absence, and preside over meetings when the president vacates the chair and calls upon him or her to do so. After completing his or her term as president-elect of the Faculty Senate, this officer will automatically become senate president at the senate’s first fall term meeting of the next academic year. Following his or her term as president, he or she will assume the office of past president at the first fall term meeting of the succeeding academic year.

- **The Faculty Senate Past President** – The senate’s past president will serve an advisory role to the Faculty Senate’s president and president-elect.

- **The Faculty Senate Secretary/Treasurer** – The secretary/treasurer will keep full and faithful minutes of the proceedings of each senate meeting and present a written transcript of the minutes to each senator. In consultation with the Faculty Senate president, the secretary/treasurer will prepare, in writing, the call and agenda of each meeting to be presented by the senate president to each senator at least 72 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting. The secretary/treasurer will write and transmit, in such form as directed by the Faculty Senate president, all communications ordered by the senate or the senate president. In addition to the meetings’ minutes, the secretary/treasurer will keep in good order, from the inception of the senate, all transactions, communications to or from the senate, and all other records the senate directs him or her to keep and will make them readily available to any senate or faculty member, the university president, or members of the Board of Regents.

- **The Faculty Senate Parliamentarian** – The Faculty Senate’s parliamentarian will acquaint himself or herself with parliamentary procedure. He or she will advise the
president, upon his or her request, on matters concerning parliamentary procedure. In the parliamentarian’s absence, the president will ask another member to act in this position. The parliamentarian’s rulings may be put to a vote of a majority of the senate.

**Section 3.3 – Executive Board**
The Faculty Senate’s officers will constitute the Executive Board. The senate president will chair the Executive Board. In the event of both the president’s and the president elect’s absence, the remaining members of the senate’s the Executive Board will designate a temporary chairman. The board will meet upon the chair’s call, at the request of the university president, or upon the request of any three board members. The Executive Board is charged with the preparing an agenda for each senate meeting, will serve as a Committee on Committees, call senate meetings when deemed necessary, and consider matters that the senate president or the senate body bring before it. The Executive Board will meet in sufficient time in advance of each scheduled senate meeting to allow senators to receive their written agendas at least 72 hours prior to each scheduled meeting.

**Section 3.4 – Special Committees**
The Faculty Senate will create standing and ad hoc committees as it deems necessary. The senate’s standing committees will have the power to originate proposals in their areas of oversight, hold open meetings to explore campus opinion, and consider proposals the senate refers to them. Upon the senate’s or the senate president’s order, or upon written petition signed by at least twenty members of the faculty and delivered to the senate president, any topic or any aspect of any topic pertinent to the work of a committee will be considered by the committee and included in its report to the senate.

**Section 3.4.1 – Special Committee Membership**
All university faculty, administrators, staff and students will be eligible to serve on senate committees, but every committee chair will be a Faculty Senate member. A standing committee’s chair may request that the senate replace members for non-performance of committee duties.

**Section 3.4.2 – Special Committee Terms**
Unless senate action creates their committees at a later date, standing committee members will be elected at the first senate meeting of the fall term in each academic year, and will serve until the beginning of the following fall term. Ad hoc committee members will serve until the committee presents its final report to the senate or until the senate dismisses them.

**Section 3.4.3 – Special Committee Reports**
All committees will report to the senate in writing, and may also be present reports orally if the committee desires to do so and/or if the senate requests an oral presentation. Along with any reports a committee desires to present or that the senate may request, the senate requires all standing committees to present annual report.

**Section 3.4.4 – Special Committee Meetings**
All committee meetings will be open unless otherwise ordered by the senate or provided for in the senate by-laws. The time and place of any open committee meeting will be adequately published at least three days before the meeting is to occur. A committee meeting may be called by a petition signed by twenty or more faculty members and delivered to the senate president. At least one meeting of each ad hoc committee, and one meeting each semester of each standing committee, will be an open meeting.

**Section 3.4.5 – Special Committee Quorum**
A quorum for any senate committee will be a majority of the members of the committee.

**Section 3.4.6 – Subcommittees and Minority Reports**
The committees may appoint subcommittees without restriction, but all reports subcommittees submit to the senate require a majority vote from the parent committee for adoption. A committee’s minority will have the right to present a minority report to the senate at the time the majority report is presented.

**Article 4 – Ratification and Amendments**

**Section 4.1 – Ratification**
The ratification and adoption of this constitution will be accomplished upon the approving vote of a majority of an established quorum of the members of the faculty voting in a general election called for the purpose.

Following the faculty’s ratification and adoption, this constitution will be submitted to the Tarleton State University president and the chairman of the Texas A&M University System’s Board of Regents, entering into force upon the Board of Regents’ approval. Current members of the Faculty Senate will constitute the initial membership of the Faculty Senate under this constitution.

**Section 4.2 – Amendments**
Amendments will take effect upon a three-fourths affirmative vote (75% or better) by the faculty voting in a general election called for the purpose of this document’s amendment and upon the subsequent approval of the university president. The senate will propose, by two-thirds vote, amendments to this constitution to the faculty, and the senate will provide each faculty member with copies of proposed amendments at least thirty days before a faculty vote.

Amendments may also be proposed by petitions containing signatures of 40% of the faculty. Amendments initiated by faculty petition will become effective upon a two-thirds affirmative vote by the faculty, and upon the subsequent approval of the university president.

**Article 5 – Faculty Senate By-Laws**
It will be the Faculty Senate’s responsibility to provide for the preparation and publication of any necessary by-laws conforming to the provisions of this constitution. By-laws will be adopted upon the approving vote of a simple majority of the faculty members voting in an election or a
meeting called for the purpose. Copies of proposed by-laws will be provided in writing to the faculty at least five days prior to such an election or meeting. The Faculty Senate will be the sole judge of its own rules and by-laws. Ratification or amendment of the by-laws will be accomplished upon the approving vote of a two-thirds majority of the Faculty Senate members.

Section 5.1 – Committee Oversight
The Faculty Senate establishes the following responsibilities to the university committees under its purview.

- Select university committees will have a Faculty Senate member as a regular or ex-officio member as liaison between the committee and the senate’s resources and oversight functions. While each committee should have significant autonomy, the senate maintains the ability to call special meetings, if necessary due to unforeseen and/or impactful contingencies, to consider committee business. In some cases, a committee may send or present confidential information to the senate. All senators are obligated to preserve the information’s confidentiality.

- At the end of each academic year, the Faculty Senate president will submit a summary of each respective committee’s activities to the university president and vice president for academic affairs. The report may include evaluations of the committee's effectiveness and how well the senate and committee worked together.

Section 5.2 – Procedures for Initiating a Confidence Vote for Administrators
Tarleton State University’s primary mission is to educate its students. To fulfill that mission, administrators must maintain a relationship with faculty, staff, and students that promotes academic freedom, scholarly activity, teaching excellence, and creative endeavor. Specifically, Tarleton administrators are responsible for engaging in activities and adopting policies that are consistent with the university's mission and advancing the achievement of the university's goals. They are charged with fulfilling their assigned duties competently and with due care and professional integrity, complying with the laws of the United States and the State of Texas as well as the policies of the Texas A&M University System, and using the university's resources prudently and productively while supporting the academic, cultural, social, and personal growth of Tarleton students and maintaining open and appropriate communication with those faculty, students, and staff whom their actions affect.

When faculty are concerned that an administrator is not performing his or her duties in a responsible manner, or when there is evidence of a flagrant violation of the responsibilities outlined above, faculty may lose confidence in the administrator's leadership, jeopardizing the close relationship that is necessary to fulfill Tarleton's mission.

The concerned faculty should first access the appropriate chain of command in order to communicate their complaint the administrator whom they believe is not performing satisfactorily and attempt to resolve the complaint. If unsatisfactory conditions persist, the concerns should be presented to the administrator's immediate supervisor with a request for corrective measures. If the problem is not resolved, the faculty may wish to initiate the
process leading to a vote of confidence on the administrator's fitness to continue his or her position. The purpose of this section of the document is to detail the procedures for initiating a vote of confidence in such circumstances.

To initiate the process, faculty must communicate their complaints in writing to the Faculty Senate president, who will contact the chair of the Administrative Review Committee, a university standing subcommittee. This committee will confer with the concerned faculty, the appropriate administrator, and the Faculty Senate, and decide if the complaint warrants initiation of the confidence vote process.

If it is decided that a vote of confidence should be pursued, the committee will notify the administrator and his or her supervisor and distribute ballots to all full-time faculty in the area involved (department, college, university) to ensure that the majority favors proceeding with the vote. An explanation of the conditions that led to Faculty Senate involvement and consideration for a confidence vote will be given on the ballot.

If a majority of the faculty to whom ballots are distributed favor a confidence vote, and there is no resolution to the problem within ten working days, the committee will circulate ballots to all regularly appointed full-time faculty in the area involved for a vote of confidence or no confidence for the administrator. It is imperative that the anonymity of the voting faculty be ensured for all voting processes.

The Administrative Confidence Committee will count the ballots from the confidence vote and report the result to the Faculty Senate president, who will forward the outcome to the appropriate administrators. The result of a confidence vote on the university president will be forwarded to the chancellor and chair of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

1The term includes those employees of Tarleton State University with administrative titles and responsibilities.

2A complaint or grievance initiated by an individual faculty member should follow the procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook.