

Senate Election: Getting Involved



STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Senate is important to Ryerson students because it decides academic policies and priorities for the University. Students are important to Senate because students comprise about a third of Senate's elected membership. This document tells you a little about Senate and how you can participate in its work. If you want to discuss Senate with someone who knows about it, see your Department Chair or School Director, your Dean, or the Secretary of Senate.

WHAT IS SENATE?

Senate is Ryerson's academic decision-making body. The Ryerson Act, which established the University, set up a bicameral governance system consisting of a Board of Governors and a Senate. The Senate is responsible for determining the curricula for all programs, admission and graduation requirements, conducting examinations, awarding certificates, and bachelor's, master's, doctoral and honorary degrees. It essentially establishes all academic policies, and makes academic decisions based upon these policies.

To assist with its work, Senate has established Departmental/School and Faculty Councils in which curriculum and academic policies are formulated and through which they are presented to Senate for information or review and decision. There are also a wide variety of standing committees which work on specific aspects of academic policy and provide reports and recommendations to Senate.

WHAT IS SENATE'S STRUCTURE?

Much of Senate's work is carried out in its standing committees or in *ad hoc* committees established for specific purposes. These committees encompass all areas of academic interest at the University. Committees examine and debate issues within their respective terms of reference and make recommendations to Senate.

WHAT IS THE COMPOSITION OF SENATE?

Senate is, by statute, made up of administrators, faculty, students and alumni. The President of the University serves as its Chair. There are many administrators, who serve *ex-officio*, or because of their position at Ryerson, 6 Senate Associates (non-voting), 32 elected faculty members, 1 elected Librarian, 16 elected student representatives and 2 elected alumni.

HOW OFTEN AND WHEN DOES SENATE MEET?

Senate usually meets the first Tuesday of each month from October until June (with the exception of January). The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m. Meetings that are being held in person are in POD250

on the second floor of Jorgenson Hall. Note: Some Senate meetings for the 2022-2023 academic year may be held via Zoom Video Conference.

Members receive an agenda approximately one week in advance, and are expected to read it in preparation for the meeting. Attendance at all the meetings is expected, but if a member cannot attend, he or she is expected to email regrets to the Senate office. The Senate Bylaw establishes clear attendance policies.

WHAT IS ON THE SENATE AGENDA?

The agenda includes reports from the President, who is the Chair of Senate, the Secretary of Senate, and Senate Committees. There is a time for announcements and members can present motions or give notice of a motion that is to follow at a subsequent meeting. Decision by Senate binds the members of Ryerson because of the authority of Senate under the *Ryerson Act*, subject only to the higher authority of the Board if there are financial implications.

Members may initiate proposals for Senate's consideration directly or through the governing structure for ultimate consideration by Senate. Often, proposals brought directly to Senate for decision without wider and prior debate and discussions are referred to committee for review before being given final consideration by Senate.

Senate follows *Bourinot's Rules of Order* when its own Bylaws does not provide a procedure.

The agenda package for the Senate meeting is available on the Senate website one week prior to the meeting.

WHAT ARE SENATE'S STANDING COMMITTEES AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

In addition to the three major committees of Senate (Academic Governance and Priorities Committee; Senate Priorities Committee, and Scholarly Research and Creative Activity Committee), there are several standing committees: Awards and Ceremonials Committee; Academic Standards Committee; Senate Appeals Committee; Learning & Teaching Committee; and Research Ethics Board. The Terms of Reference of these committees is detailed in the Senate Bylaws, and can be found on the Senate website (<https://www.ryerson.ca/senate/senate-meetings/act-bylaws-guidelines/>).

These Committees carry out detailed work on behalf of Senate. Depending on their terms of reference, they may make decisions on behalf of Senate or return to Senate with their recommendations. For example, the decision of the Appeals Committee on a student's appeal is final because Senate has delegated this authority. The Academic Standards Committee, on the other hand, always brings recommendations to Senate for its consideration and decision.

Some committees meet frequently. For example, the Academic Standards Committee meets weekly and the Learning and Teaching Committee meets once a term. Others, like the Awards and Ceremonials Committee meet when there is business to transact.

There are student representatives on all of the Standing Committees of Senate.

The Secretary of Senate supports the work of Senate and its committees. The duties of the Secretary are set out in the Bylaws.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENTAL COUNCILS?

To ensure that the academic governance structure reflects Ryerson's academic range and diversity, Senate has established subsidiary bodies at the school/department level. Student membership on this council is not less than one-fourth and not more than one-third of the total voting faculty. These councils meet at least twice each year. Each has a bylaw governing its own affairs, which must be consistent with the policies and procedures of, and approved by, Senate. The School of Graduate Studies and the Chang School of Continuing Education also have councils. There is also a Liberal Studies Council that reports to Senate.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

The value of Senate to student members lies in the experience that they derive in committee work; through contact with other student representatives, faculty and administrators; in understanding the nature of academic policy issues and how academic policy can and should be formulated; in voting on decisions and in the value of listing Senate membership on a *curriculum vitae*. Senate needs committed student members to ensure that the student interest is reflected in academic policy and curriculum decisions.

HOW DO I NOMINATE SOMEONE TO BE A STUDENT CANDIDATE FOR SENATE OR HOW DO I BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR MY FACULTY OR AN AT-LARGE CANDIDATE?

Nominators, voters and candidates must be persons registered in a program or course of study at the University that leads to a degree, diploma or certificate of the University.

Nomination forms are available at the Senate website at <https://www.ryerson.ca/senate/elections/>

NOTE: THERE IS A MANDATORY INFORMATION SESSION FOR ALL NOMINEES JUST BEFORE THE ELECTION (see <https://www.ryerson.ca/senate/elections/electschedguide.pdf> for details).

To be nominated, simply obtain a nomination form, and complete and submit it according to the instructions on the form.

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