

**CHARTER OF  
THE FACULTY ASSEMBLY  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM**

March 4, 1994 (amended as shown)  
Updated by Dr. John Waterbor and Ms. Celeste Young, April, 1999  
September 22, 2006 (amended as shown)  
Updated by Dr. Christopher S. Coffey, October 2008 (amended as shown)  
Updated by Dr. Shannon M. Bailey, December 2009 (amended as shown)

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**I. NAME**

The members of the faculty of the School of Public Health, collectively, constitute the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**.

**II. MISSION**

The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** is responsible for the development and discharge of responsibilities in three areas: academic affairs, faculty affairs and other affairs. This **MISSION** statement can not be all inclusive and so lists only the major responsibilities of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** in each area.

**A. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

1. Degree Programs - The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** is responsible for approving all degree programs to be offered by the School. It is also responsible for approving all programs that are to be terminated for other than administrative reasons. These responsibilities can not be delegated.
2. Program Curricula - The approval of the content of specific courses and the structure of programs of study is the responsibility of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. This responsibility ordinarily will be delegated to the Educational Policy Committee but approval remains subject to review by the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. The particulars of such delegation and review shall be incorporated into the bylaws of the Educational Policy Committee.
3. Admissions and Graduation - The development and adoption of policies that underlie the specific criteria for admission to, and graduation from, the School=s various programs is the responsibility of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. The development and application, to individuals, of these criteria are delegated to the

committee on Admissions and Graduation (*amendment, 07/17/98*). The particulars of such delegation shall be incorporated into the bylaws of the Admissions and Graduation Committee. The application of the criteria is done with the oversight of the Dean's Office by the Associate Deans for Academic Affairs and for Student Affairs.

## **B. FACULTY AFFAIRS**

The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** is responsible for faculty affairs that are not explicitly within the authority of the Dean's Office. These affairs include, but are not limited to: a) Development and review of the criteria to be met for an individual to be placed in each of the respective faculty ranks. This responsibility is ordinarily delegated to the Faculty Affairs Committee which serves both as advisor to the Dean and as advisor to the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. The particulars of this delegation shall be incorporated into the bylaws of the Faculty Affairs Committee; b) Issues of faculty development and recognition such as the development of policies guiding the award of sabbatical leave, emeritus status, recognition for outstanding teaching; c) Issues of the nature of a potential grievance that involve at least one faculty member may, with the approval of that faculty member, be brought to the **FACULTY COUNCIL** (an arm of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**, see Section VII, below) for advisory resolution; d) Other issues that involve the faculty as may arise.

## **C. OTHER AFFAIRS**

The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** of the School of Public Health has a vested interest in all matters that impact the School to any meaningful degree. This includes matters that are not explicitly within the authority of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** requires that its Chair seek information on such matters and report to it items of concern.

### **III. MEMBERSHIP**

A person who holds any faculty appointment (primary, secondary, adjunct or emeritus) in the School of Public Health is a member of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** and shall be permitted to attend faculty meetings. All such persons have the same rights under the Charter except where specified otherwise.

### **IV. MEETINGS**

The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** may be convened for a **REGULAR** meeting or for a **SPECIAL** meeting.

#### **A. REGULAR**

The Chair of the Faculty (see below) must call a **REGULAR** meeting of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** once per academic semester except during the summer semester. The Chair may call a **REGULAR** meeting during the summer semester.

#### **B. SPECIAL**

The Chair of the Faculty shall call a **SPECIAL** meeting of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** when: a) five or more of the primary and secondary faculty members of the School of Public Health so request it of the Chair in writing; or, b) four of the six Faculty Councilors so request in writing.

#### **C. AGENDA**

The Chair of the Faculty shall set the agenda for all meetings. For a **REGULAR** meeting the Chair shall accommodate all requests for a place on the agenda or mention those items that have been excluded. For a **SPECIAL** meeting no agenda need be prepared and the meeting shall usually be limited to the items stated to be the basis for calling the meeting.

**D. PROCEDURE**

The Chair of the Faculty, or designee, shall preside at all meetings of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** and shall conduct them in an orderly and efficient fashion.

**E. NOTIFICATION**

A REGULAR meeting shall be announced at least two weeks prior, and the agenda shall be distributed at least one week prior, to the scheduled time of the meeting. A SPECIAL meeting shall, if possible, be announced at least twenty-four hours before being held. Announcements and agenda need not, as a matter of course, be sent to adjunct or emeritus faculty members. However, any adjunct or emeritus faculty member may be included in such distributions by so requesting it of the Chair of the Faculty.

**V. VOTING**

A vote may be called by the Chair of the Faculty provided that the following conditions are met:

a) a simple majority of the primary full-time faculty is present at a meeting of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** and the item to be voted on was so designated on the agenda or the vote pertains to a procedural matter. New items of consequence may not be introduced from the floor and voted on at the same meeting

- OR -

b) a mail vote is to be held. Such a vote will be held whenever two or more of the Councilors agree to it.

Ordinarily, voting done at meetings will be by a show of hands. However, a written, secret ballot will be used if that is requested by five or more members of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** or deemed appropriate by the Chair of the Faculty.

The right to make a MOTION or to VOTE on all issues is restricted to primary appointees of the Faculty who are not members of the Dean's Office. The right to make nominations is given to all members of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**.

## **VI. CHAIR OF THE FACULTY**

### **A. FUNCTIONS**

The Chair of the Faculty shall:

- a) set the agenda for all meetings of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** (see Section IV.C.) and of the **FACULTY COUNCIL**.
- b) preside at all meetings of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** and of the **FACULTY COUNCIL**.
- c) represent the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** on the Executive Committee of the School (with the permission of the Dean).
- d) oversee elections and voting conducted by the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**.
- e) represent the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** at ceremonial and at certain other occasions.
- f) conduct such other duties as directed by the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** or by the **FACULTY COUNCIL**.

### **B. ELECTION**

The Chair of the Faculty shall be a full-time primary appointee in the School of Public Health and not a member of the Dean's Office. The procedure for electing a Chair of the Faculty shall be as follows:

**Phase I:** A mail ballot is sent to all full-time primary faculty members, who are asked to circle the names of ALL full-time primary faculty members who they could support as Chair of the Faculty.

**Phase II:** In descending order, those faculty members who received the most votes will be approached to determine whether they would serve if elected, until 2 interested individuals (or more, if there is a tie in the voting) are identified. A “regular” election will then be held to elect the Chair of the Faculty (*amendment, 07/17/98*).

The Chair of the Faculty shall serve a *three-year term (amendment, 01/16/98)* and, if re-elected, may serve a second, but not a third, consecutive term.

## **VII. FACULTY COUNCIL**

### **A. FUNCTIONS**

The FACULTY COUNCIL has three (*amendment, 12/18/09*) major functions.

First, the Faculty Councilors represent, and are empowered to act in the stead of, the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**, when the majority of them judge that they should do so. This is expected to occur only in circumstances when it is impractical to convene the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**. Any decisions or actions taken by the FACULTY COUNCIL may be implemented immediately on an interim basis but are to be reviewed by the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** at its next meeting.

Second, the Faculty Council shall constitute the **Faculty Grievance Committee (FGC)**. **Duties** of the FGC are to serve as a liaison between the SOPH faculty members and administrators at the department or school level to ensure that grievances are addressed and possibly resolved at the departmental or school level. Upon request by the faculty grievant, the FGC shall initiate and follow-up on actions deemed important for resolving the reported grievance. **Membership** - The faculty councilor from each department serves as a voting member with the Chair of the Faculty Assembly serving as the non-voting chair. Individuals named in a formal grievance are ineligible to serve on the committee to consider that grievance.

An alternate member will be named by the Chair of the Faculty. The grievant may request that specific members not serve, or, any member who believes he or she cannot act in an impartial manner shall be excused from serving and the Chair of the Faculty will appoint a new member from that department. Additional guidelines for SOPH grievance procedures are contained in Appendix A. (*amendment, 12/18/09*)

The third function of the FACULTY COUNCIL is as an advisory body to the Chair of the Faculty. (*amendment, 12/18/09*)

#### **B. MEMBERSHIP/ELECTION**

The FACULTY COUNCIL shall consist of the Chair of the Faculty and one faculty member from each department, so that all departments will be represented. Only council members have voting privileges (*amended, 10/31/08*). All Councilors must be primary appointees in the School of Public Health and not members of the Dean's Office. The Councilors are to be elected at large by primary appointees in the Faculty to represent the FACULTY ASSEMBLY at large. They shall serve for *three* years (*amendment, 01/16/98*). When possible, the terms of the Councilors, other than the Chair, shall be staggered so that one-third of the Council seats are open for election each year.

#### **VIII. REPLACEMENT OR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

If a Councilor is unable to complete a term for any reason a replacement to complete that term shall be appointed by the Chair of the Faculty. If the Chair is unable to complete a term a new Chair must be elected following the stated procedures.

Any, and any combination, of the members of the FACULTY COUNCIL, including the Chair of the Faculty, may be removed from office. If five members of the FACULTY

ASSEMBLY so request, a vote of confidence will be called pertaining to the Councilor(s) in question. If two-thirds of all (not the number voting) primary faculty members (excluding members of the Dean's Office), express NO CONFIDENCE that Councilor(s) shall be unseated.

The five faculty members may bring their request for a vote of confidence to the Chair of the Faculty, to the FACULTY COUNCIL other than the Chair of the Faculty, or to the Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee as is appropriate.

### **IX. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Certain procedures in this charter call for a small number of faculty members to act and to express a request in writing to certain individuals or bodies within the School. The identity of any such faculty members shall be disclosed to no one, except on the order of a court of law, without the permission of the faculty member.

**X. UNANTICIPATED CIRCUMSTANCES**

No Charter can accommodate all events, foreseen and unforeseen. The **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** expects the **FACULTY COUNCIL** and the Chair of the Faculty to act in its stead in the event of a need for action and to hold themselves accountable to the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY**.

**XI. AUTHORITY - MODIFICATION - RATIFICATION**

This Charter is intended to set forth the major responsibilities of the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** and the authority implicit in the need to discharge those responsibilities. Every effort has been made to describe that authority in a manner consistent with the policies of the Graduate School, of the Administration of the Academic Health Sciences Center and of the Central Administration of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Nonetheless, it is recognized that a seeming or real inconsistency may arise, from time to time, as to the authority to prevail in a particular circumstance. It is thus made explicit that the **FACULTY ASSEMBLY** acknowledges its authority to be subordinate to that of the entities listed above. This Charter shall become effective on the day it is ratified by a simple majority of the voting faculty members at a regularly scheduled meeting of the faculty (*so ratified, 03/04/94*).

**APPENDIX A**  
**School of Public Health Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedure**  
*(amendment, 12/18/09)*

A general description of the grievance process to be followed at the department- and/or school-level is described in the UAB Faculty Handbook in section 2.9:

“A faculty member with a grievance relative to his or her position as a UAB faculty member should file a written complaint and should seek solution of the problem through the appropriate department Chair or Dean or Library Director.”

In general, grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers. A grievance can occur at any level (department, school or University) and does not apply only to those issues carried formally forward to the Provost.

In the School of Public Health the Faculty Grievance Committee (FGC) (see Section VIIA of the Faculty Charter) can be used by a faculty member to seek advice regarding the best course of action regarding a particular grievance. Generally, a faculty member with a grievance should first seek resolution with the individual with whom he or she has the grievance. This approach is preferred for most issues as many problems can be settled quickly and without damage to personal or working relationships. If this approach fails to satisfy the faculty member or the grievant does not wish to confront the charged party the following steps should be followed:

1. The faculty member informs the Section Head and/or Department Chair of the grievance in writing and what action is expected to resolve the grievance. This step must be completed if the

faculty member wishes subsequently to use the grievance as the basis of further appeal.

2. The Section Head and/or Department Chair invites the faculty member to meet to discuss the grievance. If the faculty member so wishes, a member of the FGC could accompany the faculty member to this meeting. The Section Head and/or Department Chair notify the faculty member in writing of the resulting decision and of the appeal process within 10 business days of this meeting. The faculty member informs the Section Head and/or Department Chair if he or she wishes to appeal.

3. If the grievance cannot be resolved at the department level or if the complaint involves the Section Head and/or Department Chair or the grievant does not wish to involve the Section Head and/or Department Chair, a written complaint should be filed with the FGC as outlined in Section VIIA of the Faculty Charter. A copy of this written complaint should be given to the Section Head and/or Department Chair. Similar to the procedures outlined in the UAB Faculty Handbook, this written statement should: 1) state in detail the facts from which the grievance arose, the process the faculty member has followed within the SOPH to resolve the grievance and the results of the preliminary attempts to solve the problem, and 2) should state a specific request for the relief sought.

4. The FGC will review the written complaint and request a meeting with the grievant to discuss the complaint within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint. If the grievance involves the Section Head and/or Department Chair the FGC will request a meeting with the grievant's Section Head and/or Department Chair to discuss the complaint within the same 10 business day

time frame.

5. The FGC will submit a written recommendation to the Dean of the SOPH within 30 days of receipt of any grievance. Any grievance received directly by the Dean will be submitted to the FGC which will provide a written recommendation to the Dean within 30 days following procedures similar to those outlined in #4 above.

6. The Dean will consider the recommendation, make a decision regarding the grievance, and inform in writing the grievant, the grievant's Chair, and the FGC.

7. When parties involved are unable to resolve the grievance at the School level and/or the decision is not satisfactory to the grievant, the grievant may file a formal written grievance with the Provost. (See Appendix A and Section 2.9 of the UAB Faculty Handbook & Policies)

8. It is important to note that each step in the grievance procedure described above must be accompanied by written documentation of the complaint of the grievant and of each outcome.