

# Senate Orientation

Alison Macherson, Chair of Senate  
Pascal Robichaud Secretary of Senate

September 26, 2019

## **Pascal Robichaud**

Introductions, Governance Overview and Senate Primer

## **Alison Macpherson**

Role of the Chair, the University Academic Plan,  
Committee Priorities, Nominations and Elections

# What is Senate?



A formal governing body created by the *York University Act* with unique and shared powers.

A legislative body whose approval or oversight is necessary for many types of academic proposals.

A space for sharing information about academic matters, carrying out consultations, and advancing the University's interests.

# University Governance



Under the ***York University Act***, powers are assigned to *Senate*, the *Board of Governors* and *President*.

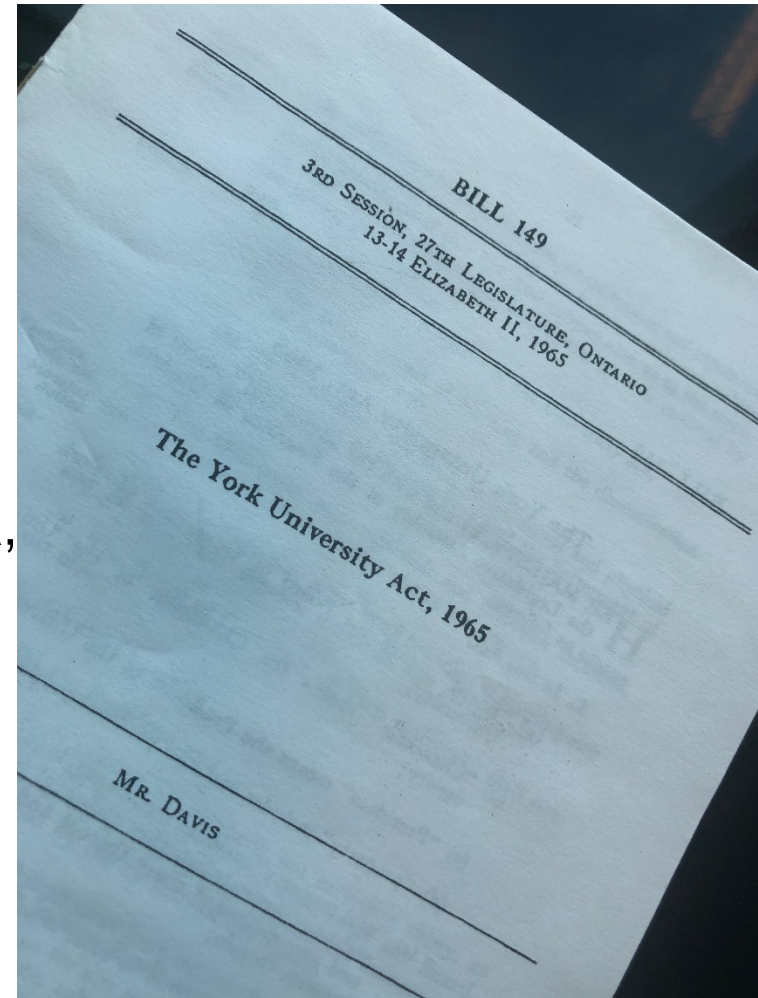


# University Governance



## York University Act 1965

- Creates bi-cameral system
- Two governing bodies with distinct jurisdiction + President
- Senate is responsible for academic policy including standards for admission, curricula, conferring degrees (s. 12)
- Except for powers assigned to Senate, the Board is responsible for everything associated with government, conduct, management and control of university and its property (s. 10)



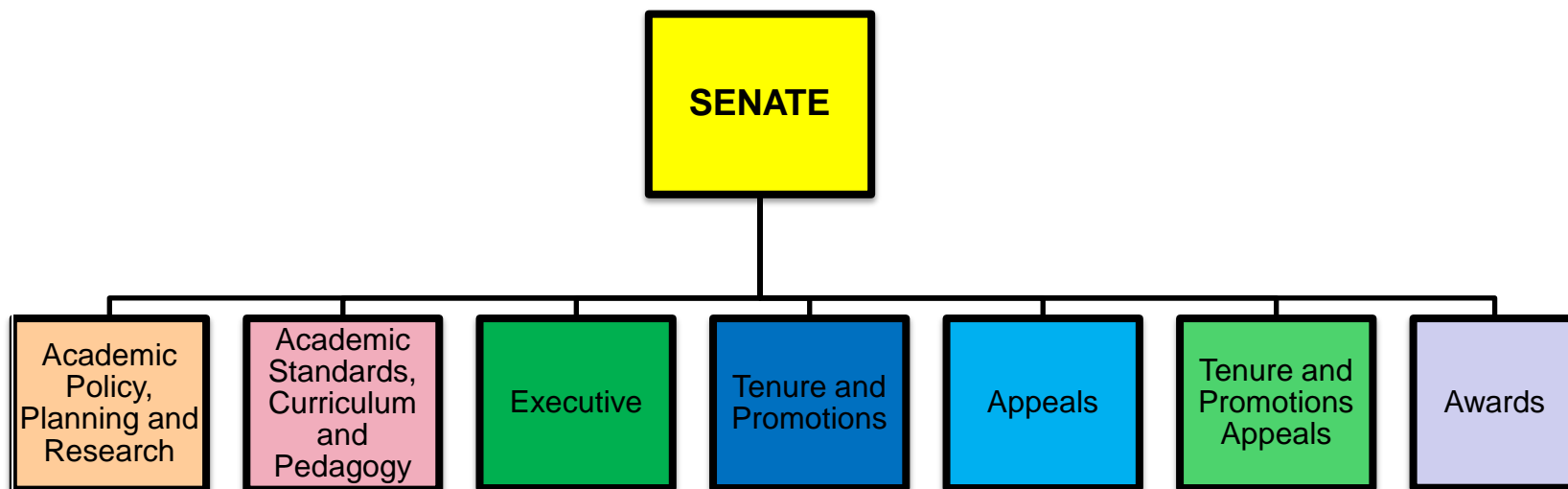
# Senate Responsibilities



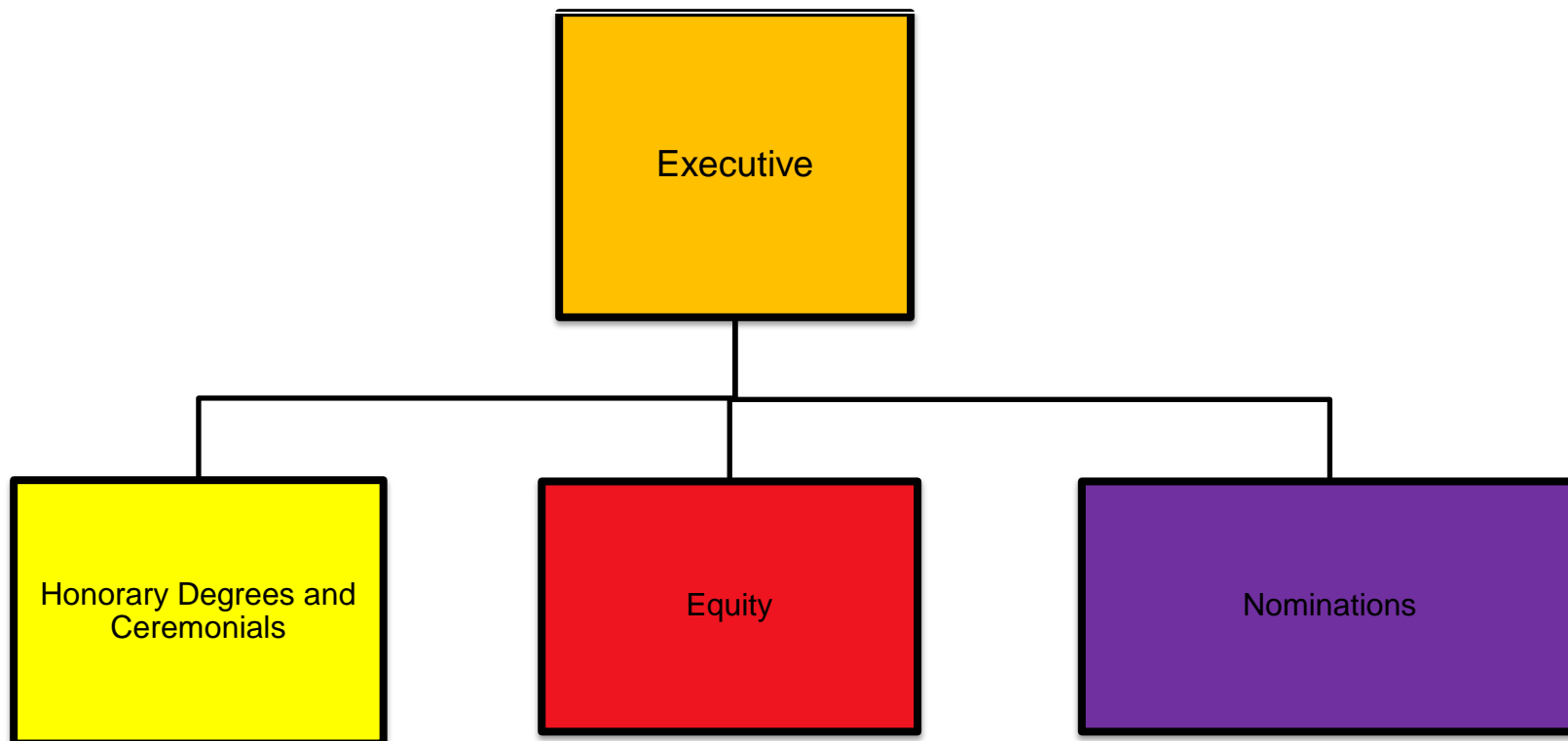
**Senate** (Section 12) is responsible for academic policy including:

- consult with the Board and to make recommendations on appointment of the Chancellor and the President;
- determine and regulate the standards admission of students, the contents and curricula of courses, and requirements for graduation
- conduct examinations and appoint examiners;
- the award of fellowships, scholarships, medals, prizes and other awards for academic achievement;
- confer degrees, diplomas be conferred by a University;
- in consultation with the Board, confer honorary degrees.

# Senate and Senate Committees

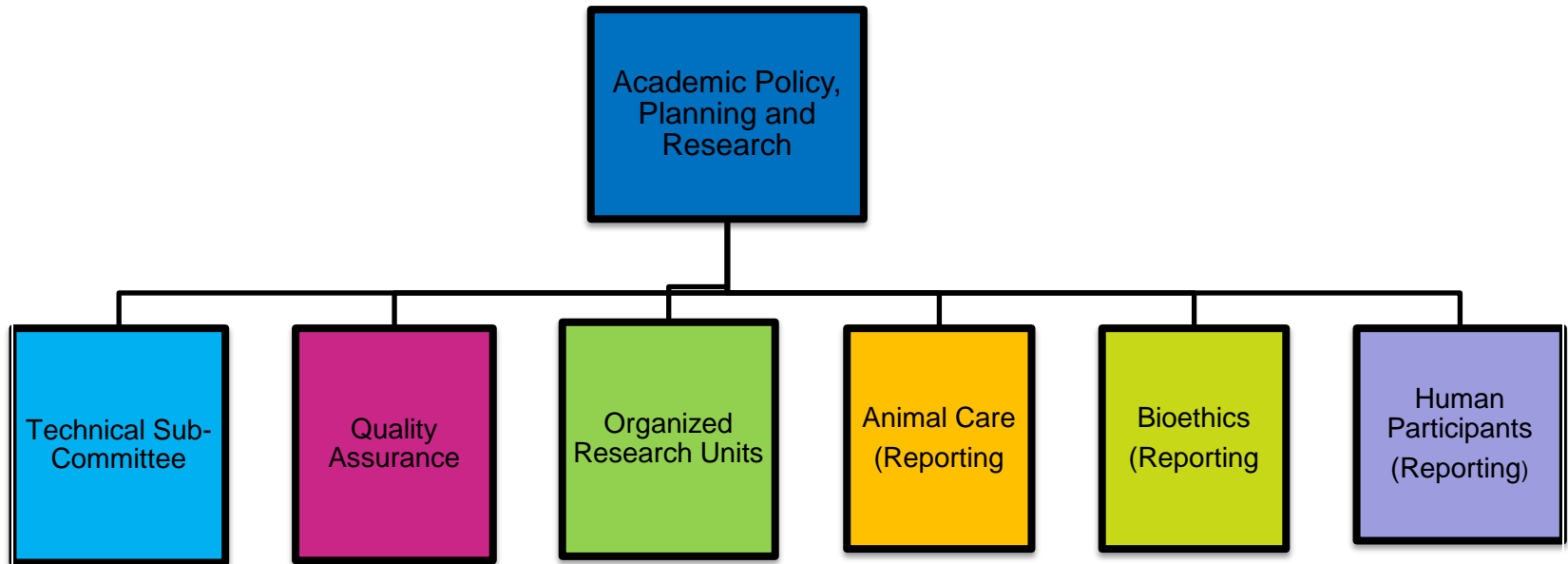


# Executive Committee and Sub-committees

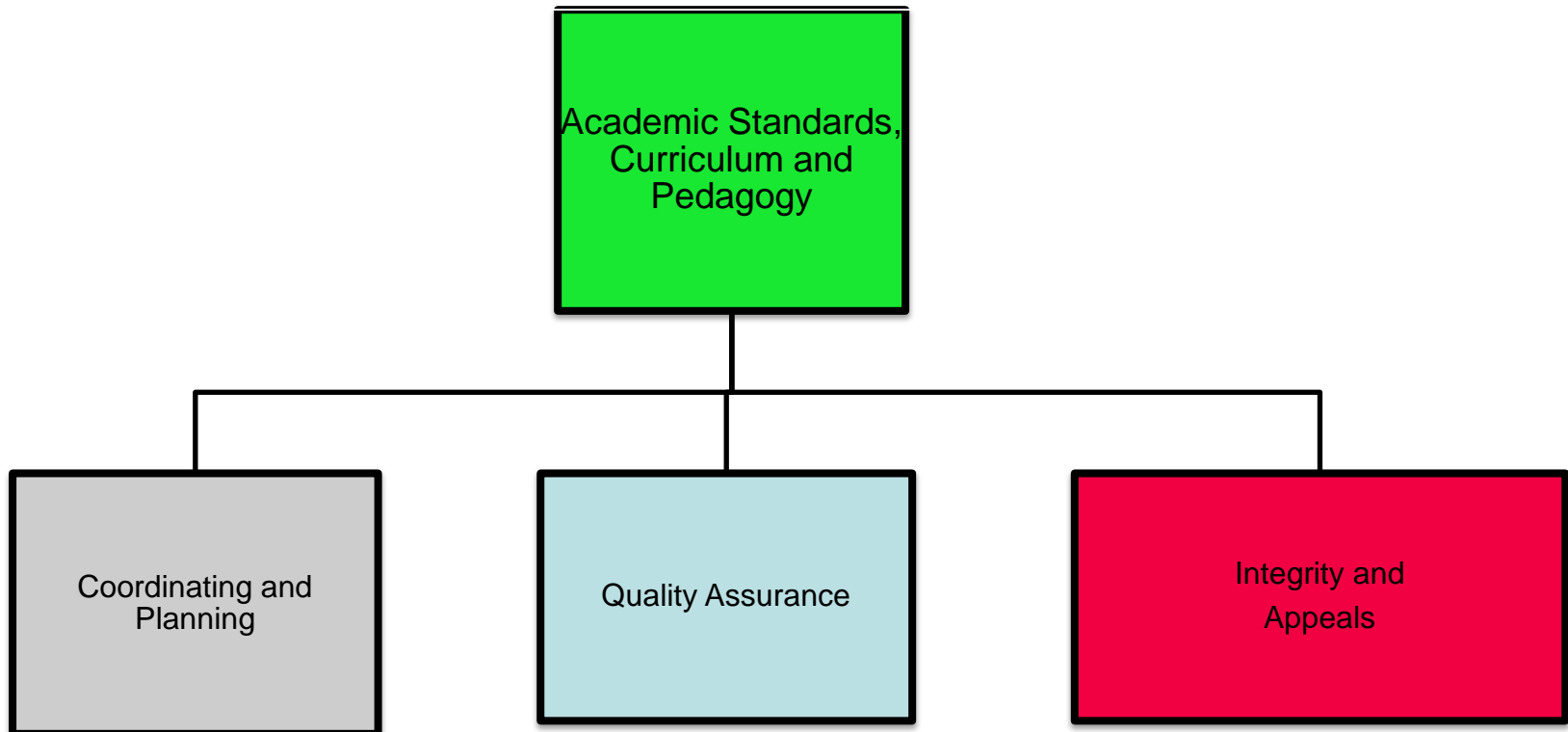




# Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committees and Sub-committees



# Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committees and Sub-committees



# Senate and Governance



Senate is atop a system of collegial academic governance involving Faculty Councils (which are creatures of Senate) and academic administrators (appointed by the President).

[Governance at a Glance](#)

# Senate and Faculty Councils





## Senators

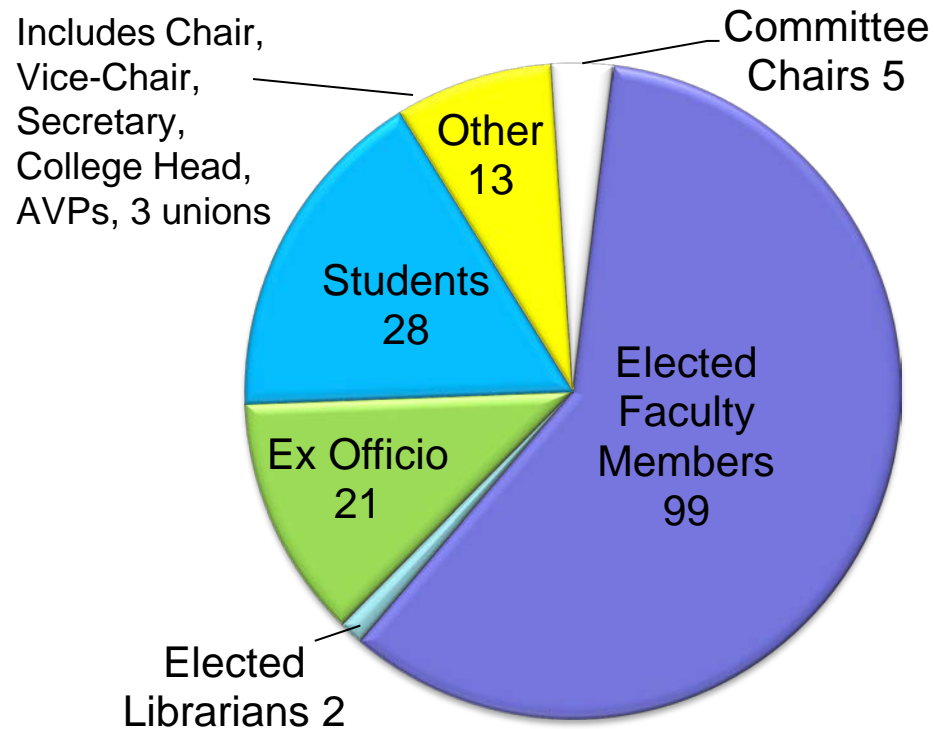
Place the University's overall interests at the forefront

Advance academic planning objectives

Help connect Senate with the collegium and communities

Promote pride in governance and York

# Membership of Senate



Current Maximum=168

# Now That You're A Senator



Your name appears on the [list of Senators](#) on the Senate Website

You have been subscribed to the listserv “Senate-L” for notices of meetings and other important communications

You are eligible to vote in Senate elections (Passport York is needed for e-votes)

Brush up on [rules and procedures](#) – but remember Senate is a welcoming body that emphasizes contributions

Visit frequently the [Senate Website](#) where key background information is maintained and special announcements appear

# Senator Rights and Responsibilities



## Principles from Senate's [Rules and Procedures](#)

- All have the same rights and obligations
- Right to receive due notice of matters to be decided
- Duty to attend meetings, and to vote on resolutions
- Obligation to act with civility and decorum
- Opportunity to debate issues under consideration

**At meetings, members address one another as Senator.**



# Governance Resources

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/governancedocs/index-governancedocs.html>



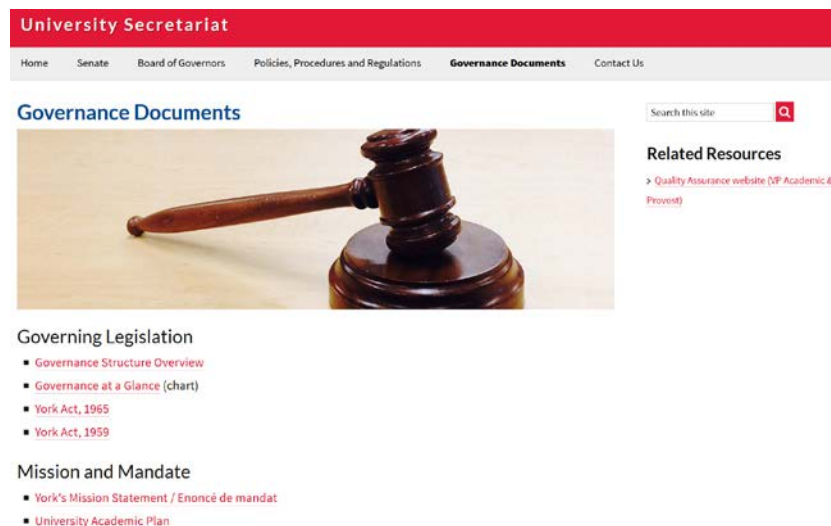
## [Senate Rules, Procedures and Guidelines](#)

## [Governance at a Glance](#)

## [University Academic Plan 2020-2025](#)

## [Strategic Research Plan 2018-2023](#)

## [Retention and Disposal of Senate Documents](#)



The screenshot shows the 'University Secretariat' website. The header is red with the text 'University Secretariat'. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, Senate, Board of Governors, Policies, Procedures and Regulations, **Governance Documents**, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Governance Documents' and features a large image of a wooden gavel. To the right of the image is a search bar and a 'Related Resources' section with a link to 'Quality Assurance website (VP Academic & Provost)'. Below the image, there are two sections: 'Governing Legislation' with links to 'Governance Structure Overview', 'Governance at a Glance (chart)', 'York Act, 1965', and 'York Act, 1959'; and 'Mission and Mandate' with links to 'York's Mission Statement / Énoncé de mandat' and 'University Academic Plan'.

# Before Senate Meetings



Notice of meetings are issued **approximately a week prior to meetings on the Senate listserv**– a link to the agenda package on the Senate Website will be embedded in the notice

## York University Senate

### Notice of Meeting

Thursday, May 23, 2019, 3:00 pm

Dr Robert Everett Senate Chamber, N940 Ross Building



### AGENDA

Page

1. Chair's Remarks (F. van Breugel)
2. Business Arising from the Minutes
3. Inquiries and Communications
  - a. Academic Colleague to the Council of Ontario Universities (A. Davis)..... 1

**NOTE:** Watch for additional notices just before meeting – with supplementary items from committees or presentations

# Senate Meeting Venues



Most Senate meetings are held in the Senate Chamber. Some are held elsewhere....



50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting, **Osgoode**, March 2009



Committees normally meet in the Kaneff Tower



Some meetings are at Glendon

# Arriving at the Senate Chamber



**Sign in** – important for minutes and for tracking Senators who miss three consecutive meetings

**Pick up your name placard** – necessary for getting on a speaker's list and for voting (a temporary one can be provided). Look for staff at the front of the chamber if your placard is missing or you have any questions or concerns

**Watch the screen** at the front of the room for news about the meeting, including time allotments for agenda items.

# Conduct of Meetings



At the front desk:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary



The Chair of Senate presides

The Vice-Chair may preside over all or part of the meeting (if the Chair is absent or when Senate meets in committee of the whole)

# Conduct of Meetings



Senate acts by **resolution** – that is, by passing motions.

Most motions are put by the Chairs of Senate's committees.

There are also many information items – but you can always ask questions about them or make suggestions to Committee Chairs.



# What to Expect at a Meeting



Remarks from the Chair – brief, focusing on Senate business, governance, major items

Remarks from the President – University matters (with “Kudos” report), major items of interest, priorities, postsecondary education policy in Ontario and Canada

Committee reports – items for approval, notice of recommendations for preliminary discussion by Senators, actions taken by committees on behalf of Senate, annual reports with statistical analyses, soundings on policies in development, items for information on a variety of topics

Reports from the Academic Colleague (external environment) and Senators on the Board of Governors (with meeting synopses)

Reports from Vice-Presidents (primarily through APPRC)

Other Business – rare and relevant to Senate’s mandate

# Consent Agenda Items



- Routine items for approval or receipt by Senate
- Deemed to be approved or received without a vote
- **HOWEVER** - Any consent agenda item can be moved to the regular business agenda at the request of one or more Senators for a vote or discussion
- Consent agenda items include the minutes of the previous meeting, curriculum and academic standards proposals that require approval but have been through detailed review and approval, reports from Senators on the Board of Governors



# Senate Rules



Self-contained, comprehensive and approved by  
Senate itself

All Senators have a responsibility to know the rules --  
which are online

The Chair may relax rules on some occasions

# Participating at Senate Meetings



## **When** you can speak:

- A committee has presented an item for information or sought feedback
- A motion is on the floor
- The President, Vice-Presidents or others have presented and you have a question or comment
- There is business arising from the minutes or there are inquiries and communications
- You have a point of order
- You have a point of privilege

# Participating at Senate Meetings



## **How** you can speak:

- Raise your name placard until someone from the front desk acknowledges you
- The Chair and Secretary will add your name to a speaker's list
- The list may be adjusted if a Senator can make a special contribution on a point

# Participating at Senate Meetings



## **Wait** until:

- Your name is called by the Chair: “Senator ---”
- You may speak just **once** to an item for no more than **seven minutes**
- The Chair may permit additional interventions if time permits and new, brief thoughts would assist Senate

# Tips for Effective Participation



- Review the Rules, Procedures and Guidelines regularly
- Review materials carefully in advance
- Discuss your concerns with others if you have time
- If you have an amendment to a motion, you must write it out in full, provide it to a Secretariat member – hold up your paper
- When you begin, indicate why you are speaking (have a question, in support of or opposed to something, in need of clarification or additional information, wish to suggest some action by a committee)
- Address the Chair but speak to the whole chamber – the Chair will determine who should respond and when
- Be succinct. Keep your remarks brief and pointed
- Speak with respect – a Senate rule and a key collegial value

# After a Senate Meeting



A **synopsis** is issued by the Secretariat following the meeting.

Synopses are not minutes, but they are an accurate report of actions taken by Senate, including decisions.

Senators are informed on the listserv when synopses have been posted on the [Senate Website](#) – Y-File also announces availability

Faculty Councils reprint the synopses or link to them.

Senators let others know about Senate initiatives and encourage them to share their views with you.

# Senate Committees



**Senate Committees are a primary source of items reaching Senate.**

There are three types of committees:

**Policy-oriented** (policies, planning, programs / diplomas / certificates degree and admission requirements, quality assurance, establishment of units, etc.)

Primarily **adjudicative** (decisions on individual cases – awards, tenure and promotion, honours; may also deal with policy matters)

**Executive** (coordination, communication, direction)

# Role of the Chair



Chairs Senate and Executive Committee.

Serves ex-officio on committees with active participation in Academic Policy, Planning and Research (and its Technical Sub-Committee) as well as Honorary Degrees and Ceremonials.

Represents Senate at official occasions like Convocation.





# Role of the Chair at Meetings



Assisted by the Vice-Chair and Secretary, the Chair:

- Opens proceedings
- Determines what is in order (motions, interventions, documents etc.)
- Recognizes speakers (no one may speak until recognized, and must halt or pause when the Chair intervenes)
- Makes definitive rulings as necessary to ensure that rules are properly followed, that speakers are focused on the matters at hand, and are respectful to others
- Maintains decorum and civility

# University Academic Plan (UAP)



Guides academic planning, touchstone for proposals, benchmarks to track progress toward major goals

Develops out of intense consultation process involving Faculties, units, senior academic administrators, community at large

UAP 2020-2025 approved by Senate June 25 2020 and Strategic Research Plan approved in 2018.

[Institutional Integrated Resource Plan \(IIRP\)](#) to realize UAP goals

UAP will be a focus of reports at Senate during the year and referenced in rationales supporting proposals

# Current UAP Objectives



- Priority 1. Innovative, Quality Programs for Academic Excellence
- Priority 2. Advancing Exploration, Innovation and Achievement in  
Scholarship, Research and Related Creative Activities
- Priority 3. Enhanced Quality in Teaching and Student Learning
- Priority 4. A Student-Centred Approach
- Priority 5. Enhanced Campus Experience
- Priority 6. Enhanced Community Engagement
- Priority 7. Enabling the Plan

# Senate and Committee Priorities



Committees establish priorities for the year that help to:

- Emphasize matters of the greatest importance
- Maintain focus on mandates
- Shape agendas and ensure appropriate attention is paid to them through work plans
- Signal to Senate the major initiatives planned by committees and created space for timely questions and suggestions from Senators
- Facilitate tracking of progress

# Senate and Committee Priorities



Senate Executive's priorities are described in its report this month.

Other committees will report to the Executive Committee and Senate in October.

Senators can have input into priority-setting.

Senate Executive poses questions or invites comments on a number of items in its report this month.

# Nominations and Elections



- Nominations and elections are critical for Senate
- Senate Executive presents recommendations
- Some elections are conducted by **e-ballot** (a secure, accurate and anonymous process)
- Balloting requires a Passport York account
- If you do not have a Passport York account – which is also required to access some other York Websites – contact **Elaine MacRae**, University Secretariat (**emacrae @yorku.ca**)

# Today's Meeting Begins at 3:00....

