

Executive Committee Confidentiality Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this confidentiality policy is to provide a framework of principles and guidelines concerning the sharing and non-sharing of information gained as a member or guest of the Oregon State University Faculty Senate Executive Committee. This framework is formalized in order to protect the rights and interests of Executive Committee members, guests, and the integrity of information that is disclosed to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee functions in a position of trust with both the broad community (specifically the Faculty Senate) and with individuals; either individual faculty, students, administrators, or other employees. That trust requires a balance between openness and transparency with the ability to maintain confidentiality of information not intended as public.

Definitions

Confidentiality: Principles and guidelines for what information may be shared and to what extent and what information is to be kept private.

Private information: Information that is not to be shared outside of the entrusted group.

Public information: Information that may be shared without restriction.

Qualified information: Information that can be shared beyond the entrusted group only within the restrictions determined by the nature of sensitivity; for instance information that is need-to-know or time sensitive.

Entrusted group: people designated to receive information including public, private, and sensitive information.

Sharing: communicating information to another person by any means to include spoken, written, or electronic media.

Principles

1. Benevolence: The basic principle of judgment and action with respect to information acquired as an Executive Committee member is to cause no harm to, and to promote the well-being of, individuals, the OSU community, and OSU as an institution.

2. Trust: Judgment and action in sharing or withholding information is guided by the necessity of validating trust and confidence in the Executive Committee by members, guests, constituents, and the public.

3. Liberty: Executive Committee members, guests, and constituents can expect to share information and opinion candidly without concern for

consequences arising from sharing of what they say outside Executive Committee.

4. Rights: The rights of Faculty Senators, members of the OSU community, and the public to be relevantly informed of issues considered by the Executive Committee shall be honored.

5. Truth: Information that is shared is done so with respect for accuracy and relevant context.

Guidelines

1. Executive Committee members should distinguish among different types of information that comes to them in this role either in EC meetings or when they act as a member of EC. *Public information* (e.g., a curricular proposal has been submitted and is before one or another Senate committee) is characterized by its availability outside the Executive Committee meeting: availability on a Web site, statements from the Senate floor, inclusion in committee agendas or minutes. *Private information* is generally anything else (with some exceptions). Student records or employment information will be private. Draft policy proposals will normally be private, as will items that are subject to further negotiation where publicity may adversely affect one party. However, in some cases *qualified information* may be identified where sharing with a limited number of people is needed to move an issue forward. The fact that the Executive Committee has considered an issue (without details of the discussion) may often fall into this category.

2. The Executive Committee relies on the experience and expertise of its members to identify and specify what information will be treated as public, private or qualified. Normally, the Senate President will provide leadership on the issue, but not to the exclusion of input from other Executive Committee members or the Executive Committee as a body. *When a member has a question about specifying the nature of information s/he should bring to question to the Faculty Senate President with the understanding that the Executive Committee as a body can alter an initial designation.*

3. Particularly with qualified information, the Executive Committee must be deliberate about defining how and when such information will be shared. As examples, time frame may be important: we do not wish to release information prematurely that will be coming from other sources. If an item needs to be shared on a need-to-know basis, the group with which it must be shared should be specified. Other factors include the source(s) of information and their reliability and authority, and the number of parties both affected by the information, and the nature of how it affects them.

4. The Executive Committee makes regular reports to the Senate concerning the items taken up in consideration by the committee. These reports shall incorporate the principles articulated in these guidelines by not abridging elements of trust in which items came before the Executive Committee.

5. Discussions among members and guests in Executive Committee meetings are candid and often test the grounds of controversial issues. The contents of those discussions are presumed private information especially with respect to who said what.

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate voted unanimously to ratify the foregoing confidentiality framework on November 21, 2012 with the recommendation that this document will be reviewed for revision by the EC on an annual basis.