

School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences Bylaws

POLICY 03: VOTING

A. General policies

1. All faculty votes and elections, including but not limited to electronic elections, shall be conducted only between and including the 1st day of classes in the Fall semester of the academic year and one day after the grades are due at the end of the Spring semester.
2. Electronic voting, using Helios Voting, or other similar encrypted voting systems, will be used for all major votes, where participation of all eligible voting faculty is essential, including but not limited to voting to form elected committees, voting on candidates applying for tenure and/or promotion, voting to approve new policy documents or revisions of policy documents, votes to approve committee decisions or decisions of the School Director where faculty approval is needed by policy unless the vote administrator calls for a meeting to conduct the vote by paper secret ballot or the voting faculty approve a motion, on a case by case basis, to use an alternative secure voting method during a faculty meeting that is already in progress or that will be convened by the vote administrator at the request of at least 5 voting faculty.
3. All Boolean votes (e.g. approve, not approve, etc.) should include the option to abstain in the ballot, unless explicitly prohibited by University policy.
4. The vote will be organized by the School Director or his/her designee, for committee elections, approval of appointment of Associate School Director, election of Faculty Senators, and election of representatives to College Committees.
5. The vote will be organized by the relevant Committee Chair or his/her designee for all votes that relate to the business of the Committee.

B. Guidelines for electronic voting

1. Nominations will be submitted by email to the vote administrator and the name of the nominee and both the name of the faculty member that submitted the nomination will be posted on a document uploaded on a secure cloud service and shared with all voting eligible faculty. A deadline will be set for submitting nominations that allows for at least 3 business days. The deadline may be extended if insufficient nominations are submitted by the deadline. Alternatively, nominations can be submitted during a faculty meeting of the voting faculty preceding the electronic vote.
2. The vote administrator is required to send to all voting faculty a separate email reminder as well as post a bulletin board announcement in both the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.
3. The vote administrator will set a deadline for the conclusion of the vote. The deadline must be extended if faculty participation in the vote is less than 51%. Furthermore, the vote administrator, at his/her discretion, may extend¹ the deadline for releasing the result of the

¹In an encrypted electronic voting system, the vote count cannot be accessed unless the vote closes and the results are released

vote, if faculty participation in the vote is less than 75%

C. Guidelines for voting with paper ballot

1. Ballots will be submitted using the double envelope system. The ballot will be placed in the inner envelope, which will then be placed in the outer envelope. The inner envelope must have no markings to protect voter anonymity. The outer envelope will include the voter's printed name and should be signed over the seal.
2. When the double envelope is inserted into the ballot box, the voter roster should also be signed by the voting faculty.
3. The ballot may also be submitted by postal mail sent to the vote administrator if and only if the voting faculty member is traveling outside of the Rio Grande Valley during the vote. At the request of the voting faculty member, postage for the mail-in ballot may be compensated by the School from the travel funding allocated to the voting faculty member. Faculty that submit a mail-in ballot must place it in a double envelope and place the double envelope inside the mailing envelope, use a mailing method that allows tracking and preferably at least two-day delivery, and should notify the vote administrator as soon as the ballot is mailed with the mail tracking information. The ballot must arrive at the SMSS before the vote deadline. Both the vote administrator and one of the School staff and one more faculty member will sign in the voter roster on behalf of the faculty member that submitted the mail-in ballot. The email with the mail-tracking information will be attached to the voter roster.
4. The following policies shall apply to the ballot box:
 - a. Separate ballot box on each major campus (Brownsville and Edinburg) will be used.
 - b. The ballot box should have key and it should be tamper proof. Tamper proof sealing identified by either serial number or by signatures should be used.²
 - c. The ballot box should be sealed at the beginning of the voting, so that ballots can be inserted but not be removed.
 - d. The ballot box slot should be completely sealed for transportation from one campus to the other with tamper-proof sealing, so that ballots can neither be inserted or removed.
 - e. The time of the sealing should be announced in advanced and people should be given opportunity to add their own seals.
 - f. If the ballot box is transported from one campus to the other, then the signed roster and either the serial number or the names of the persons signing the seal should be also placed in the ballot box before sealing it.
5. The following procedures will be followed to count the votes and report the results to the faculty.
 - a. The counting of the ballots should be done within 4 business days after the vote deadline and must be done with at least four persons: one counting the ballot another recording the ballot a third and fourth checking the counting and recording respectively. All of these persons should have no conflict of interest with respect to the outcome of the vote.

² For examples, see <https://goo.gl/qs7R7t> and <https://goo.gl/PPCfbm>

- b. The time and place of counting must be announced in advance, and faculty must be given opportunity to participate.
 - c. The persons present at the counting should be also announced along with the results.
 - d. Before counting, the outer envelopes with the names and signatures must be checked against the voting roster. Envelopes not matching the names must be discarded as invalid ballots.
 - e. The inner envelopes must be separated from the outer ones, and the outer envelopes must be set aside.
 - f. The ballots must be removed from the inner envelopes and the inner envelopes must be set aside.
 - g. The ballots are counted and then they are set aside.
 - h. A copy of the voter roster should be forwarded to faculty along with the voting results.
6. Retention policy for paper ballot.
 - a. The envelopes and ballots should be kept for at least a month.
 - b. Electronic copy of the voting roster and records (result of the vote, participants in the counting of the vote) should be kept for at least one year.
 7. Secretarial staff handling the ballots should be trained and should make sure the process is followed.