



University of Houston Chapter

July 30, 2025

Dear President Khator, Provost Chase, and General Counsel Cornell,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the policy proposal designed to implement the requirements of SB37 and the bylaws for the proposed Faculty Council. We, the members of the AAUP Chapter at the University of Houston, representing nearly one hundred faculty, submit the following comments in response to the call for suggested edits to the new policies being created in response to SB37.

Some of our comments call for clarification of existing language, while others ask for changes or additions. The following comments explain the specific modifications we would like to see, as well as the reasons for requesting those additions.

1. We are concerned about the requirement that members of the Faculty Council must attend 75% of meetings in-person. SB 37 does not require in person attendance; Chapter 551 of the Government Code permits remote attendance for many important governmental bodies. This provision creates inequities given the size of the University of Houston campus, the difficulty navigating campus due to on-going construction, the location of buildings (including the Medical School), the distance between the University of Houston main campus and faculty housed at Katy and Sugar Land, and the legal obligations owed to faculty under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Given the time it will take many members of the Council to travel to/from meetings, an in-person attendance requirement would impose significant additional burdens and costs on some members disproportionately. The Faculty Senate held hybrid meetings with no adverse impact on participation—indeed, we believe participation will significantly improve if members have the option of joining the meetings remotely. Given that the meetings will already be live streamed allowing members to join from their normal work location poses no additional cost or burden to the University.
2. We would like the policy to clarify that the language regarding the fact that service on the Faculty Council is an “additional duty” and does not bring “compensation.” Our understanding is that such participation will qualify as part of a faculty member’s required service, but we would like to see language explicitly confirming that understanding.
3. We find the provision regarding the removal of members of the Faculty Council problematic as it does not outline what constitutes misconduct, nor the process through which members could be removed. We understand that this provision echoes the language in the legislation, but would like to suggest ways in which the policy could be improved, consistent with the law. The following list provides specific changes we would like to see:
 - A. Define more specifically the grounds for removal, including providing a definition explaining what qualifies as “misconduct.”
 - B. Provide procedures by which the removal process would operate, including placing a member on notice and providing a probationary period where the member may modify their behavior to avoid the alleged misconduct, allowing the member being removed to contest the removal decision, and specifying an appeals process for adverse decisions.

- C. Lay out the consequences for a College whose member is removed. In particular, we would like the policy to make clear that, if one of a college's representatives is removed, that college will have an opportunity to promptly elect a new member to fill that spot.
4. As you know, the fact that some members of the Faculty Council will be appointed whereas others will be elected is a cause for concern among faculty. Potential problems raised by this novel aspect of the Council are (a) the appointment of a potential member who does not want to serve and (b) the potential for divisions or hierarchies forming between appointed and elected members. As a result, we would like to see policy language providing that a faculty member has a right to decline—without any adverse consequences—an appointed seat, as well as a provision in the bylaws specifying that appointed and elected members will be treated equally and will possess the same powers and obligations.
 5. Currently, the bylaws bar participation in the Faculty Council by Assistant and Associate Deans. Our understanding is that these positions vary significantly from College to College and from Asst/Assoc. Dean to Asst/Assoc. Dean. Some are predominantly administrators, whereas others are more like traditional faculty with some additional responsibilities. We think that, if a College wants to elect as one of their representatives an Asst. or Assoc. Dean, it should be able to do so. We, therefore, propose making Asst and Assoc. Deans *eligible for election* to the Faculty Council, but *not eligible for appointment* to the Faculty Council.
 6. We object to limiting the Faculty Council to 60 members. SB37 allows the Board of Regents to approve a larger body, and we think UH should ask the Board to let the University avail itself of this option. There are numerous reasons that we think 60 members is inadequate. As an initial matter, we think a larger Council is necessary to ensure the Council's success. As you know, the Faculty Senate involves a significant amount of work, keeping more than twice the number of Senators busy with their responsibilities. Asking less than half the number of people to do the same work will overwhelm the 60 members. This increased workload will also deter valuable members of the faculty from participating in the Faculty Council. Moreover, a cap of 60 members ensures that the Council, like the United States Senate, will be malapportioned. Given that each college is guaranteed at least 2 representatives, it is impossible to achieve proportional representation. As a result, smaller colleges will have an outsized voice in Council matters.
 7. Finally, given the concern about workload, we question whether meeting every other month will be sufficient. Monthly meetings would help promote open communication between the Council and University administration.

Thank you for considering our feedback on these issues. We would like to set a time for the UH AAUP Board to meet with you to discuss the Chapter's concerns about this policy and the policy implementing SB 2615; please contact Professor Daniel Morales, president of the Chapter, to schedule a mutual convenient time.

Sincerely,

UH Chapter, AAUP