

UH may give administrators more control over already weakened faculty councils

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A bronze cougar statue is shown at The Albert and Mamie George Building at the University of Houston at Sugar Land Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026.

Melissa Phillip/Houston Chronicle

The [University of Houston System](#) could officially embed administrators within faculty councils at two campuses, a move some professors say will further erode the groups' authority just one year after a GOP law [weakened faculty advisory groups](#) statewide.

The system's board of regents will consider revising the bylaws for faculty councils at UH and UH-Downtown on Thursday, according to an agenda posted with the Texas Secretary of State. UH has not yet posted its board materials for the upcoming meeting, but the Houston Chronicle obtained a copy of the proposed bylaws, which are labeled, "Presented to the BOR 8/20/2026."

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If approved, the bylaws would make several high-ranking administrators voting members of the council's executive committee. The rules would also require the provost or a provost's appointee to approve the faculty council's agendas. And they would remove the council's presiding officer from the university president's cabinet.

"UH has always been committed to shared governance and greatly values the perspective, expertise and insight of our faculty," a university spokesperson said in a statement. "SB 37 made clear that the faculty council is an advisory body, and any proposed bylaw adjustments will not change that. The UH Faculty Council will continue to be the voice of faculty advice to the University administration."

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It's not clear what prompted the changes, though several faculty said they believed the new rules would codify what's been in practice since Senate Bill 37 dismantled "faculty senates" and allowed weaker councils to operate in their place.

Campus leaders with the [American Association of University Professors](#), or AAUP, have been unable to confirm whether any current members of the faculty council were involved in crafting the revised bylaws. The Houston Chronicle has contacted the main campus' presiding officer, Elena Grigorenko, for comment.

Daniel Morales, speaking in his individual capacity and as president of the AAUP chapter at UH, said he viewed the proposal as a "hostile takeover" of

the faculty council.

"Not content to follow the letter of state law, UH Administrators have designed a body that will use faculty to launder any policy administrators want to impose," Morales said in a statement. "Under the new bylaws faculty are puppets to be stage managed by crafty administrators who hold all the strings and answer to politicians in Austin — not to UH students or alumni."

The president of UH-Downtown's AAUP chapter, Mike Duncan, said he believes the new groups have already been acting as "puppets" of the provost's office, but the bylaw changes would make it official.

"We had some say in things. Now we have none," he said. "It's the illusion of shared governance instead of the reality."

He believes that some AAUP [membership increases](#) are tied to the weakening of faculty councils.

HIGHER ED CHANGES: [UH may cut 40% of core requirement classes due to GOP law. See the list.](#)

In 2025, lawmakers passed SB37, which increased state oversight in university governance and weakened the influence of faculty, who conservative lawmakers have accused of pushing liberal agendas on their students and campuses.

The law had several prongs, including [establishing an ombudsman's office](#) to investigate alleged violations of the governance bill and another bill targeting diversity, equity and inclusion.

Another part of SB37 called for universities to review [their core curricula](#), which has already led to policy changes at the Texas A&M and Texas Tech systems. The University of Texas at Austin is [rebuilding its core](#) from the

ground up. At UH, the board is expected to vote on cuts to its course offerings Thursday.

Some faculty were also dismayed that the law killed "faculty senates," which were already advisory on matters, including curriculum and "votes of no confidence."

UH was one of several university systems that restarted the groups under new restrictions, forming them as "faculty councils" with fewer responsibilities and a new structure more closely tied to the administration. Instead of peers electing all members, the university president appoints some members.

As professors face more restrictions, some say they've lost a key venue to have their voices heard. A group of 32 law professors have signed a [letter](#) asking the UH board to defer a vote on the new bylaws until the council consults on the issue with the rest of the faculty.

Holley Love, a former president of UH's faculty senate and an engineering professor, helped craft the council's original bylaws. She said she was assured that any future revisions would occur with the help of faculty. She doesn't believe that has occurred and said that the proposed changes undercut the purpose of having a group of professors giving input.

"Having administration this heavily involved with something that's called a 'faculty council' really renders it an 'administration council,'" she said.

This story has been updated to include a response from the University of Houston.