

# What best practices guidance can be provided to faculty senate representatives to help them connect...


For faculty senate representatives, best practices to connect with and fully represent their constituency groups involve proactive communication, strategic engagement, and consistent transparency. Building trust requires active listening and showing tangible results from faculty input. [🔗](#)

## Best practices for communication

- Use a variety of communication channels. Relying solely on a mass email is not enough. Supplement written communications with regular department meetings, small-group conversations, and even phone calls for a more personal touch.
- Regularly report back to your constituents. Always provide updates on senate activities and actions. Create a summary of relevant senate meeting notes and share them in a location accessible to all faculty, such as a shared drive or departmental website.
- Leverage existing meetings. Request a standing slot on the agenda for departmental or division meetings to provide brief senate reports and solicit feedback on agenda items.
- Be professional and prepared. When communicating, be respectful, specific, and clear. Whether by email or in-person, make sure your message is well-structured and addresses the purpose of the communication. [🔗](#)

## Best practices for engagement

- Solicit input from faculty. Don't assume you know the issues. Use surveys, town halls, or smaller focus groups to identify key concerns and priorities directly from your colleagues.
- Ensure diverse representation. Actively seek out perspectives from all members of your constituency, including part-time faculty and those who may be less engaged. Avoid relying only on the most vocal or easily accessible colleagues.
- Connect faculty involvement to the bigger picture. Help your constituents understand why their participation in shared governance matters and how it connects to the institution's strategic goals. Showing how faculty input has influenced decisions increases engagement.

- Actively listen to feedback. When faculty offer feedback or raise concerns, listen genuinely and take their input seriously. This builds trust and shows that their involvement is valued.
- Make participation manageable. For faculty who are not on the senate, clearly define the commitment required for committee service, including meeting times and length of term, to make it easier for them to get involved. 

## Best practices for full representation

- Ground your representation in evidence. When advocating for a position, gather and present evidence to demonstrate the issue and support a specific response. This helps overcome skepticism and builds consensus.
- Clarify your role. Ensure your title, such as "faculty representative," reflects an active role rather than a passive one like "observer". If asked to serve on a committee outside of the senate's nomination process, clarify who you represent.
- Involve constituents in decision-making. For significant decisions, use every possible means to engage faculty outside the senate, including town halls or meetings with affinity groups. This ensures that personal preferences are not passed off as the official sentiment of the entire faculty.
- Be a credible and trusted voice. Consistently demonstrate professionalism and trustworthiness. Your effectiveness is tied to your credibility, both with the administration and with your faculty constituents.

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