

## ROBINSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ONLINE FACULTY APPROVALS: OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### Objectives

Matters that have been by approved by Academic Program Councils (UPC and GPC), the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC), and the Executive Committee often require faculty approval in Faculty meetings. Such faculty wide voting and approval is required in RCB bylaws, but can be delayed when queued awaiting the next faculty meeting. Such delays are inconsistent with the administrative and academic agility expected in a modern business school. Further, University-imposed deadlines can be misaligned with the RCB faculty meeting schedules, sometimes introducing months of delays in University and Board of Regents approvals for RCB proposals. Increasing the frequency of face-to-face faculty meetings or decreasing the notice for such meetings has been made problematic by the physical distribution of RCB teaching and research programs to facilities across metropolitan Atlanta. The availability of digital communication options provides faculty with an alternative to a face-to-face meeting vote and enables timely voting for important matters.

The objective of this policy is to provide a digital-communication-based faculty approval process for matters that have been approved and recommended by the relevant committees. A key benefit of this policy is the partial replacement of a *batch-process*, in which proposals are batched and voted at faculty meetings, with a *continuous-process*, in which the faculty approves matters by digital communication as well as face-to-face meetings. For such matters, faculty approval of proposals may consist of their digital approval.

This solution does NOT eliminate the routine RCB faculty meetings. These face-to-face meetings serve an important social function. They permit face-to-face interactions and exchange of knowledge among colleagues who otherwise would only communicate digitally. These meetings also reflect institutionality – officially required faculty attendance, the Dean in the chair, reports from various bodies to the faculty, faculty votes for graduates, candidates, question time, etc. Such meetings are an exercise in faculty governance, and reflect its social and institutional fabric. These traditional faculty-meetings will remain home to faculty approval decisions for which the continuous process proves unsuitable

An objective of this policy is to ensure that the approval process by digital communication makes our faculty members: aware of digital meeting agendas in advance, allowed ample opportunity to participate in digitally-based discussions, and to vote digitally in a process that is as open and accessible as the traditional faculty meeting. Ideally, the time-and-

place convenience of such communication will enable even better faculty participation with more thoughtful comments than face-to-face meetings.

### **Online Faculty Approvals Policies**

1. Existing policies and procedures for introducing motions for faculty approval during their traditional face-to-face meetings remain in place as an alternative to the digital process that follows.
2. In concordance with the bylaws<sup>1</sup>, online faculty approvals may be initiated at the Dean's discretion during fall, spring, or summer sessions.
3. The initiating Committee (IC) may be one of the committees served by members elected from the faculty (e.g., Faculty Affairs Committee, Faculty Development Committee, Faculty Hearings Committee, Graduate Program Council, Planning Committee, Promotion and Tenure Committee, or Undergraduate Program Council). An IC may choose to initiate an online faculty approval process. The IC must *unanimously* approve the proposal.
4. The IC must circulate their proposal to the RCB faculty as a "request for comment" (RFC), via digital media (e.g., email to the RCB faculty email list).
5. The IC must provide a means for receiving and recording all comments received in reply (e.g., reply email, blog, wiki, etc.), and for making these comments known and available to all faculty members (e.g., by email announcement).
6. The comment period must be no less than ten business days. This ten day period cannot count any day on which the University is officially closed.
7. If the proposal is revised, it must be circulated again as a new RFC.
8. When the RFC response is quiescent or uniformly positive, the IC requests the Dean to initiate an online voting process. If the RFC response is clamorous or negative sentiments are ultimately present, the proposal should be withdrawn or deferred to a traditional face-to-face faculty meeting.
9. Online voting process
  - a. The Dean will organize an online ballot survey of the Faculty members
  - b. The call for voting will be circulated to each voting Faculty member, via their official GSU email address. The call must clearly state the motion together with the name of the IC proposing and seconding the motion.
  - c. The ballot will allow each faculty member to choose to respond YEA, NAY, or ABSTAIN
  - d. The Faculty will be allowed a period of at least 5 business days to vote.
  - e. The Dean will publish the results of the online balloting including the count of each vote (YEA, NAY, ABSTAIN) and the names of faculty members voting.
  - f. Votes of YEA must constitute a majority of the voting Faculty in order for the motion to pass.
10. Any proposal that fails to win approval in the online process above may still be taken forward, at the option of the IC, in original or modified form, for faculty approval during their traditional face-to-face meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> "A summer faculty meeting may be called at the Dean's discretion." (under Governance Procedures, Meetings of the Faculty, FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS)

**Sunset Clause**

The policy above expires three years following the date of its approval.

(Approved at RCB Faculty Meeting on November 17, 2017)