

Senate Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Senate?

Vancouver Island University has a bi-cameral governance structure consisting of the Board of Governors and Senate. The Board of Governors manages, administers, and directs the corporate affairs of the University. The VIU Senate is responsible for all academic and curriculum-related matters, including development of academic policy, curriculum content, and student performance issues, as defined by the [University Act](#).

2. How many Senators are there?

The Senate is constituted under the University Act and is chaired by President and Vice-Chancellor. The Senate is comprised of 40 voting members including representatives from faculty, alumni, students, and support staff.

Voting members of Senate also include the Chancellor, the Vice-President Academic & Provost, the Deans of each faculty, and the Chief Librarian. Non-voting members of Senate include a representative from the Board of Governors and the Registrar.

3. How do I become a Senator?

Some Senators are deemed by virtue of their position at VIU. Others are elected from faculty, students, and staff. There are two appointed Senators, one by the Board of Governors, and another by the President upon nomination of the VIU Alumni Association.

Senate membership changes from year to year with the majority of changes occurring every July. For more information on upcoming elections please contact the Senate Office.

4. What is the history of the Senate?

Malaspina University-College was granted University status September 1, 2008, and was named Vancouver Island University at that time. In the fall of 2008 the “Transitional Senate” was formed which included the members of the former Education Council – the previous academic governing body of the institution. The VIU Senate was fully constituted in January of 2009. In June of 2009 Senate approved its Standing Committee structure as follows:

1. [Awards & Honours Committee](#)
2. [Curriculum Committee](#)
3. [Governance Practices Committee](#)
4. [Educational Standards Committee](#)
5. [Elections Committee](#)
6. [Planning & Priorities Committee](#)

5. What are Senate Standing Committees?

Senate conducts its business through the work of six standing committees. Senate Standing Committees normally meet once a month to discuss issues and provide recommendations to Senate for approval. Each Standing Committee has specific terms of reference and advisory mandates.

Two Senate Standing Committees (Curriculum Committee and Educational Standards Committee) are comprised of a few Senators and members from the VIU community. The remaining Standing Committees are comprised of Senate members only.

6. Can I attend a Senate meeting?

Yes. Regular Senate meetings are open to the public.

7. How can I get an item on the Senate agenda?

[Click here](#) to view the flowchart which outlines how issues/recommendations are directed through to Senate. Also review Senate [Policy 91.01](#) and [91.01.001](#) – Submissions to Senate. For more information please contact the Senate Office.

8. Where do I find help and information about the VIU Senate?

Help is always available from the Senate Office. The Administrative Coordinator, Senate is available to offer help, information, or directions as necessary. Feel free to drop by (Building 305, Room 432), email (senate@viu.ca), or phone (250-740-6107).