

## Rationale

From Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised: <https://robertsrules.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

***Isn't it necessary to summarize matters discussed at a meeting in the minutes of that meeting in order for the minutes to be complete?***

*Not only is it not necessary to summarize matters discussed at a meeting in the minutes of that meeting, it is improper to do so. Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, not a record of what was said. [RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 48:2; see also pp. 148–49 of RONR In Brief.] (RONR=Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised)*

Best practices dictate that all statements should be as neutral as possible. Minutes should avoid writing down everything everyone said. Minutes should be concise and summarize the major points of what happened at the meeting. There can be a lot of debate that happens at a meeting as people offer their opinions, research, and experience, which should not be recorded. The minutes should summarize the outcome of the discussion, not every single point that was considered. Because debates infrequently reflect a balanced view or consensus of the members—either the minority or majority view is argued more strongly, thus including debates in the minutes might create a skewed historical record. Additionally, identifying speakers during debate/discussion may prevent some members from speaking during the meeting, especially if their viewpoint does not represent the majority opinion or if they identify as part of a marginalized group.

The senate will adhere to these guidelines, especially concerning the objective record of the minutes and protecting the free and unfettered exchange of ideas by not including the details of debates or attributing statements made in debates. To increase the likelihood that the senate minutes are neutral and factual and as a reminder to comply with best practices, we are adding a statement to the bylaws to clarify what should be included in the minutes.

### G. Roles of the Senate Secretary

1. The senate secretary will be elected by the Faculty Senate for a two-year term.
2. The senate secretary will prepare minutes of Faculty Senate and Executive Board meetings. The minutes will be a concise record of what was done at the meeting. While it is acceptable to include a brief summary of reports and general discussion topics, it is improper for the minutes to be a record of what was said during debates and discussions and should never attribute statements made during debates and discussions to individuals either directly or by implication.
3. The senate secretary will maintain council and committee documents and is responsible for submitting council and committee documents for archival purposes to the library.