Executive Committee Statement

Open Status of Faculty Meetings

Issued pursuant to Senate Action S-09/10-8

The faculty’s public business should be conducted publicly. General Meetings of the Senate will always be open, as described in the Handbook, 1.6.1.2.9.1 at 2 (General Meetings) and 1.6.1.2.13 (Voice). The meeting schedules of Senate committees—including the Senate’s Executive Committee—will be posted, and interested members of the faculty will be admitted normally as auditors or, at the discretion of the chair, as speakers.

Not all of the faculty’s business is public business. Where the Senate or one of its committees has a duty to render a judgment of merit which could be unduly influenced by the presence of interested parties or by the likelihood that deliberations could be reported or misreported to interested parties, its deliberations may be closed precisely in the interest of the good conduct of the faculty’s business. One such regular duty devolves yearly upon the UEPC and GPSEPC when they meet jointly to consider the merits of sabbatical proposals. But since the duty to undertake judgments of merit may arise adventitiously, responsible officers of the faculty, including the chairs of Senate committees, must be allowed, for good cause, to close all or part of the deliberations over which they preside. The very fact that sensitive deliberations may arise adventitiously entails that the only reasonable rule governing the ad hoc closure of meetings I that faculty officers give cogent reasons for their rulings to their deliberative colleagues, to the Senate, and to their faculty colleagues at large.