



TO: ECU Official Faculty

FROM: Grant Hayes, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Purificación Martínez, Ph.D.
Chair of the Faculty

DATE: October 21, 2021

SUBJ: Interpretation of Majority Vote for Recommendations of Initial Appointment, Promotion and Conferral of Permanent Tenure, and New Appointments or for Subsequent Appointments for Fixed-term Faculty Members in *ECU Faculty Manual*, Part IX, Section I, effective October 21, 2021

This memorandum is being sent in accordance with the *ECU Faculty Manual* [Part I. Introduction](#) as a joint conditional interpretation of procedures contained in Part IX, which require clarification. This interpretation is in effect beginning October 21, 2021, and remains in effect until the *ECU Faculty Manual* is revised through the normal process.

[Part IX, Section I](#), subsection IV.F.2 entitled "Voting Procedures for Personnel Actions" contains three subsections marked (a), (b), and (c). Subsection (a) is for initial appointment recommendations, subsection (b) is for promotion and conferral of permanent tenure recommendations, and subsection (c) is for recommendations for new appointments or subsequent appointments of faculty members currently holding fixed-term appointments. The information regarding what counts as a majority vote for a candidate differs between the subsections.

Despite the explicit inclusion of the abstaining member in subsection (c) in establishing the count to determine the majority vote, processes within the *ECU Faculty Manual* related to candidates tend toward their protection more often than penalization. Committee members may not understand that their abstention, recusation or blank vote in personnel actions will ultimately be counted as a vote against a recommendation. Their misunderstanding may be due to familiarity with *Robert's Rules of Order* 44.1, which defines a majority as "more than half of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstention."

The Faculty Governance Committee, Chair of the Faculty, and the Interim Provost have reviewed these sections and agree that for each type of recommendation described in (a), (b), and (c), the majority vote should be determined using the definition of majority from *Robert's Rules of*

Order 44.1, which excludes blanks and abstentions. This interpretation is in accord with the tendency toward protection of faculty candidates in the *ECU Faculty Manual* and will preserve a committee member's ability to abstain from a vote without causing unintentional harm to the candidate.

If you have questions about this conditional interpretation, please direct them to the Chair of the Faculty. Thank you.