

SENATE COMMITTEE ONEDRIVE FOLDERS: ENHANCING EFFICIENCY, CONTINUITY, AND SECURITY

Introduction

To improve the efficiency, transparency, and continuity of Purdue Fort Wayne's Senate Committees, we are introducing a centralized document management system using OneDrive. This solution addresses long-standing challenges with document storage, sharing, and access management. By transitioning to OneDrive, we aim to enhance collaboration, ensure consistency across academic years, and provide a secure platform for sharing committee materials.

Current Challenges with Document Management

Currently, the process for managing and sharing documents within Senate Committees is inefficient and prone to errors. Two common scenarios highlight the need for improvement:

1. **Individual Storage:** Each committee member stores all documents on their personal devices, leading to duplication. For example, if a committee has five members, all five store identical records, which can lead to inconsistencies when documents are updated.
2. **Email-Based Sharing:** When a document needs to be updated, it is shared via email. Each member handles downloading and replacing the old document on their device. Amid a busy semester with many emails from faculty, staff, and students, it is easy to overlook updates, resulting in members working off different versions of the same document.

Solution: OneDrive Senate Committee Folders

To address these challenges, we propose the implementation of OneDrive folders for each Senate Committee. This solution offers the following benefits:

1. **Centralized Document Storage:** All Senate Committee documents will be stored in a shared OneDrive folder, providing a single point of reference for current and earlier academic years. This will ensure that committee members are always working with the most up-to-date versions of documents.
2. **Edit and View Permissions:** All committee members will have "Edit" access to their respective committee folders, allowing them to collaborate efficiently. Additionally, a separate "Public" folder will house the Senate Committee meeting minutes, with "Edit" access restricted to the Chair and Secretary. Other users will have "View" access, ensuring transparency while keeping control over document updates.

3. **Continuity Across Academic Years:** One of the fundamental issues with the current system is that OneDrive folders are often tied to individual members who created them. This creates problems when members leave the university or transition out of the committee. With the new OneDrive folders, control will no longer rest with one person. The folders will be managed by the committee, with new members gaining access through a clearly defined process.

Addressing Potential Concerns

While the benefits of this system are clear, we recognize the need to address potential concerns, particularly around technology, security, and access management.

1. **Technological Training and Support:** For faculty members unfamiliar with OneDrive, training will be available to ensure that everyone can access and manage their committee's documents effectively. Tutorials and support will be provided to streamline this transition.
2. **Security and Confidentiality:** OneDrive offers robust security features, including encryption and access controls, to ensure that sensitive documents stay confidential. Only members of the Senate Committees will have access to their respective folders, providing a secure workspace for committee deliberations.

Folder Permission Structure

The folder permission structure is designed to balance secure internal collaboration with public transparency. Here is how the folder permissions will be structured:

1. **Private Committee Folder:**

Access: All committee members will have "Edit" privileges, ensuring that all relevant documents are accessible and up to date.

Purpose: This folder will serve as the central repository for all committee documents, including research, draft proposals, and internal communications.

2. **Public Senate Committee Minutes Folder:**

Access: The Chair and Secretary will have "Edit" access to add approved meeting minutes, while all others (with PFW email accounts) will have "View" access.

Purpose: This folder will house publicly accessible Senate Committee minutes, ensuring

transparency while supporting document integrity.

Shortcut Link: Each Senate Committee will have a shortcut link to the “All Senate Committee Minutes – Publicly Viewable” folder within their private OneDrive space for easy reference.

3. [Senate Committee Name] Chair Information Folder:

Access: All committee members, with a specific focus on the incoming Chair.

Purpose: This folder will be a repository of useful resources for the Chair, particularly during transitions. Outgoing Chairs are encouraged to upload vital information such as timelines, responsibilities, and procedural guidance to ensure continuity across academic years.

Onboarding New Chairs and Members

Each year, new members and Chairs will be added to the OneDrive folders. Outgoing Chairs are responsible for ensuring that the transition of access occurs smoothly. New Chairs, especially those who have not previously served on the committee, will benefit from the Chair Information folder, which will help them quickly acclimate to their new responsibilities.

How to Use the OneDrive Senate Committee Folders

To ensure the success of this initiative, each Senate Committee will follow these steps:

1. **Annual Folder Set-Up:** At the start of each academic year, the Senate Secretary will ensure that each Committee Chair is given “Edit” permissions to the private Senate Committee folder and the public Minutes folder.
 - a. All Committee Chairs are responsible to add all committee members to the private committee folder with “Edit” permissions.
 - i. Ensure that all non-committee members are removed from accessing the private folder.
 - b. All Committee Chairs are responsible to add the Secretary to the public committee Minutes folder with “Edit” permissions.
 - i. Ensure that only the current committee Chair and Secretary are given “Edit” permissions to the public Minutes folder.
2. **Adding Meeting Minutes:** After committee approval, the Chair or Secretary will upload the minutes to the public Minutes folder. Each committee will have a shortcut to the public folder to streamline this process.
 - a. Committee Minutes no longer must be emailed to the Senate Secretary instead ensure the Minutes are posted within the public Minutes folder.

- i. ****All other documentation such as Senate Documents, References, Question Time questions, etc. will still need to be emailed to the Senate Secretary. ****
3. **Using the Chair Information Folder:** Chairs will be expected to add key documents, such as procedural outlines and important dates, to the Chair Information folder, ensuring future Chairs have access to critical information.

Conclusion

The introduction of OneDrive folders for Senate Committees will significantly improve document management, enhance transparency, and ensure continuity across academic years. By providing centralized access to committee documents and a clear system for managing permissions, this system will reduce inefficiencies and create a more streamlined, secure environment for Senate Committee work.

We welcome feedback from committee members as we implement this new system to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the Senate.