

Report of the
Seventh Senate Review Commission

Submitted to the:

Senate Executive Committee and the
Urbana Senate

April 2015

Commission Members:

Alston, Reginald J
Aminmansour, Abbas (Chair)
Graber, Kim C
Guo, Shao-Hai
Kuntz, Kristi A
Lear, Calvin R
Marshall, Anna-Maria
McCarthy, Randy
Waspi, Kevin G
Wilson, Barbara Jan
Yfantis, Konstantinos N

“As the responsible body in the teaching, research, and scholarly activities of the University, the faculty has inherent interests and rights in academic policy and governance.”

ARTICLE II: Section 3.b, University Statutes

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is a world-class institution. The core strength of the university is the faculty who carry out the teaching, research and service mission of the institution and have played a key role in earning the institution its outstanding reputation. Indeed, it is the quality of our faculty that attracts outstanding students who come from near and far to acquire knowledge and skills that allow them to become leaders in their fields. And the efforts of our faculty and students are complemented by a group of dedicated staff, including academic professionals, who make it possible for all of us to engage in teaching, research, and scholarly activities. We are very fortunate to have such a campus community.

In addition to their significant contributions to the mission of the university, our faculty, students and academic professionals have a keen interest in developing academic policies as well as participating in the decision making process on issues that have an impact on the core mission of the institution. The body that most directly engages in our system of shared governance and represents our faculty, students, and academic professionals is our Academic Senate. The Commission firmly believes that our University of Illinois Senate of the Urbana-Champaign Campus is a crucial partner in our shared governance system. We are honored to have had the opportunity to conduct a review of our Academic Senate and submit this report for consideration by the Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Senate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Seventh Senate Review Commission respectfully submits the following recommendations for consideration by the Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Senate (Senate). These recommendations have been developed through discussions by Commission members over several meetings and following solicitation of input from Senators, Senate Committee Chairs, and other Senate Leaders.

1. Senate Attendance

- a. Elect Senators as well as alternates from each unit to increase participation at Senate meetings in case a senator(s) is unable to attend a meeting.
- b. Remind Senators, alternates, and Senate committee members of meeting attendance policies of the Senate - - enforce these policies.
- c. Inform those running for senate seats of the day/time of senate meetings to help them avoid known conflicts.

2. Senate Membership

- a. Limit faculty Senate seats that represent academic units to currently employed full-time faculty.
- b. Establish a number of Senate seats (e.g. five) for election of retired faculty, elected by their fellow retired faculty campus-wide.
- c. Establish a more uniform mechanism for election of Specialized Faculty as Senators. Some units may allow such faculty to stand for election as Senators, while others do not.
- d. Increase the number of Academic Professional (AP) senate seats from seven to ten so as to include one elected AP from each district with the exception of the district comprising the University Administration.

3. Facilitating Engagement and Participation

- a. Limit the April Senate Organizational meeting to elections, appointments to committees, and other business. Move the informational portion of the meeting to the first Senate meeting of the new academic year.
- b. Use computer projection for discussions of all resolutions / other documents under consideration and for displaying the motions and/or amendments on the floor at Senate meetings. Specifically identify the subject of a vote on the screen before votes are taken.
- c. Encourage Senators to solicit input from their constituents and to offer regular feedback to them after each Senate meeting.
- d. Send out a brief summary of the discussions and actions taken at a Senate meeting shortly after a meeting to all Senators. Encourage them to forward the summary to their constituents.
- e. Encourage academic units to place a regular item on their faculty meeting agendas in which Senators can review and solicit seek input from the faculty about key issues before the Senate.

- f. Ask Senators with long service on the Senate to encourage other faculty to participate in the Senate and Senate committees if such activities do not adversely affect their obtaining tenure and/or promotion.

4. Senate Committees

- a. Enforce the expectation that Senate committees submit annual reports and share these reports with the Senate.
- b. Conduct periodic reviews (e.g. every five years) of standing Senate committees.
- c. Schedule periodic brief oral reports, updates, or sharing of anticipated major activities from chairs of selected senate committees at some Senate meetings.

5. Develop a “Booklet” for Senators with Pertinent Information, Including:

- a. Membership of the Academic Senate and role of the Senate and Senate Committees in shared governance at the campus and university levels.
- b. The jurisdiction of the senate.
- c. Senate committees and their charges.
- d. How to become a Senator and/or a member of Senate committees, if not a Senator.
- e. How to solicit input from constituents and offer feedback to them on key Senate actions
- f. Fundamentals of Roberts Rules of Order.
- g. Fundamentals of the Open Meetings Act and its applications.

6. Recognition of Senate Service

- a. Request that the Chancellor and/or Provost thank and recognize the contributions of senators and non-senator members of senate committees at the end of each year. The letter should be included in the personnel files of the faculty and APs.

7. Role of the Senate Educational Policy Committee

- a. The Chair of the Senate on Educational Policy Committee (EPC) should serve as the first point of contact for addressing concerns related to considerable changes in the size of faculty and students in a program and/or its course offerings. The Chair of EP will discuss the concerns with the Committee and, if deemed appropriate by the Committee, establish a group consisting of faculty, students and administrators to look into the concerns and report to the Senate Executive Committee and appropriate administrators.
- b. Conduct an annual review of the Enrollment Management report for academic units and programs undergoing relatively large changes in the size of their faculty, students or course offerings. Particular attention should be paid to potential implications of such changes relative to Senate Rule 13 as well as on other units or programs and their available resources.

Overview of Commission Activities:

The Seventh Senate Review Commission was established by the Senate during the 2014-15 academic year to carry out a review of the Academic Senate and make recommendations for consideration by the Senate. In order to accomplish this goal, the Commission solicited input from members of the Senate and Senate committees through their chairs. In addition, the Commission held a number of meetings to plan and carry out its mission.

Based on the input received as well as from the discussions of the Commission, it appeared that five major themes were of particular interest. Therefore, five subgroups of the Commission were formed to conduct more detailed discussions in the following areas.

- 1) Senate Membership
- 2) Senate Rule 13
- 3) Engagement and participation of senators in Senate meetings and activities
- 4) Open Meetings Act related issues (OMA)
- 5) Shared governance

Each Commission member served on three of the subgroups listed above. The subgroups met separately and submitted their findings to the full Commission for its consideration and further deliberations. The Commission respectfully offers the following recommendations for consideration by the Senate Executive Committee and the Academic Senate.

It should be noted that items 1 and 3 above have been of interest to the Senate and considered by previous Senate review commissions. This Commission believes it is time for bold action and thinking outside the box to address these issues.

ATTENDANCE AT SENATE MEETINGS

In order for our Academic Senate to operate effectively within our system of shared governance, it must be composed of members who consistently attend and participate in the meetings of the Senate. Attendance at meetings, however, is not always possible, even for the most dedicated Senators. At times, establishing a quorum is not possible, and when a Senator calls for a quorum and it is determined that one does not exist, Senate business cannot be conducted.

To address these issues, the Commission recommends that the Senate establishes a voting system whereby each unit elects one or more alternates to serve in the capacity of Senator when an elected Senator is unable to attend a meeting. It would be the responsibility of an elected Senator to contact an alternate to attend a Senate meeting when necessary. The alternate system would help to increase participation at Senate meetings, would serve as a mechanism for generating greater interest in the Senate by a larger number of individuals, and would provide additional faculty, students, and Academic Professionals (APs) with Senate experience and possibly motivation for those who may elect to seek an office in the future. Since the role of an alternate Senator would only be sporadic, alternates should not be subject to the Senate term limit rule.

The Commission also recommends that at the beginning of each semester, the Chair of the Senate Executive Committee forward a statement to all Senators reminding them of the rules relative to attending Senate and Senate committee meetings as outlined in Part A, Section 12 of the Senate Bylaws (see Appendix A). At the end of the semester, Senate attendance records should be published (see Appendix A, Section 12i) on the Senate website and shared with unit executive officers and deans. If the alternate system is implemented, the report should also indicate instances when an alternate attended a meeting in place of a Senator. This would indicate that the Senator was diligent about asking an alternate to attend a Senate meeting in case of an unavoidable scheduling conflict.

Finally, the Commission recommends that potential Senators be informed of the day/time of Senate meetings prior to running for Senate seats to make them aware of known scheduling conflicts.

SENATE MEMBERSHIP

Based on the input it received, the Commission believes that there is a perception among many members of the campus community that a large number of Senators are at or near the end of their academic careers. The Commission recognizes the value of having Senators with a long history of service in the Senate. However, the Commission also believes that other faculty should be recruited for service in the Senate.

The Commission recommends that only full-time members of the faculty stand to serve as regular Senators. At the same time, the Commission recommends that a finite number of Senate seats (e.g. five) be dedicated for service by retired faculty who would be elected by their fellow retired faculty.

The recent inclusion of Academic Professionals in the Senate has been a very positive development. However, currently only seven of the 11 campus Academic Professional districts are represented with one Senator each. The Commission recommends an increase in the number of Academic Professional in the Senate from seven to ten senators, representing ten districts and excluding the district representing the University Administration.

FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

There exists the perception among some senators that too much time is spent during Senate meetings on procedural issues. To address this perception, the Commission recommends that Senators develop a better understanding of Robert's Rules of Order. The Commission recommends producing a booklet for Senators that would, among other things, include basic information from Robert's Rules of Order.

The Commission believes that de-coupling the business and informational portions of the Senate Orientation meeting that is held near the end of the academic year would be helpful. Specifically, we recommend that

elections, appointments to committees, and similar business be held at the same meeting as usual. However, the informational portion of the Senate Orientation meeting such as review of important rules, procedures, etc. be moved to the first Senate meeting of the new academic year. This will help to ensure that such information is fresh in the minds of Senators.

At times it may be confusing for some senators what motion or which version of a resolution or document is being considered. The Commission recommends use of computer projection to help senators better understand what specific motion or amendment or changes to a document are being considered.

The practice of Senators soliciting input from their constituents on issues being considered by the Senate and providing updates and feedback to them afterwards appears to be inconsistent among different units. Senators should be reminded that their role as Senator does not end once a Senate meeting adjourns. Again, the Commission believes that including best practices for accomplishing this objective in a booklet for senators will be helpful. Further, the Chancellor and Provost may consider encouraging unit executive officers to regularly ask their unit Senators to report on Senate business at faculty meetings.

A few years ago, the Chair of Senate Executive Committee shared a brief summary of the Senate's business with senators via an email. Senators could easily forward that summary to their constituents. The Commission recommends reinstating that very helpful practice.

It appears that at times new tenure-track faculty may be informed that service on the Senate is not a good use of time. While this may be true in some cases, it is not universally true. Such information eliminates the voices of newer faculty from being heard. Further, it perpetuates the perception that the Senate is comprised primarily of faculty who are close to the end of their careers. Additionally, such beliefs reduce the opportunity for institutional memory to be created in the junior faculty who are the future of the university. A culture must be created whereby the role of the Senate is perceived as critical to the successful functioning of the university. One way to accomplish this is for Senators to reach out to new faculty in order to introduce them to the Senate, its roles, and activities. The campus needs to attract the most accomplished faculty to the Senate.

SENATE COMMITTEES

Committees play an essential function in the success of both the Senate and the university. In order to maintain their effectiveness, the Senate Review Commission recommends that the membership, function, and bylaws of standing committees be thoroughly reviewed every five years on a rotating basis by members of that committee. The chairs of the committees under review would submit a written report to the Chair of the Senate Executive Committee who would conduct a follow-up review in collaboration with members of the Senate Executive Committee and the Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures. Currently, there are 19 standing committees, so a review of four committees per year would result in each committee being reviewed every five years.

In addition to five-year reviews, each committee chair should be required to submit an annual written report summarizing committee work that is submitted to the Senate Clerk at the end of each academic year and posted on the Senate website. In addition, brief reports from chairs of certain committees should be presented orally at the Orientation meeting of the Senate.

The Senate Executive Committee should annually conduct an inventory of ad hoc Senate committees and retain/terminate/revise the portfolios of those committees as necessary. For example, the Licensing Advisory Committee has existed for some time without justifiable activity.

It is also recommended that a different approach, consistent with the Open Meetings Act, be considered for determining honorary degree recipients. The current system has the potential to be highly embarrassing to individuals who often are completely unaware that they are being vetted for such an award. Article II, Section 1d of the Statutes states, "Each senate shall recommend candidates for honorary degrees and shall determine for its campus the manner in which the faculty shall recommend candidates for earned degrees, diplomas, and certificates to be conferred by the president under the authority of the Board of Trustees." This considerable responsibility of the Senate should continue but in a manner that protects the integrity of those being vetted for honorary degrees.

Finally, the rules for selection of members to the Committee on Committees need to be clarified. There currently exists confusion about who is eligible to serve. Specifically, Part D, Section 6 of the Senate Bylaws states, "Five senators who are members of the faculty electorate at the time of election..." shall be elected to the Senate. It should be determined if "time of the election" refers to the current academic year in which the election occurs or the subsequent academic year in which the committee member would serve.

RECOGNITION OF SENATE SERVICE

All Senators and Senate committee members should be recognized at the end of the academic year for their service. The Commission recommends that the Chancellor and Provost host an annual social event to do this. In addition, a letter from the Chancellor and Provost should be forwarded to each Senator and Senate committee member thanking her/him for service to the Senate. The letter should value this service and acknowledge the critical importance of Senate service in our shared governance and encourage recognition of Senate activities in annual reviews and tenure and promotion process. A copy of this letter should be sent to the individual's unit executive officer and dean.

ROLE OF THE SENATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE

The Senate Educational Policy Committee (EPC) should serve as a resource to faculty and administrators considering reorganization of an academic unit. The Commission believes that the EPC can share experiences and knowledge with anyone considering reorganization of units so that there is a more consistent and smooth process. Further, the EPC should serve as an ombuds group for individuals concerned about actions taken by Unit Executive Officers (UEO) and/or other individuals or offices that may lead to vacating an academic unit of faculty and students or to eliminate course offerings in the future. Such actions may lead to eventual forced elimination of the unit or program without due process and consultation with faculty, students and other stakeholders of the impacted units or programs.

In light of the above roles, the Commission recommends Amending Part D, Section 8(a) of the Bylaws of the Senate, duties of the Committee on Educational Policy (EP), to include the following.

- a. The Commission recommends that the Chair of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy be the first point of contact for addressing such concerns. The Chair of EP will discuss the concerns with the Committee and, if deemed appropriate by the Committee, establish a group consisting of faculty, students and administrators to look into the concerns and report to the Senate Executive Committee and appropriate administrators.
- b. Conduct annual reviews of reports from Enrollment Management for academic units and programs undergoing relatively large changes in the size of their faculty, students or course offerings and potential implications of such changes on the existing faculty, students and curricula in the unit or program. Particular attention should be paid to the impact of such changes on other units or programs and their resources.

ISSUES THAT REQUIRE FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

The Commission believes that two topics require further study as follows.

- a. Inclusion of Specialized Faculty in the Senate in a more consistent way.
- b. The size of the Senate.

The Commission recommends focused study of these two topics via appropriate committees.

NEXT STEP:

If adopted by the Senate, certain of the Commission's recommendations require the formation of ad hoc implementation committee(s) as well as work by one or more existing Senate committees such as the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (USSP), Senate Committee on Educational Policy (EPC) and Senate Committee on General University Policy (GUP) before submission to the full Senate for consideration and final action. The Senate Executive Committee should oversee the distribution and consideration of these recommendations by appropriate committees.

APPENDIX A

Bylaws of the Senate

As amended through October 8, 2012

Part A - Meetings

12. (a) Attendance is expected of all Senators at all regularly scheduled Senate meetings, and of all committee members at regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate's committees.
- (b) A Senator who is required to miss a regularly scheduled Senate meeting should notify the Senate Clerk prior to the meeting. A committee member who is required to miss a regularly scheduled meeting of a Senate committee should notify the committee chair prior to the meeting.
- (c) If a Senator misses two consecutive regularly scheduled Senate meetings during an academic year and has failed to notify the Senate Clerk prior to such absences as described in subsection (b), the Clerk shall notify the Senator in writing that because of irregular attendance, the Senator is presumed to have resigned from the Senate, effective as of the date of the letter.
- (d) If a student is removed from the senate of the Illinois student government, the senate of the Illinois student government will notify the Clerk of the UIUC Senate. The Clerk shall notify the Senator in writing that, because of action of the senate of the Illinois student government, the Senator is presumed to have resigned from the UIUC Senate, effective as of the date of the letter.
- (e) Upon receipt of a letter described in subsection (c) or (d), the Senator may, within fourteen calendar days after the date of the letter, notify the Senate Clerk in writing of his or her desire to continue serving as a Senator. Upon receipt of such a letter, the Clerk shall reinstate the Senator. If the Senator fails to respond to a letter described in subsection (c) or (d) within fourteen calendar days after the date of the letter, the resignation becomes final.
- (f) No Senator may be reinstated more than once in any one Senate term under the procedures outlined in subsections (c), (d), and (e) above.
- (g) If a Senator's resignation becomes final under subsection (e) or (f), the Senate Clerk shall notify the Senator's unit of that fact so that a replacement can be selected to serve the remainder of the resigned Senator's term.
- (h) If a committee member misses two consecutive regularly scheduled meetings of a committee of the Senate and has failed to notify the committee chair prior to such absences as described in subsection (b), the committee chair may notify the Senate Clerk of that fact. The Senate Clerk shall then notify the committee member in writing that because of irregular attendance, the committee member is presumed to have resigned from that committee, effective as of the date of the letter. Upon receipt of this letter, a committee member may be reinstated using the same procedures and subject to the same limitations described in subsections (e) and (f) above. If a committee member's resignation becomes final under these procedures, the Senate Clerk shall notify the chair of the Committee on Committees so that a replacement can be selected to serve the remainder of the resigned committee member's term.
- (i) At the end of each semester, the Senate Clerk shall cause the attendance records for that semester of all Senators at regularly scheduled Senate meetings to be published in any medium or publication chosen by the Senate Clerk.