SP.19.03
Revision to the Standing Rules – Speaking at Senate and Senate Committee Meetings

BACKGROUND
The Illinois Open Meetings Act requires that “Any person shall be permitted an opportunity to address public officials under the rules established and recorded by the public body.” This is generally referred to as public comment. The proposed time allocation for Senate meetings is parallel to the rules adopted by the Board of Trustees. The proposed time allocation for committee meetings is scaled down from the Senate meeting allocation in order to accommodate public comment but not prohibit the committee from completing its business.

The Senate also permits non-senators to request the privilege of the floor at Senate and Senate Committee meetings to speak during the discussion of a particular item listed on the business portion of the agenda. This is generally referred to as floor privileges.

The new rule below would outline the two separate processes: one for requesting to speak during the public comment portion of a meeting and one for requesting floor privileges on an item of business.

RECOMMENDATION
The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures recommends that the Senate approve the following amendment to the Standing Rules. As this is to be a new Rule, the text to be added is not underscored.

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE STANDING RULES

NEW RULE

16. Requesting to Speak at a Senate or Senate Committee Meeting

The Senate has developed procedures in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act by which individuals may request the opportunity to speak at Senate or Senate Committee meetings. This is generally referred to as public comment.

The Senate has also developed procedures permitting non-senators to request the privilege of the floor at Senate and Senate Committee meetings to speak during the discussion of a
particular item listed on the business portion of the agenda. This is generally referred to as floor privileges.

The procedures for requesting the opportunity to speak during public comment and requesting floor privileges on an item of business on the agenda are listed separately below.

A. Public Comment

Public comment is a portion of the meeting set aside specifically for the public to address the Senate or a Senate committee (the body). A response to the individual making the public comment is not required by the presiding officer or by members of the body. When addressing the body, individuals shall first state their name and any relevant title or affiliation.

1. Requests to address the body.

Requests to make a public comment at a Senate meeting must be submitted to the Office of the Senate in writing no later than twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak.

Requests to make a public comment at a Senate committee meeting must be submitted to the chair of the Senate committee in writing no later than twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak.

In making a request to appear before the Senate or Senate committee, individuals must give their names and any relevant title or affiliation. The request must state the subject matter to be presented and must relate to matters within the jurisdiction of the Senate or Senate committee. The Senate Clerk or committee chair will review each request and notify the individual making the request whether the individual may give public comment at the next meeting. Substitute speakers will not be permitted.

2. Time allocation.

The Senate will allow public comment at each meeting. An individual will be limited to speak for no more than three minutes. This limit will be strictly adhered to with assistance of a timekeeper. A maximum of ten speakers will be recognized for each Senate meeting.
Senate committees will allow public comment at each meeting. An individual will be limited to speak for no more than two minutes. This limit will be strictly adhered to with the assistance of a timekeeper. A maximum of five speakers will be recognized for each committee meeting.

3. *Scheduling of speakers.*

When the number of requests to address the Senate or Senate committee at a given meeting exceeds the number allocated in section A.2 above, requests will be approved based on the date and time the written request was received by the Office of the Senate or chair of a committee. In addition, preference may be given to subject matters that relate to the agenda for the relevant meeting or relate to items under the committee charge in the Senate Bylaws, and to avoid repetitiveness.

4. *Discussion moderation.*

The presiding officer or committee chair may truncate repetitious or disruptive comments.

B. Floor Privileges

The Senate or a Senate committee may grant floor privileges to an individual to participate in the discussion of an item listed on the business portion of the agenda.

1. *Requests to address the body.*

Requests for floor privileges at a Senate meeting must be submitted to the Office of the Senate in writing no later than twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak. The individual must include in the request the business item on the agenda the individual wishes to speak about. At the beginning of each meeting, the presiding officer will announce the names of those who have requested floor privileges and the business item the individual wishes to speak about, and the Senate shall vote on those requests, either separately or collectively.

Requests for floor privileges at a Senate committee meeting must be submitted to the chair of the Senate committee in writing no later than twelve hours before the scheduled start of the meeting at which the individual wishes to speak. The
individual must include in the request the business item on the agenda the individual
wishes to speak about and must include a brief explanation for the request. At the
beginning of each meeting, the presiding officer will announce the names of those
who have requested floor privileges and the business item the individual wishes to
speak about, and the committee shall vote on those requests, either separately or
collectively.

2. **Scheduling of speakers.**

   Individuals who have been granted floor privileges by the body shall state their
name and relevant title or affiliation before addressing the body and shall speak only
during discussion of the business item on the agenda to which floor privileges were
granted.

3. **Discussion moderation.**

   Precedence of the floor will be given to members of the body. The presiding officer
or committee chair shall moderate the discussion in accordance with *Robert’s Rules
of Order Newly Revised*. The presiding officer or committee chair may truncate
repetitious or disruptive comments.

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**University Statutes and Senate Procedures**

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