

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES  
(Final; Action)

SP.20.29      Resolution to Maintain Certain Senate Operations During the COVID-19  
Pandemic

1    WHEREAS, the COVID-19 global outbreak has resulted in the need for social-distancing to limit  
2    the transmission of coronavirus, resulting in significant disruptions and widespread changes to  
3    a normal way of life and work;

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5    WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued the First Gubernatorial  
6    Disaster Proclamation declaring a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 threat and  
7    on April 1 issued the Second Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation;

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9    WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a COVID-19 pandemic;

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11    WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, University of Illinois System President Timothy Killeen  
12    announced a broad set of policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that, among other  
13    things, suspended indefinitely gatherings of fifty or more people at University-sponsored  
14    events, but permitted livestream or telecommuting events;

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16    WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-07  
17    suspending certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act for the duration of the Gubernatorial  
18    Disaster Proclamation to allow public bodies to assemble electronically or virtually to conduct  
19    their business;

20  
21    WHEREAS, any meetings of the Senate of the Urbana-Champaign Campus, or its committees,  
22    are governed by both the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws, and*  
23    *Standing Rules*;

24  
25    WHEREAS, the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules* do not allow for the conduct of  
26    electronic or virtual meeting of the Senate or its committees, and do not provide for remote  
27    electronic voting on matters before the Senate;

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29    WHEREAS, the *Bylaws*, Part D.1.e authorizes the Senate Executive Committee to act on behalf  
30    of the Senate on urgent matters during the summer months;

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32 WHEREAS, the *Bylaws*, Part D.1.e requires the Senate Executive Committee to first consult any  
33 senators on campus prior to acting on urgent matters during the summer months and to  
34 subsequently report all actions taken during the summer months to the Senate at the first  
35 regular meeting of the fall semester;

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37 WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order No. 2020-  
38 10 implementing a statewide “Stay-at-Home” order for all Illinois residents in non-essential  
39 occupations until April 7, 2020;

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41 WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order No. 2020- 18  
42 (Second Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation) extending the statewide “Stay-at-Home” order  
43 for all Illinois residents in non-essential occupations until April 30, 2020;

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45 WHEREAS, the above actions prevent the Senate from conducting its business and fulfilling its  
46 shared governance functions in a manner that adheres to the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws*, and  
47 *Standing Rules*;

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49 WHEREAS, it is important for the Senate and its committees to continue to meet to discuss and  
50 act on policy, procedural, and curricular changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in  
51 anticipation of resuming normal university operations when possible; and

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53 WHEREAS, under the Senate *Constitution* Article I, Section 3, the Senate cannot amend its  
54 *Bylaws* to allow for electronic meetings and actions until such time as it can gather in person to  
55 do so; therefore,

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57 BE IT RESOLVED, that extraordinary steps are needed to enable the Senate to conduct critical  
58 business while “stay-at-home” and “social-distancing” orders remain in effect;

59 BE IT RESOLVED, that to ensure that the Senate can fulfill its duties to share in the governance  
60 of the University during the COVID-19 pandemic, and until such time that the Senate can  
61 convene in person to conduct meetings, the Senate shall:

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63 1) Conduct meetings of the Senate and its committees by video and/or audio, subject to  
64 the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act as altered by any current or future  
65 Executive Order;

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67 2) Keep written minutes and votes of all video and/or audio meetings, which shall be  
68 properly recorded by the Clerk of the Senate and made available in a timely fashion on  
69 the Senate website;

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71 3) Address urgent matters regarding the University response to the COVID-19 pandemic by  
72 granting authority to the Senate Executive Committee, consistent with the model of the  
73 authority granted to the Senate Executive Committee during the summer months as

74 established in Part D.1.e of the *Bylaws*, including all stipulations to seek the advice of  
75 senators and to report all actions to the Senate at the next regular meeting of the  
76 Senate;

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78 4) Address regular matters relating to shared governance of University policies,  
79 procedures, and curricula by using the Senate’s standard policies and procedures to  
80 propose, deliberate, and formally act using Senate committees to provide specialized  
81 input via electronic communication tools to the extent practicable;

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83 5) Maintain transparency of the conduct of Senate business outside traditional in-person  
84 meetings by preserving and making available a written record of any electronic meeting  
85 or opinion-gathering effort to gather the perspectives and opinions of the Senate;

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87 6) Maintain transparency of the conduct of Senate business by distributing regular updates  
88 on matters before the Senate and results of Senate actions;

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90 7) Maintain the right of any senator or senators to introduce a resolution to the Senate  
91 during an electronic meeting of the Senate;

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93 8) Present all items voted upon and passed during electronic meetings of the Senate in the  
94 consent agenda for ratification at the first regular, in-person meeting of the Senate,  
95 subject to consent agenda procedures; and

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97 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures shall  
98 develop proposals to maintain normal Senate operations during emergencies or disasters that  
99 prevent the Senate from conducting business in person, including proposals that:

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101 1) Define the circumstances under which a qualifying emergency or disaster event is  
102 understood to exist;

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104 2) Specify the Senate actions that are permitted during an emergency or disaster;

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106 3) Address any other policy or procedure gaps that do not anticipate emergency- or  
107 disaster-related disruptions in the ability of the Senate to fulfill its duties.

UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES

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