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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3) Address urgent matters regarding the University response to the COVID-19 pandemic by granting authority to the Senate Executive Committee, consistent with the model of the authority granted to the Senate Executive Committee during the summer months as
established in Part D.1.e of the *Bylaws*, including all stipulations to seek the advice of
senators and to report all actions to the Senate at the next regular meeting of the
Senate;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES**

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