

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

SP.26.02 Proposed Revision to the *Statutes*, Article II, Sections 3a(1) and 3a(2) – Faculty Role in Governance (ST-91)

BACKGROUND

On April 22, 2025, the University Senates Conference (USC) transmitted ST-91, which contains potential amendments to the *Statutes*, Article II, Sections 3.a.(1) and 3.a.(2), originally proposed by the Chicago Senate. These proposed changes would expand the definition of the “faculty of the University of Illinois System and any of its units except for the Graduate College” to include specified non-tenure-system faculty: those with modified professor titles, as well as instructors and lecturers. Further, ST-91 proposes restrictions on unit-level bylaws on matters such as the decisions and provisions “regarding indefinite tenure,” as well as restrictions on which faculty may vote to award promotions.

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (SP) began its consideration of ST-91 in Fall 2025 under the agenda item SP.26.02. Throughout the Fall, SP solicited input from the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GP) and the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (AF). SP also presented ST-91 at the October 13, 2025, December 8, 2025, and April 7, 2026 Senate meetings, and provided a web form to collect feedback from senators.

In particular, senators have been asked to consider the following questions regarding the proposed changes in ST-91:

- Does expanding the definition of “faculty” in the *Statutes* to include non-tenure-track professors, lecturers, and instructors (ST-91, lines 5-8) raise any concerns about the role of faculty, broadly or in relation to governance?
- Do the *Bylaws* of units you belong to adequately address the proposed changes in ST-91 lines 15-16 and 29-30, or would they need revision?
- Are there uses of “faculty” elsewhere in the *Statutes* or other major governance documents that might need to be clarified or redefined if the expanded definition were incorporated into the *Statutes*?

While the proposed changes to *Statutes*, Article II are textually straightforward, both the Senate Committee on General University Policy (GP) and the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure (AF) identify matters the Senate may want to consider. In particular, GP comments that:

Expanding the meaning of the term “faculty” in this proposal may result in more opportunities for inclusive participation in department-level governance where they may not now exist. However, it also introduces potential conflicts for those departments whose current bylaws specify clearly delineated authority structures guiding unit decisions about appointments, evaluation, advancement, and oversight of their academic programs. Because this change will require department by-laws to be updated, it is possible colleges and departments may end up creating uneven or conflicting applications of voting rights, committee eligibility, and advisory responsibilities. [...]

If adopted, ST-91 would remove flexibility within each department or unit to determine for themselves appropriate details of local governance participation by academic staff ineligible for tenure. [...]

GP broadly supports and encourages the participation of non-tenure track faculty in the shared governance activities of their units but does not support mandating this through the means proposed by ST-91, particularly because of the governance issues noted above. For this reason, we will propose an amendment to ST-91 for the Senate’s consideration.

SP notes that ST-91, if adopted into the *Statutes*, would include non-tenure-system faculty in governance by default rather than only at the discretion of the tenure-system faculty. GP’s comments are provided for the Senate in a separate document under the agenda item for SP.26.02.

Further, AF comments that the proposed expansion of the definition of “faculty” in II.3.a.(1):

...does not affect [Article X.2.a] protections which extend to “academic staff”— clearly a broader category than “faculty”. AF believes the main effect of this as to academic freedom is that the persons who are now “faculty” by definition are covered by [Article IX.6], which describes severe sanctions short of dismissal. [Article IX.6] limits causes for such sanctions to a specified list and prescribes a procedure. In particular, AF interprets IX.6.e to mean that no sanction as severe as “suspension with or without salary (full or partial) for a period not to exceed one-half of the individual’s normal appointment period ... health and retirement benefits shall be maintained” can be applied to any person who is “faculty” without following the procedure in IX.6. Further, AF interprets IX.6.e to mean that no more severe sanction is available other than dismissal. [Article IX.12] covers dismissal of academic staff with multi-year appointments and sharply limits the available causes for dismissal. A difficulty would arise if dismissal was available for an activity that could not give rise to severe sanctions short of dismissal. AF does not believe this difficulty is present.

In addition, SP notes that the term “faculty” appears just over 150 times throughout the *Statutes*. The Chicago Senate’s background notes that some key sections of the *Statutes* could be affected by this change:

- Article III, Section 2b (Faculty of a College)
- Article IV, Section 1a (Faculty of a Department)
- Article IV, Section 4 (Changing a department from one with a head to one with a chair)
- Article IX, Section 6a (Severe Sanctions Other Than Dismissal for Cause for Members of the Faculty)

However, after a review of key sections of the *Statutes*, SP has not yet found any specific instances of “faculty” in the *Statutes* that, if expanded, would be unclear. It is worth remembering that if these changes were integrated into the *Statutes*, all uses of “faculty” would hinge on this expanded definition unless otherwise specified. Importantly, definition of the faculty of the Graduate Colleges (V.1.a) would be unaffected.

RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures therefore recommends aligning the proposed expansion of “faculty” in *Statutes* Article II, Section 3.a.(1) with the ranks and titles recognized at Urbana-Champaign: tenure-system faculty, non-tenure-system faculty including associates (e.g. postdoctoral research associates), and administrators in the direct line of responsibility for academic affairs. SP recommends removing the specified modifiers for non-tenure-system faculty titles by generalizing to “with or without modifiers,” allowing more flexibility for use cases at each university and ease of reading. Further, SP recommends rejecting the proposed Section 3.a.(3), which would unnecessarily restrict voting on appointments and promotions (currently specified in the *Statutes*, Article IX, Section 3), matters best left to unit-level governance.¹

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures recommends the approval of the following proposed revision to the *Statutes*. Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~ and text to be added is underlined. Text that is both ~~struck through and underlined~~ rejects the proposed language from the Chicago Senate.

PROPOSED REVISION TO THE *STATUTES*, ARTICLE II, SECTIONS 3a(1) and 3a(2) – FACULTY

ROLE IN GOVERNANCE

- 1 **Section 3. Faculty Role in Governance**
- 2 **a. (1)** The faculty of the University of Illinois System and any of its units except

¹ Over the 2021-25 academic years, the Urbana-Champaign Senate independently considered other proposed revisions to the *Statutes* (ST-83) that also contained potential changes to the definition of “faculty.” In 2024, the Senate voted to reject or modify many of its changes ([SP.22.01](#)), and in 2025 to reject ST-83 in full ([SP.25.02](#)). Further, the Urbana-Champaign Senate approved [SP.25.01](#) on November 10, 2025 (designated ST-94 by USC), a proposed revision to the *Statutes* that would modify Article II, Section 3.a.(2) to incorporate the term “principal” as a modifier for instructors and lecturers. ST-91 proposes modifications to the same passages, but in ways compatible with ST-94—the affected area(s) would need to be reconciled if both ST-91 and ST-94 were approved by all three senates.

3 for the Graduate College consists of those members of the academic staff with the
4 rank or title in that unit of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor who
5 are tenured or receiving probationary credit toward tenure; members of the
6 academic staff with the rank or title in that unit of professor, associate professor,
7 assistant professor, modified by “teaching,” “research,” “clinical,” or instructor
8 lecturer, or associate, with or without a “senior” modifier; and those administrators
9 in the direct line of responsibility for academic affairs (persons who hold the title
10 director or dean in an academic unit, provost or equivalent officer, chancellor/vice
11 president and president). Administrative staff members not in the direct line of
12 responsibility for academic affairs are members of the faculty only if they also hold
13 faculty appointments. The bylaws of any academic unit may further mandate a
14 minimum percent faculty appointment in that unit for specified faculty privileges,
15 such as voting privileges. ~~For decisions regarding indefinite tenure, The bylaws of a~~
16 unit may also require a minimum rank, seniority, or percent appointment in that
17 unit for other specified privileges, such as the composition of internal governance
18 bodies and for decisions regarding tenure.

19 **(2)** The bylaws of a unit may grant specified faculty privileges to selected faculty of
20 other units. The bylaws may also grant specified faculty privileges to members of
21 the academic staff of the unit or of other units who are not included in subsection 1
22 above (~~i.e., neither tenured nor receiving probationary credit toward tenure~~), and
23 who have the rank or title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor,
24 instructor, ~~or~~ lecturer, or associate. The bylaws may also grant specified faculty
25 privileges to members of the academic staff of the unit or of other units who have
26 the rank or title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, ~~or~~
27 lecturer, or associate, modified by the terms ~~“research,” “adjunct,” “clinical,”~~
28 ~~“visiting” and/or “emeritus”/“emerita”~~ (e.g., ~~“research professor,” “adjunct~~
29 ~~assistant professor,” “clinical associate professor,” “visiting professor”~~). Only
30 academic staff with titles listed above may be extended faculty privileges. Voting on
31 these provisions of the bylaws is limited to those named in subsection (1) above.

32 Voting on bylaws provisions regarding indefinite tenure is limited to tenure system
33 faculty.
34 ~~(3) Voting to award an appointment or a promotion is limited to individuals who~~
35 ~~hold a rank at or above the rank being considered. Voting to award an appointment~~
36 ~~or a promotion with indefinite tenure is limited to those with indefinite tenure.~~
37

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