

TO: Shawn Gilmore, Chair
Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (SP)

FROM: Joanne Kaczmarek, Chair
Senate Committee on General University Policy (GP)

DATE: March 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Feedback on GP.26.03, Proposed Revision to the *Statutes*, Article II, Sections 3a(1) and 3a(2) – Faculty Role in Governance (ST-91)

On November 18, 2025, then-Chair of SP, David Dalpiaz, requested feedback from GP on GP.26.03/ST-91. In his email, Chair Dalpiaz indicated:

“ST-91 proposes extending added governance rights, especially voting, to many non-tenure system faculty. Again, reasonably simple textual changes, but far-reaching policy implications. SP is looking for any general input on this proposal but especially interested in any glaring governance issues it would create.”

Below, we outline the potential governance issues followed by some general input on other issues.

Potential Governance Issues

Potential governance issues concerning the draft revision to the *Statutes* (ST-91) appear to fall particularly around the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structures for all academic units at all three campuses. 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.

Another governance issue to consider is whether the proposed revisions, beyond mandating broad voting rights for non-tenure system faculty, will create conflicts in process that may be difficult to easily resolve. For example, in the case of initiating disciplinary sanctions on faculty

members, how will the process be carried out if what is currently outlined in *Statutes*, Article IX, Section 6 and Article X, Section 1.b.6, conflicts with binding employment-related contractual agreements? There may also be a risk that the expectations regarding faculty duties and evaluation contained in these agreements may become inconsistent with the statutorily implied expectations of faculty.

Changes in the definition of faculty through these “...reasonably simple textual changes” would require extensive review and revision of unit by-laws and other established governing policies and processes to ensure alignment with the *Statutes*. The matter of aligning governance documents with one another becomes even more complex because of this need to review over 150 instances of the mention of “faculty” in the *Statutes*.

Other issues

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. Currently, Article II Section 3a (2) of the *Statutes* specifies that units may indeed grant any unit-level privileges to non-tenure track colleagues if they so choose; therefore, those who are ineligible for tenure are *not* necessarily prohibited from participating in committees or participating in shared governance activities of their units. ST-91, lines 17-19, states that “[Academic staff ineligible for tenure]...are *denied access* to shared governance at the college and unit levels and are *prohibited from* participating in committees with direct relevance to their work condition” (our emphasis). This assertion, upon which the rationale for ST-91 currently rests is not accurate for all units and colleges across all three universities.

This approach immediately recognizes non-tenure track faculty as faculty in the *Statutes* and does not foreclose on the extension of broader faculty rights to non-tenure faculty after necessary review.

Recommendation

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. (see attached)

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

- For Section 3a (1) we propose leaving the language of 3a (1) as it is in the current *Statutes* until ST-83 completes its review and it is presented to the Board of Trustees.
- For Section 3a (2) we propose the below modification to clarify granting further governance privileges to specialized faculty regardless of the formal definition of “faculty”.
- For Section 3a (3) we support inclusion of the ST-91’s proposed Section 3a (3) in its entirety.

Section 3. Faculty Role in Governance

a. **(1)** The faculty of the University of Illinois System and any of its units except for the Graduate College consists of those members of the academic staff with the rank or title in that unit of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor who are tenured or receiving probationary credit toward tenure, and those administrators in the direct line of responsibility for academic affairs (persons who hold the title director or dean in an academic unit, provost or equivalent officer, chancellor/vice president and president). Administrative staff members not in the direct line of responsibility for academic affairs are members of the faculty only if they also hold faculty appointments. The bylaws of any academic unit may further mandate a minimum percent faculty appointment in that unit for specified faculty privileges, such as voting privileges.

(2) The bylaws of a unit may grant specified faculty privileges to all non-tenure track faculty appointed in that unit. The bylaws of a unit may also grant specified faculty privileges to selected faculty of other units. ~~The bylaws may also grant specified faculty privileges to members of the~~ and to academic staff ~~of~~ within the unit or ~~of~~ within other units ~~who are not included in subsection 1 above (i.e., neither tenured nor receiving probationary credit toward tenure), and who have~~ hold the rank or title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or lecturer including titles modified by “research,” “adjunct,” “clinical,” “visiting,” or

“emeritus/emerita.” ~~The bylaws may also grant specified faculty privileges to members of the academic staff of the unit or of other units who have the rank or title of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or lecturer modified by the terms “research,” “adjunct,” “clinical,” “visiting” and/or “emeritus” (e.g., “research professor,” “adjunct assistant professor,” “clinical associate professor,” “visiting professor”).~~ Only academic staff with titles listed above individuals holding these ranks or titles may be extended faculty privileges, in so far as they align with all terms of agreed upon employment. Voting on these provisions of the bylaws is limited to those named in subsection (1) above.

(3) Voting to award an appointment or a promotion is limited to individuals who hold a rank at or above the rank being considered. Voting to award an appointment or a promotion with indefinite tenure is limited to those with indefinite tenure.