

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
University Statutes and Senate Procedures
(Final; Action)

SP.14.03 Amendments to Nicknames in the *Senate Election Rules for the Student Electorate*

BACKGROUND

Many people often use a nickname instead of their full given or legal name. For example, someone named “Matthew” may often identify with the nickname “Matt.” There are also some people who use facetious nicknames, so someone named “Matthew” may identify with the nickname “Mattypoo.” The current *Senate Election Rules for the Student Electorate* state that students may use a nickname they are commonly referred to as on the ballot, but it states nothing about the intent or legitimacy of nicknames.

The Campus Student Elections Commission’s (CSEC) only attempt in preventing the misuse of nicknames is currently reserving the right to refuse the use of a nickname if it believes a candidate is using it to gain an unfair advantage. However, this policy is not in the *Senate Election Rules for the Student Electorate*.

One example of nicknames influencing an election was in 2002. The student body elected its President and Vice President, and both candidates used facetious nicknames on the ballot. One student ran for Student Body President using the nickname “Gordon T. Gnome Meron,” and another student ran for Student Body Vice President using the nickname “Hale T. Snail DePriest.” These nicknames referenced comic strip characters from *The Daily Illini*. Both candidates received the most amount of votes, but the CSEC disqualified the candidates.

Additionally, in recent year’s student elections, there were multiple candidates who used facetious nicknames. In almost every case, a candidate that used a facetious nickname won his or her race. Some candidates even used a facetious nickname in a competitive race while using no nickname in another non-competitive race. All of these instances prompted Student Senators and committee members to propose IA.2013.47 *Amendments to Nicknames in Senate Election Rules* for the Student Electorate, which was adopted by the Illinois Student Senate on April 10, 2013.

RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures recommends approval of the following revisions to the *Senate Election Rules for the Student Electorate*. Text to be added is underscored and text to be deleted is indicated by ~~strikeout~~ (e.g., ~~sample text for deletion~~).

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE SENATE ELECTION RULES FOR THE STUDENT ELECTORATE

9. Ballots

• 9.3 *Contents*. The ballot shall contain the following:

- (a.) name of the college;
- (b.) designation of the election unit and number of senators to be elected;
- (c.) the names of the nominees by unit; and
- (d.) directions on proper voting procedures.

In the designation of a candidate's name on the ballot, the candidate's surname shall be used. In addition, any combination of the following designations may be used at the discretion of the candidate as space dictates: the candidate's full or shortened given name, and/or the candidate's initial(s), ~~and/or a nickname by which the candidate is commonly known~~. Nicknames may be used if the candidate can demonstrate prior common usage upon request.

No designation may be used in addition to the candidate's surname which suggests or implies possession of a degree or title, nor may a candidate's nickname be designed to intentionally mislead voters.

UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES

William Maher, Chair

H. George Friedman

Wendy Harris

Scott Jacobs

Calvin Lear

Anna-Maria Marshall

Mark Roszkowski

Cheyenne Wu

Sandy Jones, *Ex officio (designee)*

Jenny Roether, *Ex officio*

Dedra Williams, *Observer*