University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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September 8, 1977

Professor Martha Friedman
Senate Council
Urbana-Champaign Senate

Dear Marty:

Attached is a copy of the report of the Second Senate Review Commission. It has been developed after many meetings and with many exchanges of letters and comments between the members of the Commission. Although not all members are present on campus and could not, therefore, participate in consideration of the final detailed wording, all members of the Commission support the recommendations which are made. Therefore, all names of the Commission are appended to this letter.

The body of the report consists of three main parts. First, we include our perception of the events which led to the establishment of the present Urbana-Champaign Senate and the reasons behind some of the procedures of its operation which have been developed. The body of the report includes recommendations in four areas. The items we present for action are indicated by Roman numerals and are italicized. Each recommendation is accompanied by brief discussion of its background and our perception of the need for affirmative action on that recommendation. Finally, the report concludes with a summarizing page.

I will be pleased to present this report and to discuss it briefly at the Senate meeting on September 19, 1977. Other members of the Commission may wish to be present at that time, as well. Furthermore, the Commission members are willing to meet with committees or other groups of the Senate to aid in the effective consideration of these recommendations by the Senate. We will leave to your discretion, and that of the Senate Council, the dismissal of the Commission.

Sincerely yours,

Charles Wert

Charles Wert, Chairman

Roger Clark
James Gower
Kitty Locker
H.W. Norton
A.R. Robinson
Hugh Satterlee
A.P. Shpuntoff
H.W. Wakeland
P.M. Weichsel

Enc.

REPORT OF THE SECOND SENATE REVIEW COMMISSION

I. General Charge to the Commission

The Constitution of the Urbana-Champaign Senate provides for periodic reviews of its functions. The Senate established the present Review Commission in April of 1976. Members of the Commission were notified of their appointment in June of 1976, and the Commission has been working diligently since September 1976.

This Review Commission used the experience of the first Commission in planning its agenda and mode of operation. No general meeting with either the faculty or student electorates was held, because the first Commission found that response to their open meetings was disappointingly small. The present Commission, though, had many discussions with members of the Senate, with committee chairmen, with the Senate Council, with administrators, and with other individuals on campus. The Commission also reported to the Senate at its March 21 meeting some of its areas of consideration and asked for advice. No comment or suggestion was received by the Commission from this request.

The Commission has assembled its comments and advice in four major areas, as follows:

1. Role of academic deans
2. Role of the Senate Council
3. Role of the Committee on Committees
4. Committee operations

II. General Comments

The present Urbana-Champaign Senate was created by action of the Faculty Senate which existed on this campus for many years. The Faculty Senate consisted of full professors and administrators with that equivalent rank. In its last years, some associate and assistant professors were added to the Senate, and some students were added to Senate committees.

Many trends in the nation tended to come to a focus in the late 60's to give increased impetus to expanding the constituency of a campus governing body for academic affairs. These were

1. Insistence by the faculty-at-large on greater participation in academic affairs.
2. Demands for greater participation in University governance by younger faculty.
3. Pressure from students for their participation in academic governance.

The Faculty Senate of the 1960's had a membership of about 1,000 members. Clearly, enlargement to include all faculty and the entire student body was impractical. Therefore, an elected Senate whose membership reflected all of these constituencies was necessary, and the make-up of the present Senate was established. The present Review Commission did not examine the general issue of changes in membership in the constituency or reallocation of representation.

A wide range of views exists concerning the importance of the Senate, its authority and power, and its effectiveness. Many members of the academic community will remember the glowing expectations that were anticipated from a truly representative body, elected by democratic processes, whose members would represent their constituency on the one hand, but be sensitive to the broadest campus-wide needs on the other. Many members of the community will also recall that predictions of difficulty were made as the Constitution of the new Senate was being drawn up by the old. In many respects, both groups were correct: the Urbana-Champaign Senate is effective in many ways, but it also has shortcomings and difficulties. In brief, it is our view that many of the high expectations that were expressed in the planning of the present Senate have been fulfilled; at the same time, it has not functioned as well as its most vigorous proponents expected.

Part of the reason for criticism of the present Senate comes from a nostalgic comparison by some individuals to the effectiveness of the older Faculty Senate. It is, therefore, worthwhile to recollect some of the characteristics of the Faculty Senate:

1. The Faculty Senate had a stable group of "professional leaders" who had gained experience in the functions of the Senate through long participation in Senate affairs. This group of leaders rotated slowly so that a member could gain experience before assuming responsibility.

2. The Faculty Senate handled course and curriculum matters effectively. The Committee on Educational Policy was a powerful and effective group whose recommendations were rarely questioned by the full Senate.

3. The Faculty Senate did not achieve a position of influence on budgetary matters.

4. Attendance at meetings was a small fraction of the total membership.

5. The Senate Council, formed in the 1960's, assumed many of the functions of an executive committee, because campus events often required action more rapid than was practical for the full Senate.

Thus, the Faculty Senate was a continuing body, most of whose business was transacted by a small fraction of its membership, but at whose meetings groups could apply pressure or resist actions, depending on whose "ox was being gored". Tradition, and active participation by many members of the administrative staff, gave it considerable clout.

The new Urbana-Champaign Senate has many of the same features; but it also has some difficulties of operation:

1. The Urbana-Champaign Senate has recurrent difficulties in leadership on committees because of rapid turnover of its members.

2. The U-C Senate supervises changes in academic programs about as successfully as did the old Senate.

3. The U-C Senate has not achieved a position of influence on budgetary matters.

4. Attendance at the meetings is about 60% of the elected membership, not as good as might be hoped.

5. The Senate Council of the Urbana-Champaign Senate is a smaller body than was the Council of the old Faculty Senate, and it assumes fewer of the executive functions of the Senate than did the old Senate Council.

The Urbana-Champaign Senate has not met all expectations of many of those who framed its Constitution and planned its operations. In some units, representatives can scarcely be elected because of apathy of the constituents. Large numbers of eligible faculty members do not wish to be nominated for the Senate and refuse to stand for election. A great deal of disillusionment exists in large parts of the electorate. Perhaps part of this disillusionment comes from unrealistic expectations. A major part, it seems to us, stems from the notion that much of the time devoted to the Statutes, other matters of governance, and procedural issues is not time being given to academic affairs.

No recommendation from this Commission nor any formal expression of the philosophy of the Senate seems likely to change the perception of the constituent electorates. Consequently, we have not given much time to philosophical discussions of what the Senate is and what its membership ought to be (except in one instance), and have instead spent our time assessing the operations of the Senate with a view toward recommending improvements so that the body can get on with its business of participating effectively in the governance of the University.

Detailed Recommendations

I. The Role of Academic Deans

Membership in the Senate excludes many administrators who were members of the old Senate. Faculty members holding administrative appointments in excess of one-half time are excluded from voting membership unless they are department executive officers. The temper of those who framed the new Constitution was that the new Senate was to be a representative body of faculty and students. A few administrators were made ex officio members of the Senate without vote: a) president, b) executive vice president and provost, c) chancellor, d) vice chancellors, e) dean of students, and f) deans of colleges and executive officers of comparable academic units. Voting privileges are extended only to the presiding officer, who may, but need not, vote to break a tie.

We do not question the intent of the members of the academic community who framed the Constitution of the new Senate. They wanted the Senate to speak for the faculty and students. Before reconstitution, the academic deans were regular in attendance, spoke often, and were widely perceived as valuable members because of their knowledge and experience in academic affairs. Persons holding administrative appointments often constituted a large fraction of those in attendance, to the point that faculty opinion was often tempered by administrative views. For these and perhaps other reasons, reconstitution of the Senate was accompanied by exclusion of administrators as voting members.

Experience shows that academic deans simply have not functioned as ex officio members. Their attendance has been about 4%. Some of the academic deans who were excellent members of the "old" Senate have never attended a single meeting of the new Senate.

We believe there should be some attempt to regain their participation. They have much to offer in consideration of academic matters, and their assistance in preparing and presenting actions of the Senate to higher levels of the administration would be valuable. Therefore:

I-1 *We recommend that the deans of the degree-granting colleges (eleven at present) should be made full members of the Senate, with vote.*

I-2 *We recommend that the membership of the Senate be increased by this number, so that revision of representation from the present units will not be necessary.*

II. Role of the Senate Council

We believe that the Senate Council is operating extremely effectively in some respects. Nevertheless, we suggest that several changes in its authority and responsibility might assist the Senate to operate more effectively.

One might conceive of the Senate Council as being purely a persuasive, implementing body. It might simply prepare agendas and coordinate the activities of the Senate so as to expedite the flow of Senate business. On the other hand, the Senate Council might act more like an executive committee, especially in the handling of emergency items when calling the full Senate together might be difficult. The Senate Council, it seems to us, is operating more in the first mode--as a coordinating and implementing body--in accordance with what the U-C Senate apparently perceives to be its appropriate role. This was not always the case. In its first few years--recall that this was under the old Senate--the Senate Council assumed many of the roles of an executive committee. The period of campus unrest was marked by events which took place with such rapidity that calling special meetings of the Senate to deal with specific issues was not possible. The Senate Council, in those days, did consistently report to the Senate its activities and gave the Senate opportunity to object to or modify its actions as the full Senate deemed advisable.

The reduced role of the present Senate Council is perhaps a logical consequence of implementation of the philosophy that the U-C Senate itself should be the decision-making body. Experience shows, though, that many aspects of campus governance and budget making have time schedules and deadlines which the Senate schedule does not readily match. The Senate must, therefore, decide whether it wishes to limit the authority of the Senate Council, thereby limiting the ability of the Senate itself to respond to short deadlines, or whether it is willing to delegate short-term authority to the Council.

Members of the Commission have attended Council meetings and have talked with Council members and with the present and past chairpersons of the Senate Council. We have come away with a generally favorable view of the functioning of the present Council. Debate and discussion in the Council among the student and faculty membership seems excellent. We believe, however, that the Council could assume a more active role in the functioning of the Senate. In doing so, we believe that the Senate would thereby become a more effective body, with little reason to fear that its prerogatives would be even temporarily usurped by a small clique.

Specifically, we identify two types of issues where we recommend action to improve the functioning of the Senate Council:

A. The Senate Council should be provided with some authority to go beyond its coordinating role in acting for the Senate. Two occasions in which this might occur are the following: (1) When a response or an action is needed on such short time that the Senate as a whole cannot be consulted. (2) In the summer. In such instances, we propose that the Council would give its advice or take an action, after which it would make a report to the Senate. The Senate should then have opportunity to make a further statement if it wished to. We do not, however, perceive the Council as necessarily asking for confirmation of its actions. Our recommendations for implementing these proposals are the following:

II-1 *The Senate Council should have authority to act for the Senate when a response is requested or an action seems necessary in a short time. The Council would report its response or action to the Senate at the next Senate meeting.*

II-2 *The Constitution of the Senate should permit the Council to act for it during the interval between the May and September meetings of the Senate.*

B. The coordinating role of the Senate Council should be strengthened with regard to the work of Senate committees. We recognize that much of the work of the Senate is done in committees and propose the following recommendation which we believe will enhance the quality of actions:

1. The Council should have more authority than it presently has in assisting the committees to perform the work of the Senate. At present, we note some uncertainty as to the responsibility and authority which the Council has in requesting action by a committee on specific items. We acknowledge that the Senate itself has authority to require that these items be presented to it at specified time, but this is rarely done.

   We recommend, therefore, that:

II-3 *The Senate Council be given authority to set time schedules for action on items by committees of the Senate, in consultation with those committees.*

2. Other aspects of committee operation are discussed in Section IV.

3. The present clerical aides to the Senate work diligently on Senate affairs, but some members of the Council and some committee chairpersons feel that additional assistance is needed. Therefore, we recommend that:

II-4 *The Senate Council should examine the need for clerical help, both for itself and its committees.*

Additional Comment: The Review Commission notes with satisfaction that those committees of the Senate which deal directly with operating units of the campus and which have ex officio non-senators assigned to them function effectively, as far as we can determine. Of course, not all committees have duties which lend themselves to such an association, but the staffing of committee work and the "memory" which accompany this arrangement seem to enable those particular committees to function well over a long period of time. We believe that both the Senate and the campus-at-large should take note of this arrangement.

III. The Role of the Committee on Committees

The interval between mid-March and the end of the spring semester is a busy one for the Senates. Not only is the current Senate finishing its business for the year, but also the next Senate is meeting to organize itself for the following year. Many faculty members belong to both, and some members of the Committee on Committees belong to both Senates. We are told that the problem of learning who the new Senate members are, finding out if they are interested in a committee assignment, and learning of their special expert abilities is a severe task for the Committee on Committees.

Thus, we are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it is desirable that the committees be formed soon enough that they can begin their work in late August before the Senate has its first meeting in the fall. On the other hand, it seems likely that committee membership may not fully utilize the quality of the senators. Furthermore, many senators are never assigned to any committee during their tenure in the Senate. Perhaps no one knows of their abilities in certain areas or perhaps they are reticent about making their wishes known or intentionally keep their association with the Senate low-key.

We do not pretend to have the complete answer to this problem. Therefore, we make a series of suggestions and a recommendation:

A. Committee chairpersons should be identified in the spring, in accordance with present procedures.

B. The nominations of part of the membership of the committee may be delayed until August or early September, if the Committee on Committees feels that such delay would result in better committee nominations.

C. All senators should be considered eligible for committee membership whether or not they have applied for such membership.

D. In addition, we recommend that these and similar issues be clarified by the Senate itself. Therefore, we urge that:

III-1 *The Committee on Committees develop a set of guidelines for organization and staffing committees of the Senate.*

Note: This issue occupied a great deal of attention of the Review Commission. We acknowledge that the above recommendations are only permissive, and may not result in changes of present procedures. We have been told that the Committee on Committees in some years has excluded from their consideration those (faculty) senators who do not return the Committee questionnaire. We believe that the Senate, through its Committee on Committees, should consider all senators for committees, irrespective of whether they have indicated their willingness to serve by returning a questionnaire. We view Senate membership as a responsibility which includes active participation on committees, not mere attendance at Senate meetings.

IV. Committee Operations

We commend many of the committees of the Senate. Most of them seem to work diligently and effectively. On the whole, they are as effective as many of the committees of the old Senate--nostalgia-clouded remembrances notwithstanding. However, several features of committee operations seem to require some consideration, and we draw attention of the Senate to several items. The first two of these are statements which may not require action by the Senate but which should be noted by the Senate. The final three are recommendations.

A. Appointment of the committees. We have already alluded to the apparent difficulty of the Committee on Committees to fill the committees from the Senate membership. We will not return to that matter except to make one additional statement: We believe that non-senators should be made members of committees only under the most exceptional circumstances. We acknowledge that some committees need ex officio members who have appointments which make their membership on committees highly desirable. We urge that these continue. However, we suggest that non-Senate faculty members, in particular, should not ordinarily be made members of Senate committees. The Senate prides itself on being a democratic, representative body. It should, therefore, be consistent in that stance, and should make every reasonable effort to use elected senators for committee positions.

B. Students on committees. Our student members inform us that most committee chairpersons treat students with respect and consideration. There have been instances, however, where students have been effectively excluded from participation by scheduling difficulties or by committee chairpersons' apparent failure to appreciate the fact that student senators are TRUE SENATORS. We suggest that the greatest care be taken that all members of committees be notified of meetings well in advance and that meetings be scheduled when the largest number of senators may be in attendance--students and faculty alike.

Specific Recommendations

C. Records of committee meetings. We have been informed that many committees do not keep records of meetings, that minutes are not kept, and reports of action are sometimes kept haphazardly. We believe that the transfer of committee business from year to year would be helped by careful attention to the maintenance of committee records, which periodically are deposited with the Clerk of the Senate. Therefore, we recommend that:

IV-1 *Every committee of the Senate should have a secretary whose duties should include: preparation of minutes of each meeting, presentation of minutes of its previous meeting at any given meeting for approval or change and presentation to the Clerk of the Senate of minutes of the meetings of the committee either at regular intervals or at the end of the year.*

D. Annual reports of committees. Each committee is required by Senate bylaws to submit a written report of its activities and unfinished business to the Senate at the last regular meeting of the year. This requirement is apparently not being followed by all committees. During the calendar year 1975-76, nine of the twenty committees of the Senate did not submit such reports. In calendar year 1976-77, the number not submitting reports was only three, a great improvement over 1975-76. The orderly transfer of Senate business from year to year requires that accurate records of Senate actions and pending business be maintained. Therefore, we recommend formal affirmation of the following statement:

IV-2 *The Senate notes that the bylaws require an annual report from each committee, and requests each committee chairperson to note this requirement.*

E. Items on committee dockets. Some difficulty apparently exists with orderly disposition of items which have been assigned to specific committees. The assignment of numbers to each item of committee business seems commendable to us, but the logic and reason-for-being of many of the items seem to have been lost. Some items apparently exist on committee dockets which have been lodged there with little background documentation. Consequently, current committees may not know why they have been assigned some items or what to do with them. Therefore, we recommend that the committees of the Senate during the 1977-78 academic year carry out the following procedure:

IV-3 *Each chairperson should prepare a list of items appearing on the committee docket and distribute such list, with appropriate background information, to the full committee membership. The committee should then prepare an orderly agenda which would permit all items deemed important to be considered during the year. Items for which the background information seems obscure and for which committee members can find little reason to continue on the docket should be listed on a sheet to be distributed to the Senate at one of its regular meetings. The committee would then be authorized to remove that item from the committee assignment, if the Senate does not request, by majority vote, that it remain.*

Summary

The Urbana-Champaign Senate has many features which are commendable. The Senate is working, although with some difficulties from time to time. It does get tied up in procedures to a larger extent than the constituency would often like, and which senators, themselves, find depressing. On the whole, however, the new Senate is operating as effectively as did the old Faculty Senate in many respects.

The mixed student-faculty Senate has not seen the difficulties which many members of the academic community predicted when the Urbana-Champaign Senate was being formed. Student senators seem to be as effective as faculty senators, and, in fact, are often better prepared--on the average--than faculty senators.

We know that a good part of the student and faculty constituency of the Senate is apathetic toward the Senate. We acknowledge that philosophical problems of what the Senate is and what its position should be in the community are serious questions; we also acknowledge that the "advisory" role of the Senate may give the appearance of weakness in the overall campus scene. However, stature cannot be legislated, and "clout" is mostly earned by actions. We have, therefore, deliberately kept ourselves away from consideration of a philosophy of the Senate as well as the constituency of its members. We have, however, felt the desirability of bringing the academic deans into closer contact with the Senate--both for the role they play in formulation of academic programs in their own units and for the increased status which Senate action on academic matters might develop.

The most desirable improvement in operations which we perceive is enhancement of the effectiveness of the committees of the Senate. The old Faculty Senate had a cadre of members who had gained experience in Senate and campus affairs through long membership in the Senate. The new Urbana-Champaign Senate does not have that possibility, with the more rapid rotation of membership which the elected Senate produces. Therefore, ways must be found to increase the effectiveness of transfer of information, of handling items expeditiously, of reporting minutes and actions, and of writing and distributing annual reports. We have suggested that the committees themselves, and the Senate Council, take an active role in developing procedures and patterns which will permit better management of the affairs of the Senate. We are optimistic about the future of the Senate and hope that the suggestions and recommendations we have made here will help the membership to find appropriate means of enlarging its activities in the general operations of the University.