

PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: Amendment to Constitution of Academic Senate to Provide for Undergraduate Student Senators to be the Same Students Elected by the Student Government Association as Academic Senators

SUBMITTED BY: Student Academic Policies Committee

DATE: February 23, 2001

ACTION IS: Legislative

REFERENCES ARE: ARTICLES: IV, A, 4; IV, C, 1-5; VI, E, 1-2

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Introduction

Presently, the Academic Senate is composed of twenty-three faculty (possibly will be increased to twenty-four), six deans, six undergraduate students, one graduate student, and the provost. All faculty and student members are elected in the fall, and begin serving at the first meeting of the senate in the winter semester. In particular all student senators serve a one-year term. Each of the six undergraduate student senators represents an undergraduate division of the university; humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business, education, and engineering.

The Student Government Association is composed of over sixty undergraduate senators, plus other officers. They are all elected in the early spring, and begin serving a one-year term at the beginning of the fall semester. Among other senators, SGA has eight academic senators, two each representing a unit of the university: the college, business, education, and engineering. The eight academic senators elect one of their own members to be the Vice-President of Academic Affairs. The VPAA therefore serves a dual role, representing a unit, and also the whole student body.

In the past it has sometimes been difficult to recruit students to run for the Academic Senate, and some have shown little interest in the position after being elected. On the other hand, SGA members have consistently attended meetings of the Academic Senate and the Student Academic Policies Committee. They have shown particular interest in matters that impact on students.

It is being proposed that the positions of undergraduate student senators to the Academic Senate and academic senators of the SGA be merged. The two obstacles referred to above are the starting time of the year of service (winter semester versus fall semester), and the number of undergraduate student senators (six versus eight). To overcome these obstacles, it has been suggested that both the Academic Senate and SGA amend their constitutions.

SGA has proposed an amendment to their constitution to reduce their number of academic senators representing units from eight to six. These six academic senators will

represent the same constituency that undergraduate students on the Academic Senate represent. In addition SGA will have a separate election for Vice-President of Academic Affairs; SGA will now have seven academic senators. SGA has collected 4200 student signatures (2/3 of the undergraduate enrollment) to effect this amendment.

It is now up to the Academic Senate to amend their constitution to be aligned with the newly amended SGA constitution. The details of this amendment are as follows:

1. Undergraduate students on the Academic Senate will be elected in the spring. They will be the same students elected as academic senators for SGA. Their term will begin in the fall.
2. The SGA Vice-President of the Academic Affairs will be elected in the spring, and begin serving on the Academic Senate in the fall semester.
3. Undergraduate students on the Academic Senate, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate and the committees of the Academic Senate will serve one year beginning in the fall semester.
4. SGA will conduct the election of the undergraduate students to the Academic Senate.

Rationale

Both legislative bodies, the Academic Senate and SGA, develop policies that have significant impact on students. SGA has shown particular interest concerning these issues, but has not had a direct vote to influence their outcome. The Academic Senate has had some input from SGA, but it has been limited to only one or two spokespersons.

By merging the position of undergraduate student on the Academic Senate and academic senator on SGA, both bodies will benefit from a better understanding of each other, and will have a greater ability to effect change. The Academic Senate will have input from several students who are in touch with the student body through SGA. And SGA will be able to have a more direct impact on student policies.

Implementation

Presently, there are six undergraduate students on the Academic Senate. Their term of office runs from January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001. When this amendment passes and becomes effective beginning in the fall of 2001, there will be six undergraduate students halfway through their term on the Academic Senate, and seven more elected to begin their term.

To prevent a doubling of undergraduate students on the Academic Senate, the six newly elected academic senators for SGA will not take office on the Academic Senate until January 1, 2002. They will be distributed to the three committees of the senate at that time. However, the SGA Vice-President of Academic Affairs will take office at the first meeting of the Academic Senate in the fall of 2001, and will be assigned to one of the three senate committees at that time.

The election of an undergraduate student to the ECAS will take place at the first meeting of the Academic Senate in the winter semester of 2002. S/he will serve through the winter semester of 2002.

Words to be deleted are indicated by a ~~strikethrough~~.

Words to be added are in **bold**.

ARTICLE IV: COMPOSITION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

A. Membership

4. Students. There will be **eight** ~~seven~~ student representatives, one each from Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, ~~and~~ Graduate Studies (including Law), **and the Student Government Association's Vice-President of Academic Affairs**.

C. Election of Undergraduate Student Representatives

1. One undergraduate student representative shall be elected from each of the following areas: Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Business, Education, and Engineering. **Also, the undergraduate student who is elected as SGA's Vice President of Academic Affairs will serve ex officio on the Academic Senate.**
2. Elections shall be held in the **winter term** ~~fall~~ of each year.
3. The term of office shall be one year. All terms of office shall begin with the first Senate meeting of the **fall** ~~winter~~ term.
4. Procedure for the elections shall be as follows:
 - b. Each student nominee shall submit to the **Student Government Association** ~~Provost~~ a petition signed by a minimum of **fifty** ~~twenty-five~~ students ~~and five University Faculty members~~ from his/her respective **constituency** ~~School/College~~.
5. The **Student Government Association** ~~Provost's Office~~ will supervise the elections.

ARTICLE VI: PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

E. Executive Committee

1. Composition of the Executive Committee
 - d. **One undergraduate student and one graduate student (including Law)**. ~~Two students~~.
2. Election of the Executive Committee

Vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be filled through elections by the Senate at the initial meeting of each winter term, **except for the undergraduate student, whose election shall take place at the initial meeting of each fall term.**