

27 April 2020

**TO:** The University Senate

**FROM:** Faculty Affairs Committee and Election Procedures Inquiry Commission

**SUBJECT:** Election Procedures Inquiry Commission Report

**DISPOSITION:** University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

**REFERENCE:** Election Procedure Inquiry Commission's Report (see except included as attachment)

**RATIONALE:** In December 2019, the Faculty Affairs Committee convened, on behalf of the University Senate, a commission to investigate the election procedures of the University Senate. In April 2020, the Faculty Affairs Committee received a report from this Commission; this report was subsequently shared with the full Senate membership. This report has some findings and recommendations that are important to the future functioning of the University Senate.

**PROPOSAL:**

The University Senate agrees with the findings of the report in that "we do not suggest that the current membership of the Steering Committee should be retroactively altered by our findings." Senators on this current year's Steering Committee who are continuing to serve on the Senate during the same term of service should continue to serve on the Steering Committee.

The University Senate recognizes that "at some point around 2008," election practices followed by the University Senate did not necessarily follow the bylaws. Accordingly, the University Senate agrees with the future-looking tone of the Commission's report that we should "avoid procedural conflict in the future." Over the 12-year period since election practices stopped consistently following the bylaws, there were many different chairs of both the nominating committee and the Senate. We do not find it helpful to dwell in the past but to look towards improving practices in the future.

Therefore, the University Senate sends the first recommendation from the Commission's report: "Addressing the Need for Educating All Senators About the Senate Bylaws" to the 2020-2021 Nominating Committee to discuss and make proposals to the full Senate.

The University Senate sends the second recommendation from the Commission's report: "Addressing the Need for Increasing Participation of Senators in the Legislative Process, Especially Participation on Committees" to the 2020-2021 Faculty Affairs Committee to discuss and make proposals to the full Senate.

For:

Sharon Christ (FAC/EPIC)  
Joe Kokini (FAC)  
David Koltick (FAC)  
Seokcheon Lee (FAC)  
Erik Otárola-Castillo (EPIC)

Linda Prokopy (FAC)  
Audrey Ruple (FAC)  
Charlene Sullivan (EPIC)  
Steve Wereley (FAC)

Against:

Alex Francis (FAC)  
Ralph Kaufmann (FAC)  
Morris Levy (EPIC)  
Jim Pula (FAC)  
Steve Yaninek (FAC)

Abstain:

Min Chen (FAC)

No Response:

Bruce Craig (FAC)  
Peter Hollenbeck (FAC)  
Lisa Mauer (FAC)  
Paul Robinson (EPIC)

**ATTACHMENT** (excerpt from Election Procedures Inquiry Commission's Report)

#### **IV. Addressing the Need for Educating all Senators About the Senate Bylaws**

The University Senate is the legislative body of the Purdue faculty. The Senate exercises the legislative and policy-making powers assigned to the faculty, subject only to review and check by the faculty's established procedures. The Senate is subject to the authority of the Board of Trustees, and in consultation with the president, it has the power and responsibility to propose or to adopt policies, regulations, and procedures intended to achieve the educational objectives of Purdue University and the general welfare of those involved in these educational processes.

Given the importance of this governing body, it is most important that its members are well versed in the procedures of the Purdue University Senate, including the Senate Bylaws and its parliamentary procedures (The American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2012).

Fundamentally, the Purdue University Senate Bylaws are the governing rules by which the Senate operates. Parliamentary procedure defines how the Senate can most effectively meet and make decisions in a fair, consistent manner—making good use of everyone's time. While parliamentary procedure cannot guarantee that every member of an organization is pleased with the outcome of a decision, it aims to ensure that every member is satisfied by the manner in which the decision was made, and that the organization makes sensible decisions, with consideration for every member's opinion. Senate members' proficiency in these procedures ensures their effective and efficient conduct of business.

The findings of EPIC suggest that misunderstanding of the Senate Bylaws and parliamentary procedure was a major factor contributing to the events leading to the formation of this commission. This commission therefore makes the following recommendations for existing and future members of the Purdue University Senate:

1. To be effective, Senate members must possess detailed knowledge of the Purdue University Senate Bylaws (<https://www.purdue.edu/Senate/Bylaws/>). Within it, the specific purpose of the Senate, membership composition, officer's definitions and duties, committees, and checks are detailed. All Senate members must undergo training and evaluation of these Bylaws. Voting or other participation by new members shall not be allowed unless training is completed.
2. To ensure working knowledge of parliamentary procedure, current members of the Senate shall undergo necessary training and evaluation. Examples include parliamentary training services provided by the National Association of Parliamentarians (<https://www.parliamentarians.org/services/>), and by the American Institute of Parliamentarians (<https://aipparl.wildapricot.org/event-2384197>).

It is our recommendation that an ample timeframe be given to current members of the senate to complete training. Although we leave the operationalization of training, mechanisms, and timeframe for completion to the senate, we recommend that, following a reasonable timeframe, voting or other participation by current members shall not be allowed unless training is completed.

3. Newly elected or appointed members of the University Senate must undergo training and evaluation required by recommendation 1 and 2, and as needed in cases of senator replacements. Voting or other participation by new members shall not be allowed unless training is completed.

## **V. Addressing the Need for Increasing Participation of Senators in the Legislative Process, Especially Participation on Committees**

The University Senate shares the governing responsibilities with the Purdue University Administration. It is composed of faculty, students, staff, and administrators, including Purdue University's President, Provost, and CFO, who attend regular senate meetings. The primary responsibility of the Senate is to share governance with campus leaders on the key educational and academic policy concerns. As important issues and events develop across campus, the University Senate, through its Standing Committees, can leverage its position to provide solutions that help move the university forward. This responsibility is not trivial and carries with it a large amount of time and effort by senate members.

One of the underlying problems contributing to the current practices of assignment of faculty to committee positions by the Nominating Committee has been insufficient volunteers for participation. EPIC members are aware that faculty units consider member participation in the Purdue University Senate as a service to the university. As such, individual faculty units usually elect or appoint university senators to represent them.

It is imperative that faculty units consider the amount of time and the effort that their representatives must dedicate to become proficient members of the Purdue University Senate. It is also necessary for prospective senators to be aware of the normal duties of Senators, including the expectation of active participation on at least one committee. This includes training as proposed here, attendance to regular Senate meetings, membership in Senate committees, subcommittees, and one-on-one meetings to discuss proposals, generate consensus and make fair decisions that affect the objectives of Purdue University and its members. Given the workload of sometimes already overburdened prospective faculty members, if the University Senate workload is not considered properly, we believe this will result in negative outcomes in the work of the University Senators.

EPIC therefore makes the following recommendations to faculty units:

1. That elected/appointed faculty members be relieved of additional service duties or committee memberships. (University Senate membership should be considered the work of at least two or three service commitments.)
2. And/or elected/appointed faculty members be afforded with a course release for their duration of service in the Purdue University Senate.

These recommendations should be contingent on faculty senators remaining in good standing with the Purdue University Senate, including:

1. Attendance to at least a majority of regular Purdue University Senate meetings,
2. Voting in at least 90% of voting opportunities presented at Senate meetings,
3. Membership in at least one Senate committee, and
4. Attendance at a majority of Senate committee meetings.
5. Documentation of proposals or leadership in at least one legislative resolution per three-year term.