

To: The University Senate
From: Faculty Affairs Committee
Subject: Convening Electronically at Will
Reference: Senate Document 20-01
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: The Bylaws of the University Senate do not specifically address remote meetings. However, AIP permits them, provided they are allowed in the bylaws and any applicable legal statute. Technology has advanced to the point that, while no platform is perfect, there are many advantages to electronic meeting platforms. The Senate should be empowered to make decisions about the modality of its own meetings.

Senate Document 20-01 (Convening During the COVID-19 Pandemic) allows the Senate to meet electronically through Fall 2021. When surveyed, the majority of the Senate membership preferred meeting electronically for Fall 2021 by more than a 2:1 margin. Also, attendance for electronic Senate meetings was greater than in prior year face-to-face meetings: the absentee rate averaged 31% from 2015-2020, but averaged only 9% in 2020-21. Meeting electronically supports accessibility for all.

Proposal: The Senate will convene remotely using Zoom or a similar platform when it shall be the will of the body, expressed as a majority vote, to do so. The Secretary of Faculties will arrange for the remote meetings and convey any necessary information to Senators, advisors, and guests. Voting, except in cases of unanimous consent, will take place electronically according to the will of the body or specific motions. Voting may be administered via Zoom polling, Qualtrics survey, email, or any other reasonable means that is acceptable to the Senate body. A Senator may request a secret ballot in accordance with existing Bylaws. Voting will be administered by the Secretary of Faculties with the assistance of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Committee Votes:

For:

Min Chen
Stephen Hooser
Jozef Kokini
David Koltick
Brian Richert
Susan South
Steven Yaninek
Peter Hollenbeck

Against:

Abstained:

Absent:

Charles Bouman
Lisa Mauer
John Springer