

To: The University Senate
From: Alice Pawley, Engineering Education
Susan South, Psychological Science
Anish Vanaik, Honors College
Subject: The University Senate’s right to direct communication with the Faculty
Reference: See Works Cited
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption
Rationale: The University Senate is the governing body of the faculty of Purdue University on the West Lafayette campus. [1]

The Office of the Provost currently maintains electronic mailing lists of all faculty organized by classification, accessed through information from the Office of Human Resources. The Office is delegated this authority through policies VII.A.4 and VII.B.8. [2-3]

For the University Senate leadership to email the Faculty directly, it must send a request to the Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs, with the justification of how the information is “official University business of broad interest.” [4] The VPFA must provide advance approval for the Senate leadership to email the faculty directly.

The AAUP Report on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications [5] states:

“[S]enate officers and other faculty representatives engaged in institutional governance activities should have free and unfettered access to university-controlled lists of faculty members they represent, and all faculty members should be able to comment electronically on governance issues without restriction or fear of disciplinary action.”

Purdue Student Government (PSG) and Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG), MaPSAC leadership, and CSSAC leadership currently enjoy the right to directly email their constituents without mediation by administration. Additionally, the Senate leadership at Purdue-Northwest and Purdue-Fort Wayne have the power to email their faculties without asking permission from the administration.

The University Senate chair is the elected representative of the Senate, which itself represents the faculty at Purdue-West Lafayette; the chair serves a one-year term. The Secretary of the Faculties is a faculty member who serves the Senate across multiple academic years, thereby providing organizational continuity and consistency. The Sergeant-at-Arms, is a staff person assigned by the Office of the Provost to support the work of the Senate. These are Senate officers entrusted with ensuring the business of the Senate is carried on expeditiously, and that the will of the Senate is clearly expressed to various constituencies.

In pursuit of this charge, they might have need to communicate with the faculty body at large from time to time.

Proposal: The University Senate asserts that the University Senate Chair, Secretary of the Faculties, and Sergeant-at-Arms should have the right to email the Faculty directly on the Senate's behalf, without needing advance approval by the University administration.

Works cited:

1. University Senate Bylaws, <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/about/bylaws.php>
2. VII.A.4, "Acceptable Use of IT Resources and Assets" - <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/information-technology/via4.html>
3. VII.B.8. "Information Security and Privacy" - <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/information-technology/viib8.html>
4. University Senate minutes from January 27, 2020 on listserv use, summarizing remarks from Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs: <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/documents/meetings/Jan-27-2020-Minutes-Complete.pdf>
5. AAUP report on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications - <https://www.aaup.org/report/academic-freedom-and-electronic-communications-2014>