

To: The University Senate
From: Senate Faculty Affairs Committee
Subject: Creating a University Senate Listserv to enable unmoderated communication between senate leadership and faculty
References: See Footnotes
Disposition: The University Senate for discussion and adoption
Rationale: The University Senate is the governing body of the faculty, and it exercises the legislative and policy-making powers assigned to the faculty, subject to review and check only by the faculty by established procedures. [1]

The University Senate does not have direct access to the use of university-wide mailing lists. For the University Senate leadership to email the Faculty directly, it must send a request to the Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs that justifies how the proposed email content is “official University business of broad interest.” [2] The VPFA must provide advance approval for the Senate leadership to email the faculty directly.

The above policy was put in place to address concerns about misuse of university-wide listservs for unimportant items.[2]

The AAUP Report on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications [3] 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 Chairperson is the elected representative of the Senate, which represents the faculty at Purdue-West Lafayette; the chair serves a one-year term. [4] The Secretary of the Faculties is a faculty member who assists the Senate across multiple academic years, thereby providing organizational continuity and consistency.[5] The Sergeant-at-Arms is a staff member assigned by the Office of the Provost to support the work of the Senate.[6] 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 Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs authorize IT at Purdue to create a University Senate listserv with the following stipulations and take supportive measures to disseminate knowledge about the existence of the University Senate listserv.

1. The Senate Chairperson, Secretary of Faculties and Sergeant-at-Arms have the right to send emails on the University Senate listserv without needing advance approval by any member of the University administration. Deliberation among these three parties will be the sole basis for deciding what is appropriate content for posting on this listserv.
2. The listserv be created such as to allow any member of faculty, staff and students of Purdue University to:
 - a. Opt-in to receive emails sent on this listserv.
 - b. Once admitted, opt-out of this listserv if they wish.
3. That, once created, the university administration facilitate dissemination of knowledge about the University Senate listserv and instructions on how to access it through all available channels including (but not limited to):
 - a. One university-wide email annually
 - b. A monthly reminder in Purdue Today during the first academic year of the creation of the listserv.
 - c. Inclusion in the orientation materials sent to all new faculty hired at Purdue University.

d. Inclusion in orientation workshops to new faculty at Purdue University.

References

1. Bylaws of the University Senate, Article 1: Purpose and Powers <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/about/bylaws.php>
2. Discussion during Question Time of University Senate meeting of 27 January 2020. Minutes available at <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/documents/meetings/Jan-27-2020-Minutes-Complete.pdf>
3. AAUP report on Academic Freedom and Electronic Communication, 2013, p. 48. <https://www.aaup.org/report/academic-freedom-and-electronic-communications-2014>
4. Bylaws of the University Senate, Article 3.20: Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the University Senate. <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/about/bylaws.php>
5. Bylaws of the University Senate, Article 3.30: Secretary of Faculties. <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/about/bylaws.php>
6. Bylaws of the University Senate, Article 3.40: Sergeant-at-Arms. <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/about/bylaws.php>

Committee Votes:

For:

Françoise Brousseau-
Lapr *
Stephen Cameron
Patricia Davies
Alice Johnson
Bhagyashree Katare
Robert Nawrocki
Anish Vanaik*

*FAC Co-Chairs

Against:

Abstained:

Ali Bramson

Advisors

Sunil Prabhakar
Lisa Mauer

Absent:

Arezoo Ardekani
Alexander Francis
Nastasha Johnson
J. Paul Robinson
Jennifer Scheuer