

DRAFT Proposals for Senate Meetings and Procedures
Ad Hoc Committee to Review and Revise Faculty Senate Procedures
November 2018

This ad-hoc subcommittee was formed in Fall 2017 and officially charged by Faculty Senate President Cathy Paris to broadly examine Faculty Senate process and procedures and make recommendations that would support increased faculty engagement in Senate operations. Towards this end, we surveyed members of the faculty Senate and met with individuals that presently (or historically) have played leadership roles in the Senate's leadership both at the full Senate and in its various Standing Committees. From these efforts, two major and inter-related themes emerged as underlying barriers to Senator engagement:

- 1) Information relevant to senate meetings is not always disseminated in the most efficient manner, resulting in the majority of the meetings being consumed by "report out" or informational agenda items rather than true discussion/debate.
- 2) An implicit cultural expectation that items under Senate consideration should be expediently voted on and/or approved without being given ample time for discussion and debate.

As a result of our analysis of the Faculty Senate survey results, our individual meetings with various Faculty Senate stakeholders, and internal discussions, this ad-hoc committee has outlined below a number of explicit proposals that are intended to improve both efficiency and engagement of Faculty Senate membership. These items are being presented to the Senate body for consideration and vote.

Faculty Senate Meeting Procedures and Engagement Proposal.

1. Propose that faculty must have at least three years of UVM service to be eligible to serve as a senator.
2. Establish a New Senator Orientation open to new and existing faculty on an RSVP basis.
3. Limit presentations by administrative offices or committees to those items for which Senate input or vote is required. When such presentations are necessary, provide context and mark on agenda as "Senate Education"
4. Provide sufficient time for discussion before a vote takes place. Ideally issues should be discussed at one meeting and brought to the Senate for a vote the next meeting.
5. Provide a brief, dedicated "New Business" item on each agenda to appear early in the agenda.
6. Agenda material should be sent out 2 weeks in advance to allow more time for digestion and engagement. This would allow Senators to share materials with their departments and receive feedback before the meeting.

7. "Report out" agenda items, such as committee reports that do not require Senate action, should be disseminated electronically and not put on the formal agenda unless otherwise proposed for discussion by the Senate floor.
8. Standing committee representatives should be invited at least once a year to generate discussion on current committee-related issues that may benefit from broader participation/brainstorming from the senate floor and to answer questions. These are not to be "progress reports" which can be handled and viewed electronically.
9. We welcome interaction with the President and the Provost, but we request that they address the Senate no more than once a semester, unless events require them to address a specific issue.
10. For one of these times, we request an open forum where the President/Provost would field questions once a year.
11. Delineate a set of reasons for the Senate to go into executive session, with only Senators and the Executive Council
12. Establish process for emerging themes to be a focus of extended/year long discussion:
 1. Procedure Proposal 1: Before the start of the academic year, ask Senate Office to put out call for ideas of concern. Senate Executive brings a slate of ideas to the Senators to vote on. Senate Exec either puts together a slate of topics to be addressed over the course of the year or establishes an ad hoc committee to structure conversation
 2. Procedure Proposal 2: The themes should be solicited from all parts of the university including faculty, staff, administration, and students. The Executive Council should present a slate of themes at the first Senate meeting of the year and open the floor to additional proposals. A revised slate of themes will be presented at the second meeting of the year. If a Senate member feels a theme of importance is missing they shall be given time to present a case for its inclusion. Once finalized, the slate of themes shall be scheduled for discussion throughout the year in a manner at the discretion of the President.
13. In setting the agenda, the Executive Council should strive to provide follow up for issues discussed in previous meetings.
 1. Reason: When the Senate has given feedback (as in IBB advisory sessions), the Senate has not been given the aggregated data. It would be helpful for us to see this.
14. Establish a senate evaluation of the various standing committees regarding their purpose and process.
15. Establish an ad hoc committee to review/revise the Senate constitution
16. Establish a clear list of matters that should be reported to, but need not be voted on by the Full Senate.
 1. Reason: the Senate is not always aware of what its vote means, whether it is required or advisory.
17. At least once a semester, the FPPC provide the Senate membership with a presentation about the budgetary matters relevant to the Senate.

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