Academic Senate

Proposed Resolution 19 20-03

WHEREAS the Academic Senate Constitution provides that the Academic Senate “is the representative body of the faculty at large for university-wide issues,” that it “acts through its Executive Board.” The Constitution further states that the Executive Board’s duties include referring topics to faculty and University committees, reviewing and making recommendations based on committee reports, and acting as “the channel of communication between the Academic Senate and the administrative officers of the university”;

WHEREAS the Senate Constitution currently states that the members of the Executive Board are elected by the “voting members of the Senate,” not by all members of the faculty at large;

WHEREAS changing to a direct election system in which all members of the faculty at large can vote for members of the Executive Board may increase awareness of the Senate and strengthen faculty engagement with the work of the Senate;

WHEREAS the Senate has a “Nominating Committee,” which is explicitly charged with identifying at least two qualified candidates for each open Executive Board position;

WHEREAS the Nominating Committee has also been informally charged with ensuring that the Executive Board ballot includes a diverse array of candidates—considering the candidates’ faculty tracks, disciplines, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and school size—and has sought to identify candidates to be Executive Board officers who have past experience in leadership roles, either at the school or university level;

WHEREAS in November 2018, the Senate Constitution and Bylaws were amended to give all faculty greater opportunity to participate in faculty governance by allowing all members of the faculty at large to nominate “write-in” candidates to serve as members of the Executive Board;

WHEREAS the Senate recognizes that write-in nominations that do not go through the Nominating Committee’s vetting process risk creating a slate of candidates that is not as well-balanced and diverse;

WHEREAS the participation of faculty can be promoted by requiring the Nominating Committee to widely publicize the fact of the Executive Board elections and by inviting faculty to provide the Committee with the names of possible candidates to be vetted;

WHEREAS there is currently a contradiction between the Handbook and the Senate Constitution concerning the composition of the Faculty Assembly. The Faculty Handbook Ch. 2, section 2-B (1) defines “Faculty Assembly” as the “faculty at large,” without limiting it to full-time faculty. In addition, Faculty Handbook 4-C(2)(c) states, “Part-time faculty are eligible to be elected or appointed to faculty governance bodies” By contrast, the Senate Constitution, Article III, Section 1 states that “The membership of the Faculty Assembly consists of all full-time faculty members (tenured and tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, and librarians), and those who have retired from these positions.”
WHEREAS part-time faculty currently participate in voting for Faculty Councils and Senators in at least 13 USC Schools;

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Senate Constitution Art. II, sec. 1, and Senate Constitution, Article III, Section 1, shall be amended to state that the Faculty Assembly “consists of the faculty at large, including all full- and part-time faculty members (tenured and tenure-track faculty, RTPC faculty, and librarians), and those who have retired from these positions.”

2. To create a direct election system in which all members of the faculty at large can vote for members of the Executive Board, the Senate Constitution shall be amended as follows:

   a. Article VI, Section 3 shall be amended to state, “Executive officers and Members at Large of the Executive Board are elected by the Faculty Assembly in the spring. The Academic Senate will provide for the nomination and election process by Bylaw.”

   b. Article VI, Section 7 shall be amended to state, “[t]he Faculty Assembly shall elect the executive officers of the faculty and the Members at Large of the Executive Board.”

3. To promote broad faculty engagement in governance, while also ensuring a balanced, diverse slate of candidates for the Executive Board election, the Senate Bylaws shall be amended as follows:

   a. Senate Bylaw 11 shall be amended to state:

      The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of at least two candidates for each office for which there will be an election (i.e., the Academic Vice-President, the Administrative Vice-President, the Secretary General, and each position of Member-At-Large of the Executive Board.) The Nominating Committee may not nominate any of its members. Additional nominations for an office are permissible with the signed endorsement of a minimum of five supporting Academic Senate members and prior agreement from the nominee that the individual will serve if elected. Additional nominations for Member-At-Large positions are permissible with the signed endorsement of a minimum of ten supporting faculty, with no more than five of the endorsements being from any one school. Prior agreement from the nominee that the individual will serve if elected is required. Each faculty member can endorse a maximum of four faculty nominees for Member-At-Large positions. Nominations shall be submitted in the manner, with the information, and within the deadlines, prescribed in the standing rules.

   b. Senate Bylaw 14 shall be amended to state:

      Elections will take place by electronic ballot distributed to the Faculty Assembly, using software that protects the anonymity of the voter. The ballot will include the names of all who have been properly nominated and who have agreed to run for office. Each member
of the Faculty Assembly may cast one vote for each open seat on the ballot. The election will be determined by simple plurality. Ties will be broken by having a run-off election in which the voting members of the Senate will choose between the candidates who previously tied.

c. Senate Bylaw 17 shall be amended in relevant part to state:

2. Additional Nominations: The Nominating Committee shall propose a slate of officers for the Executive Board for the next year. The Nominating Committee is charged with advertising widely the elections and with seeking out a wide variety of candidates reflecting diversity across all the relevant dimensions. The Nominating Committee shall aim to ensure an Executive Board where Schools are represented in approximately the same proportions as in the Senate itself. As prescribed by Bylaw 11, additional nominations are permissible with the signed endorsements of five Academic Senate members and prior agreement that the nominee will serve if elected. Additional nominations for Member At Large positions are permissible with the signed endorsement of a minimum of ten supporting faculty, with no more than five of the endorsements being from any one school. Prior agreement from the nominee that the individual will serve if elected is required. Each faculty member can endorse a maximum of four faculty nominees for Member-At-Large positions. The calendar prepared by the Academic Senate office shall state the date by which such nominations must be received.

Resolution Number: 19 20-03
Motion by: Executive Board Date: Nov. 20, 2019
(No second required when moved by committee)