

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 24, 2012
To: University Faculty Senators
From: Bylaws Committee (Karen Breitbach, Chris Neuhaus, Scott Peters, Jesse Swan)
Re: Proposed revisions to Senate Bylaws

The ad-hoc Bylaws Committee was charged by the Chair of the Senate with reviewing the Senate's bylaws and recommending changes. Our committee was further charged by the Chair with recommending reforms related to faculty committees, especially the relationship between the Senate and committees. We advanced one set of bylaws amendments last fall, which were approved.

At this time, we ask the Senate to consider amendments aimed at tying the Senate closer to the various faculty and Senate committees on campus. Our recommendations come after extensive deliberation within the committee as well as several consultations with the Committee on Committees. In the course of our debates, we came to believe that the Committee on Committees, by virtue of its role of coordinating college elections that select senators and committee members and holding at-large elections, is central to better coordination between the Senate and various committees. Although we considered some more extensive reforms, we concluded that the simplest, most straightforward way to achieve this was by placing the Vice-chair of the Senate on the Committee on Committees and having her serve as that committee's chair. First and foremost, this will assure that elections are conducted and reported on a schedule that comports with the Senate's needs. It will also make communication between the Senate and committees more straightforward, since the Vice-chair will be very familiar with who serves on the committee. Finally, our proposal allows the Vice-chair to appoint an administrative assistant to help coordinate and report the college and at-large elections. (Associate Provost Licari has indicated that Alisa Weeks in the Provost's Office would be able to do this).

Our other major recommendation is to alter the selection of the Senate chairperson by having the chair be the person who has served as Vice-chair in the prior year. This recommendation is driven by similar concerns about the need to coordinate activities across campus, as well as by a desire to have smoother transitions from year-to-year. If the Senate Chair had previously been the vice-chair, s/he would be quite familiar with the committees on campus and their membership. Moreover, as vice-chair, the chair would have been attending meetings with members of the administration and would have been included on much communication that various groups on campus had with the chair. The chair would thus be more ready to step in and continue existing projects. This is a model that many organizations follow, including the senates at UI and ISU.

Finally, we recommend several other changes:

- Updating some language about minutes to reflect current practices (overlooked on the first round of changes)

- Clarifying language in sections 6.1 and 6.2 to make it clear that section 6.1 describes the Senate's relationship to and powers over committees of the faculty and section 6.2 describes the Senate's relationship to and powers over its own committees.

In addition to this memo, you will find two documents. One summarizes *in seriatim* the proposed amendments. The other compares the current language of each amended section with the language we are proposing.