

# COMMITTEE ON SENATE STRUCTURE AND EFFECTIVENESS

## FINAL REPORT

The Committee on Senate Structure and Effectiveness is concerned first and foremost with effectiveness. It is not simply trying to redesign the faculty senate. All members of the committee have been involved in Senate affairs for many years. The Chair of the Committee is a former Senate president and a member of the Board of Trustees, who has represented the faculty in all kinds of situations. It has always been apparent that the Senate has problems with credibility, perception and effectiveness. These problems concern both the attitudes of administrators and of the faculty as a whole.

A substantial fraction of the faculty believes that the Senate is a waste of time and effort. There is a perception that the Senate spends its time endlessly debating minor points and that the most substantial contribution that many senators make is to correct typos in the minutes. There has always been a belief that faculty who like the sounds of their own voices are those most eager to serve. Whereas, these perceptions are, in the main, ridiculous, there is no doubt that they do ring bells in our minds.

These perceptions lead to the belief that the senate does not truly represent the faculty, or that it represents just a fraction of the faculty. One result of this perception has been administrators bypassing the Senate when appointing faculty representatives to campus and system committees. This behavior, in turn, reduces the credibility of the Senate and of the faculty to take care of its own affairs. In other words there is a vicious cycle that is self-perpetuating. A first step towards changing the situation dramatically is the decision by President Shumaker to consult the Faculty Senate in all appointments of faculty to system-level committees. Provost Crabtree has also reintroduced task forces for policy development, similar to the old Senate-Chancellor Committees. For the first time ever, the Chairs of the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils are elected faculty. We are now in the enviable position of having an administration, which intends to move the campus forward quickly, and the faculty will need to play an important and integrated part in the changes that will occur.

The current Senate structure, formed in the 1970s, is set up for representation at the college level, the number of senators being determined by the number of faculty in each college. In several instances, direct elections are held across colleges, however, in some cases, notably Arts and Sciences and Engineering, the number of senators, coincidentally, approximates the number of departments. The result has been an assignment within the colleges of one senator to each department, without any real elections. Hence, the Senate tends to behave like a House of Representatives, which was not, and is not, its purpose. In many ways this apportionment has been responsible for several of the senate's problems, since faculty may be told "it's your turn to go waste your time on the senate". We need a Senate where all the senators want to be there and are eager to take an active part in the growing partnership with the administration in moving the University forward.

We need a Senate, which will address substantive issues, with senators who do not take a parochial attitude. A smaller Senate with all senators being elected at a college (or division) level should work better. Debate should take place in the Senate. All the real debating takes place in the Senate Executive at the present time, since it has over 30 members. The Executive needs to be a small body, which sets the agenda and serves as a "swat team" for the Presidents of the Senate and the University, not a debating chamber. The Committees of the Senate, where most of the real work takes place, would have only two or three senators on them, the rest of the membership being faculty with a real interest in and qualification to be involved in the business of each committee. So, with a smaller Senate, we would have more active and broader faculty participation through the committees.

This report completes the work of the committee that can be completed during the 2003-2003 Senate. The committee was constituted for only one year and so recommendations not considered by the Senate this year will need to be brought forward for discussion by the next Senate. This report has been modified from the original version to accommodate the wishes of the Senate Executive Committee.

## 1. SENATE STRUCTURE

**Preamble:** We are convinced that the Senate should be structured in such a way as to encourage the discussion of substantive issues and policy formulation. It should also be structured to attract more interested and effective faculty to its affairs. We believe that this will best be achieved by reducing its size, so that faculty represent larger campus units in practice and are elected by broader audiences.

### **Recommendations:**

a. The Senate should have at least two senators from each academic college (and each division of Arts & Sciences), but should retain some form of proportionality, determined by faculty numbers). A scheme, which generates an appropriate number of representatives, is based on proportionation for 40 seats, with the minimum number from each college being two. This scheme generates the numbers given below, with a total number of 49 senators. One advantage of this system is that there would rarely be changes in the number of representatives, without major structural changes at the college level.

Architecture	2	Arts & Sciences: Natural Sciences	6
Business Administration	3	Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences	3
Communications & Information Sci.	2	Nursing	2
Education, Health & Human Sciences	5	Social Work	2
Engineering	4	Library	2
Law	2	Agriculture	5
Arts & Sciences: Humanities	6	Space Institute	2
ROTC	1	Veterinary Medicine	2

b. The President and the Chancellor will be ex-officio non-voting members of the Senate

## 2. SENATORS & ALTERNATES

**Preamble:** There are often good reasons for faculty being absent from Senate meetings, but, quite often, poor attendance occurs without any reason.

**Recommendations:** In order to generate more responsibility when absences are merited it is recommended that Alternates be elected, according to the following rules:

- There should be one alternate for each college, or division in the case of Arts and Sciences.
- The alternates will have full voting rights, when substituting for an absent colleague.
- The alternates will be provided nameplates with ALTERNATE as well as the name
- The alternate will sign in, identifying the senator s/he is replacing.

## 3. ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS OF SENATORS

**Preamble:** We believe that, with a smaller senate, nominations and elections will need be made in a structured manner within each college or division, but that the entire process should be in the hands of faculty.

### **Recommendations:**

- Senators will not be allowed to serve more than two consecutive terms and each senator must be off the Senate for a full three years before standing for another term.

- b. All elections will be administered by the office of the President of the Senate with assistance from the Office of Institutional Research
- c. The appropriate Senate caucus will make nominations.
- d. Nominations will be submitted by February 15 and the elections completed by the beginning of the spring break.

#### 4. EXPECTATIONS OF SENATORS

**Preamble:** Prospective senators should have a code of expectations and duties that they are expected to carry out.

**Recommendation:** The following list of duties be adopted and distributed to all faculty.

##### DUTIES OF A FACULTY SENATOR

- 1. Represent the constituency and the broader interests of the faculty
- 2. Attend and participate in Senate meetings on a regular basis
- 3. Active participation in College Senate caucus
- 4. Regular communication and interaction with constituents
- 5. Maintain awareness of senate affairs as they develop between meetings
- 6. Active membership on at least one Senate standing committee
- 7. Active membership on other committees, as needed; participation in Senate retreats, training, and information sessions

#### 5. COLLEGE CAUCUSES

**Preamble:** the representative responsibilities of senators need to be structured in order to ensure that such duties are easily conducted. These representative duties must be taken seriously by all senators and effective means of constructive interaction with all constituents must be generated. We believe the best way to do this is through the College Caucuses, which must begin to function in a continuous manner.

**Recommendations:**

- a. Each unit (college or A&S division) will have a senate caucus comprising all senators and alternates.
- b. The convening caucus chair will be elected by that caucus during May.
- c. The caucus will be responsible for timely communications with the faculty in the unit and will be provided with LISTSERVs for their units by the office of the Senate President.
- d. The caucus will call meetings of the faculty as needed.
- e. The caucus will be assisted by a staff member of the dean's office, who will function as a *de facto* administrative secretary for the caucus, with responsibilities including calling meetings, taking and distributing minutes etc.
- f. The caucus will be responsible for making nominations to the senate.
- g. The caucus will be expected to provide nominees, when requested, to the senate president for senate and other committees

#### 6. PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

**Preamble:** We believe the current process of having a president-elect is not the best one. Given the complex nature and duties of the Senate President, it is important to have a Vice-President with specific functions. Since, learning the job of Senate President takes a significant amount of time, and it would sometimes be advantageous to the faculty for a President to continue in office, we have several important changes to suggest.

**Recommendations:**

- a. The position of President - Elect will be eliminated.
- b. The President may stand for re-election for one additional year.
- c. A Vice – President will be elected each year and may stand for re-election.
- d. The Vice – President will be responsible for
  1. monthly newsletter
  2. oversight of caucuses
  3. Bye - law changes, to be carried out through the newsletter using voting slips, unless the changes proposed are substantial.

**7. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Preamble:** It is important that the Senate Executive be an agile body, able to respond to new situations in a timely manner. We see no need for a cumbersome Executive Committee and a nimble Advisory Committee. One body should be able to carry out both functions. There has been an unwelcome tendency of late for the Executive to be the place where debate takes place, not the Senate floor.

**Recommendations:**

- a. The Executive Committee and the President’s Advisory Committee will be one and the same.
- b. The Executive Committee will assume the responsibilities of the Bylaws and Legislative Committees, which will cease to exist.
- c. The Executive Committee will be comprised of eight voting members and ex-officio non-voting members as listed below.
- d. The voting members of Executive Committee will be
  1. President of the Senate
  2. Vice – President of the Senate
  3. Three current senators, to be elected in the spring: one will be from Arts and Sciences and two from other colleges, but no more than one from any college.
  4. Two other faculty, to be appointed by the President of the Senate.
  5. The Provost/Chancellor
- e. The non-voting members of the Executive Committee shall be:
  1. The Secretary of the Senate
  2. The Parliamentarian of the Senate
  3. The Senate Information Officer
  4. The immediate Past President of the Senate (for one year only)
- f. The Chairs of Senate Committees will have speaking privileges, as will Vice-Presidents and Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Provosts and Deans from the Knoxville campus.

**8. COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

**Preamble:** The traditional role of the Committee on Committees has been to meet once a year in the spring to appoint the senate committees for the following year. It has traditionally been chaired by the President Elect. With the expansion of shared governance under the new administration, it is believed that the Senate President will have an expanded role in appointing faculty to administrative committees continuously throughout the academic year. This welcome change requires that the President be able to call on a group of faculty for advice, but a group that is larger than the executive committee. The obvious body to serve this function is the Committee on Committees, which will need to be reorganized and renamed.

**Recommendations:**

1. The name of the committee will be changed to the Committee on Nominations and Appointments

2. The President shall retain responsibility for all nominations of faculty to administrative committees and other bodies.
3. The President should seek the advice of the Committee in this task.
4. The Committee will be a standing committee of the Senate.
5. The Committee will be composed of the College Caucus chairs, being Division Caucus chairs in the case of Arts & Sciences.

## **9. OTHER SENATE COMMITTEES**

Suggestions for organization of other committees will follow in a later report. The basic principle that we will follow is that the majority of the members of any committee should be appointed from the entire faculty body. There will be only two or three senators on each committee.

## **10. SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR CHANGEOVER TO NEW SYSTEM**

1. Make the change in the election of officers immediate.
2. Make the changes in organization of the Senate Executive effective next academic year.
3. After adoption of the new senate organization, do not elect Senators for colleges, or divisions, that already have more than the allotted number of senators under the new system.
4. After adoption of the new senate organization, elect one senator for each college, or division, having fewer senators than the allotted number under the new system.
5. A proposed timetable for elections using these principles is appended, beginning with the first year after adoption of the new senate structure.

Year Elected	Year -2	Year -1	Year 0	TOTALS			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3			
Term Expires	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	OLD	NEW		Year 4	Year 5	Year 6			
						Alt		Alt		Alt		Alt
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources	3	2	4	9	5	1	2	1	2	1	1	1
Agriculture Extension Service	-	1	-	1								
Architecture and Design	1	1	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	1
Arts and Sciences - Humanities	4	4	2	10	6	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
- Natural Sciences	3	5	1	9	6	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
- Social Sciences	4	1	2	7	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Business Administration	2	1	2	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Communications	2	-	1	3								
Information Sciences	2	-	-	2	2	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
Education, Health, & Human Services	2	2	1	5	5	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Human Ecology	2	1	1	4								
Engineering	2	3	3	8	4	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Law	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	1
Libraries	1	2	1	4	2	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
Nursing	1	1	-	2	2	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
ROTC	1	-	-	1	-	-	1					
Social Work	-	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	1
Space Institute	1	1	1	3	2	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
Veterinary Medicine	-	3	1	4	2	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL - elected</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	15	<b>16</b>	15	<b>16</b>	15

Grand Totals of elected Senators each year during transition											
Year 0		Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
85	70	15 alt	55	15 alt	49	15 alt	49	15 alt	49	15 alt	

