

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES
(Final; Action)

SP.23.14 Proposed Revision to the *Constitution*, Article III – Academic Professional Representation

BACKGROUND

On September 20, 2021, the Senate approved [EC.21.06](#) (Revision to the Election Rules for the Academic Professional Electorate, Section 3 – Eligibility), a proposal from the Senate Committee on Elections and Credentials (EC), which streamlined how eligibility for the academic professional (AP) electorate was to be administered. It removed a step that required Deans and/or Unit Executive Officers to verify the eligibility of each AP in their unit. Removing this step left a process that requires the Council of Academic Professionals (CAP) to request a list of all APs that meet the teaching and research eligibility requirements from Illinois Human Resources (IHR). However, to provide this information, IHR would need to continually review individual AP job titles and responsibilities to meet the expectations set in the Senate *Constitution* for the AP electorate; EC and SP find that to be unsustainable.

The proposed revisions to the *Constitution* have been recommended by EC to resolve a long-standing challenge that it and, previously, the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures (SP) have faced in identifying which APs meet the Senate’s criteria for membership in AP electorate, a prerequisite step for the administration of elections of AP Senators.

The root of the problem lies in the model that SP forged in 2008-10 for the initial creation of the AP electorate. SP had been called upon to develop new *Constitution*, *Bylaws*, and Election Rules to respond to the Sixth Senate Review Commission’s 2007 recommendation to add APs to the Senate. SP put forward to the Senate a constitutional amendment ([SP.08.13](#)) calling for the new academic professional electorate to include all academic professionals with appointments of at least 50 percent of full-time service “without distinction on the basis of rank or other criteria.” During the December 8, 2008 Senate meeting, at which the proposed amendment was presented for its second reading and vote, concerns were raised that the lack of criteria beyond AP appointment of at least 50 percent did not provide sufficient focus on the teaching and research missions that had been central to the *Constitution*’s original foundation for the faculty and student electorates.

In 2009, SP turned to the principles and objectives that the Senate had used in its previous experience of adding an electorate to the Senate. When the Senate “reconstituted” itself in 1970-71, by reducing the size and restructuring the faculty electorate and adding a student electorate, it centered the basis of membership in the Senate on those individuals who have a

direct stake in the formulation of educational policy and who were directly engaged in and responsible for the educational function of the university. SP thus offered the Senate a new proposal ([SP.09.03](#)) that called for the AP electorate to be composed of those “members of the academic staff as defined in the University *Statutes* Article II, Section 5, and satisfy the teaching or research criteria established by the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures and approved by the Senate”. The proposal was approved by the Senate on November 9, 2009, on the understanding that SP would return with supporting *Bylaws* amendments and a set of election rules for the AP electorate.

SP developed election rules whereby Deans and Unit Executive Officers would be responsible for determining which of the APs in their units met the Senate’s criteria, because these administrators were closer to the work being done by the APs in their units. On October 4, 2010, the Senate approved *Bylaws* amendments to authorize elections ([SP.10.06](#)) as well as for the Election Rules for academic professionals ([SP.10.09-B](#)). The first elections of AP Senators took place in Spring 2011.

Over time, the process for determining the eligibility of APs for the AP electorate has proved cumbersome, so the following proposed changes aim to streamline the process of assessing eligibility.

At the time it outlined the process involving Deans and Executive Officers, SP recognized that it could be cumbersome, but the committee believed that the Deans and Executive Officers were in the best position to determine the extent of regular contact with students involving teaching or research. Unfortunately, obtaining compliance and consistency has been difficult. Thus, at the September 20, 2021, Senate meeting, the Senate Committee on Elections and Credentials put forward revised *Election Rules for the Academic Professional Electorate* that removed the involvement of the Dean and Unit Executive Officer in determining electorate eligibility. In [EC.21.06](#), the Senate approved a process that called for Illinois Human Resources (IHR) to provide the Council on Academic Professionals with a list of academic professionals who met the eligibility requirements of teaching and research. However, IHR and EC soon realized that HR data would not provide efficient or effective distinctions, and even a review of individual job titles and position descriptions would be cumbersome to conduct on a regular basis and still be ineffective.

Meanwhile, the [Professional Employment Redesign](#) (PER) process has converted many APs to Civil Service (CS) roles, reducing the total number of APs. Thus, the total pool of APs differs in size and composition from that in place during the late 2000s, and the conversion has focused the AP category more closely to the teaching and research function that had been essential to the Senate’s creation of the electorate.

In response to these shifts, EC recommends removing language that limits the AP electorate to only those with teaching and research responsibilities and that excludes APs from the electorate if they are pursuing a degree from this University. (Note that the Senate *Constitution*, Article IV, Section 1 specified how the student electorate intersects with other

electorates: “all persons actively pursuing a degree on this campus who meet the eligibility requirements for voting and who are not members of the faculty or academic professional electorate.”)

Further, EC and SP recommend the removal of language in Article III, Sections 4 and 10, which are not present in other definitions of electorates in the Senate *Constitution*. Note that CAP would still be able to require biographies of those seeking election, should CAP choose.

For reference, the UIC Senate defines its academic professional electorate in its *Bylaws* Article I, Section 5: "All academic professionals with a permanent appointment of 50% or more of full-time service at UIC are eligible for election. Academic professional members shall serve for three-year terms. One academic professional will be elected each year. The academic professional electorate shall consist of all persons holding permanent appointments of 50% or more of full-time service at UIC." At present, the UIC senate consists of 200 faculty members, 50 student members, and 3 academic professional members.

The UIS Senate establishes its academic professional electorate in their *Constitution* Article I, Section 2: "The Academic Professional Electorate shall be composed of those staff members whose positions have been designated by the President and the Chancellor as meeting specialized administrative, professional, or technical needs in accordance with Article II, Section 5 of the University of Illinois Statutes." At present, the UIS Senate consists of 20 faculty members, 5 student members, and 1 academic professional member.

RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures recommends the approval of the following proposed revision to the *Constitution*. Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~ and text to be added is underlined. Adoption of amendments to the *Constitution* require a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

REVISION TO THE *CONSTITUTION*, ARTICLE III

1 Article III — Academic Professional Representation

2 **Section 1.** The academic professional electorate shall consist of ~~those members of the academic~~
3 ~~professional staff who are engaged in and responsible for the educational function of the~~
4 ~~University; ordinarily this will involve teaching and research. Specifically, the academic~~
5 ~~professional electorate shall consist of all persons of the campus non-visiting academic~~
6 professional staff who have a non-visiting, full-time, paid appointment, are paid by the at this
7 University, excluding those are not pursuing a degree from this University, and who are
8 members of the academic staff as defined in the Statutes, Article II, Section 5, and satisfy the
9 teaching or research criteria established by the Senate Committee on Elections and Credentials

10 ~~and approved by the Senate.~~ holding an administrative appointment with the title of
11 chancellor, provost, or dean, modified or unmodified.

12
13 **Section 2.** All ~~persons included in~~ members of the academic professional electorate shall be
14 eligible for election to the Senate, without distinction on the basis of rank or other criteria. Each
15 member of the electorate shall be entitled to cast one vote for each open senatorial position in
16 the member's ~~electoral~~ voting unit. There shall be no cumulative voting.

17
18 **Section 3.** Elections shall be held on the basis of ten voting units, each with one seat. These
19 ~~election~~ ten voting units shall be as nearly equal in size as is practicable and shall be the same
20 as the voting units for the relevant Council of Academic Professionals election districts,
21 excluding the district that is ~~comprised~~ composed of the university system administration those
22 at the University System level.

23
24 **Section 4.** Those eligible to vote in each academic professional voting unit shall be notified that
25 an election is to be held. Any member of the academic professional electorate who desires to
26 run for election from their ~~election~~ voting unit shall submit a statement to that effect ~~and a~~
27 ~~short biography to the appropriate academic professional voting unit elections and credentials~~
28 ~~committee.~~ The nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected.

29
30 **Section 5.** ~~Voting on the e~~Election of academic professional senators shall be by secret written
31 ballot.

32
33 **Section 6.** Academic professional ~~S~~senators shall be elected for two-year terms commencing at
34 the beginning of the next academic year. ~~Provisions~~ Terms shall be ~~made for~~ staggered ~~terms~~ so
35 that approximately half the academic professional senators will be elected each year.

36

37 **Section 7.** Vacancies shall be filled by election of a member of the voting unit for the remainder
38 of the vacant term, in accordance with the nomination and election procedures prescribed in
39 this Article.

40

41 **Section 8.** No academic professional senator shall be elected for more than three consecutive
42 full terms.

43

44 **Section 9.** An academic professional senator can be recalled by a vote of two-thirds of those
45 voting in the recall election.

46

47 ~~**Section 10.** Membership in the academic professional electorate continues during the term of~~
48 ~~any member elected to the Senate.~~

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Jenny Roether, *ex officio*