

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

SP.20.29 Resolution to Maintain Certain Senate Operations During the COVID-19
Pandemic

1 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 global outbreak has resulted in the need for social-distancing to limit
2 the transmission of coronavirus, resulting in significant disruptions and widespread changes to
3 a normal way of life and work;

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5 WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued the First Gubernatorial
6 Disaster Proclamation declaring a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 threat and
7 on April 1 issued the Second Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation;

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9 WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a COVID-19 pandemic;

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11 WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, University of Illinois System President Timothy Killeen
12 announced a broad set of policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that, among other
13 things, suspended indefinitely gatherings of fifty or more people at University-sponsored
14 events, but permitted livestream or telecommuting events;

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16 WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-07
17 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meetings Act for the duration of the Gubernatorial
18 Disaster Proclamation to allow public bodies to assemble electronically or virtually to conduct
19 their business;

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21 WHEREAS, any meetings of the Senate of the Urbana-Champaign Campus, or its committees,
22 are governed by both the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws, and*
23 *Standing Rules*;

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25 WHEREAS, the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules* do not allow for the conduct of
26 electronic or virtual meeting of the Senate or its committees, and do not provide for remote
27 electronic voting on matters before the Senate;

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29 WHEREAS, the *Bylaws*, Part D.1.e authorizes the Senate Executive Committee to act on behalf
30 of the Senate on urgent matters during the summer months;

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32 WHEREAS, the *Bylaws*, Part D.1.e requires the Senate Executive Committee to first consult any
33 senators on campus prior to acting on urgent matters during the summer months and to
34 subsequently report all actions taken during the summer months to the Senate at the first
35 regular meeting of the fall semester;

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37 WHEREAS, on March 20, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order No. 2020-
38 10 implementing a statewide “Stay-at-Home” order for all Illinois residents in non-essential
39 occupations until April 7, 2020;

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41 WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker issued Executive Order No. 2020- 18
42 (Second Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation) extending the statewide “Stay-at-Home” order
43 for all Illinois residents in non-essential occupations until April 30, 2020;

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45 WHEREAS, the above actions prevent the Senate from conducting its business and fulfilling its
46 shared governance functions in a manner that adheres to the Senate *Constitution, Bylaws*, and
47 *Standing Rules*;

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49 WHEREAS, it is important for the Senate and its committees to continue to meet to discuss and
50 act on policy, procedural, and curricular changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in
51 anticipation of resuming normal university operations when possible; and

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53 WHEREAS, under the Senate *Constitution* Article I, Section 3, the Senate cannot amend its
54 *Bylaws* to allow for electronic meetings and actions until such time as it can gather in person to
55 do so; therefore,

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57 BE IT RESOLVED, that extraordinary steps are needed to enable the Senate to conduct critical
58 business while “stay-at-home” and “social-distancing” orders remain in effect;

59 BE IT RESOLVED, that to ensure that the Senate can fulfill its duties to share in the governance
60 of the University during the COVID-19 pandemic, and until such time that the Senate can
61 convene in person to conduct meetings, the Senate shall:

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63 1) Conduct meetings of the Senate and its committees by video and/or audio, subject to
64 the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act as altered by any current or future
65 Executive Order;

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67 2) Keep written minutes and votes of all video and/or audio meetings, which shall be
68 properly recorded by the Clerk of the Senate and made available in a timely fashion on
69 the Senate website;

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71 3) Address urgent matters regarding the University response to the COVID-19 pandemic by
72 granting authority to the Senate Executive Committee, consistent with the model of the
73 authority granted to the Senate Executive Committee during the summer months as

74 established in Part D.1.e of the *Bylaws*, including all stipulations to seek the advice of
75 senators and to report all actions to the Senate at the next regular meeting of the
76 Senate;

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78 4) Address regular matters relating to shared governance of University policies,
79 procedures, and curricula by using the Senate’s standard policies and procedures to
80 propose, deliberate, and formally act using Senate committees to provide specialized
81 input via electronic communication tools to the extent practicable;

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83 5) Maintain transparency of the conduct of Senate business outside traditional in-person
84 meetings by preserving and making available a written record of any electronic meeting
85 or opinion-gathering effort to gather the perspectives and opinions of the Senate;

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87 6) Maintain transparency of the conduct of Senate business by distributing regular updates
88 on matters before the Senate and results of Senate actions;

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90 7) Maintain the right of any senator or senators to introduce a resolution to the Senate
91 during an electronic meeting of the Senate;

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93 8) Present all items voted upon and passed during electronic meetings of the Senate in the
94 consent agenda for ratification at the first regular, in-person meeting of the Senate,
95 subject to consent agenda procedures; and

96

97 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures shall
98 develop proposals to maintain normal Senate operations during emergencies or disasters that
99 prevent the Senate from conducting business in person, including proposals that:

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101 1) Define the circumstances under which a qualifying emergency or disaster event is
102 understood to exist;

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104 2) Specify the Senate actions that are permitted during an emergency or disaster;

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106 3) Address any other policy or procedure gaps that do not anticipate emergency- or
107 disaster-related disruptions in the ability of the Senate to fulfill its duties.

UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND SENATE PROCEDURES

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