

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE
COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES
(Final; Action)

CC.26.02 Election of the 2025-2026 Senate Executive Committee (SEC) Vice-Chair

BACKGROUND

The Senate Executive Committee Vice-Chair shall 1) Ensure that Senate committees submit and share annual reports with the Senate; and 2) Perform other duties as the Senate Executive Committee or Senate Executive Committee Chair shall specify. (*Bylaws* Part D.1.b)

The Senate Executive Committee Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected by and from the membership of the Senate, and who shall be the presiding officers of the Senate Executive Committee. The officers of the Senate Executive Committee shall be elected for terms of one year. (*Bylaws* Part D.1.c-d)

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for Executive Committee officers shall be made by the incumbent Committee on Committees. Nominations may also be made by others and must be accompanied by consent to serve from the person nominated. Nominations must be received in the Senate Office prior to the date set by the Senate Executive Committee. The nominations will clearly distinguish between Chair and Vice-Chair. The nominator shall provide a brief biographical sketch of each nominee. (*Bylaws* Part A.7.d)

The Senate Committee on Committees nominates the following senator for a one-year term as Vice-Chair of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) ending in 2026. A statement of interest is included.

Sara Benson	(Associate Professor, LIBR)
Shawn Gilmore	(Teaching Assistant Professor, LAS)
Rob Kar	(Professor, LAW)

2024-2025 COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

Chaya Sandler, Chair
Alex Belanger
Kent Choquette
Linda Herrera
Myles Johnson
Prasanta Kalita
Robin Kar
Lilah Leopold
Carol Symes
Jenny Roether, *ex officio*

STATEMENTS OF INTEREST

Sara Benson (Associate Professor, LIBR)

I am working very hard to attain full professorship, so this will be a strain on my time, BUT at a moment in our history when higher education is under attack, I feel very strongly that we need leadership from true advocates at this moment. I am that person. I will voice the concerns of the faculty to the administration, the Governor, our federal representatives and more if necessary. We cannot stand by while higher education is dismantled. We must remain the strongest advocates for one of the true backbones of America: the ability for those who wish to attain more from every race, religion, and background to attend public institutions of higher education, such as the University of Illinois. AND for researchers, such as myself, to be able to conduct high-quality, cutting edge research at the highest levels WITH appropriate funding.

Shawn Gilmore (Teaching Assistant Professor, LAS)

Shawn Gilmore is a Teaching Assistant Professor in the Department of English, where he teaches comics, literary studies, and composition, among other things. He has regularly served as a senator from his department since the mid-2010s, served as the chair of the Senate Committee on University Statutes and Senate Procedures for six years, and continues to serve on that committee as a member. In addition, he has regularly served on various shared governance bodies, including Provost's Task Forces, Vice Chancellor reviews, the Senate Executive Committee, and is currently a member of the Joint Advisory Committee on Investment, Licensing, and Naming Rights. He sits on the national AAUP Committee on College and University Governance (Committee T) and serves on the advisory board of Academe.

Rob Kar (Professor, LAW)

As a professor of law and philosophy, I would be happy to serve as SEC Vice Chair next year if this body believes my experience could be useful. Having led USC as President and Vice President, and as President of this Academic Senate for three years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, I bring a deep understanding of shared governance, including during periods of crisis. Since then, my roles as President of the local AAUP chapter and head of the philosophy department for three years have strengthened my skills in collaboration and addressing challenges. While I initially stepped back from Senate leadership to support emerging leaders, I recognize that we are at a critical point in the history of higher education and that my experience may be useful for helping traverse today's new challenges. With a proven track record in leadership, advocacy, and consensus-building, I believe I am especially well equipped to contribute to the SEC's mission as Vice Chair, where I would seek to safeguard our institution's values, including academic freedom and shared governance. In a supporting role like this, I believe I could help in ways that still allow emerging leaders to flourish.