

FAS Senate

**AN ELECTED BODY OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES
YALE UNIVERSITY**

REPORT

FASS Ad-hoc Committee on Elections - 8/27/2018

Chair: Emily Erikson. Members: William Nordhaus, Reina Muryama, Beverly Gage

Item 1: Proposed change to bylaws regarding constituency of Senate

Existing bylaws leave ambiguity as to what types of appointments are eligible to vote for and serve in the Senate, where the intention was to include individuals with at least one type of primary appointment in FAS.

Current bylaws governing constituency upon which electoral eligibility is based:

“The FAS Senate is the representative body of the FAS faculty. Those eligible to vote in Senate elections include all ladder faculty in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as full-time adjuncts in all ranks, full-time senior lecturers and senior lecturers, full-time lectors and lecturers with appointments of more than one year, and fulltime FAS research scientists and senior research scientists who also hold multi-year teaching appointments as lecturer or senior lecturer.”

Proposed amendment to bylaw 2: “The FAS Senate is the representative body of the FAS faculty. Those eligible to vote in Senate elections include all ladder faculty with primary or fully joint appointments in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as full-time adjuncts in all ranks, full-time senior lecturers and senior lecturers, full-time lectors and lecturers with appointments of more than one year, and fulltime FAS research scientists and senior research scientists who also hold multi-year teaching appointments as lecturer or senior lecturer.”

Item 2: Proposed amendment to by-laws regarding term of appointments

In order to avoid inconsistencies such as executive council members serving prior to their term as senators, we propose harmonizing Senate and Executive Council turnover.

Current bylaws:

Bylaw #7: “The executive council changes each year on June 15, two months before the instatement of the new Senate.”

Bylaw #5: “The newly elected executive council takes office on June 15, while the new senators take office on August 15.”

Proposed amendments: “The executive council changes each year on July 1” and “The newly elected executive council and senate take office on July 1.”

Item 3: Clarifying distributional requirements of the Senate

It has been unclear whether the distributional requirements of the senate should be based upon the status of the current senators or based upon the seat to which the senators were elected. This lack of clarity has been problematic in two types of instances. One, senators routinely receive tenure during their terms and it has been debated whether it is necessary to replace those senators with another untenured faculty before they finish their term. Two, in it has proven difficult at times to find a suitable number of candidates from a particular division of FAS and the question was debated whether senators elected at-large can be considered to fulfill the divisional distributional requirements of the senate.

Relevant bylaws: “Tenured faculty as well as untenured and non-ladder faculty members with a current appointment longer than one year are eligible for election to the FAS Senate. There shall be one seat reserved for an untenured member of the ladder faculty in each of the three divisions, and one such seat for a non-ladder faculty member reserved in the at-large category. This does not preclude the election of additional untenured and non-ladder faculty through the normal election process. When one of these seats falls vacant, the highest polling untenured faculty member in each division and the highest polling non-ladder faculty in the at-large category, as required will be elected to fill the vacancy.”

The committee notes that tracking senators rather than seats may build in unintended asymmetries in the senate. For example, if a senator tenured in term continues to serve and another untenured senator is elected to fill the distributional requirements of the senate, we will quickly have a very young senate with a correspondingly disproportionate service burden for the untenured.

The language of the existing bylaws suggests that elections should be treated by seat, and we agree that this is the best course of action. Thus senators that are elected as untenured faculty will continue to serve in the untenured faculty seat, fulfilling that distributional requirement of the senate. Similarly at-large senators will be treated as distinct from divisional senators and will not be treated as divisional at a later date in order to fulfill the distributional requirements of the senate.

This report clarifies existing procedure and requires no action.

Item 4: Composition of Nominations and Elections Committee

Currently, we have a system that precludes second-term senators who have not declined to run from serving on the nominations or elections committee (since they would have a potential conflict). This leads to a lack of continuity from year to year. Since senators are encouraged to consider serving additional terms, there seems to be little reason to exclude them from the nomination process.

We propose the following to changes to existing senate rules and procedures: (a) formalizing hand-off of information between chairs from year to year and between the chair of the nominations and elections committees with meetings and a written document of procedures and timing, (b) involving the senate staff in the process, (c) making past chairs made automatic members of the new committees (whether running or not and whether in the Senate or not), and (d) relaxing the rules that exclude second-term senators from serving on the nominations and elections committees.

Item 5: Record-keeping

We recommend that the senate acquire storage space on dropbox or some other cloud service where information can be stored at various levels of confidentiality and shared with specific members of the senate and that the executive council follows up on this issue.

Item 6: Ballot tabulation

We recommend that the elections committee considers an alternative elimination rule for the ballot tabulation process. Borda and Condorcet are possible alternatives. A brief description of the different systems is available here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Issues_affecting_the_single_transferable_vote

Item 7: Re-nominations

It has been debated whether current senators should be automatically re-nominated if they would like to run again. We propose the following change to existing senate rules and procedures: incumbent senators should be placed on the ballot (a) if they get the minimum number of nominations or (b) if they are nominated by three members of the nominations committee.

No change to bylaws necessary.

Item 8: Election Process

We recommend external handling of the election process with an outside firm or contractor and that the elections committee and executive council follow up on this issue.