

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 2-15 (Voting Units: Full Senate)

“Amending the Senate’s Constitution”

I. Introduction

The University Senate should strive to make Michigan Tech the best institution that it can be. The principal means to this end is genuine shared governance, which is the official policy of the University and the best way to ensure wiser decisions.

In this process, the Senate partners with our constituents, the administration’s Executive Team, the Board of Control, our students, and others who care Michigan Tech’s past, present, and future.

In order for the Senate to be successfully engaged in shared governance, Senators must have both the information and time needed to complete their work. Good governance, in any context, also required separation of powers and the rule of law.

In addition, the efficient and effective conduct of Senate business is hampered by two fundamental problems:

- a. According to the Senate Constitution, “The officers-elect of the Senate shall assume their duties on the Monday before the first week of instruction in the fall term.” This potentially hamstrings the new officers, making it impossible for them to begin their work until the end of August, which could have severe negative consequences for the Senate getting off to an effective start in the fall.
- b. As one respondent to the Senate’s 2013-2014 self-evaluation wrote: “[The Senate] has not been as effective in promoting shared governance [in part] because the decisions get made in the summer and are suddenly presented as a done deal. In effect, the university runs 12 months a year, but the Senate only from around October to the end of April.”

It is with these principles and concerns in mind that the following amendments to the University Senate’s Constitution are proposed:

A. Role of Assistant Deans

~~B. Distribution of At-Large Senators~~

~~C. Terms of Office~~

~~D.~~ **B. Commencement of Term of Office**

~~E.~~ **C. Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)**

~~F.~~ **D. Officers-Elect to Begin Duties Immediately**

II. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the University Senate

A. Role of Assistant Deans

Article I.M.3 of the Senate's Bylaws reads as follows:

*“Department Chairs, Associate Deans, **and Assistant Deans**, despite their additional status as Academic Faculty members, shall not serve as senators or alternates. They are considered constituents of the Senate.”* (Emphasis added.)

In contrast, Article II.B.2.c of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

“Department chairs and associate deans shall be constituents of the University Senate but may not serve as Senators or Alternates or as members of University Senate committees.”

Therefore, it is proposed that Article II.B.2.c of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:

“Department chairs, associate deans, and assistant deans, despite their additional status as academic faculty members, shall not serve as senators or alternates. They are considered constituents of the Senate.”

~~**B. Distribution of At-Large Senators**~~

~~Articles IV.A.4-5 of the Senate's Constitution read as follows:~~

~~*4. Four at large academic and research faculty senators shall be elected by the entire faculty constituency.*~~

~~*5. Two at large professional staff senators shall be elected by the professional staff and research unit constituencies.*~~

~~In order to ensure the equitable distribution of at large senators, it is proposed that Articles IV.A.4-5 of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:~~

~~**4. Four at large academic and research faculty senators shall be elected by the entire faculty constituency; not more than one of these positions shall be filled by any given unit.**~~

~~5. Two at-large professional staff senators shall be elected by the professional staff and research unit constituencies; not more than one of these positions shall be filled by any given unit.~~

~~C. Terms of Office~~

~~Article IV.C.1 of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:~~

~~*"The term of office of elected senators and alternates shall be three years except as set forth in Paragraph 3 below. After serving for six consecutive years as a senator and/or alternate, an individual shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year. Representation units may ask the Senate Executive Committee to waive these term limits."*~~

~~Michigan Technological University does not term limit administrators (academic chairs, deans, directors, vice presidents, the president). The reason given for this is that capable and experienced leaders are hard to find and, hence, should not be term limited. The same reasoning should apply to the University Senate: It has not been easy to find experienced and capable people who are willing to serve.~~

~~Hence, it is proposed that Article IV.C.1 of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:~~

~~**"The term of office of elected senators and alternates shall be three years except as set forth in Paragraph 3 below. Senators and alternates are not term limited and, hence, may be elected to additional terms by majority vote of their constituents."**~~

~~D. B. Commencement of Term of Office~~

~~Article IV.C.3 of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:~~

~~*"Election of senators shall be held in the spring of each year. The term of office shall commence at the beginning of the following fall term. Vacancies in at-large membership created by resignation or otherwise may be filled by appointment by the President of the Senate until the next election, at which time vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms by elections."*~~

Consistent with proposed changes in the Senate's Bylaws, which would allow the election of committee chairs and, hence, the creation of the Executive Committee and, hence, Senate coherence over the summer months, it is proposed that Article IV.C.3 of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:

"Election of senators shall be held in the spring of each year. The term of office shall commence immediately following the end of the last meeting of the spring term. Vacancies in at-large membership created by resignation or otherwise may be filled by appointment by the President of the Senate until the next election, at which time vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms by elections."

~~E.~~ C. Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR)

Article VII.A of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

"The business of the Senate shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order when these are not in conflict with the Bylaws of the Senate."

Robert's Rules of Order was first published in 1876 by Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923), a distinguished engineering officer who retired from the U.S. Army as a brigadier general (RONR, xxxv), originally based on procedures of the English Parliament.

Since 1876, 10 subsequent editions of *Robert's Rules of Order* have been published. Since the copyrights on some of the earlier editions have expired, various publishers now distribute copies of these earlier editions, which potentially breeds confusion as to which edition any given deliberative assembly is employing. The most authoritative and most widely used edition—which is still affiliated with the Robert family via Robert's grandson, Henry M. Robert III—is the *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR), which is currently in its 11th edition (2011).

Therefore, it is proposed that Article V.A of the Senate's Constitution be revised to read as follows:

"The business of the Senate shall be conducted according to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR) when these are not in conflict with the Bylaws of the Senate."

~~F.~~ D. Officers-Elect to Begin Duties Immediately

Article V of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

"The officers of the Senate shall be a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. Their duties shall be defined in the Bylaws. These officers shall be chosen by the continuing senators-and the senators-elect following the annual spring elections in a manner described in the Bylaws. The officers-elect of the Senate shall assume their duties on the Monday before the first week of instruction in the fall term."

Consistent with proposed changes in the Senate's Bylaws and foster Senate coherence over the summer months, it is proposed that Article V of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:

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Clean Copy of revised proposal:

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A. Role of Assistant Deans

B. Commencement of Term of Office

C. *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR)

D. Officers-Elect to Begin Duties Immediately

II. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the University Senate

A. Role of Assistant Deans

Article I.M.3 of the Senate's Bylaws reads as follows:

*“Department Chairs, Associate Deans, **and Assistant Deans**, despite their additional status as Academic Faculty members, shall not serve as senators or alternates. They are considered constituents of the Senate.”* (Emphasis added.)

In contrast, Article II.B.2.c of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

“Department chairs and associate deans shall be constituents of the University Senate but may not serve as Senators or Alternates or as members of University Senate committees.”

Therefore, it is proposed that Article II.B.2.c of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:

“Department chairs, associate deans, and assistant deans, despite their additional status as academic faculty members, shall not serve as senators or alternates. They are considered constituents of the Senate.”

B. Commencement of Term of Office

Article IV.C.3 of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

“Election of senators shall be held in the spring of each year. The term of office shall commence at the beginning of the following fall term. Vacancies in at-large membership created by resignation or otherwise may be filled by appointment by the President of the Senate until the next election, at which time vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms by elections.”

Consistent with proposed changes in the Senate's Bylaws, which would allow the election of committee chairs and, hence, the creation of the Executive Committee and, hence, Senate coherence over the summer months, it is proposed that Article IV.C.3 of the Senate's Constitution be amended to read as follows:

“Election of senators shall be held in the spring of each year. The term of office shall commence immediately following the end of the last meeting of the spring term. Vacancies in at-large membership created by resignation or otherwise may be filled by appointment by the President of the Senate until the next election, at which time vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired terms by elections.”

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Therefore, it is proposed that Article V.A of the Senate's Constitution be revised to read as follows:

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Article V of the Senate's Constitution reads as follows:

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