

## Q14 How can the Senate better meet your needs?

The administration does not seem to listen to the Senate as far as benefits are concerned. More work needs to be done in that area.

Try to see how policies improve the university instead of being so self-serving. Some upper level management have taken to male bashing. Maybe work on that.

By strongly advocating for the rights, benefits, and working conditions of professional staff. We should be off on MLK day, Thanksgiving Break, two weeks around Christmas/New Years, etc. for example. Who is fighting for us?

I am a scientific programmer working for the CTT. I work in Chicago and travel once a month to Houghton and stay a week. As such, I'm not really involved with the Senate or the operations of the university.

Help us maintain our health insurance. Nearly every year that I have been here over the last decade, our insurance has diminished. Further, in the last decade there has not been one cost of living raise. Merit raises are being used to make sure everybody gets some sort of raise in order compensate for no cost of living raise, which is paltry, ineffective and unfair.

To inform staff and faculty, the Senate might consider communicating possibly from time to time with a short Teaser in TechToday about a relevant topic, and then a link from TechToday to the Senate's website for more detailed information

Try to push the university to recognize you as a body with any actual power rather than just an advisory body that can be ignored. I know that's a huge ask, but you asked...

General education needs a major overhaul.

I need to be at MTU a bit longer, before I can answer this question adequately.

Be more staff focused.

Spend more time and go into depth in complicated issues if shared governance. Get a good designer to visualize the data in complex processes so we can see at a glance the changes proposed and impacts. The policies are too detailed to follow otherwise- especially with gaps of time that fall among meetings.

meet during business hours

I have not been working here long enough to have an opinion.

Promotion with years of experience weighing in as much as a BS degree.

Address the needs of working parents. For example, I'd like to see them address aligning our spring break with the local schools.

Remember it's a-list functions and stop whining about stuff not on the list

The Senate should, in part, play the role of a faculty/staff union as we do not have a faculty union or a strong staff union. There is little an individual can do to affect decision-making at the university level, and there is always the fear of recrimination if an individual does so. The MTU administration has increasingly followed national trends toward autocratic governance. In short, the Senate should be a bulwark against such a harmful direction.

Provide more entry points to engage with senators; better website.

I've only been on staff with MTU for about 1.5 years so I am gradually learning the role of the senate and it's relationship to policy development. I will continue to monitor emails I receive to determine my future input. It's good to see that the Senate is reaching out to be effective.

I am not really sure what the MTU Senate does; I'm just trying to do my work.

Regular communication.

Stop bugging me with so many requests to fill out a survey.

The senate is far too focused on academic issues and not on overarching concerns of all staff and faculty including (but not limited to): lack of career paths, lack of common classifications and pay equity across the university, across the board pay raises below the inflation rate despite university revenues growing at a rate larger than inflation, not even remotely competitive benefits, and continued lack of adequate budget planning that has led to the have and have-nots amongst university departments.

As a staff member, I'm not exactly sure what the senate does for me.

Either have explicit guidelines for senators to communicate with the department they are representing, and/or have the senate directly communicate with the departments

Provide occasional summaries of meeting discussions that include more detail and context than is normally included in the minutes.

Avoid issues that are ridiculous. The proposal to change the time that classes start is irrelevant and has wasted time that could have been devoted to something that actually matters. The Senate is only as relevant as the issues addressed.

Senate should raise the question about an increase in the number of administrative staff with a fat salary over the years; the student population is flat so also the number of faculties.

I've been here for some time, but am not really sure what the Senate actually does. I've heard about some things that the senate does, but am not sure about their function. I'll try attending some meeting to see for myself

Doing well.

When I was a Senate alternate, I found the emails listing the agenda for upcoming meetings informative--even if I wasn't going to the Senate meetings. I miss receiving those. Depending on who our senator is, they may or may not forward those emails to our unit's faculty/staff.

Not sure

Provide timely feedback on proposals from the academic units and centers/institute.

The senate should be careful in what proposals it passes. One of the most recent approved proposals is about on-line teaching. This proposal is flawed. It puts a supportive body such as Center for Teaching and Learning into an evaluative role which evaluates faculty! If the quality of online-programs was a concern, we should have developed a mechanism of peer evaluation for online programs. The senators should READ the proposals before they say YES.

It would help to have Senate meetings when school is in session, so I do not have to arrange separate childcare. I also think it would help for the Senate to have clearer recommendations/partnerships with the Dual Career Office.

Focus on important issues. For example, the time that classes start is NOT an important issue. It damages the credibility of the Senate when inappropriate issues take time away from other issues.

communicate the senate values. For example, the senate has reporting on fringe benefits, compensations and university goals for admissions, recruiting and a future vision...but its success in gaining these benefits or responses from administration has been a challenge. So perhaps continuing to state the senate goals, objectives and values would address the part of you doing your role. AND treating the administrative responses as separate things that need to be contended with.

The professional staff members have always felt like an after thought and are excluded from voting on numerous items. There have been meetings where professional staff members have done little more than sat and watched since nothing on the agenda let them have a voice.

Needs are being met effectively at this time.

I don't know much about what the senate is doing for me. I don't want to attend senate meetings, but how can our senators do a better job of disseminating the information?

senate is doing a great job

Outreach to remote employees

Communicate better. If you communicate to my area those don't always trickle down.

More and clearer communication of issues at hand and decisions regarding them, particularly via email.

Stop passing ill-thought out proposals. Determine the resources, costs, etc. for new policy and how that will impact department budgets!

I think it could be useful if proposals were posted on TechToday for broader public input. It would also be nice if say, some items like degree proposals could be introduced and passed at the same meeting to expedite items getting through in cases where there is no comment/concern. I think the senate should look into live streaming meetings and allowing remote participation and voting to see if that would facilitate a broader range of faculty and staff being able to participate as senate members.

I am continually frustrated, disappointed, and angered by our university's lack of meaningful work towards diversity and inclusion. I have several close friends who have been severely bullied by their colleagues and/or department chairs - either because of their race, gender, or disability status. The university claims to care about this, but recourse is ineffective. Those who go through proper channels have nothing done to help them, and are left feeling discouraged and devalued. Do we actually care about diversity and inclusion? Or are we using them as words because they are popular on university campus and we think it will improve the way we appear? We are losing faculty and staff because of this issue - both those it directly affects, and those who care about them. We must do something about this. And it needs to be a REAL something - not just more words that don't go anywhere.

Discuss or promote professional development of staff or non-tenure faculty.

More timely communication when dept.-specific items appear before the Senate. Most communications are effective, just the occasional problem.

This would require the administration ceding real power to the Senate...which won't happen (i.e., real shared governance). I feel that the Senate is irrelevant with regard to many important issues such as resource allocation. As such, it does not have the necessary standing to be an effective advocate for the interests of faculty and staff on issues such as salary and benefits, for example.

There are many people in the Seate who joined to make a difference. It is very unclear how the process works as a newcomer. Even in committee, there are different opinions about how to execute strategy. I don't think this should be solved with policy, but maybe there could be a "new senator/alternate" orientation once per year to help be more effective sooner.

Stop squandering time on unnecessary minutia, such as changing class start times. It is a distraction and gives the appearance that the Senate serves no real purpose. More time should be spent on aligning university resources with university mission. More and more time is being demanded from faculty to serve "external influences", for example HLC. No resources are being allocated for these activities. No resources are being budgeted for these activities. No other activities are curtailed to buy time for faculty to engage in these activities. Faculty time is not respected and is, in effect, treated as an unlimited resource. The Senate should serve as the check and balance on these demands of faculty and staff.

I am research faculty. I have absolutely no idea who the Senate is supposed to serve, whether or not it is supposed to serve me, or the general role of the Senate. This is my first academic appointment and there has been no training or information provided at orientation or during the start of my appointment.

The senate model is outdated. I don't feel a "faculty senate" represents the faculty at all.

It probably can't. I am a professional staff member with only a BS degree. My opinions aren't generally valued.

Don't rely on Senators to communicate. This is not effective and will vary with the individual. Run summaries of what happened i on your own blog. Put article in Tech Today when something is posted.

Perhaps out of reach, but the Senate needs to be more highly regarded by the administration and the Board of Trustees. The BoT continues to be a rubber stamp for the administration and has frequently pursued deleterious policies for faculty and staff (e.g. fringe benefit decisions, work load model engagement, etc.) Senate needs a stronger voice with BoT as compared to current state of affairs.

Continue to be a strong advocate for shared governance and transparency in University decision making processes, including benefits.

I think the Senate has to find a way to actually have effective shared governance, but that can only happen if the Board of Trustees expects the administration to look at the Senate as an equal partner in policy decisions. In order to be taken seriously, the Senate also needs to exhibit some more common sense restraint at times. The Senate response to the tobacco-free campus initiative was a good example of this.

Generally, the decision making that comes out of the Senate is baffling. Recent examples include providing sabbatical benefits to lecturers and requiring special training for faculty to offer online courses even when the University pays a huge percentage of the tuition from the online program to consultants who specialize in online education. These decisions make no sense whatsoever. Now we are considering changing the start time of courses from five after the hour to on the hour in order to... what? Help students with maturity and time management? Are you kidding me? This is what you do with your meetings? And we wonder why that administration doesn't bother to engage with the Senate on anything more meaningful than parking. Honestly, the problem isn't that the Senate is not listened to; the problem is when the upper administration does listen. It would be better to have no Senate whatsoever than the Senate that we have. Start making better decisions, or if that is not possible, just disband it.

The benefits have been continuously deteriorating for the last decade or so, and the living costs have never been below the US average (in fact, it is higher here). The Senate regularly publishes reports on that, but nothing at all has been done to improve the situation. So far the administration has had the upper hand on these issues. The Senate needs to be proactive in really important areas and should not spend time and resources on insignificant issues such as adjusting the start time of classes, etc.

My senator has been updating me and asking my input, but I don't know where to get information on "the Senate" as a body. Regular email updates would be more helpful than the surveys. This is the third survey I've taken recently, and know nothing about any of the results.

It needs to see that those who are senators effectively communicate the proposals and meetings of the senate to their constituents. We have not heard much from our senator who appears incapable of getting questions answered. The Senator has never held a discussion about the senate during a faculty meeting. In fact the senator has never attended a faculty meeting in the last year and rarely attends senate meetings as well. That is a disgrace. From memory that large report that some subsection of the senate produced did not contain a table showing the actual salaries of profs compared to the various universities. Rather it just contained data to try to make the point that we are losing out on benefits. That did not appear to be a comprehensive or fair summation to me.

have more clarity (details) in explaining the need for the change; also, mention, which department had proposed it.

I am not even sure who my Senator is. Maybe Senators should be required to hold Info "town hall" sessions every quarter. I feel more advanced knowledge of elections would get more people to be engaged or run for a seat.

69 Allowing decisions about online teaching during finals week without any broad consultation, or allowing the senate to be informed about taking money from salary pools for faculty during the last meeting before break are examples of calculated attempts to dis-empower faculty that the senate does little about. That ought to change.

i have never been informed about anything in regards to the senate

University cut the fringe benefits, where was the Senate?

I did not know that everyone is welcome to attend/view Senate meetings. Maybe share with new faculty at new faculty orientation (and then again a few months later, because we are overwhelmed with info at that new faculty orientation) information about the Senate and how to be involved in it.

I think if there was a senate for staff it would feel more relevant and interesting to me. Most of the minutes don't seem relevant to me as staff.

With two kids and two working parents, the Senate meetings on Wednesday night creates conflicts (or any evening to be honest). My inability to attend many senate meetings is due in large part to the time of the meetings. We need to re-look this, in my opinion. Between my work responsibilities, my wives, and my two kids extra-curricular requirements - attending faculty Senate meetings takes a back seat. Moreover, the meetings tend to spend 85% covering items of less/little/no importance (can be handled through other forums) and 15% on items of actual substance. The important 15% is usually intermixed with the other 85%. If we could handle the important business up front, it would feel a lot less like a wasting valuable hours.

Communication about the work of the senate has varied widely depending on who our unit's senator is at any given time. Having some standard form of communication might be helpful.

Senate is ineffective in bringing any good changes. Parking problem persists and so are other usual FB problems. Senate wastes a lot of time in low priority things. Having meetings after office hours does not help faculty with other family responsibilities either. Stuck in 70-80s in terms of operations and mindset.

The Senate needs to raise its own profile, put together an annual report, widely distributed to faculty and staff and linked from the webpage, that summarizes all of the activity in the Senate for that year.



Help employees make more money as I am currently making less due to the change in benefits this year. Even with a raise, I still make less than last year.

Allow all senators to vote on all topics.

Dissolve and go away. The Senate has no power or influence other than approving new degree programs. Its a dysfunctional organization and serves no purpose.

exercise oversight on administration actions by providing evaluations of those actions (perhaps by conducting staff and faculty wide surveys designed to provide a consensus of said staff and faculty's opinion on whether those actions were in the best interest of the university as a whole, or only for the best interest of select departments/ levels/ or individuals).

I'm not clear on how the senate gets proposals. Some come from groups/units on campus – but are other proposals/problems planned for the senate to discuss? (e.g., come from the admin or trustees, etc).

The senate needs to take the job more seriously. Quit diddling around over little things. Where is the Senate in the whole college of computing business? Nowhere to be seen. Realize that proposals for many items that are shared responsibility with the Senate (e.g., curriculum) go through dean's council first and never make it there unless approved by the administration 1st. How is that "shared" governance? Find a way to get faculty involved in the Senate that have something better to do. I mean that the way I wrote it.

Stop reading professional staff as a lesser tier of the campus community.

Be more accessible for younger/junior faculty, and reflect their needs/views more. While being a member of the senate is a large time burden and too onerous for junior faculty who should focus on career development, the lack of representation means that our views are not well represented. This doesn't just affect development of tenure and promotion policies but other issues too, such as fringe benefits etc.

By challenging the BoT to make Tech more competitive with other institutions in regards to employee compensation.

Our senator doesn't send us information. It would be helpful if he would, but I don't think the Senate can dictate such things.

The senate should be bicameral; two bodies with equal influence representing (separately) the needs unique to staff and faculty. Today, the Senate is all about the specific concerns of faculty.

Less faculty driven. More equality for staff.

Dissolve and unionize

I don't know what the University Senate actually does, nor do I know who my Senator is, assuming that I have one. So I don't really know what it could do for me or what it has or has not done for me in the past.

Actually represent professional staff instead of catering to the faculty.

more communication and transparency