

American Senator

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Governance at American University

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We welcome all readers to the return of the *American Senator*, the publication of the Faculty Senate at American University. The *Senator* has served over several years to communicate information of interest to the AU faculty and others. But it lost its voice in 2002, as the University entered into a period of upheaval in governance. Now that the dust has settled, members of the AU 2007 Senate realized that we are ready to breathe life back into this previously useful publication. This issue attempts to make sense of the settled dust and direct attention to where we go from here.

Several new features mark this new incarnation of the *Senator*. First and foremost, it aims to serve the goal of greater transparency, to inform our faculty colleagues more systematically and effectively about the highlights of recent work and current agenda of the Senate. Much of this information has been available primarily in the form of the minutes of the Senate meetings -- for anyone with the doggedness to dig to find them and then wade through accounts of edits to academic regulations, voting results of successful and unsuccessful amendments to passed and failed motions regarding the composition of strategic planning and provost search committees, and other such important tedium. We think the faculty deserves a friendlier account of the most significant issues before the Senate and how they are resolved. We plan to do this in each issue through a column by the Chair of the Senate and overview reports by the chairs of the various Senate Committees.

Second, the *Senator* now comes to you in two versions: a printed copy that is distributed to you as in the past and a longer, interactive web version

<http://www.american.edu/faculty_senate/>. This will give the entire AU community -- faculty, administration, staff, and students -- an opportunity to express their views on matters of importance to the academic affairs of American University.

We have scheduled two issues for the current academic year, this one for the fall semester and one for the spring, with the possibility of an occasional edition on a topic of special interest, should the need arise.

These changes are intended to help the *Senator* to do an even better job at doing what it once did extremely well: to shorten the distances between the various schools and teaching units that make up the University and thus contribute to the cohesion of the AU faculty, and to broaden the reach of the faculty voice.

Please let us know if you would like to see the *Senator* changed further, if you wish to express concerns or offer comments about matters discussed in this publication, or about other matters related to academics at AU. We look forward to hearing your views on these matters.

Respectfully,

Brian Forst, Senate At-large Member, School of Public Affairs <bforst@american.edu>

Richard Sha, Senate Representative of the College of Arts and Sciences <rcsha@american.edu>

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View from the Chair **Gary Weaver**

Five years ago, as Vice President of the old *University* Senate, I wrote a piece for the last edition of the *Senator*, which also focused on governance.¹¹ Gary Weaver, "A Rose by Any Other Name," *American Senator*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (March 2002). Many of the questions regarding governance remain the same for the new *Faculty* Senate. Nevertheless, the adage that we need to know where we came from before we can determine where we are going, applies as we consider governance today.

I opposed the new system of governance advocated by the Administration in 2002. Today, I've mellowed somewhat and think we need to move forward and let go of some of the battles of the past. Furthermore, times have indeed changed. I believed in collaboration and cooperation between all sectors of the University: faculty, administration, staff and students. I still believe this.

From University Senate to Faculty Senate

In 2002 the Administration strongly supported moving from a University-wide Senate to a more corporate model of governance. There was even discussion of

calling the new Senate a "council" rather than the current Faculty Senate. I wrote in my 2002 piece that a top-down hierarchical model could work for a company, but is totally inappropriate for a university:

A professional model would be very different. For example, a good hospital would have medical personnel who make professional decisions regarding health care. They certify quality and even consider financial priorities such as what equipment is necessary. They are responsible for the integrity of the institution just as faculty in this model determines the academic integrity of a university.

Administrators assure that the hospital is financially viable and facilitate the health care given by certified professionals. They don't tell surgeons how to operate and they allow the medical staff to make decisions regarding health care policy. Many administrators are not experienced doctors just as many university administrators are not necessarily experienced teachers or scholars. However, mutual respect is given to everyone's particular area of responsibility and expertise. The primary concern in a hospital is care of patients and perhaps research that enhances health care.

President Ladner confirmed my fears of governance under a corporate model -- and the fears of many of my colleagues too -- when he went to the Board of Trustees with his "15 points" before we faculty could fully discuss, cooperate and collaborate with him on governance issues. He proposed that "the current Senate be replaced by a new and smaller Faculty Council, comprised of faculty only, and focused exclusively on academic and faculty issues" and that it be chaired by the Provost.

An advisory group was appointed -- not elected -- to develop a framework that the entire faculty body would eventually approve or disapprove. While the Administration had never really gone out of its way to encourage greater involvement in faculty governance, once this new model took shape, the Administration lobbied very strongly through some of the deans to "get out the vote." We now have a smaller Faculty Senate with diminished authority (although, the Administration could always override the faculty on almost any issue -- and often did) and a diminished sphere of influence.

Even before 2002, the Senate itself realized that the body had become too large and cumbersome, there was a tendency to continually re-elect Senators, and many meetings were endless tedious exercises in pedantic

discussion of trivia. Under the leadership of Senate President Phil Jacoby, some committees were eliminated and merged and there was already discussion as to how the body would be streamlined. The faculty realized there were problems with the University Senate.

Times Have Changed

Ladner is gone and the faculty and the Senate are still here. We have begun to undo some of the excesses of the Ladner era. It is time to consider which of the changes from that era were beneficial and ought to be kept and which ought to be undone to restore functions and authority of a more professional governance model.

Ironically, one of the results of the Ladner crisis was a much more representative and professional model of governance. For example, I now sit on the Board of Trustees as a nonvoting member, and faculty are on all committees. I really feel as if I can say whatever I would like and contribute to discussions as an equal voice. This is truly revolutionary in academic governance.

I know that there were considerable differences of opinion on the selection of our President, but he really is accessible and has proven to be open to greater participation of faculty at all levels of governance. He has created a new body to consider the budget beyond the phony restriction of "instructional budget." That is, he realizes that the overall budget is a faculty issue and their voices must be heard. This is a step in the right direction. And, there are some indications that we may be on the verge of even greater cooperation and collaboration between administrators and faculty.

The early years of the new Faculty Senate often featured meetings where administrators reported on what they did. It seemed as if legislation took forever. Some Senators complained that the Senate really didn't do anything. I noticed that even deans and students stopped coming to meetings. Some even caught up on their paperwork at the back of the room.

Today, we have eliminated most of these reports to focus on legislation. Having fewer committees seems to be working well, and members of these committees work very hard to bring clear legislation to the floor. This seems to be an efficient use of time for everyone. But, there still is room for change.

We are beginning to consider the creation of a new advisory committee that would serve some of the purposes of the old Executive Committee. As Chair, I find it almost impossible to pull together an agenda that is fully developed before it is sent out a week before our meetings. Often things seem to pop up without the kind

of deliberation that needs to take place to be sure that the legislation is going to the proper committee, that most aspects and implications of legislation have been considered before discussion of the body of the Faculty Senate. Sometimes we need to "duke it out" without fear that what is said will spill over into the some publications. I also see the need for some body to serve as a nominating committee. And, there are a host of other functions that this body could serve.

I don't think we need fear that it will become a clique again because we now have term limits on Senators. Furthermore, I suggest the new body would keep minutes that could be distributed to the Faculty Senate. At this point, this is only an idea. But, I believe we went too far in eliminating the Executive Committee of the Senate and the time has come to revisit this issue.

The Future?

I think we are beginning to move toward a more professional model of governance with greater collaboration between all sectors of the university. I know that the administration has no objections to some kind advisory committee that would serve to develop agendas for the Senate, coordinate committee work, nominate faculty for various committees, and so on. I know that faculty members are now being encouraged to be active in governance, and not simply at the teaching unit level. In the past, some administrators not only discouraged faculty from participation in governance, so-called "community service" was considered so unimportant that it was suggested that it not be considered in merit evaluations. And students are beginning to ask how they can be more involved in the overall governance of the university. Students still sit on many committees including Board of Trustee committees, and there is an undergraduate student who sits on the Board as a nonvoting trustee. These changes suggest that we are moving in a direction of more a more democratic and comprehensive view of governance.

This fall, not only the University President but also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees spoke to the Faculty Senate and both have participated in very open town hall meetings. This practice of greater transparency and greater communication and cooperation between the administration and faculty, but also with the Board of Trustees, is a dramatic change from the past. I have been assured that the President and Chairman will continue to meet with the Senate. The Board is considering other ways that it can include even greater participation of students and faculty in its deliberations. In many ways, AU is charting the course for other universities in modern governance. I'm optimistic that this movement will continue long into the future.

Reflections of Chairs Past

Anthony Ahrens
Senate Chair, 2005-6

We are a community of scholars, and good governance must reflect and aim to reinforce that. I will focus on three lessons I draw from this observation and then comment briefly on my time working with and on the Board of Trustees.

1) Good governance is marked by the free exchange of views, including the disagreement that marks such exchanges. During my time as Senate Chair, I was struck by both the diversity of opinions held by our community and by the degree to which many were unaware of this diversity. How can we draw strength from our disagreements? I believe we need to listen, speak, and act with the understanding that we might be right, partially right, or dead wrong. Given that our individual knowledge is limited, we benefit from being attentive to collective knowledge. We need to exercise a frame of mind that is open to diverse views and use formal and informal structures to ensure that these views are shared within our community.

2) Faculty governance presents a seeming tradeoff between our efforts to govern and the efforts our governance is designed to facilitate. Time spent on governance can limit time spent on teaching and scholarship. Yet if we collectively spend no time on governance, our scholarship and teaching will certainly suffer. Faculty time spent on governance needs to be spent wisely. To this end, we often benefit from having decisions made locally rather than centrally. Faculty governance needs to not be costly to and to be seen as efficacious by those engaged in it, else those who choose to engage will not be representative of the diverse talents and views of our faculty.

3) Governance, like scholarship, needs to draw courage from the belief that both we and our community can rectify errors after they are committed rather than from the false belief that we will make no mistakes. Belief that error cannot be survived promotes a hypervigilance toward threat, and an accompanying paralysis. If we understand that we can survive, and even thrive, after mistakes, then we can keep our attention on advancing our university's mission to create and share knowledge. This is not to say that every proposal should be undertaken, but assessing proposals in the context of faith in our collective durability could help us take the risks that will move AU forward.

My time on the Board of Trustees helped make clear these lessons. I am grateful for the time I spent working with the Trustees and am proud of them. These are volunteers who were willing to engage in reasoned, civil, disagreement of the sort that should mark all of our governance. At a point when they could have given up, they instead worked generously to the betterment of the University. I am delighted that the Board has added diverse voices, including those of faculty members. I am hopeful that the relationship of faculty and Board will continue to grow in time and urge us all to participate in building this relationship.

Finally, in an era in which debate is so often marked by polarization, stereotyping, and fear, I believe we owe our students, and all who have ever belonged to or will join our community, an alternative model of engagement marked by those characteristics I have described above. Thanks for all you do for AU.

Mary Gray
Senate Chair, 1980s, 1992-3

That the reputation of a university depends heavily on the reputation of its faculty is generally understood. That it is also dependent on the role of faculty in governance is often ignored in the recent transformation to a more corporate management style in higher education. The expertise and experience of faculty can help an institution achieve and maintain excellence. The tendency in recent years at American University has been to limit the participation of faculty in governance, confining it to matters characterized as "academic". But everything about a university is -- or should be -- academic and should involve real consultation with faculty. In particular, faculty input into the university-wide budget process should be substantive and ongoing with detailed information made available.

How do we recruit students? How are scholarship decisions made? How are international initiatives planned and carried out? What are the priorities in the upgrading and management of facilities? What should be the University's strategy for energy saving? What incentives will attract, retain and energize faculty, staff and students? Do we care about diversity and if so, what should we do about it? These are just a few of the questions that arise in the determining the distribution of the university's resources. To benefit from faculty participation in formulating the best possible answers, frequent, regular contact is needed with those making and carrying out decisions such as these. If faculty input

is not substantial and taken seriously, faculty will choose to spend their time on other things. However, if it is seen to be valued and effective, the institution will benefit greatly.

Phil Jacoby
Senate Chair, 1999-2001

I recently attended a meeting of the Audit Committee of the American University Board of Trustees, as a faculty representative. Although I do not participate in executive sessions of the Committee, I have been very encouraged by the Committee's receptivity to my participation as well as by the overall seriousness and professionalism of the Committee. My sense is that the Board has undertaken some honest soul-searching and is now genuinely working to foster the collaboration and trust of the University community. Although I have approached my Board involvement with a healthy degree of skepticism, I am becoming increasingly convinced that the Board is indeed getting its act together. I also have growing confidence that under this board's oversight, and with the capable leadership of President Neil Kerwin and Vice-President/ Treasurer Don Myers, the University will continue to prosper as a business enterprise.

I am somewhat less sanguine about the University's advancement in terms of its academic and humanistic purposes. Although the Board and University administrators have important roles in advancing the institution's intellectual, educational and social agenda, I believe that the determination of the University's most fundamental values and goals as well as the energy and commitment necessary to successfully promote and achieve them cannot be driven from the top down but are ultimately the responsibility of the faculty. Unfortunately, over the past several years, I have seen a gradual but significant decline in the faculty's institutional dedication, passion for teaching, and commitments to service and self-governance. These changes have occurred for a variety of reasons, many of which are not unique to AU. But I hope that President Kerwin's call for participation in developing a new strategic plan will spur the faculty to undertake a careful self-examination of its values and priorities to assure that they are consistent with the best interests and most noble purposes of the University as well as the requirements of the 21st century.

***University Governance Then and Now,
Here and There***

Brian Forst
At-large Senator

The faculty plays an important role in the governance of most universities in the United States and Western Europe, usually centered on academic affairs through a faculty senate. The precise responsibilities vary from institution to institution, but the faculty's role in governance is usually shared with the president through the provost and subject to approval by a board of trustees or regents of the university (Hirsch and Weber, p. viii). Issues of primary concern typically include involvement in the strategic planning process, to create alignment with the administration on the academic goals of the institution, and issues related to those goals: standards for tenure and promotion; questions about the curriculum; the relative importance of research, teaching, and service in the annual merit review process and the way each is assessed; the nature and scope of undergraduate and graduate programs; the scope and importance of general education; levels and variations in teaching loads; and related matters. (See the Appendix for the official authority of AU's Senate in these matters.)

It was not always thus. In 1959, philosopher Karl Jaspers characterized professors as eccentric souls relentlessly in pursuit of "truth", focused on their research and their students, and removed from bottom-line accountability systems that govern the corporate world and from the corrupting influences that afflict the broad public and private sectors and the popular culture. For Jaspers, the scholar's motivation must come from within, not susceptible to the influence of politicians or administrators. Even as recently as 1990, economist Henry Rosovsky, dean of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences in the 1970s and acting president of Harvard in the 1980s, likened many professors to the characterization of Mozart in the movie, "Amadeus": infantile geniuses inclined to see administrative authorities as repressive dunces.

This quaint view of faculties has gradually shifted over the ensuing years, following several major social developments: the elevated importance of transparency and accountability in virtually all professional occupations, spawned by revolutions in communication and information technologies, flattening of management hierarchies and creation of more responsive organizations, greater emphasis on notions of inclusion and empowerment to achieve legitimacy both in

principle and practice, and the expanded participation of women as professionals, executives and administrators.

Changes in governance at American University have paralleled these general trends. The current status of governance at AU is most unusual in one respect, however, due to a quirk of history: AU was established in the District of Columbia under an act of Congress in 1893, a product of the efforts of Methodist Bishop John Fletcher Hurst. This quirk, together with significant changes at AU in recent years -- first a re-structuring of the Senate in 2003 and then the resignation of a president under public scandal (the second in a 15-year span) -- caused members of the faculty to give more than routine thought to questions of governance. This process was accelerated by a letter from U.S. Senator Charles Grassley to the chair of the Board of Trustees in 2006, product of the unique Congressional role in oversight:

It says volumes about problems of AU governance that students, faculty, and supporters often have to learn about the work of the AU board from the U.S. Senate Finance Committee rather than from the board itself. I understand that governance changes are to be proposed that proponents claim will ensure that there will be greater openness and transparency at AU.

Senator Grassley also criticized the legal structure and composition of the AU Board of Trustees, calling for a more "meaningful and substantive voice at AU ... a vital part of governance reforms." With this charge comes a clear responsibility for the faculty to help reshape its role in governance here at American University. What emerges in the process could well become a model for the faculty role in governance in higher education more generally.

AU's Congressional mandate is unique: universities in Western civilization are generally chartered by design to be independent of government influence or pressure. According to Jaspers, "The university is meant to function as the intellectual conscience of an era." One can thus find considerable irony in the fact that the federal government had a legitimate basis for stepping in to correct problems of impropriety, lack of transparency, and insufficient faculty voice at a major university.

President Neil Kerwin, for his part, has offered promising statements regarding the role of faculty in governance. He has been a member of the AU faculty since 1975, and has frequently noted that he maintains a strong identity in that capacity. He has endorsed the University's Statement of Common Purpose, which calls for inclusive participation in university governance. In

his open letter to the campus community on November 14, he wrote that he will ensure that the development of a new strategic plan is "both inclusive and disciplined, relies on existing governance and management structures, but also encourages and respects individual and group participation; a process that is open to dramatic changes of direction as well as incremental progress". He concluded by calling for "active, widespread, and serious participation in the planning effort." We look forward to his further thoughts on these matters, perhaps in future editions of the *Senator*.

American University has risen steadily in rankings of major universities in the United States over the past several decades. Several of our academic units are now among the finest in the world. In less than 15 years, AU has risen even more dramatically in the rankings of universities by size of endowment: from \$36 million (ranked #311) in 1994 to \$319 million in 2006 (#168). Board of Trustees Chairman Gary Abramson reported at the October 3 meeting of the Senate that the endowment had grown more recently to \$400 million. This is an extraordinary development, one that we should be able to tap into over the coming years to stimulate a continued rise in academic excellence. There may be no more effective way, in turn, to *attract* funding than through a sustained investment in academic quality. It is hard to imagine the endowment serving a purpose more urgent to the University than to produce compelling evidence of academic superiority.

And now we have a president who has demonstrated competence as an effective university leader and who has committed most of his life to this institution. The stars may be aligned for AU to continue, and possibly accelerate, its upward trajectory of excellence in both graduate and undergraduate programs and scholarship. This prospect is likely to be enhanced with a community committed enthusiastically to a common purpose and an ambitious yet realistic plan for achieving it.

President Kerwin will spend most of his time over the coming years on fund raising, nurturing effective relations with external and -- through the provost and deans -- internal constituents. The faculty will spend most of its time doing the core work of the university: teaching and research. Some will be more involved in matters of governance than others. Both the President and the faculty are likely to have an easier and more fulfilling experience in their respective roles -- and questions of governance will tend to resolve themselves more naturally -- when we are all aligned on the goal of academic excellence as the driving force behind all that we do.

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Committee Reports

Faculty Development Steve Sylvia

The Faculty Development Committee has two items on its agenda:

1. *Increasing the clarity of the guidelines for applications for University Curriculum Development Support Award.*

Last spring, the Faculty Development Committee discussed ways to increase the clarity of the guidelines for applications for the University Curriculum Development Support Award. Suggestions include greater guidance regarding the circumstances of eligibility (e.g., “upgrading” a course vs. creating a new course) and permissible expenditures (e.g., travel and book purchases). The Faculty Development Committee also would like a revision of the guidelines to include a greater emphasis on the need for applications to include a budget with line items. The Committee Chair met with Provost Broder and DAA Mardirosian in April to discuss improvements. There was agreement to revise the guidelines to take into account the suggestions of the Faculty Development Committee. The revisions have not yet taken place.

2. *Facilitation of the Advancement of Faculty from Associate to Full Professor.*

Last spring, the Faculty Development Committee expressed an interest in holding a discussion to explore ways to help to facilitate the advancement of faculty from associate to full professor. The Chair of the

committee raised this idea with DAA Mardirosian, who expressed an interest in pursuing it. DAA Mardirosian offered to meet with the Faculty Development Committee to discuss the matter. The Chair of the Committee welcomed the offer and will arrange it.

Committee on Information Services Brian Yates

The Committee on Information Services meets bi-weekly for an hour or more with faculty representatives from the major teaching units, including the Library, WCL, SIS, KCBA, SPA, SOC, and CAS, and resource persons from the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and the Office of Information Technology (OIT). We recommend faculty for software awards in an annual competition in the Spring. We represent faculty interests and concerns to both CTE and OIT. We also provide representatives to groups organized by University administration on issues such as faculty rights and copyrights, plagiarism prevention, AU’s web design, and the Enterprise System Advisory Group.

In the past two years we have advocated the installation, support, and use of open-source software, such as the free OpenOffice and NeoOffice suites of word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and database software, and the Linux operating system. Since Spring 2007 we have established a Blackboard site on which we post discussions and documents on issues ranging from privacy of faculty and student e-mailings to trouble-shooting difficulties faculty have in using their older software to read the newer versions of papers and presentations created by our students. We continue to serve as a conduit for communication between faculty and administration on issues involving computers, software, and other aspects of information technology. Our current foci include educating ourselves and our colleagues on balancing information security and ease of access to information resources. Some of us also are dedicated to “Greening IT” by using software to decrease faculty, staff, and student use of energy-intensive information resources, as well as reducing pollution created when discarding old computer equipment.

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**Committee on Student Learning and Academic
Engagement
Ira Klein**

Retention, student spirit, student roles in AU governance and in an AU Plan, and issues of some students' substance abuse are among the current concerns of the Committee on Student Learning and Academic Engagement.

Through June the Committee expended the largest portion of its energies on retention matters, producing a 40-page report to put in perspective and supplement that of the Provost's Working Group. We also created experimental models of "learning communities" and "affinity groups", which use resources stringently. Likely we will work most closely with Campus Life in its retention endeavors. We find that institutions that do not have broad-based improvement and cannot attract large proportions of top quality, high performing students rarely have very high retention rates. Nonetheless, much can be done in the way of short-term improvement of retention, although AU's limits of funds require financially efficient solutions. Creating or emulating "learning communities" is critical. Also important is school spirit. AU lacks a Student Union and nationally ranked teams in the major audience sports, and has a multiplicity of "local communities" and off-campus involvements. We need to work hard to build an AU spirit not only through academics, but by improving campus life and services, and by early attention to and amelioration of the social factors which put some students at risk of leaving. The problems are understood, and the key question is how clever we can be in implementation new ideas, to circumvent limits of resources and facilities.

Issues of student involvement and spirit lead into the important matter of student roles in AU governance. Students now have a voice on the Board of Trustees, but they have been substantially segmented from the faculty in considering key questions since changes in university governance removed the voices they had on the Senate until about five years ago. While the Student Confederation and Graduate Leadership Council are very active, and participate on university committees, the sense here is that students' interest and involvement increase with the greater importance of their voice and their belief that they are shareholders in AU's development. Many of us also think that faculty conclusions are wiser and more encompassing when they hear informed student views on issues central to them. We will be considering ways to enhance faculty-student communication, whether by reviving a student voice on

the Senate, by student liaison with any Senate sponsored committee to deal with a new AU plan, or other means.

We will also consider whether there are ways of better publicizing the issue of some students' substance abuse. AU is fortunate and has been deft in avoiding deaths from binge drinking, for example, but literally thousands of college students die annually from this misbegotten activity. Understanding how to deal with intoxicated students too often has been absent: frequently the practice is letting inebriated people who pass out "sleep it off," which can be fatal. Campus Life leaders and staff work hard and intelligently to contain the problem here, but they believe that wider understanding in the campus community would be valuable.

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**Appendix: The Powers and Jurisdiction of
the American University Faculty Senate**

**Academic Regulation 50.00.00
.04 Rules of the Faculty Senate**

Article I. Powers and Jurisdiction of the Senate

A. The University's Bylaws provide for the faculty to play several roles in governance. These are performed at a number of levels in the institution. The Faculty Senate (hereinafter called the Senate) serves as the authoritative voice of the entire faculty on matters pertaining to the academic mission and strategy of the university as established in the University Bylaws (Article X, Section 2). Elected by faculty colleagues, members of the Senate shall, in accordance with the Bylaws, have primary responsibility for:

- a. Instruction and academic standards;
- b. Determination of curricula and approval of courses;
- c. Recommendations of faculty appointments, promotions, and other faculty personnel concerns;
- d. Recommendations for the instructional budget;
- e. Recommendations of policies affecting student affairs.

For curricular and academic programs, the Senate will consider matters affecting more than one school or college.

B. The Senate shall have the power:

1. To delegate and to re-delegate or to reclaim the exercise of any of its powers to its standing committees.
2. To fill or to provide for the filling of vacancies in its membership or leadership between annual elections, and to fix the procedures for the nomination and election of

at large members of the Senate and of its standing committees.

3. To create, reconstitute, and abolish, and to provide for the appointment and discharge of members of special committees and to define the powers of those committees.

4. To create, reconstitute, and abolish standing committees, and to define the power thereof, with the understanding that any standing committee may, in addition, exercise powers delegated by the Board of Trustees.

5. To invite the attendance at meetings, without vote, of any person whomsoever, and to empower the presiding officer to recognize such person to permit him or her to speak.

6. To take such other action by resolution as it may deem necessary and proper for the exercise of its authority and responsibilities.