

FROM: Task Force to Study Senate Council Chair's Term
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SUBJECT: Recommendations

In April, then Senate Council Chair Jan Schach appointed us to study the question of whether the term of the Senate Council Chair should be changed. After discussion of the question, we now submit the following recommendations for your consideration. We will, needless to say, be glad to talk with you about these recommendations.

With Cindy Todd's assistance, we obtained information about the chairs' (or their equivalents) terms at a number of our benchmark universities. It shows considerable variety in both the terms of the council chairs and in how they are elected. We include an appendix about this.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON A SECOND YEAR'S
SERVICE FOR THE SENATE COUNCIL CHAIR**

We were charged in April, 1997, by then Senate Council Chair Jan Schach to consider the advisability of the Senate Council chair serving for a second consecutive year, and, if we found it advisable, to recommend the best method for accomplishing this.

We think there are several advantages to a chair serving for two years rather than for one. Perhaps most persuasive, we know from our experience as former chairs that it takes several months to get used to the position -- to learn what the chair's powers and authority are and to gain experience in dealing with the president, the chancellors and other administrators with whom the chair interacts regularly. By the time a person gets a "feel" for being chair, his or her term is halfway over. Service for a second year would reduce the "training period" to experience ratio and enable the chair to interact more confidently with the faculty and administration. Moreover, service for two years would enable a chair to better pursue his or her initiatives. New proposals always take time to develop and implement and are less likely to succeed if the initiator cannot follow them up.

We see one disadvantage to a chair serving for two years: fewer faculty will be able to serve in this capacity which will diminish the breadth of faculty leadership slightly. It is also possible that a disinterested or less competent person will be chair longer than desirable, but this can be prevented by requiring the chair to be reelected to a second term.

We believe the advantages of a second year's service outweigh the disadvantage and we recommend that the chair of the University Second Council be allowed to serve a second consecutive year. To accomplish this, we recommend the

following mechanisms be incorporated into Rule I - 3.1.3:

1. The Senate Council shall elect its chair in December preceding the academic year during which the Chair shall serve. All nine of the elected faculty members then serving on the Council shall be eligible for election to the position. The incumbent chair, if in his or her first year as chair, shall also be eligible for reelection. When the person chosen is not the incumbent chair, he or she shall be known as the chair-elect.

2. The Senate Council shall also elect a vice-chair at its December meeting from among the six faculty members whose terms do not expire at the end of that month (see also #3 below). The vice-chair's duties are to preside at any meeting of the Senate or the Senate Council at which the chair is not present, and to introduce the Senate Council motions and resolutions at Senate meetings. The vice chair shall become chair of the Senate Council for the remainder of the chair's term if for any reason the chair is no longer able to serve in that capacity.

3. The chair-elect or a chair reelected to a second term shall take office as chair on the following June 1st and serve through May 31st of the next year. The vice chair shall have the same term.

4. An incumbent vice chair whose term as a member of the Senate Council expires on December 31st shall continue in office and serve as a non-voting member of the Council until the following May 31st. An incumbent vice chair whose term on the Council expires on December 31st shall be eligible to be named chair-elect at the meeting that December to choose the next chair.

Rationale for the Proposed Mechanisms

We recommend changing the terms of the Council officers from a May 16 - May 15 period to a June 1 - May 31st period. As former council chairs, we found it difficult (as did Jan Schach) to wind up affairs by May 15th given all the other events that occur at the semester's end. The additional 15 days would give the chair more breathing space, and would not diminish the ability of the chair-elect to prepare for the following year's activities.

We recommend moving the election from April until the following December. The chair-elect will not yet be chair in April, so it is obviously too early for the Council to decide whether a chair's performance warrants another term. Likewise, a chair may decide after six months' service that he or she doesn't want a second term. If the election is later than December, the terms of three experienced faculty council members will have expired, making them ineligible for election as chair. December is also early enough for

the chair-elect to negotiate a reduced teaching load for the following year with his or her college.

Because there will be no chair-elect between June 1st and the December election and none for 18 months if the Chair is reelected, we recommend creating the office of vice chair. This officer will do the things that the chair-elect in the present system now does.

Because the chair-elect in the present system is part of the Council's leadership (Committee on Committees, etc.), we anticipate that the new vice chair will continue in this capacity. We therefore think that the vice chair should be eligible for election to chair even if his or her term on the Council is expiring at the end of the December in which the election occurs.

We surveyed our benchmark universities about the terms of their council chairs. There is no set pattern; responses show a variety of term lengths and eligibility for reelection. Two universities do not have equivalents to our Senate Council. We attach an appendix with these data.

--Bradley C. Canon (Council Chair '85/'86)
--Wilbur Frye (Council Chair '86/'87)
--Loys Mather (Council Chair '88/'89)