

Guide to Effective Senate Proposals for Change

Issue: To streamline the process *for* proposed changes and to engage affected constituencies in **effective** dialogue, in a timely fashion, *and to assure valued and thorough discussion*, **all** proposals for substantive change over which the Academic Senate has jurisdiction must be presented in writing to the Academic Senate Executive Board beginning in the Spring 2007 semester.

Rationale: Proposals for substantive change often encounter unnecessary obstacles on the path to acceptance or rejection. A well-executed written document provides the appropriate launch pad to advance consideration of the suggested change.

Background/Institutional History: Focusing solely on two recent illustrations: the winter session addition to the Academic Calendar and the revision in the General Education categories, the Academic Senate provided a forum during which concerns, suggestions, revisions, and criticisms came to light. Robust personal exchanges and subsequent electronic communications expanded the discussion, underscoring the importance and vitality of collegial participation beyond the boundaries of a committee or interest group presenting a proposal for change. Considerable confusion still exists about the source and fate of the first illustration and the scope and viability of the second illustration.

Opposing Views: (for illustrative purposes only—there may be others)

Requiring a written document may inhibit committee work. *Things of an urgent nature may not be dealt with in a timely manner.*

Response: As an academic institution, we model the writing process as the first step in creating a permanent record and memorializing our collective and individual perspective(s) to clarify and crystallize our thinking and action plans. *Historically, many changes have been lost or misunderstood due to lack of documentation e.g. organizational changes, committee charges, and budgeting processes.*

Solution: The Academic Senate Executive Board hereby agrees that any proposals for substantive change must be presented personally and in writing to the Academic Senate Executive Board beginning in the Spring 2007 semester.

Written proposals must be responsive to the following elements:

- 1) Identify the **Issue**: (novel situation, challenge, problem, etc.)
- 2) Provide underlying **Rationale** for addressing the issue.
- 3) Include **Background** and **Institutional History** (if any).
- 4) Anticipate **Opposition**: (What will opponents say/want/think/do?)
- 5) Articulate possible **Solution(s)**, highlighting support for the most desirable outcome.

Provide updated versions of the proposal as discussion modifies and contributes to the content of the original proposal. (Senate discussion will occur only with updated proposals.)

***Adopted by Academic Senate
March 7, 2007***