

Action Protocol

A change in how the Academic Senate meetings are run occurred last semester that has caused concern. This change was that items are regularly being placed on the agenda under New Business with a request for action.

Unnecessarily Long Meetings

Since this change was made, meetings have regularly gone over the scheduled meeting times. On the one hand, it is helpful to be able to discuss the items being considered and participate in a lively debate. On the other hand, we are all busy people, and had the items been presented to the Senate with the traditional 1st and/or 2nd read, members would have a more time to consider the items, discuss any issues or questions with their respective departments, and attend the meeting with more fully formed ideas, questions, suggestions, and/or concerns. Instead, by placing items on the agenda as New AND requestion action, members are forced to read, comprehend, dialogue with their departments, and be ready for discussion so quickly that most of the processing appears to be happening live at the meeting, thus causing a flurry of conversation that inevitably results in the meeting running over time. Providing a 1st and/or 2nd read will promote and allow for a more efficient and authentic dialogue with our respective departments and enable us, as senators, to participate in a more informed and prepared manner.

Senators as Representatives

The shortened amount of notification and request for immediate action inhibits our ability to truly represent our departments. We are a large college with multiple campuses, and now that many are working from off-campus, the opportunities to stop and chat with our colleagues are fewer and fewer. Much of our communications are done through email and text. While grateful for the technology that allows us to remain connected even from afar, none of this is particularly helpful when trying to gather ideas, questions, suggestions, or concerns from colleagues on such important issues as those that flow through Academic Senate. In order to truly honor and value the input and knowledge that our colleagues have, to ensure that all voices are heard, it seems only right to respect them enough to provide time to review and discuss these issues.

Routine Items

In the past, and now, it is understood that there are items that routinely come through Academic Senate, and which rarely, if ever, require discussion. As President Strobel pointed out in his report on 12/1/21, minutes, committee appointments, and committee charges are often submitted as a 1st or 2nd read. Additionally, there are occasionally time-sensitive items that require action prior to the Senate meeting again. Handling these items in this way has always been fine. In fact, previous to this past semester, routine items and the VERY RARE time-sensitive item were presented as immediate action.

The new approach to New Business items seems to 1) be based on whether or not the president feels an item is controversial, and/or 2) make it an exception to allow for a 1st/2nd read rather than the exception being the request for immediate action.

Asking the Senate to consider all/most items as action only and “pull” them from voting if they would like to discuss puts a burden on the senators by asking them to step out, potentially singling out

departments with concerns/questions, and requiring a vote from the body with minimal explanation. For example, there are many situations where an item may appear mundane to the majority of us, but for a specific department, it is MONUMENTAL. Imagine if you will that this item affects YOUR department. Now decide, would you prefer the Senate have time to read and discuss this issue or vote immediately?

History of New Business and Action Items

Date	Number of Action Items listed under New Business	
09/09/2020	0	Holmes
09/23/2020	0	
10/07/2020	No New Business	
11/04/2020	0	
11/18/2020	0	
12/02/2020	No New Business	
02/03/2021	0	
02/17/2021	0	Strobel
03/03/2021	0	
03/17/2021	0	
04/07/2021	0	
04/21/2021	0	
09/08/2021	2	
09/22/2021	4	
10/06/2021	0	
10/20/2021	1	
11/03/2021	1	
11/17/2021	3	
12/01/2021	2	
02/02/2022	1	

Requested Action

It is requested that the Senate president return to a process in which items introduced as New Business be considered 1st read, and exceptions, in VERY RARE cases, to be given to demonstrable time-sensitive items. Furthermore, it is requested that routine items, to be determined by the Senate, be listed under Consent Items (i.e., Approval of the Minutes, Faculty Appointments, and Committee Charges), of which, individual items may be pulled by the Senate.