**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE**

**Ad Hoc Committee on Culture and Leadership**

**S-2102, Final Report**

1. **Review of Charge**

**S-2102, Senate Culture and Leadership**

Examine the culture of the Senate, and the roles and responsibilities of Senate leaders including: Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Committee members and committee chairs. Determine if revisions need to be made to the current roles and responsibilities, outlined in the Senate Handbook and University Policy 50.2.1: Senate Membership and Organization. Make recommendations as appropriate. Report to the Executive Secretary by December 2021.

1. **Process**

A total of 7 meetings occurred in 2021 on 4/27, 5/4, 5/11, 5/14, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7. The ad hoc committee sought to identify and address areas of concern and perceived impacts of Senate contributions related to culture and leadership. Where appropriate, the ad hoc committee sought to propose recommendations. A survey of ad hoc committee members’ perceptions of Senate culture and leadership was conducted in April 2021, from which several themes emerged. These themes structured the committee work and were refined through discussion and feedback among committee members at live Zoom meetings across the Spring and Fall 2021 semesters. Additional input was provided to the ad hoc committee co-chairs from the Senate Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

1. **Proposed Recommendations**

Section III summarizes the 16 proposed recommendations from the ad hoc committee. This concise list is expanded upon in more detail in Section IV and mapped to identified concern.

1. Solicit feedback from new Senators on the effectiveness of orientation;
2. Develop mentoring processes for new Senators and new committee chairs;
3. Establish a pool of Senators to address mentorship processes;
4. Enforce time limits in Senator comments, committee reports, and action items;
5. Provide abridged reports only (<5 min with main points);
6. Conduct a poll to determine appropriate time limits for speakers in debate;
7. Consider rewarding PTL participation;
8. Develop an annual feedback mechanism for Senate committee chairs;
9. Consider implementation of an informal feedback mechanism to promote a culture of open communication with Senate leadership;
10. Add requirements for Senate representatives to the BOG and BOT to be consistent with Chair and Vice-Chair;
11. Require addition of Co-Chairs for all committees, with preference for inclusion across multiple constituencies;
12. Propose charge to the Technology Committee to utilize technology to expand the visibility of Senate contributions;
13. Consider creation of a Social Media position;
14. Consider development of a Senate newsletter for community-facing communication;
15. Explore relationships with administrative liaisons to develop mechanisms to track, tag, and log responses from administration;

Recognize Senators’ contributions both internally and externally.

**Summary of Areas of Concern with Proposed Actions**

Section IV, A-G lists the areas of concern. Areas of concern included: A) onboarding and socialization of new Senators, B) meeting culture, C) part-time lecturer (PTL) concerns, D) review of Senators in leadership positions, E) eligibility and succession planning for Senate leadership positions, F) impact and visibility of Senate contributions, and G) acknowledging Senator contributions. The current status of each concern and corresponding proposed resolutions with more detail provided than the summary in Section III are provided for transparency.

| **Area of Concern** | | **Current Status** | **Proposed Recommendations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | 1) Onboarding (content v. process) 2) Socialization of new Senators | Mechanisms are in place to deliver content (such as orientation and caucus) but little is known on the effectiveness of these mechanisms and inadequate focus on process/connection. | Solicit feedback from new Senators on the effectiveness of orientation and what improvements may be needed to increase engagement and preparedness; develop mentoring processes for new Senators and new committee chairs beyond orientation. Recommend EC establish a pool of Senators to address mentorship processes. |
| B | Meeting culture:  total time, taking turns/interrupting, agenda items | Mixed responses on environment of Senate meetings: welcoming/hostile; unproductive/autocratic. Charge pending with USGC (S-2108) on time limits. | Enforce time limits in Senator comments; provide abridged reports only (<5 min with main points); enforce time limits for each committee report and action item. Recommend EC conduct poll to determine appropriate time limits for speaker in debate. Based on results of the poll, the EC will communicate to membership what time limits will be implemented. |
| C | PTL concerns | Charge sent to FAPC  (S-2113) | Consider rewarding PTL participation. PTL service and participation in the Senate should count towards reappointment and advancement. |
| D | Review of Senators in leadership positions | 1) Minimal feedback mechanisms exist to assess the quality or effectiveness of committee chairs within committee or to EC.  2) No explicit feedback mechanism exists for Chair and Vice-Chair beyond re-election. | Develop an annual feedback mechanism for Senate committee chairs, to be shared internally to committee members and externally to EC. The mechanism will provide 1) constructive feedback on improving process and culture within committee and 2) developmental feedback. The committee could not reach consensus on term limits for committee chairs and the ability of the EC to appoint and/or replace committee chairs on an annual basis. Succession planning for the role of committee chair was identified as important.  Consider implementation of an informal feedback mechanism through the Executive Secretary and an email function added to the Senate website to promote a culture of open communication with leadership. |
| E | Eligibility and succession planning for Senate leadership positions | 1) Inconsistency in requirements for Senators to serve in leadership positions  2) Expand and increase engagement of Senators into leadership roles for shared decision-making, shared workload, and succession planning | Add requirements for Senate representatives to the BOG and BOT to be consistent with Chair and Vice-Chair. Consider adopting S-1501 language. For student Senator Board representatives, consider student leadership experience in student organizations as meeting pre-requisite experience and/or student service to the Executive Committee.  Require addition of Co-Chairs for all committees, with preference for inclusion across multiple constituencies. In order to increase participation, engagement and succession planning, whenever possible, no person should serve in more than one concurrent leadership role. Consider including student Senators in committee leadership, whenever possible, to promote engagement and leadership experience (Ex. co-chair, delegated tasks). (Refer to handbook: Sec IV, E). Generate a list of roles that are mutually exclusive. |
| F | Impact and visibility of Senate contributions to the University | 1) Lack of communication of Senate contributions to the larger Rutgers community  2) Confusion on process by which Senators keep constituencies informed (Article VI: Responsibilities of Senators, A)  3) Follow-up/tracking of administrative responses to the Senate | 1) Propose charge to the Technology Committee to utilize technology to expand the visibility of Senate contributions. Suggestions: link to Senate website on University President’s website; connection to Targum; liaison with UCM.  a) Consider development of a Senate newsletter, regular reports to the press and University community through social media; visual representation of Senators on the Senate website.  b) Consider creation of a Social Media position to coordinate with Senate leadership and the Executive Secretary for communication of Senate contributions during the academic year.  Consider Senate newsletter for community-facing communication of current events and contributions. Suggestions: link in Rutgers Today; utilize University mailing lists to reach constituencies broadly. Consider Executive Secretary developing 1-page list of talking points in consultation with EC and Chair.  Explore relationships with administrative liaisons to develop mechanisms to track, tag, and log responses from administration. Suggestions: Vice Chair as responsible party to follow-up on completed responses. |
| G | Acknowledging Senator contributions | Senators need to feel valued for their service and participation. | Recognition of Senators’ contributions should be implemented both internally within the Senate and externally by the President’s office. Suggestions include (but are not limited to): certificate, email acknowledgement, pin. Consensus that recognition should be shared with the larger University community, including (faculty/staff) Senators’ supervisors. |

Respectfully submitted,

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