

STANDING COMMITTEES REVISION PROPOSAL

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1. Motivation

In recent years, the bulk of advocacy work has fallen on the Executive Committee. This has been a burden on the officers of Exec; the officers of Exec have other duties. The GSG has Standing Committee which are supposed to deal with much of the advocacy. However, these committees have been largely vacant and inactive in recent years. This proposal is designed to address this problem by bringing greater attention to the Standing Committees.

The Executive Committee should continue to be involved in the GSG's advocacy work, and should assist and work with the Standing Committee chairs. But, since the Exec officers already have other duties, they should not have the primary responsibility for advocacy.

This proposal is intended as a simple "first step," and may not entirely resolve the problem. In the future, Assembly may want to consider a further revision to the Standing Committees and the structure of the GSG.

2. Overview

This proposal mainly makes three changes to the Standing Rules regarding the Standing Committees:

1. Update the list of standing committees to reflect the current standing committees.
The current standing committees were formed on a trial basis many years ago, but have not been reflected in our standing rules. The current standing committees are: Academic Affairs, Campus Relations, Facilities, and Health & Life.
2. Change the rules to hold regular elections for each standing committee chair at the April Assembly meeting.
Currently, each standing committee appoints its chair from within, whenever it likes. This is intended to increase the visibility of the positions.
3. Specify that each chair must report at every regular Assembly meeting.
The report itself may be brief, such as "Nothing to report" or submitting a written report one week before Assembly and saying "Nothing to add to written report." This is intended to increase the visibility of the work done by the standing committees -- or, if the committees are inactive, to highly their inactivity.

3. Full Text

Proposed changes to article II of the standing rules [COMMITTEES OF THE ASSEMBLY]:

Change paragraph 1 to read:

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1. The committees described in this paragraph are the Standing Committees of the Assembly. Section II of the Standing Rules may be amended, and Committees may therefore be established or abolished, by a simple majority vote and without prior notice. [See Constitution VI.6]

a. Academic Affairs. The Academic Affairs Committee is charged with (1) investigating and advocating for library facilities and library services for graduate students, including both physical and electronic facilities, (2) studying and reporting on the status of students who are not in regular enrollment, and (3) advocating on behalf of students who are not in regular enrollment. [Legislative intent: this includes DCE and ET-DCC students.]

b. Campus Relations. The purview of the Campus Relations Committee shall be: (1) relations between graduate students and other members of the Princeton Community, including undergraduates, faculty, and staff, (2) University policies and practices affecting the interactions of members of and groups within the Princeton Community, (3) studying , reporting on, and advocating for or about issues of special interest to international students, including (i) visa issues, (ii) financial issues, (iii) travel, (iv) teaching and employment, (v) English language education and testing, and (vi) community relations among international students and between international students and domestic students. Special attention should be paid to postdoctoral research staff.

c. Facilities. The Facilities Committee is charged with (1) performing advocacy for graduate student parking and transportation needs and oversight of the GSG's responsibilities in connection with the University shuttle system, (2) working with the Housing Office and Graduate School for the continual improvement of processes related to graduate student housing, (3) working with the residential committees on issues of housing and maintenance, (4) performing advocacy for housing construction, renovation, and maintenance, as well as residential services in provided by the University, (5) performing advocacy on the subject of rents, (6) addressing any projects or programs to assist graduate students in finding affordable and convenient housing, (7) working with the Office of Information Technology on issues concerning graduate students, (8) studying and reporting on computing facilities, University computer systems, programs and services dealing with computers or computing, the campus network, University electronic records, and security and privacy concerns associated with any of these subjects, and (9) performing advocacy on these and related issues. The Facilities Committee is authorized to maintain the e-mail account and reply to concerns of constituents regarding the Campus Shuttle system.

d. Health & Life. The Health & Life Committee is charged with (1) studying and publicizing health care options for members of the graduate student body, (2) performing advocacy within the University for improvement in health care and insurance options, services, and benefits for members of the graduate student body, (3) seeking, negotiating, and publicizing external discounts or other health care benefits for graduate students, and, (4) studying and addressing the challenges faced by graduate students with minor children or other

dependents.

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Change paragraph 2 to read:

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2. Each Standing Committee shall have a Chair, as described in this paragraph.

a. Duties. The Chair shall report at each regular meeting of the Assembly on the activities of the Committee. No person shall chair more than one standing committee at a time.

b. Regular Election by the Assembly. Assembly shall hold elections for the Chair of each Standing Committee at the first meeting of the Assembly following the certification of the results of the Annual Officer Elections. [See Constitution III.4] The elections for each Standing Committee Chair shall be publicized to the graduate student body at least one week prior to the meeting when they are scheduled to be held. The election procedures shall follow the procedures for Balloting by the Assembly. [See By-Laws III.6]

c. Special Appointment by the Assembly. Assembly shall enjoy the power to, by a simple majority vote, remove the Chair of a Standing Committee. Assembly shall enjoy the power to, by a simple majority vote, appoint any willing member of the graduate student body to the Chair of a Standing Committee.

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4. Comments

Notes on paragraph 1:

1. The charges are basically mergers of the current [2008.01.23] version of the charges of the relevant standing committees, except that the post-enrollment charges were greatly reduced. The charges should perhaps be re-evaluated in the near future.

Notes on paragraph 2:

1. Change to have regular publicized elections for each chair. This is to increase awareness and involvement of each standing committee.

2. Change to have elections within Assembly instead of having each committee elect. This is important since the standing committees may be vacant or near-vacant.

3. Regarding special appointment: Assembly can, essentially, do whatever it wants with the chairs -- remove them or appoint new ones whenever it likes. This would be true even without the special appointment clause, as Assembly can easily suspend the rules. But the point is that anything other than the regular elections *explicitly* requires either suspending the rules or doing something "special;" Assembly should be aware when it performs such actions.

4. Perhaps "No person shall chair more than one committee at a time." should be removed; as the detriments are obvious, the constraint is unneeded.

Other notes:

Pay attention to paragraphs 4 and 5. "Every representative and delegate is encouraged to be a member of at least one standing committee." "The Executive Committee shall assign one member of the Executive Committee to each standing committee to act as a liaison."