

November 4, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: University Constitution and Regulations Committee

FROM: Subcommittee on Constitutional Revision Related to Special Meetings
(Ashley Ghiaseddin, Merritt McAlister, Katherine Vogel Anderson, & Danaya Wright)

RE: Proposals to Reform UF Constitution and Faculty Senate Bylaws to Address
Ambiguity Related to Senate Special Meeting Provision

Our Subcommittee has been tasked with revising and clarifying the procedures related to Special Meetings upon Senate Member petition.

Included with this memorandum, please find proposed Constitutional Amendments that (1) require petitioning members to be from at least two different academic units; and (2) clarify that, upon such petition, the petitioning members shall have full agenda-setting authority. Since our last meeting, the subcommittee has met and discussed the overall project and concluded that a more modest revision—that is, one that does not increase the triggering threshold to 50 senators—may be in the best interest of the faculty.

We have also reviewed the Senate Bylaws to conform with this proposed amendment. We suggest both a conforming amendment to Bylaw 4(G)(1)(b), as well as a new Bylaw 4(I), which would permit petitioning members to set Information Items and Action Items for special meetings. Only upon a vote of the full Senate may such items be declined, deferred, or referred to a Senate Council or Committee. We also propose the Bylaws specify that the Senate Chair set a reasonable amount of time for discussion to ensure that the UF community is heard on the agenda items for the special meeting.

We look forward to discussing these proposals at our upcoming meeting.

University of Florida Constitution

Article IV

Section 1. FUNCTIONS— . . .

The Senate agenda prepared by the Senate Steering Committee shall consist of three parts: (a) reports of the President, Provost, and Faculty Senate Chair (b) information items, such as reports of general decisions or summaries from committees or others as appropriate; and (c) action items containing matters to be decided at current meetings and proposals for action at subsequent meetings.

. . .

Section 4. MEETINGS—The Faculty Senate shall normally meet at least once during each calendar month of the academic year or as specified by the Bylaws of the Senate. Special meetings of the Senate may be called upon due notice at such times as the Chair or President may designate or upon petition of twenty-five members of the Senate, so long as at least two of the twenty-five petitioning members of the Senate are from different Academic Units. Where a special meeting has been called upon petition, those petitioning members shall exercise any authority that the Steering Committee otherwise may exercise pursuant to this Constitution in connection with that special meeting.

University of Florida Faculty Senate Bylaws

Bylaw 4

(B) Senate Organization and Procedure: Notice of Proposed Bylaws

The constitutional requirement that the proposal for a Bylaw shall be submitted to the Senate at least two weeks prior to action upon it, shall ordinarily be met by including the proposal on the agenda of two successive meetings of the Senate. In cases of emergency, however, the Secretary of the Senate may either issue the regular agenda two weeks, rather than the customary one week, in advance of a meeting of the Senate or may make a special advanced mailing of the proposed Bylaw to the members of the Senate.

(C) Senate Organization and Procedure: Senate Agenda

(1) The Senate Agenda, prepared by the Senate Steering Committee, shall consist of three parts:

- (a) Reports of the President, Provost, and Chair of the Senate;
- (b) An Information Agenda consisting of information items, such as reports of committees, and
- (c) An Action Agenda, consisting of action items, containing matters to be decided at the current meeting.

(2) Placing items on the Agenda:

(a) Items to be included on the Senate Agenda shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Senate.

1. Items to be included on the Agenda may be submitted by any member of the Senate, by the chairperson of any committee or council, by a member of the faculty, or by an administrative officer of the University.

2. Items to be included on the Agenda shall be submitted in writing, in the manner prescribed by the Senate Steering Committee.

3. The Senate Steering Committee shall post the process for submitting items to the agenda on its website.

(b) The Senate Steering Committee shall determine whether items should be:

1. Referred to a Senate Council or Committee,
2. Placed on the Information Agenda of the Senate
3. Placed on the Action Agenda of the Senate,
4. Deferred, or
5. Declined.

(c) Ordinarily, the Senate Steering Committee shall refer matters brought

to its attention to the appropriate Senate Council or Committee for consideration and report.

1. Upon receipt of the report or before, the Steering Committee normally places the item on the Information Agenda prior to its placement on the Action Agenda.

2. The Steering Committee may place an item immediately on the Information Agenda if it feels that no committee consideration or report is necessary, or on the Action Agenda in unusual, special or emergency circumstances.

(d) The Steering Committee shall within 48 hours inform the person who submitted the item as to its disposition.

(G) Senate Organization and Procedure: Senate Meeting Procedures

(1) Meetings

(a) The Faculty Senate shall normally meet at least once during each calendar month of the academic year or as specified elsewhere in the Bylaws of the Senate.

(b) Special meetings of the Senate may be called upon due notice at such times as the Chair or President may designate, or upon petition to the Chair of at least 25 voting members of the Senate, so long as at least two of the 25 voting members are from different Academic Units. Where a special meeting upon petition has been called by the requisite number of Senators, the petitioning Senators may exercise agenda-setting authority consistent with subsection (I) of this Bylaw.

(H) Senate Organization and Procedure: Public Appearances Before the Senate or a Senate Committee.

Individuals or representatives of groups who desire to appear before the Senate or a Senate Committee regarding any item being considered on the meeting agenda of the Senate or of the Senate Committee must submit their requests to the Secretary of the Senate specifying the agenda item about which they wish to speak. Such a request, along with the requestor's name and contact information, any group represented, and any supporting documentation, must be submitted at least two (2) days prior to the start of the meeting. Consistent with the law, the Faculty Senate Chair or the Chair of the Senate Committee will determine whether the item will be heard and when (at what meeting and when on the agenda) it will be heard, and may require a representative for a group if many members request to be heard on the same topic. The Faculty Senate Chair or the Chair of the Senate Committee may set time limits on

requestors' presentations. The time limit on any presentation shall not exceed 5 minutes. The Faculty Senate Chair or the Chair of the Senate Committee may limit the aggregate time for public comments at a meeting to 15 minutes.

(I) Special Meeting Upon Petition of Senators Procedures.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this bylaw, in the event that a special meeting has been called upon petition of at least 25 of the voting members of the Senate pursuant to Bylaw 4(G)(1)(b), those petitioning senators shall submit in writing any Information Items or Action Items to the Secretary of the Senate. Those items must be placed on the Agenda of the Senate and may only be declined, deferred, or referred to a Senate Council or Committee upon a majority vote of the full Senate. The Faculty Senate Chair shall ensure a reasonable amount of time for discussion of the Agenda Item(s) and may require the petitioning senators to designate a representative to speak on their behalf at the special meeting. The Faculty Senate Chair may also require any other group to identify a representative if many members also wish to speak on the same topic.