

Supporting Arguments for Amending the University Senate Constitution to enhance leadership continuity.

Over the last two months, the University Senate has been discussing a proposal to extend the maximum allowable length of service for the top leadership positions of the University Senate. The following pages are the language of the constitutional amendment that grew from those discussions. The short version is that President and VP positions would be re-electable for a total maximum of three one-year terms per position. The details, including subsequent eligibility, and the transition plan are also included in the resolution.

There are many advantages and potential benefits that the Senate sees from this amendment. Some of these are:

- Any significant job is difficult to learn in one year. Allowing for multiple years of service would allow Senate leadership to establish and refine methods and tools making the body more capable of meaningfully representing the needs and concerns of faculty and staff.
- One of the responsibilities of the Senate is to represent the positions of the faculty and unclassified staff in forums outside the university. It has been observed that the impact of this representation tends to be stronger for institutions that send the same Senate leader(s) to these forums for multiple years.
- The connection of the Senate with the university administration and leadership structure tends to only be as strong as the connection of the Senate leaders with those structures. It takes significant time to learn how decisions really get made, who to see to get information on particular matters, and what campus functions are overseen by which administrators or staff. By the time a Senate president gets a little bit of a handle on these issues in the current system, that president is leaving the office, and it is quite difficult to transfer all of that institutional memory to the incoming president.
- The Senate has observed that certain resolutions (or other actions) that it has passed tend to be forgotten quickly by the rest of the institution, and even by the rank-and-file membership of the Senate itself. Extending the possible length of service for the leaders of the Senate will allow for better organization and institutional memory, making follow-up on the part of the Senate more feasible.

- Most Senates at other universities allow for longer leadership terms than one year. This amendment would allow our Senate to try what other institutions have found worked well for their institutions.