

THE BYLAWS OF THE SENATE OF THE UNDERGRADUATE ASSOCIATION

Last Updated: 04/27/2009 by Elizabeth Denys

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the “Senate of the Undergraduate Association of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology” (Senate).

Article II: Purpose

The purposes of this organization shall be those specified in the Constitution of the Undergraduate Association.

Article III: Membership

Section 1: Divisions of Membership

The membership of the Senate shall be classed into two divisions: UA Senate Representatives and UA Senate ex officio non-voting members.

1. Members who are selected as representatives by their respective living groups shall be classed as UA Senate Representatives. The Speaker of the UA (Speaker) shall also hold this classification.
2. UA Senate ex officio non-voting members shall include the UA President (UAP), the UA Vice President (UAVP), the UA Secretary General (UASG), the UA Treasurer, the Dormitory Council President, the Interfraternity Council President, Panhellenic Association President, Living Group Council Speaker and the Chairmen of the Standing UA Policy Committees.

Section 2: Living Group Representation

1. Senators shall be apportioned by living group. One Senator shall sit for each whole multiple of 160 undergraduate residents, and an additional senator for remainders of 80 or more undergraduate residents. Each living group shall have at least one Senator. Living groups shall be as described below, except that each living group with fewer than ten members shall be considered part of the Off Campus living group.
2. The Speaker shall be responsible for ensuring the proper representation of each living group using the most current census from the Office of the Dean for Undergraduate Education.
3. All Senators shall be elected by the residents of each living group through a process governed by the UA Election Code.
4. The term of office for UA Senate Representatives shall be two semesters. All UA Senate Representatives shall take office at the first regular Senate meeting of the Fall Term.

Section 3: Member Responsibilities

1. Attendance at Meetings of the UA Senate:

a. Representatives of the UA Senate may not have more than two consecutive absences or three absences in a given academic term from any regularly scheduled Senate meetings. Representatives should send a proxy as per Article IV, Section 1, or in failing that, request an excuse from the Speaker. The UASG shall send notice to both the representative and his respective constituency President upon each absence. After more than two consecutive unexcused absences, the Speaker shall assume that the representative has resigned from his position and shall communicate with the respective constituency President the need to appoint a new Senator.

b. Ex officio non-voting members of the UA Senate shall be governed by the same rules of attendance as UA Senate Representatives. The UAP, the UAVP, the UASG, the UA Treasurer and the Chairmen of the Standing Policy Committees shall face censure by the Senate for failing to adhere to the rules of meeting attendance.

2. Committee Participation:

a. All representatives of the UA Senate must demonstrate activity on at least one Standing or Ad-Hoc UA Committee.

b. A Senator may request an exemption of clause a. of this Section if they demonstrate to the Speaker progress on a project of significant importance to improve or protect the quality of student life.

c. All representatives must submit to the Speaker a list of the UA Committees on which they will actively serve or a summary of their project to the Speaker by the second senate meeting of each term.

d. The UA Executive Officers and the UA Senate Principal Officers shall be exempt from this requirement.

e. Failure of a representative to conform to either clause a. or clause b. of this Section shall be grounds for censure. Any representative likewise judged by the Speaker to be in violation of those clauses shall be ineligible for receipt of funds from the Constituency Communication Fund.

3. Constituency Communication:

a. Representatives of the UA Senate shall be responsible for communicating the business of this Association including but not limited to upcoming events, policy proposals, ideas, matters of controversy, and involvement opportunities to the undergraduates they represent.

b. In order to accurately represent their constituents at senate meetings, representatives shall remain in touch with the viewpoints of their constituency. This includes soliciting feedback when necessary and attending meetings as required by their constituency government.

c. \$750 will be set aside in the UA Operating Budget each semester for the Constituency Communication Fund. Senators may apply for funding from this source for projects that enhance communication with their constituents. The expenditures may be capital or programmatic in nature but must help to enhance communication with a Senator's constituents or the Association at large.

d. The UA Senate Principal Officers may request to be copied on all messages from senators to their constituents in order to ensure effective communication.

4. Accountability

a. Representatives of the UA Senate shall be held accountable by their constituents. The UA Senate Principal Officers shall be responsible for ensuring that all living groups have sufficient information to gauge the performance of their representatives.

b. If a representative neglects his or her responsibilities as outlined in this section, the UA Senate Principal Officers shall notify the representative and his or her constituency government. The representative and constituency shall attempt to agree on a plan to fix deviations from the responsibilities described here. The result of this discussion shall be communicated to the senate principal officer who sent the initial notification.

c. The Senate may censure a representative for violations of this section or other rules of the Undergraduate Association. Censure shall entail illegibility to run for senate officer positions and/or loss of the ability to receive funding from the Constituency Communication Fund for a period to be determined by Senate.

d. A representative may be removed if his or her constituents see gross violations of this section or other rules of the Undergraduate Association that they feel warrant such action. The removal procedure shall be the same process normally used to remove the constituency president unless an alternate method is written in the living group's constitution or bylaws. Any alternate method must include explicit consent from at least 1/3rd of the body responsible for electing the constituency president.

e. If the removal procedure used violates due process or the preceding section, the removal may be overturned on appeal by the UA Judicial Review Board.

f. If a dormitory, Fraternities, Sororities, or Independent Living Groups Senate seat is vacant, a replacement may be appointed by the respective constituency president. For other constituencies, or in the absence of a constituency president, the UA President may appoint a replacement to fill a vacancy, with approval by majority vote of the UA Senate.

Article IV: Procedures of the UA Senate

Section 1: Voting

1. A proxy may temporarily replace a member of the Senate. A proxy must be a member of the constituency he represents and he may vote on any issue. A written authorization from the absentee,

or, if this is not possible, from a recognized representative body of the absentee group, must be submitted to the UASG prior to the meeting at which the proxy is to vote. The Speaker shall determine the validity of the proxy if it is disputed. A proxy shall not serve for more than two consecutive meetings unless the absentee has the permission of the Speaker to do so. The Speaker and the Vice-Chairman of the UA Senate (Vice-Chairman) may have proxies, but their proxies shall only have the right to vote and not the powers of the respective office.

2. Only UA Senate Representatives (or their proxies) shall vote.

3. The order of precedence for voting methods shall be as follows: Voice vote, Voting by Placard, Secret Ballot, Roll Call. A Roll Call vote shall only occur at the request of five members with voting privileges of the Senate. A secret ballot vote shall be used in all elections, but the totals may be divulged upon request.

4. One person shall not cast more than one vote for any given motion. This shall include proxy votes.

5. Any voting member of the Senate not sending a proxy may file a vote on a particular motion with the UASG prior to the vote in question.

Section 2: Rules of Operation for the UA Senate

1. Any aspect of parliamentary procedure or rules not covered by these Bylaws or the UA Constitution, shall be operated under Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

2. The Speaker shall only vote when his vote shall alter the outcome or when balloting for candidates. The Speaker may interpret these Bylaws with the understanding that these interpretations shall be based on the clear intent of these Bylaws. Rulings of the Chairman may be overturned by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

3. Any person given the floor by the Speaker shall have the floor for no more than two minutes. The Speaker may extend this limit to no more than five minutes, and the Senate may extend or decrease the limit by a majority vote.

4. The Speaker shall decide whether the Senate is to be in general discussion format or parliamentary mode.

5. A motion to reconsider must be made and seconded by persons voting on the prevailing side. A two-thirds vote of the Senate shall be needed to pass.

6. Meetings shall be opened to the MIT community. The Speaker shall have the power to exclude all save members of this Association at his discretion, but he may be overruled by a majority vote of the Senate. Only members of this Association shall have speaking privileges unless the Speaker decides to extend the privilege.

7. If the Speaker or the Vice-Chairman shall not be available to chair a regularly scheduled meeting of the Senate, the UASG shall call the Senate to order and entertain the motion for a Chairman pro tempore, who must be a voting member. The Chairman pro tempore shall not be an Executive Officer of the Undergraduate Association.

Section 3: Agenda

1. The agenda for any regular scheduled meeting of the Senate shall be organized by the Speaker, with consultation from the UA Senate Vice-Chair, and circulated at least two days prior to meetings. All main motions and resolutions shall be typed, distributed, and assigned a reference number. Any member of the Senate, or twenty members of this Association, may introduce a main motion by submitting it in writing to the Speaker. The Speaker may then take action as they see fit in addressing the matter in a timely fashion.

2. Article IV, Section 3.1, may be suspended by moving the Senate into emergency session by a two-thirds vote of those present. In emergency session, the Senate must state the matter to be addressed and discuss that topic solely.

3. Notice of Senate meetings shall be made to the MIT community through whatever means of campus media exist and are most expedient. The UA Publicity Chair(s) shall ensure this. Mention of the agenda items shall be given if at all possible.

4. A motion submitted to the Speaker must be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Senate meeting, in its original form regardless of its current status, upon the submission of a written petition bearing the signatures of ten voting members of the Senate or one hundred members of the Undergraduate Association.

Section 4: Meetings

1. The Speaker shall, in consultation with the Principal Officers of the Senate, set a day and dates for the meetings of the Senate at the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the term. The first meeting of the Senate shall be no later than two weeks after the conclusion of fall elections, for the fall term, and the first full week of February, in the case of the Spring term. The Speaker may, under exceptional and urgent circumstances, change the date of a meeting, so long as notice is given at least one week prior to such a meeting. In no case shall the Senate meet more than eight times during the Fall term, or eight times during the Spring term; nor shall the Senate convene less than six times during the Fall term, or seven times during the Spring term; nor shall fewer than seven calendar days separate meetings of the Senate. Meetings as aforementioned shall be construed to mean regularly scheduled meetings of the Senate.

2. Emergency meetings of the Senate may be called by the UAP, a quorum of Senate members with the presence of the Speaker or the Vice-Chairman, or upon the presentation of a written petition signed by five percent of the Association to the Speaker. The emergency meeting may only discuss and act on the subject expressed in the call to order of the convening individual or organization, and in the case of the petition, the meeting shall occur within four days. Removal of officers and amendments to the UA Constitution or these Bylaws shall not be in order at emergency meetings.

3. Special Budget Sessions: The Speaker shall call a special non-voting session of the new Senate the week directly subsequent to the conclusion of fall elections and the week directly prior to the last Senate meeting of the fall term for the purpose of reviewing executive budget requests. The UA Treasurer and the Chairs of the Standing Committees are compelled to present before Senate at this session a cohesive, well-defined outline of their budget requests and a justification for the allocation.

The first/last Senate meetings of the fall term shall then be called seven days subsequent to the special budget session where approval of the executive budgets shall be placed on the agenda. The special budget sessions are not considered normal Senate meetings and other business may not be considered.

3. Impeachment Proceedings:

- a. The accused shall have the right to be present during all phases of the impeachment proceedings.
- b. The accused shall have an opportunity to present his case before the Senate.
- c. The UA Speaker shall designate the specific procedures for the operation of the impeachment proceedings. The procedures in subsection 3 may be amended by a majority vote of the Senate.

4. Unallocated Funds Authorization Bills:

Whenever a bill comes before the Senate to authorize unallocated funds of this Association, the following must be adhered to:

- a. The bill must be sponsored by the Finance Board, the UA Treasurer, or a voting member of the Senate.
- b. An amendment to the bill to increase a particular amount must be made by a member of the Senate or a registered appeal of the entity requesting the amount, and shall carry with a simple majority vote of the Senate.
- c. An amendment to the bill to decrease a particular amount must be made by a member of the Senate, and shall carry with a simple majority of the Senate.
- d. The bill shall carry with a simple majority vote of the Senate, and thereupon, the UA Treasurer shall be authorized to permit the amounts as specified in the bill to be spent by the requesting entity, subject to applicable policy.
- e. When the Senate meets to authorize the allocation recommendations of the Finance Board it shall not authorize more than the overallocation percentage of the funds designated for Finboard Recommendations.
- f. In the event that more than 100 percent of the available funds is spent, the difference will be deducted from the invested reserve in consultation with the Student Activities Office and the Dean for Student Life.
- g. When emergency funds are requested by Association of Student Activities (ASA) recognized student groups, the Speaker shall notify the Finboard Chair when the group is placed on the agenda. The Speaker shall include the name of the group, the nature of the request, and the circumstances surrounding the request. The Finboard Chair shall designate a member of the Finboard to attend the following Senate meeting.

h. The Senate may not deplete the UA Invested Reserve below \$5000 or one quarter of the semester starting balance, whichever is greater.

Section 5: Subcommittees

The Senate, upon a majority vote may establish internal standing and ad-hoc subcommittees. The establishment of these committees shall be governed by those procedures delineated for the establishment of Ad-Hoc Committees in the UA Constitution.

Section 6: Division of the UA Allowance

The UA Allowance shall be divided in the following manner:

1. It shall be first split in half (one half for each semester). The following steps take place each term.
 1. Prior to the approval of the fall term UA Budget, the Executive Committee shall have discretion over 1.5% of the total Fall MIT allocation. These funds may only be distributed to the various Standing Committees for their use during the period prior to the UA Budget approval. Any unused funds will be returned to the original MIT Allocation upon the passage of the Fall UA Budget.
 3. The UA Operating Budget and Class Council funds (if applicable) shall be removed before the first Finboard funding session of the term.
 4. Three percent of the remaining amount shall be removed and set aside to be spent at Senate's discretion.
 5. The remaining amount shall be added to the unspent surplus (if any) from the previous corresponding funding period. Each term, Senate shall request that the Finboard make a recommendation of funding for no more than this amount times the overallocation percentage. Recommendations for funding may only be granted to undergraduate ASA-recognized groups that request such funds.
 6. If there is a deficit from the previous corresponding funding period, the aforementioned expected meeting shall address the deficit in conjunction with the Student Activities Office and the Dean of Student Life.
 7. If it is the will of the executive to reallocate more than \$250 worth of funds from one Standing Committee to another mid-term, the proposed reallocation must be presented by the UA Treasurer and approved by Senate. If it is less than or equal to \$250 then it may instead be approved by 4 out of the 6 members of the Executive Committee voting in favor.

Section 7. Approval of the UA Budget

The Speaker shall chair a Special Budgetary Senate Committee consisting of the UA President, the UA Vice-President, the UA Treasurer, and three senators to be appointed by the Speaker. This committee shall review the UA Operating Budget if one has been submitted by the Executive. If one has not been prepared, the committee should create an Operating Budget. This committee will meet with the Chairs

of the standing committees or their designees to determine an appropriate budget for the following term. This budget will then be presented to the Senate for a vote.

Section 8: Quorum

The quorum for all Senate meetings shall be one-third of the registered voting members.

Article V: The Undergraduate Association Standing Committees

Section 1: Enumeration of the Standing Policy Committees

1. UA Committee on Athletics
2. UA Committee on Sustainability
3. UA Committee on Dining
4. UA History Committee
5. UA Committee on Housing
6. UA Committee on Student Life
7. UA Committee on Student Space Planning
8. UA Student Committee on Educational Policy

Section 2: Enumeration of the Standing Administrative Committees

1. UA Nominations Committee
2. UA Finance Board
3. Communications Committee
4. Association of Student Activities (in joint custody with the Graduate Student Council)

Article VI: Officers of the Undergraduate Association Senate

Section 1: Speaker of the UA Senate

1. The Principal Officers shall consist of the Speaker, the Vice-Chairman, and all official staff assistants appointed by the Speaker. Additionally, the General Officers shall include the Parliamentarian of the UA Senate, and the Sergeant-at-Arms of the UA Senate.

2. The Speaker shall have the following powers and duties:

- a. The Speaker shall be the Chairman, the chief legislative officer, and the spokesman of the Senate.
- b. The Speaker shall organize the agenda for the Senate and is responsible for coordinating the activities leading to the convening of the Senate.
- c. The Speaker shall assume joint responsibility of the finances of the UA Senate with the Vice-Chairman.

- d. The Speaker shall appoint a Parliamentarian of the UA Senate. He may further appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms, and up to three official staff assistants in accordance with these Bylaws. The Parliamentarian and the Sergeant-at-Arms must be members of the Senate.
 - e. The Speaker shall be a voting member of the UA Executive Committee and shall report the actions of the Senate to the Executive Committee.
 - f. The Speaker shall attend the meeting each semester with the UA President, the UA Treasurer, the Finboard Chairperson, and the Finboard Vice-Chairperson to determine the percentage for overallocation.
3. The Vice-Chairman shall have the following powers and duties:
- a. The Vice-Chairman shall be the Vice-Chairman of the Senate and shall assist the Speaker in the execution of his duties.
 - b. The Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Speaker upon his absence.
 - c. The Vice-Chairman shall assume joint responsibility of the finances of the Senate with the Speaker.
 - d. The Vice-Chairman shall be a member of the UA Executive Committee and shall assist in reporting the actions of the Senate to the Executive Committee.
 - e. The Senate Vice-Chair shall coordinate regular group discussions between the leaders of the various student governments, including but not limited to the UA, GSC, ASA, Panhel, DormCon, LGC, and IFC, and the Dean for Student Life and any other administrator who wishes to sponsor such meetings.
4. The Parliamentarian of the UA Senate shall assist the Chairman of the Senate in maintaining effective use of parliamentary procedure.
5. The Sergeant-at-Arms of the UA Senate shall assist the Chairman of the Senate in establishing and maintaining order at Senate meetings.
6. The (up to) three official staff assistants shall serve at the pleasure of the Speaker and are empowered to aid him with the completion of the business of the Senate.

Section 2: Election, Vacancies, and Removal of Officers

1. Elections:

- a. Nominations for the office of Speaker shall occur at the fifth regular meeting of the spring term. Candidates for the position must be current or past voting members of the Senate. Elections will be held at the sixth regular meeting of the spring term. The Speaker-elect shall then be ineligible to hold any UA class office or Executive office position during the academic term (not including the summer term) following his election, regardless of resignation, except

in the case of Presidential succession. The Speaker-elect shall take office at the seventh regular Senate meeting of the spring term.

b. Nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman shall occur at the same time as the nominations for Speaker. Candidates for the position must be voting members of the Senate.

2. Vacancies:

a. If a vacancy shall have occurred in the office of Speaker, the Senate shall elect an acting Speaker to finish the remainder of the term of the original. The Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Speaker until the acting Speaker can be elected.

b. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Vice-Chairman, the Senate shall elect an interim candidate to finish the remainder of the term of the original.

3. Removals:

a. The Speaker may be removed by a three-fourths, roll call vote of no confidence of the Senate for gross neglect of duty or extreme violation of the rules of this Association.

b. The Vice-Chairman may be removed by a two-thirds, roll call vote of no confidence of the Senate for gross neglect of duty or extreme violation of the rules of this Association.

Section 3: Approval and Derecognition of Institute Committee Student Advocates

1. The UA Nominations Committee presents a compilation of descriptions of student advocates approved by NomComm for approval by a majority of Senate, before being presented to the relevant Institute committees for approval.

2. That Institute committee representatives who neglect their responsibilities shall be derecognized by the UA Senate by a majority vote, for replacement by NomComm.

Article VII: Suspension and Amendment of these Bylaws

Section 1: Suspension

These Bylaws may be suspended for the duration of one Senate meeting by a two-thirds vote of those members present at a Senate meeting. This measure should be exercised in only the most extreme situations.

Section 2: Amendments

1. Except as otherwise specified herein, these Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Senate. The motion to amend must lie upon the table for at least one meeting prior to the vote. The motion must appear on the agenda for the meeting.

2. Upon petition by ten percent of this Association, the Senate shall consider a proposal to amend these Bylaws. If the proposed amendment is not agreed to by the Senate it shall become the subject of

a referendum. This referendum shall be binding upon a majority vote of this Association if at least thirty percent of its members vote.