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Clarity in Role of Representation

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Senate Executive Committee Request Form

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SHORT TITLE

(Please provide a short descriptive title that would be suitable for inclusion in the Senate Agenda.)

Clarity in Role of Representation

SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION:

(Please state the nature of your request as concisely as possible.)


What does it mean to be a "representative" of the college while serving as a faculty senator? Post-consolidation, we still seem to have very different understandings of the represented constituency, and how senators represent their colleges.


RATIONALE(s):


(Please explain why this issue is one of general concern for the Faculty Senate or for the University and not a matter concerning only an individual college or administrative area.)

Each individual member comes to some understanding of what their representation will be, but as a body it seems to vary between something akin to a Trustee (acting autonomously; voting the way they individually imagine would represent their own group) or a Delegate (seeking the authority to vote from their group), or sometimes as a kind of hybrid between the two. Given the senate's recent action on an item taken from the floor this distinct merits clarifying. The articles of the bylaws indicate that there any items to be discussed or acted on should be shared at least two days ahead of time in writing, which implies that any item that will be discussed is something that all faculty should have the ability to read, consider, and engage with ahead of the meeting to express any concern, support, additional information, etc... with their senate representatives. Taking items from the floor prevents this interaction. Do we trust senators to know the material and implications of items that they have spent more time reviewing than the general populace, or should there be a clear line of communication about values or goals from the general populace up to the Senators?

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cannot be edited afterward

Approval


Response:

Approved 

11/9/2019 

SEC Response:

SEC approved this Discussion Item to be added to the Faculty Senate agenda for 11/9/2019.

12/2/2019 

Senate Response:

Discussion: Dustin Anderson (CAH) explained that there is some confusion about role and responsibilities of senators. There are some differences across campuses. Senators should discuss what their roles entail to avoid inconsistency. Are votes representational or based on individual understanding? We need to be transparent and clear. Also, there is some confusion about departmental versus college representation. Michele Haberland (CAH) noted that the Bill of Rights has representatives vote according to the majority of their constituents, but this did not make it into the Constitution. Congressional representatives now vote according to a hybrid of these tactics. We are empowered by the model of the US Senate to vote our conscious and also in the interest of our constituents. Jack Simmons (CAH) asked if the fundamental question is if we represent our colleges or departments? Senators are elected to represent their colleges, Dustin Anderson (CAH) responded. However, there is some imbalance among colleges in how departments are represented. Barbara Ross (COSM) noted that she is a representative for the Liberty Campus and not her college. Dustin Anderson (CAH) replied that apportionment led to Liberty Campus as having a representative for the campus rather than a particular college.



President's Response:
