

Dear Colleagues,

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee plans to introduce:

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS Section 6:

(Proposed language added to the current bylaw is underlined. Proposed language removed from the current bylaw is shown with strike marks. The complete Senate Constitution and Bylaws can be found @ the Senate web site: <http://www.temple.edu/senate/>)

A quorum of the University Faculty senate shall consist of ~~25%~~ 40 of the eligible members. A quorum of the Representative Faculty Senate ~~for the conduct of business~~ shall consist of a ~~majority of the 25~~ eligible members. It shall be assumed, upon the call to order, that a quorum is present: the minutes shall be presented; but if, after presenting and before approval of the minutes, any member shall suggest the absence of a quorum, the ~~secretary shall call the roll.~~ presiding officer shall determine whether a quorum be present. ~~In the case of the University Faculty Senate a head count may suffice.~~ If no quorum be present, the ~~meeting~~ presiding officer shall determine ~~by majority vote~~ either to wait for the appearance of a quorum or to adjourn to a day not more than two weeks hence. In the event a quorum cannot be obtained, at the presiding officer's discretion, the meeting may continue informally for purposes of debate or discussion, but no formal action may be taken. A member may at any time after the approval of the minutes suggest the absence of a quorum, but the presiding officer may rule said suggestion out of order if, in the presiding officer's opinion, a quorum is present.

Background:

An important Steering Committee task this academic year is to review the Senate Constitution and Bylaws to make sure they reflect the way we are doing business and to insure we can conduct our business. At the September 14, 2009 Representative Senate meeting, the Steering Committee introduced an amendment to the Bylaws to include electronic voting. The Senate has been using electronic ballots for a few years however the Bylaws were never changed to include this method of voting. At that meeting the Representative Senate voted in favor of the motion. The relevant Bylaw now reads:

ARTICLE VI, ORDER Section 4:

The Steering Committee, either in preparing the agenda or in the meeting, may at its discretion determine that a written ballot, a mail ballot, or an electronic ballot shall be taken on any matter. For any vote taken on any matter during a meeting, a written ballot must be taken if requested by any senator. In the event of a mail or electronic ballot, a short statement summarizing critical arguments for and against the matter shall ordinarily be included.

This brings me to the quorum motion that will be introduced to the Representative Senate at the December 10, 2009 special meeting. The Steering Committee looked at monthly Senate meeting attendance by the Representative Senators for academic years '06-'07, '07-'08, and '08-'09. After reviewing this information, the Steering Committee agreed that typical quorum numbers for these Representative Senate meetings were 25 and for University Senate meetings, 40. The Steering Committee was comfortable with the numbers presented in its motion knowing that an electronic vote may now be called for any important issues. The Steering Committee also reviewed Robert's Rules of Order and consulted Senate Parliamentarian Scott Gratson (SCT) and Marina Angel (LAW), a

parliamentary expert. As stated, the goal of this amendment is to allow the Senate to conduct its regular business with a reasonable expectation of achieving quorum.

The Steering Committee had planned to introduce the quorum amendment at the November 18, 2009 Representative Senate meeting. However, we realized there would not be adequate time for a full and complete discussion. Therefore, on November 17, 2009, the Steering Committee called for a special Representative Senate meeting for December 10th. (Senate Constitution, Article VII, Section 2).

All are welcome to attend and participate in the University and Representative Senate special meeting discussions. However, only Representative Senators – the 150 elected collegial representatives and ex officio members - vote on bylaw amendments. (Senate Constitution, Article III, Section 3)

Karen M. Turner
12/3/09